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ORIENTALISM  
IN LOUIS XIV'S  
FRANCE

NICHOLAS DEW

OXFORD HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

# ORIENTALISM IN LOUIS XIV'S FRANCE

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NICHOLAS DEW

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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
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Oxford New York

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Published in the United States  
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

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First published 2009

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Dew, Nicholas.

*Orientalism in Louis XIV's France* / Nicholas Dew.  
p. cm.—(Oxford historical monographs)  
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-19-923484-4 (acid-free paper) 1. Orientalism—France—History—17th century.  
2. Middle East—Study and teaching—France—History—17th century. 3. Asia—Study and  
teaching—France—History—17th century. 4. France—Intellectual life—17th century. 5. Herbelot,  
Barthélemy d', 1625-1695. 6. Thévenot, Melchisédec, 1620-1692. 7. Bernier, François, 1620-1688.  
8. France—History—Louis XIV, 1643-1715. I. Title.

DS61.9.F8D49 2009

303.48'2440509032—dc22 2009009583

Typeset by Laserwords Private Limited, Chennai, India  
Printed and bound in the UK  
on acid-free paper by  
MPG Biddles Ltd, King's Lynn, Norfolk

ISBN 978-0-19-923484-4

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

*For my parents and my brothers*

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Note on Conventions</i>	xiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction: Baroque Orientalism	1
1. Barthélemy d'Herbelot and the Place of Oriental Learning	41
2. 'Toutes les Curiosités du Monde': The Geographic Projects of Melchisédech Thévenot	81
3. The Double Eclipse: François Bernier's Geography of Knowledge	131
4. The Making of d'Herbelot's <i>Bibliothèque orientale</i>	168
5. Printing Confucius in Paris	205
Epilogue	234
<i>Bibliography</i>	245
<i>Index</i>	291



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## *Acknowledgements*

This book was researched and written in a variety of locations, and over a long period of time, and it is a pleasure to be able, at last, to record my gratitude to the people and institutions who helped me along the way.

I am extremely grateful to the following institutions for their financial support over the course of the project: the British Academy; St Hugh's College, Oxford; the Oxford-Paris Programme; the Zaharoff Fund; the Society for the Study of French History; the Dr Günther Findel-Stiftung and the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; St Catharine's College, Cambridge; the Leverhulme Trust; the British Academy, again; the Huntington Library; and McGill University.

I would like to record my thanks to the staff of the following libraries, in addition to all those mentioned in the bibliography: Magdalen's New Library; the Taylor Institution library; the Bodleian's Upper Reading Room; and the Médiathèque d'histoire des sciences at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, La Villette. Suzanne Griffiths of St Catharine's College library helped me make use of the college's rare books. Stephen Ferguson, at Princeton, and Anke Hölzer, of the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, were both extremely helpful in their responses to questions by email.

Early versions of this material were given as papers at numerous venues, including the Edinburgh conference of the Society for the Study of French History; the Luxury Project at Warwick University; the University of York's Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies; the Cambridge History and Philosophy of Science departmental seminar; the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute; the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and the Newberry Library, Chicago. My thanks to the organizers and audiences on all those occasions for their comments. I am grateful to Verso and E. J. Brill for allowing me to re-use sections of the book that have already appeared in a different form elsewhere.

It remains for me to thank some of the many people who have lent their support in countless ways, some of them over several years, and others at specific moments. The project took shape in the context of several overlapping reading groups at Oxford, among which I must thank the early modern France group, run by Robin Briggs

and David Parrott, which included Eric Nelson, Guy Rowlands, Phil Grover, and Simon Hodson; the Enlightenment Workshop, run by John Robertson and Laurence Brockliss; and the genuinely seminal seminar, 'History/Anthropology/Narrative', run by John Nightingale and Michael Gilsean, which is where I first encountered Edward Said's *Orientalism* (among many other things). In Paris, I received advice and help from Benoit and Corinne Lelong, Franck Achard, Véronique Dubois, Marc Olivier, Natania Meeker, the late Bruno Neveu, Herbert Schneider and his family, Audrey Provost, Filippo de Vivo, Déborah Blocker, François Regourd, Stéphane Van Damme, Antonella Romano, and Catherine Jami. At various times, I benefited from the support and encouragement of John Robertson, David Harley, Sarah Knott, Scott Mandelbrote, Eugenio Menegon, Cormac Newark, Tara Nummedal, Mike Halvorson, Richard Drayton, Nick Wilding, Simon Werrett, Lauren Kassell, Jenny Mander, Nick Hammond, Michèle Hannoosh, Chris Prendergast, and J. B. Shank. Gerald Toomer, Sonja Brentjes, David Lux, Florence Hsia, and Anne Goldgar all very generously shared unpublished papers or research notes with me. Emanuele Senici helped with Italian translations. Gottfried Hagen and Eleazar Birnbaum answered my questions on Kâtib Chelebi by email. Dan Carey, Moti Feingold, Kapil Raj, Paul Nelles, Dhruv Raina, Joan-Pau Rubiés, Nancy Siraisi, Alice Stroup, David Sturdy, Denise Spellberg, and Jim Watt have all offered crucial references, offprints, and constructive criticism. Pat and Ray Henson gave moral and material support over many years. Ann Blair, Peter Burke, Neil Kenny, Simon Schaffer, Richard Serjeantson, and Sir Chris Bayly all gave me useful comments on several draft chapters. I owe a special debt to Luce Giard, who acted as my first mentor in Paris, and commented on an earlier version in its entirety. Laurence Brockliss was the most forgiving of doctoral supervisors, and has been unfailing in his support since then. In the final stages of the book's development, I have been extremely fortunate in being surrounded by my colleagues and friends at McGill and the other Montreal universities. With this project in particular, Laila Parsons and Michelle Hartman have offered insight and encouragement at the final stages. James Delbourgo has been a marvellous interlocutor, collaborator, and friend, over several years. It has been a privilege working with him at McGill, and I will miss our trips to Thomson House. Kate Desbarats, François Furstenberg, and all our collaborators in Atlantic world history have made me feel welcome in a second research field, and I look forward to thanking them all properly in a future set of acknowledgements.

Such a list, though long, can not be complete, and I will surely have forgotten some. Needless to say, despite all this help, the failings in what follows remain mine. I owe a special kind of thanks to Karen Henson, with whom I shared so much, over so much of the period that I was working on this book.

My parents and my brothers have been patient and supportive over the whole period of the book's development, and I know how glad they will be to see the finished thing in print. Since this is a book about languages, and Asian travel, it seems especially apt to dedicate it to Simon and Oliver. My nieces Eleanor and Isabelle arrived as the book was being finished, and I look forward to reading bits of it to them soon.

N. D.

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## *Note on Conventions*

Where there is a choice of name styles for a person, I use the form most familiar in English, even at the risk of being inconsistent: Descartes and not Cartesius, Erpenius not Van Erpe. For non-European proper nouns, likewise, I have tried to use the more familiar form—Confucius and not Kongzi, Abulfeda not Abū 'l-Fidā—except in contexts where it is necessary to distinguish a figure as imagined by Europeans from the historically real person. Given the lack of consistency in seventeenth-century naming, I have followed, for French authors, the style used by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. When citing primary sources, I have not modernized spelling, and I have chosen to omit the accents from capital letters in French. Chinese terms are romanized according to the *pinyin* system, and Arabic names follow the style used by the US Library of Congress and the Bodleian Library.

Unless otherwise stated, all dates are given in the New Style (with the year beginning 1 January), and years are AD/CE.

All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own. I have tried to convey the sense of the seventeenth-century language in modern English, which has led inevitably to the loss of much of its period colour. A particular difficulty when writing French history in English is the question of whether, and how, to translate the often obscure names of the posts and institutions of the *ancien régime*. This is both a matter of style and of substance. Readers familiar with Louis XIV's France would find it jarring to find 'l'abbé de Choisy' translated as 'the abbot Choisy', and it would be misleading to translate titles like *conseiller du roi* as 'the king's counsellor'. I have therefore opted to retain the original French titles as much as possible, even at the risk of burdening English sentences with a large number of French terms. Definitions of the French office titles can be found in Marcel Marion's *Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, or Lucien Bély's *Dictionnaire de l'Ancien Régime*.

## *List of Abbreviations*

Full references are given in the Bibliography

- A* 'Akademie' edition of Leibniz (see below under Leibniz).
- AAE* Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris.
- AAS* Archives de l'Académie des sciences, Paris.
- AN* Archives nationales, Paris.
- ABF* *Archives biographiques françaises* (microfiches; now accessible electronically via the World Biographical Information System, published by K. G. Saur).
- BL* British Library, London.
- BN* Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.
- Bod.* Bodleian Library, Oxford.
- Chapelain* *Lettres de Jean Chapelain*, ed. J. P. Tamizey de Larroque.
- CUL* Cambridge University Library.
- CSP* *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, ed. and trans. P. Intorcetta, *et al.* (Paris, 1687).
- DBF* *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (in progress).
- DLF-17* *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le XVIIe siècle*, revised edn.
- DLF-18* *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le XVIIIe siècle*, revised edn.
- DSB* *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*.
- EI-1* *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edn.
- EI-2* *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn.

- HAB Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel.
- Huygens *Œuvres complètes de Huygens.*
- Leibniz, *A* G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* (in progress). References are given in the form '1/4, 417', meaning '1st series, vol. 4, p. 417'.
- Moreri L. Moreri, *Le Grand dictionnaire historique*. 'Dernière' [21st] edn.
- n. a. fr. Nouvelles acquisitions françaises.
- ODCC *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.*
- Oldenburg *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg.*
- SVEC Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (as series title).



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## Introduction: Baroque Orientalism

In the summer of 1709, with his translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* about halfway finished, Antoine Galland made the following entries in his diary:

Samedi 1er de juin [1709]. L'après-disné le maronite Hanna me dit que trois jours auparavant, c'est-à-dire le 30 du mois de mai, jour du S. Sacrement, en voyant passer de la chambre où il estoit, vis-à-vis le port S. Michel, la procession de Notre-Dame, il avoit observé que le dessus du dais estoit couvert d'un satin rouge, qui devoit avoir esté tiré d'une enseigne prise sur les Turcs ou sur quelque vaisseau de Barbarie, en tems de guerre, qui apparemment avoit esté porté à Notre-Dame, où la profession de foi entière des Mahométans [estoit] en grands caractères blancs, c'est-à-dire: *La ela ella llah Mohammed rasoul llah*. 'Il n'y a pas d'autre Dieu que Dieu; Mahomet est son prophète'. Il en avoit parlé ce jour-là à M. le chevalier Maunier, gentilhomme de M. le Cardinal [de Noailles], afin qu'il en donnast avis à Son Eminence et que Son Eminence donnast ordre que ce satin fust osté.

Jeudi 6 de juin. J'appris du maronite Hanna que, sur l'avis qu'il avoit donné, le satin qui couvroit le dessus du dais de Notre-Dame, qui sert aux processions du S. Sacrement, avoit esté osté et bruslé, et qu'il y avoit quarante ans qu'il servoit.<sup>1</sup>

[Saturday, 1 June [1709]. After lunch the Maronite Hanna told me that three days ago, that is 30 May, a day of the Blessed Sacrament, he saw from the window where he was, just opposite the Saint-Michel docks, a procession from Notre-Dame going by. He noticed that the top of the canopy [covering the host] was made from a red satin cloth, which must have come from an ensign taken in war from the Turks or from some Barbary vessel, which had clearly been brought to Notre-Dame, on which [was written] in large white characters the entire Muslim profession of faith, that is: *La ela ella llah Mohammed rasoul llah*. 'There is no other God but God, Muhammad is his prophet.' That very day, he asked M. le chevalier Maunier, the Cardinal [Noailles]'s gentleman, to inform His Eminence, so that His Eminence would have the satin taken away.

<sup>1</sup> A. Galland, *Journal parisien d'Antoine Galland (1708–1715), précédé de son autobiographie (1646–1715)*, ed. H. A. Omont (Paris, 1919), 47.

Thursday, 6 June. I learned from the Maronite Hanna that, upon the information he had given, the satin that had covered the canopy used for processions of the Blessed Sacrament at Notre-Dame had been removed, and burned. And that it had been in use for forty years.]

Although Hanna's main concern seems to have been with the theological implications of his discovery, Galland seems to enjoy the immense irony that for forty years the clerks of Notre-Dame had carried through the streets the *shabada*, the Muslim declaration of faith. In Hanna's story, Arabic writing was illegible, incomprehensible, and unrecognizable to the people of Paris, lay and clergy alike; and yet this exotic text was there, in a place one would least expect to find it, being used in the day-to-day life of Louis XIV's Paris.

Was Hanna's story true? There are grounds for caution. The *Journal* was not so much a diary in the modern sense as a notebook where Galland jotted down ideas which he would sometimes develop in other writings. After conversations with his Maronite friend Hanna, he would often make a note like this one; and indeed, some of the stories that Hanna told Galland in the summer of 1709 were to find their way into the later volumes of Galland's version of the *Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>2</sup> It is no coincidence, then, if the brief tale of the *shabada* of Notre-Dame seems to share some of the dreamlike qualities of the stories in that collection.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the idea that no one among the entire clergy of Notre-Dame—not even the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Noailles—could even *recognize* Arabic writing when they saw it seems implausible, at this date. But reading the anecdote as a parable, rather than a true story, only makes it more interesting. Both Hanna's outrage and Galland's laughter are self-conscious. It is as if Hanna and Galland between them were sharing an ironic comment on the place of Arabic texts in the cultural life of Paris, at the very moment when Galland was on the verge of being appointed to the Chair of Arabic at the Collège royal. At a broader level, the parable might serve as a reminder that the

<sup>2</sup> M. Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland: sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1964). On Galland's diary, see 415–26; on Hanna, a Maronite from Aleppo, 128, 272–4, and his input to the *Mille et une nuits*, 273–6; for some of the stories he told Galland, 428–74; on Maunier, see 266 n. 35.

<sup>3</sup> One way of analysing the story brings out its dreamlike quality: since the fourteenth century, the term for the cloth canopy that covered the Eucharist during processions—and a word Galland does not use—was 'baldachin' (in French *baldaquin*), from the Italian *baldacchino*, meaning 'cloth from Baghdad' (*Baldacco*). What Hanna's story does is to set out in a narrative form a relationship that was already implied in the object's name.

materials that make up a city's culture—even those used in its most sacred rituals—can sometimes turn out to be products of other, distant, places. At one of the symbolic centres of the French Catholic Church, a Eucharist procession at Notre-Dame, we find an ensign taken from a Muslim vessel. Furthermore, although objects and texts brought back as trophies from distant lands might have their meanings obscured or transformed in the course of their travels, those meanings nonetheless could still be deciphered by those with the relevant skills, not least people from those same distant lands.

In this sense, Galland's story embodies the themes and argument of this book. Conveniently, the period that will concern us in the following chapters is roughly the same forty-year period in which Hanna's Turkish flag was (supposedly) in use at Notre-Dame. The purloined ensign, imaginary or not, might be taken to symbolize the presence in Paris during this period of 'Oriental' texts—manuscripts collected in cities spread across the Ottoman empire (and beyond), and sent back, often to sit unread in Paris libraries, but sometimes to receive the attention of people like Hanna or Galland. Those texts that were read were often misinterpreted. Galland and Hanna were all too aware of the marginal status of Oriental knowledge in Paris at this time: in the story, only Hanna, the Maronite, is able to read the Arabic. Nevertheless—and this is true even if the story is fiction—people like Galland and Hanna *were there* in Paris in 1709. This book attempts to recognize the presence of such texts and such figures, and to situate their work, both within the intellectual landscape of Paris under Louis XIV, and also within the complex 'textual geography' that made it possible at this date to read exotic books in Paris at all.

The received image of *l'âge classique*, of France in the *Grand Siècle*—a resilient cultural creation in itself—does not afford much space to Orientalism. It is as if Victor Hugo's 1829 pronouncement has been taken all too seriously: 'au siècle de Louis XIV on était helléniste, maintenant on est orientaliste' ('in the age of Louis XIV we were Hellenist, now we are Orientalist').<sup>4</sup> In fact, as historians are increasingly now aware, the commercial and political contacts between France and its various 'Orient' were numerous and varied throughout the early modern period. Galland's journal entry is, at least, a valuable reminder of the inaccuracy of any image of the *âge classique* as a culture untouched

<sup>4</sup> Preface to *Les Orientales* (1829), in Hugo, *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. P. Albouy (Paris, 1964), vol. 1, 580.

by extra-European contact. His own life exemplifies many of the themes this book sets out to explore.<sup>5</sup> He was a product of, and a participant in, the European 'Republic of Letters'; he corresponded with other members of that scholarly community on matters ranging from epigraphy to botany; he successfully cultivated powerful patrons, who paid for him to make three journeys to the Aegean islands and the Levant to collect objects, specimens, and manuscripts for Paris libraries. Although he produced a long list of contributions to the new learned journals of his day, his name is now almost solely remembered for the translation he made, towards the end of his life, of the *Mille et une nuits* (the first volume of which appeared in 1704). Galland's translation of the Arabian Nights is almost certainly the most influential of all the products of Oriental studies in Louis XIV's France. In fact, few literary products of Louis XIV's reign can have had such widespread popular influence over the subsequent three centuries. Galland's was the definitive French version of Scheherazade's tales for the whole of the eighteenth century, and was the basis of all other translations before the nineteenth century; it also inspired wave upon wave of imitative 'contes orientaux'. It is unfortunate, though, that the book's fame and its long influence upon Western European literary history has obscured the story of how it came to Paris at the end of Louis XIV's reign.<sup>6</sup>

Galland's career as a scholar, a member of the 'republic of letters', and as the translator of the *Thousand and One Nights* can at least serve as a reminder that the intellectual and cultural history of Europe in the 'early Enlightenment' of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was shaped by Europe's increasing commercial interaction with the wider world. This book explores one facet of that process: the French scholarly engagement with the Ottoman world, India, and China, in the age of Louis XIV. It has long been recognized that new knowledge from exotic lands played at least a minor role in the philosophy of the period: from Leibniz and Malebranche's speculations on Chinese philosophy, or Bayle's paradox of the virtuous atheist, to Montesquieu's

<sup>5</sup> In addition to Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland*, see: R. Schwab, *L'Auteur des Mille et Une Nuits: vie d'Antoine Galland* (Paris, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> *Les Mille et une nuits: contes arabes traduits en françois par M. Galland*, 12 vols (Paris, 1704–17). See R. Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (Harmondsworth, 1994); G. May, *Les Mille et une nuits d'Antoine Galland, ou le chef-d'œuvre invisible* (Paris, 1986); S. Makdisi and F. A. Nussbaum, eds, *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West* (New York, 2009).

imaginary Persians' critique of Paris society.<sup>7</sup> But if we try to chart the interests of the European Republic of Letters as a whole, we find that scholars were concerned with 'Oriental' learning to a far greater extent than these famous cases might imply. Moreover, the scholarly engagement with exotic learning was made possible—inevitably—by the movement of people and books around the networks created by diplomacy and trade. In our vision of the early Enlightenment, we still have very little information on the 'geography of texts' connecting European centres of learning with those of the Ottoman world, or of South Asia and East Asia. If our aim is to ask *how* European knowledge of the Orient was produced, then our answers are likely to include the practical conditions in which it was made and circulated, which requires shifting our attention away from the familiar canon of philosophical texts, and instead mapping the journeys of less well-known figures and of the texts they read or made. In this way, an account of early Orientalism from a practical point of view (or, in other words, a social history of Orientalism) can be envisaged. Such an approach should have the merit of taking due account of the two-way relationship between power and the production of knowledge, in the various zones in which Europeans interacted with their 'Oriental' interlocutors in the early modern world.<sup>8</sup>

## ORIENTALISM BEFORE ENLIGHTENMENT; ORIENTALISM BEFORE EMPIRE

The argument of this book can be summarized in two points: first, to recover the Orientalism (that is, the intellectual engagement with 'Oriental' cultures) that existed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—partly to show that the 'scientific revolution' and the 'early Enlightenment' were intellectual processes in which encounters with Asian knowledge-cultures played a role, and partly because in the period before the 'high' Enlightenment, Europeans dealt with other cultures using a different (and to us, less familiar) set of conceptual tools than those which the Enlightenment created. The Orientalism

<sup>7</sup> See D. Mungello, 'European philosophical responses to non-European culture: China', in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. D. Garber and M. Ayers (Cambridge, 1998), vol. 1, 87–100.

<sup>8</sup> On the 'geography of writing' in this period, see M. Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago, 2007).

of the nineteenth century owed its conceptual basis to the rewriting of universal history in a secularized, stadial mode by Enlightenment thinkers, from Vico and Montesquieu to Herder and Hegel. What now seems like shocking cultural or indeed racial essentialism in a text like Hegel's *Philosophy of History* or Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs* was made possible by the emergence of Enlightened stadial models of history, and the breakdown (or rejection) of models of universal history grounded in the biblical account of human origins, such as Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (first published in 1681).<sup>9</sup> The function of scholarly engagement with 'Oriental' texts, and the concepts available for dealing with the 'Orient' generally, were very different in the years around 1700 than they were to be even fifty years later. A further sense in which the 'Oriental studies' of the Louis XIV period can be thought of as 'pre-Enlightenment' is that they were much more closely connected to the questions and agendas of the Republic of Letters as a whole than was to be the case a century later. For scholars in the seventeenth-century world of 'poly-history' and universal erudition, newly discovered 'Oriental' texts had to be brought in, somehow, to the family of knowledge with which Europeans were already familiar. This enterprise was naive, of course, but it nonetheless gave 'Oriental' texts a certain place within an imagined universal library that was not to be available once Oriental scholarship had become more specialized. Much of our current understanding of what Orientalism means is based on the post-Enlightenment period, and there is therefore a risk of reading nineteenth-century concerns back into the early modern period. This book aims to contribute to our understanding of the Orientalism that existed before the Enlightenment—what we might term, for convenience, 'baroque Orientalism'.

At the same time—to turn to the second major argument of this book—we also need to remind ourselves that the period before the mid-eighteenth century was one of Orientalism before empire. That is to say that the power dynamics between the European commercial powers and the Ottoman, Safavid Persian, Mughal, or Qing empires were not, in this period, the same as those which would obtain from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century onwards. The Europeans were

<sup>9</sup> For useful overviews, see T. Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris, 1989); C. Fox, R. Porter, and R. Wokler, eds, *Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth-Century Domains* (Berkeley, 1995).

not the dominant powers in this period in those areas. This is not to say that the making of Orientalist knowledge in our period occurred in an absence of power relations, but rather that the power relations in those specific situations need to be studied on their own terms. We still lack a model for thinking about the Orientalism of the pre-Enlightenment period. My use of the term 'baroque Orientalism' is not intended as anything other than a reminder that this Orientalism existed, that it was of its time, but that we still have difficulty categorizing it.

The term 'Orient' and its cognates in modern English usage are archaic terms which inevitably carry the freight of past meanings, many of them politically charged; using the term historically also runs the risk of conflating meanings from different periods. The 'Orient' was always, of course, a floating signifier, with a wide range of referents, from the Islamic world to East Asia. But it is retained here, and in what follows, to reflect the French usage in the period. That range of reference is important in itself. According to the official dictionary of the Académie française (in the editions of 1694 and 1798), the term *Orient* in French was properly used to refer to 'Asia Major', as distinct from the Levant (Asia Minor), with the division placed at the river Jordan.<sup>10</sup> However, in seventeenth-century usage, the term 'Orient' was frequently used for the Levant, and 'Oriental' was a standard adjective to refer to Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish books. Contemporary usage, however, was never entirely stable, and the adjective 'Oriental' was capable of being applied across the whole of the Asian continent. Crucially, the concepts that seventeenth-century European readers associated with such a term were not the same as those that were to become current in later periods, particularly in the later eighteenth century, and nor was there a unified concept of 'the Orient'. Nonetheless, as we shall see, European scholars from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment often asked a similar set of questions, and used a similar conceptual tool-kit, when studying cultures as diverse as Egypt and China. This was for intellectual reasons: with universal history still framed by a biblical account of human origins and diversity, harmonizing the unfamiliar with the familiar was necessary. It is worth adding, of course, that not only were seventeenth-century concepts of 'the Orient' not what they would be in the late eighteenth

<sup>10</sup> In the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (Paris, 1694), the primary sense is simply 'east', but 'Se prend aussi pour les États, les Provinces de la Grande Asie, comme l'Empire du Mogol, le Royaume de Siam, de la Chine, &c. *Les régions de l'Orient. Les Peuples d'Orient. Les Princes d'orient. Voyager en orient.* . . .'; the same division is more clearly implied in the 1798 edition, and also in the *Encyclopédie* article 'Orient'.



and nineteenth centuries, but nor were the later definitions available for the terms 'Europe', or 'the West'.<sup>11</sup>

'Orientalism', ever since Edward Said's groundbreaking and controversial book appeared in 1978, has been a useful but ambiguous term: it refers to the specialist work of 'Orientalists', scholars of the 'Orient'; but it also refers to the more general Western discourse on the Orient, which over a long period shaped conventional European attitudes, and served (at least some of the time) to justify the economic and political practices of imperialism. One of Said's points was that the specialist scholarship influenced, and was influenced by, the broader field of discourse. Said was primarily concerned with the period of British and French colonial presence in Egypt, the Middle East, and India, beginning in the late eighteenth century. For Said, arguably, the inaugural gesture of Orientalism—and the moment which best exemplifies his concept of it, as authoritative knowledge produced by and for the colonial project—is the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt of 1798.<sup>12</sup> Bonaparte's scholarly invasion can certainly be taken to represent a key stage in the institutionalization of European Orientalism generally, and European knowledge of Egypt in particular, and it mirrors parallel colonial developments in other European scientific centres. In the years around 1800, as European science reached new levels of global ambition (this was the age of Joseph Banks and of Alexander von Humboldt), the connections between imperialism and science were indeed becoming more intimate.<sup>13</sup> What, though, to make of the Orientalism of earlier periods, periods when Europe's relations with its various 'Orientals'—the Ottoman empire, Safavid Persia, Mughal India, or Qing China—were entirely different, and certainly not those of domination? An answer to this question is what this study of scholarly Orientalism in Louis XIV's France aims to provide. An imbalance needs to be redressed both in the established literature on the history of Orientalism, in which any period before the late eighteenth century is usually given cursory or dismissive treatment, and in our views of French cultural history, in which the 'classical age'

<sup>11</sup> See A. Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth, 1995 [1978]), specifically 22, 42–3, 80–8.

<sup>13</sup> On the scholarly aspects of the expedition to Egypt, see M.-N. Bourguet, *et al.*, eds, *L'invention scientifique de la Méditerranée: Egypte, Morée, Algérie* (Paris, 1997); Y. Laissus, ed., *Il y a 200 ans, les savants en Egypte* (Paris, 1998); P. Bret, ed., *L'expédition d'Égypte: une entreprise des Lumières, 1798–1801* (Paris, 1999).

has traditionally been seen as a period untouched by exoticism.<sup>14</sup> It is of course the case that by 1800, the study of Asian languages and cultures was much more established in Europe than at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is equally true that with the consolidation of the British and French colonial presence in India and Egypt, European Orientalism entered a new era, with new materials available and new forms of training possible for scholars. Above all, the late eighteenth century saw important new paradigms emerge in the study of Orientalism, most notably the ‘Sanskrit renaissance’ and the discovery by Sir William Jones of the relationship between Sanskrit and Greek, which in turn provided a new basis for theorizing the difference between Semitic and Indo-European (or Aryan) language groups and peoples.<sup>15</sup> However, the transformations in European Orientalism that occurred in the era of Jones or of Bonaparte can only be appreciated in contrast to the previous periods. There are more specific reasons, though, for making the Oriental scholars of the Louisquatorzian era an object of study. For example, if we examine the sources that writers like Voltaire or Gibbon used for their knowledge of Asia, we find them constantly citing books produced in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The anthropological quasi-relativism dear to the *philosophes* (Montesquieu’s Persians and Diderot’s Tahitians spring to mind) was in part made possible by the expansion of travel literature across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For a long time, it has been possible to look for the origins of the ‘esprit philosophique’ of the Enlightenment among the travellers’ tales of the late seventeenth century. Such work has been done as traditional source criticism—identifying the sources used by the *philosophes*, and showing how they used them.<sup>16</sup> The use of seventeenth-century

<sup>14</sup> See the dismissive comments at R. Schwab, *La Renaissance orientale* (Paris, 1950), 29; Said covers the medieval and early modern periods briefly in *Orientalism*, 49–73. R. Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* (London, 2006) provides a new survey with three chapters on the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries (54–140).

<sup>15</sup> See Schwab, *Renaissance orientale*; newer views of this period include T. R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, 1997); K. Raj, ‘Refashioning civilities, engineering trust: William Jones, Indian intermediaries and the production of reliable legal knowledge in late eighteenth-century Bengal’, *Studies in History* [New Delhi], 17 (2001), 175–209; M. Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750–1850* (New York, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> G. Atkinson, *Les Relations de voyages du XVIIe siècle et l'évolution des idées: contribution à l'étude de la formation de l'esprit du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1924); M. Dodds, *Les Récits de voyages: sources de L'Esprit des lois de Montesquieu* (Paris, 1929); M. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot*

travel texts and Orientalist scholarship by eighteenth-century readers is important in understanding the Enlightenment; we also need to note how Enlightened readers often turned these writings to new ends. However, these texts also need to be located in their own period, both at the level of discourse and that of practice: that is, to be situated in relation to both the 'early enlightenment'—the complex transformation in European thought in the age of Spinoza, Bayle, and Locke—and to the 'republic of letters', the particular 'imagined community' in which the scholars of the period interacted.<sup>17</sup> Paul Hazard's classic survey *La Crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715* (1935), itself influenced by the pioneering work of Lanson, Atkinson, Dodds and others, gave prominence to the role of travel literature as a factor in Europe's 'crisis of conscience'.<sup>18</sup> However, if the source-criticism approach has become familiar, the *social* history of Orientalism in this period has barely received attention. To discover how the Enlightenment's sources on Asia were made, we have to follow their authors' paths, taking note of the institutions within which they worked, the ways in which their work was funded, how their work was shaped by the circumstances of their travels, and their interactions with the people they met. It is towards this project—the social and geographic history of Orientalism—that this book aims to contribute.<sup>19</sup>

(Paris, 1971), 65–136. Gustave Lanson had given a course on the influence of the Orient on the 'esprit philosophique' as early as 1907–8. For the age of Gibbon, see now J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> See A. Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995); L. Daston, 'The ideal and the reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment', *Science in Context*, 4 (1991), 367–86.

<sup>18</sup> P. Hazard, *La Crise de la conscience européenne: 1680–1715* (Paris, 1935), 3–29. A new overview is provided by J. I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford, 2001); for the sources, see P. M. Conlon, *Prelude au siècle des Lumières en France: répertoire chronologique de 1680 à 1715*, 6 vols (Geneva, 1970–5). For recent accounts of the role of travel in the early Enlightenment, see J. Charnley, *Pierre Bayle: Reader of Travel Literature* (Bern, 1998), and D. Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2006). For the Levant and European scholarship, see S. Brentjes, 'The interests of the Republic of Letters in the Middle East, 1550–1700', *Science in Context*, 12 (1999), 435–68; A. Hamilton, *et al.*, eds, *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* (Leiden, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> My approach borrows from the historical sociology of science; for a useful overview of this literature see J. Golinski, *Making Natural Knowledge: Constructivism and the History of Science* (Cambridge, 1998); equally important are studies of scholarly practice, such as H. Zedelmaier and M. Mulsow, eds, *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 2001); G. Pomata and N. Siraisi, eds, *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); P. H. Smith and B. Schmidt,

In recent years, the literature on early modern European contact with the various 'Orients' has grown considerably. Donald F. Lach's monumental work, the multi-volume *Asia in the Making of Europe*, provides an impressive survey of the relationship between Europe and Asia east of the Indus for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>20</sup> However, much of the European writing on, say, the Mughal empire, was closely related to a wider family of discourse that also applied to other areas (such as the Ottoman and Persian empires), because European preconceptions about 'the Orient' were easily transferred from one area of reference to another. So Lach's division between 'Asia' and the 'Middle East'—though quite understandable in view of the vast wealth of sources he handles—seems somewhat arbitrary. What Lach omits can be found in the numerous surveys of the early modern European or French representation of the Ottoman empire, of Persia, or of Islamic culture generally.<sup>21</sup> Even for those areas that Lach does cover, of course, his account is by no means exhaustive. Largely centred on the story of the Jesuit mission, there is a rich literature on European images of China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which French *chinoiserie* plays a prominent role.<sup>22</sup> By comparison, French discussion of India is much less well covered, not least because the decline in French involvement in India after the mid-eighteenth

eds, *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400–1800* (Chicago, 2007); A. Blair, 'Note taking as an art of transmission', *Critical Inquiry*, 31 (2004), 85–107.

<sup>20</sup> For the seventeenth century, D. F. Lach and E. J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe* ['vol. 3:'] *A Century of Advance*, 4 vols (Chicago, 1993). The earlier 'volumes' covered the sixteenth century: D. F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* ['vol. 1:'] *The Century of Discovery*, 2 vols (Chicago, 1965); ['vol. 2:'] *A Century of Wonder*, 3 vols (Chicago, 1970).

<sup>21</sup> On the Turks, see for example C. D. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought and Literature (1520–1660)* (Paris, 1941); for Persia, O. H. Bonnerot, *La Perse dans la littérature et la pensée françaises au XVIIIe siècle: de l'image au mythe* (Paris, 1988). See also M. Rodinson, *La Fascination de l'Islam* (Paris, 1982); T. Hentsch, *L'Orient imaginaire: la vision politique occidentale de l'est méditerranéen* (Paris, 1988); A. Gunny, *Images of Islam in Eighteenth-Century Writings* (London, 1996); D. Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam dans la France du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> V. Pinot, *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France (1640–1740)* (Paris, 1932); B. Guy, *The French Image of China before and after Voltaire*, SVEC, 21 (Geneva, 1963); D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, 2nd edn (Honolulu, 1989); F. C. Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China* (Chicago, forthcoming); D. Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford, 2001); L. M. Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

century seems to have cast the earlier period into obscurity.<sup>23</sup> The use of Oriental themes in the French poetry or drama of the period has also received increasing attention from literary scholars. Texts like Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Racine's *Bajazet*, or some of La Fontaine's *Fables*, have recently been re-read as documenting France's commercial and diplomatic engagements with her Mediterranean neighbours.<sup>24</sup>

Rather than trying to offer an overview, or confining itself to one particular geographical area, this book is defined by the interests of the scholarly community in Paris in the period. This allows for detailed exploration of the activities of a group of scholars, examining their ways of working, their institutional situations, and how the two were related. This method has the advantage of bringing us, albeit by another route, to the very problems that Said was concerned with: the relationship between power and knowledge.<sup>25</sup> French representations of Ottoman, Indian, or Chinese cultures were, after all, produced in particular settings, and these settings need to be carefully mapped if we are to understand the authority of Orientalist writings. Moreover, those Europeans who produced texts about Asia were not hermetically sealed from the culture they were writing about. Europeans describing the Orient necessarily owed a great deal to the people they met on their travels, or to people they were connected to only indirectly through networks of communication. Colonial knowledge, as recent work has emphasized, was the product of exchange, interaction, contingency, and luck.<sup>26</sup> Given that even in the late seventeenth century, the Ottomans were still the dominant power in the Eastern Mediterranean, and given

<sup>23</sup> See however Z. Bamboat, *Les Voyageurs français dans l'Inde aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1933). For European accounts of India, see S. Murr, 'Les conditions d'émergence du discours sur l'Inde au siècle des Lumières', *Purusartha*, 7 (1983), 233–84; and J.-P. Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> P. Martino, *L'Orient dans la littérature française aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1906); M. Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge, 2002); I. Martin and R. Elbaz, eds, *Jean Racine et l'Orient* (Tübingen, 2003). On Molière see M. Hossain, 'The chevalier d'Arvieux and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (1990), 76–88; M. Couvreur, 'Notes sur Alexandre Lainez: ses Relations du Levant et leur influence hypothétique sur Molière', *XVIIe siècle*, 167 (1990), 221–5. See also *DLF-17*, art. 'L'Orient'. I have not been able to consult I. B. McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Regime* (Oxford, forthcoming).

<sup>25</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 9–15.

<sup>26</sup> For example, C. A. Bayly highlights the dependence of British colonial government upon Indian structures of communication: C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge,

that the Company merchants who visited their ‘factories’ in India were certainly in a position of weakness vis-à-vis their Mughal hosts, the information brought back from such ‘contact zones’ to European libraries must necessarily have been the product of a series of finely balanced exchanges. At the same time, the texts produced by colonial exchange were rarely mere documentation: as Miles Ogborn has shown in the case of the English East India Company, printed matter was a vital tool in the establishment of commercial stability in colonial settings.<sup>27</sup>

As with any discipline, one way of writing the history of ‘Oriental scholarship’ could be to select topics and make evaluations according to present-day conventions. Judged by our standards, early modern European understanding of Asian cultures is, of course, woefully inadequate. This is very important to recognize, and in much of what follows it will be taken for granted that the descriptions of Asian cultures made by French scholars were shaped by a wide range of ideological filters and categories. Rather than focusing on the question of how inaccurate seventeenth-century scholarship was, I have tried to explore how knowledge of Asia—however inaccurate it may have been—was produced, distributed, and exchanged within the seventeenth-century intellectual economy in Europe (especially France). In the period covered by this book—between *c.*1650 and *c.*1715—specialized institutions dedicated to the study of ‘the Orient’ did not yet exist in Europe. Likewise, specialization *within* ‘Oriental studies’ had barely begun to take place. Seventeenth-century scholars with an interest in, for instance, Egypt, were often interested in China as well. For this reason, I have not confined my research to the study of Arabic, Persian, or Chinese in seventeenth-century France: because most of the people involved had other interests, it seemed necessary to preserve their eclecticism. Above all, the individuals producing the European knowledge on Asia were not, for the most part, specialized students of ‘the East’ at all. So—and this is the crucial point—if we attempt to follow the seventeenth-century Orientalist around, we cannot go very far before having to venture into territories which are, according to our present-day categories, foreign to Oriental studies; or before

1996). See also Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*; and K. Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe* (Delhi, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> See Ogborn, *Indian Ink*; the power-balance of the Mediterranean is addressed in D. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002); cf. his *Britons in the Ottoman Empire, 1642–1660* (Seattle, 1998).

encountering historical characters who normally appear in other stories. Likewise, if we try to follow the movements of a seventeenth-century philosopher or *savant*—the likes of Leibniz and Boyle, for example—we will often find ourselves coming across what we might label ‘Oriental studies’.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, we should try to suspend (if only temporarily) these boundaries between disciplines and narratives. Such boundaries were differently placed in the seventeenth century: only later would ‘science’ be extracted from ‘learning’, or Oriental studies from humanist philology. The beginnings of specialization among Orientalists can be dated to the early eighteenth century, which is when this book ends.

Probably the best way to illustrate this overlapping of interests is to read the news sent around the seventeenth-century intellectual community. We could take as an example a letter to Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the Royal Society of London, from the diplomatic traveller Francis Vernon, sending news from Paris in March 1671. What is striking is the series of topics dealt with. Vernon begins with the news that Cassini’s ephemerides and Jean Picard’s treatise on the size of the earth ‘lye ready for the press’. Vernon passes on a request from Picard for the measurement of the ‘exact length of pendulum which with one vibration measures a second’, giving the figures that have been found in Paris and in Holland. Vernon asks Oldenburg on Picard’s behalf to have such observations made, and also asks him to verify that the measure Picard has marked on a piece of brass is indeed an English foot (‘for he intends to make use of it in his booke’). Next the Parisians want to know more about Samuel Morland’s ‘tuba stentoro-phonica’ or speaking trumpet (‘the invention is of that Consequence that it deserves a distinct explication’) and how far it carries the voice. Further on, we learn that the scholar Barthélemy d’Herbelot has come back from Florence with ‘a Curious Collection of Oriental pieces’, leaving behind at the Tuscan court the Dane Nicholas Steno, whose work on fossils Oldenburg was to translate, Francesco Redi, ‘publishing a discourse concerning the Indian drugges . . . conceived in the form of a letter . . . to Father Kircher in Rome’, and Carlo Dati, who is writing some *Florentine Nights* in imitation of Aulus Gellius. Later (omitting a few items) Vernon comes to some ‘experiments of Guastaferris’ and an unidentifiable work on the descent of heavy bodies by the Jesuit mathematician Regnaud. This is followed by another text that Oldenburg was to translate, François Bernier’s description of Kashmir (‘a country in India like that in Spain’).

<sup>28</sup> Various examples can be found in the chapters that follow.

Drawing to a close, we learn that there is a new volume of the 'Byzantine du Louvre' (the Jesuit edition of Byzantine documents printed at the Imprimerie royale), and that there had been yet another debate on 'who was the Author of that book *de imitatione Christi*', which remained undecided despite the fact that 'severall arguments & manuscripts were produced'.<sup>29</sup>

Such an eclectic range of topics is entirely typical of the learned communication of the period, as can be verified on almost any page of the correspondence not only of Oldenburg, but also of Leibniz, Chapelain, Huygens, Mersenne, Hartlib, Boyle, and others, or of the then new journals like the *Philosophical Transactions* or the *Journal des Sçavans*. Again, to be historicist requires us to suspend our disciplinary categories, because imposing order onto this mass of material runs the risk of anachronism. It might be just as un-historical to draw out the 'physics' as it would be to extract the 'Arabic studies'. Likewise, to talk of 'the scientific community' is misleading (at least in English), because it can imply too great a degree of separation between the natural sciences and 'general learning'. For that reason, it is preferable to work with the terms contemporaries used, such as the 'République des Lettres' or the 'Commonweal of Learning'.<sup>30</sup> In the seventeenth century, the words *litterae*, *letters*, or 'learning' could still embrace all branches of the tree of knowledge. In the Paris of the 1670s, for example, the term *gens de lettres* applied just as much to Huygens and Cassini (today famous scientists) as it did to Mabillon or Du Cange (today famous scholars).<sup>31</sup> It is often pointed out that figures like Gassendi and Leibniz operated in ways which seem to mingle 'humanism' with 'science'. In fact, anyone who did not do so would have been exceptional, since such an approach was normal for the period.<sup>32</sup> Of course, a news report like Vernon's conveys variety because of the kind of document that it is (bulletins

<sup>29</sup> Oldenburg, vol. 7, 496–500. Vernon to Oldenburg, 8 Mar. 1671.

<sup>30</sup> On the history of the term, see F. Waquet, 'Qu'est-ce que la République des Lettres? Essai de sémantique historique', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 147 (1989), 473–502.

<sup>31</sup> Indeed, *gens de lettres* had several meanings, ranging from the *noblesse de robe* to university graduates: see C. Loyseau, *A Treatise of Orders and Plain Dignities*, ed. H. A. Lloyd (Cambridge, 1994), 168 (ch. 8, section 11).

<sup>32</sup> See A. Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1991); also his 'The new science and the traditions of humanism', in J. Kraye, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* (Cambridge, 1996), 203–23. See also M. Casaubon, *Generall Learning: A Seventeenth-Century Treatise on the Formation of the General Scholar*, ed. R. Serjeantson (Cambridge, 1999).



have generic conventions), and such documents sometimes conceal as much as they reveal. Even so, the corpus of such letters that has survived can be read as evidence of the existence of an intellectual field (*litterae, lettres*, learning) ordered in ways which easily escape our view today. It is within this field, the world of 'learning', that we need to situate the Orientalism of the period.

## ORIENTAL STUDIES UNDER LOUIS XIV

Galland and his peers were 'Orientalists', and members of the seventeenth century Republic of Letters. Their interests, and their methods of working, overlapped to a large extent with that of the scholarly community as a whole. So it will not be possible to locate the institutions that supported Oriental learning without reference to the more general framework of the Republic of Letters. Far from being an empty label, the term is a useful way of designating the collective of scholars scattered across Europe in a diversity of disciplines and institutions, and seeking social legitimation through patronage.<sup>33</sup>

The 'personal rule' of Louis XIV (1661–1715) marked a new stage in the evolution of institutions of learning, with the establishment in France of several new royal academies. What is distinctive about the period of Jean-Baptiste Colbert's ministerial pre-eminence (c.1661–83) is the increasing royal involvement in the Republic of Letters, which was closely connected to the energetic construction of royal ideology. Humanist conventions still structured the relationship between prince and *savant*. For example, when Pierre Nicole wrote his preamble to Pascal's *Discours sur la condition des Grands*, he recorded that Pascal

<sup>33</sup> A. Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain: sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* (Paris, 1985); C. Jouhaud, 'Histoire et histoire littéraire: naissance de l'écrivain (note critique)', *Annales: E. S. C.*, 43 (1988), 849–66; Jouhaud, *Les Pouvoirs de la littérature: histoire d'un paradoxe* (Paris, 2000); Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*; J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger and F. Lawrence (Cambridge, 1989); D. Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, 1994), 12–52; S. Neumeister and C. Wiedemann, eds, *Res Publica Litteraria: die Institutionen der Gelehrsamkeit in der frühen Neuzeit*, 2 vols (Wiesbaden, 1987). On science and court patronage, see M. Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago, 1993); P. Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, 1994); B. T. Moran, ed., *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750* (Woodbridge, 1991).

had often declared his desire to be engaged in the education of a prince.<sup>34</sup> When it was first published in 1670, Nicole's note had a topical referent: the establishment of the extraordinary programme to educate the Dauphin (Louis XIV's eldest son) that was organized by bishops Bossuet and Huet under the supervision of the duc de Montausier.<sup>35</sup> Pascal and Nicole were invoking the humanist tradition of what Erasmus and Budé had called the *Institutio principis christiani*, the education of the Christian prince. Part of the concept of the *vita activa* elaborated by the humanists was the argument that scholars were needed at court to help rulers govern wisely and in the common good.<sup>36</sup> (This argument was put forward partly in order to persuade patrons like François I to protect scholars like Budé, and to set up institutions like the Collège royal.) By the mid-seventeenth century, absolutist political philosophy called for a powerful prince to maintain order against the mutability of human society, particularly after the religious and civil wars of the mid-century. Pascal's desire to dedicate his energies to the education of a prince—a sentiment put into practice by a Bossuet or a Fénelon—was not just a variation on the theme of scholars holding up a mirror for princes, but a reflection of a Catholic and absolutist conception of royal government which entailed the weeding-out of heresy and superstition, and the education of the populace as good Catholic subjects. The best way to guarantee the future stability of the kingdom was through the education of the prince.<sup>37</sup> Equally important was the notion of royal 'magnificence'. It was deemed fitting to the station of a prince that he should spend money on the patronage of men of letters along with painters, sculptors, musicians, and architects,

<sup>34</sup> Nicole, preamble to Pascal, 'Discours sur la condition des grands', first published in Nicole, *Traité de l'éducation d'un prince* (Paris, 1670); in Pascal, *Ceuvres complètes*, ed. L. Brunschvicg, et al. (Paris, 1904–14), vol. 9, 369: 'une des choses sur lesquelles feu M. Pascal avoit plus de vues étoit l'instruction d'un prince. . . On lui a souvent ouï dire qu'il n'y avoit rien à quoi il désirât plus de contribuer s'il y étoit engagé, et qu'il sacrifieroit volontiers sa vie pour une chose si importante.'

<sup>35</sup> [P.] A. Floquet, *Bossuet précepteur du Dauphin fils de Louis XIV et évêque à la cour (1670–1682)* (Paris, 1864); on Huet, see A. Shelford, *Transforming the Republic of Letters: Pierre-Daniel Huet and European Intellectual Life, 1650–1720* (Rochester, NY, 2007).

<sup>36</sup> See A. Grafton, 'Humanism and political theory', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns and M. Goldie (Cambridge, 1991), 9–29; Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. L. Jardine (Cambridge, 1997); R. Halévi, ed., *Le Savoir du prince: du Moyen-Age aux Lumières* (Paris, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> For an example of the 'institutio principis' in this period, see J.-B. Bossuet, *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, trans. and ed. P. Riley (Cambridge, 1990), 103–66 (book 5). See M. de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire* (Paris, 1975), 162–4.

and do so on a scale larger than his most wealthy subjects.<sup>38</sup> From the 1660s onwards, Louis XIV demonstrated his magnificence by means of increasingly organized cultural patronage. The production of scholarly work in late seventeenth-century France was no exception, and became increasingly involved in the 'fabrication of Louis XIV'. Colbert's role in the royal patronage of *lettres* was crucial, and requires exploration in further detail.

In September 1683, the French Huguenot scholar Henri Justel wrote to an English friend with the news that Colbert was on his deathbed:

Jay appris de mes dernieres lettres avec bien du deplaisir la maladie de Monsieur Colbert dont on desespere. La Republique des lettres perdroit beaucoup parce quil aime quil protege et quil faut gratifier tous ceux qui trauaillent et qui se donnent a lestude. Comme ie luy ai de lobliga[ti]on en mon particulier, ie ressens le malheur avec douleur. Si no[us] le perdons l'Academie des arts ne subsistera pas longtems parce que le Roy ne se soucie pas d'experimens ny dastronomie. Il prefere les soldats aux Astronomes.<sup>39</sup>

[I have learned from my latest letters, with much displeasure, of the illness of M. Colbert, for whom there is little hope. The Republic of Letters will lose a great deal, because he loves to protect, and to gratify all those who work and who give themselves to study. As I am obliged to him myself, this misfortune brings me pain. If we lose him, the Academy of Arts will not last long, because the king does not care for experiments nor for astronomy. He prefers soldiers to astronomers.]

Even within his lifetime, clearly, Colbert had acquired a great reputation as a patron of the 'République des Lettres'. Although Justel admits that his feelings are coloured by a sense of personal debt, we should not allow that to discount the validity of his assessment. It is even more telling that Justel expresses his concern that if Colbert died, the 'Académie des arts' (clearly, from what follows, the Académie des sciences) will not survive, because the king himself was more interested in war than in the experimental natural philosophy.

Having served under Cardinal Mazarin in the 1650s, and profiting from the fall of Nicolas Fouquet, Colbert began to accumulate high offices from 1661, becoming *Intendant des finances* (1661), and then acquiring in 1665 the posts of *Contrôleur général des finances* and

<sup>38</sup> See A. D. Fraser Jenkins, 'Cosimo de' Medici's patronage of architecture and the theory of magnificence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33 (1970), 162–70.

<sup>39</sup> Henri Justel to Thomas Smith, 9 Sept. 1683, Bod. ms Smith 46, p. 323.

*Surintendant général des Bâtiments du roi*. Although he was not technically a minister of state until February 1669, when he was made secretary of state for the navy, it was clear from 1663 (if not earlier) that Colbert was the king's preferred agent in matters of cultural patronage.<sup>40</sup> The department of the Bâtiments du roi traditionally covered rather more than its name suggests, giving Colbert responsibility for patronage of the arts and of learning. Colbert set up new ad hoc bodies in the early years, which with time acquired a more 'institutional' status. Perhaps the most important innovation was the establishment of the so-called 'petite académie', an informal committee of four scholars (all four already members of the Académie française: Jean Chapelain, François Charpentier, and the abbés Cassagnes and Bourzeis). The purpose of the group was to provide the expertise necessary for the composition of royal propaganda. The work of the 'petite académie' included the detailed planning of the decoration for royal edifices, statues, tapestries, medals, and triumphal arches; the organization of spectacular events like the *carrousel* of 1662—in which the king and members of the nobility performed an equestrian masque-cum-tournament—and the production of sumptuous books of engravings representing such events.<sup>41</sup> The members of the group also acted as 'brokers' of literary patronage for Colbert. In 1662, Colbert had asked Jean Chapelain, who was to become his most important 'broker', to draw up a list of *gens de lettres* to allow him to decide which scholars deserved patronage.<sup>42</sup> Colbert initiated a system whereby the king patronized scholars, both in France and abroad, by means of payments called 'gratifications', which were subject to renewal each year. The scholars were expected in return to compose panegyrics to Louis's greatness.<sup>43</sup> In the early 1660s, Colbert made plans for the

<sup>40</sup> The main source for Colbert's patronage activity remains P. Clément, ed. *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, 10 vols (Paris, 1861–82), vol. 5, 233–650. Useful overviews of Colbert's cultural policy include *DLF-17*, art. 'Colbert'; and the exhibition catalogue, *Colbert 1619–1683* (Paris, 1983), 363–482.

<sup>41</sup> J.-M. Apostolidès, *Le Roi-machine: spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1981), esp. 23–40; P. Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1992); E. Pognon, 'Une nouvelle séduction: les livres de fêtes et la propagande officielle', in [anon., ed.,] *L'Art du livre à l'Imprimerie nationale: 5 siècles de typographie* (Paris, 1973), 142–61.

<sup>42</sup> 'Liste de quelques gens de lettres français vivant en 1662', in *Opuscules critiques de Chapelain*, ed. A. C. Hunter (Paris, 1936), 341–64.

<sup>43</sup> G. Couton, 'Effort publicitaire et organisation de la recherche: les gratifications aux gens de lettres sous Louis XIV', in [anon., ed.,] *Le XVIIIe siècle et la recherche* (Marseille, 1977), 41–55; R. Maber, 'Colbert and the scholars: Ménage, Huet and the royal pensions of 1663', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 7 (1985), 106–14; J. Voss,

establishment of new royal academies, initially intending them to be all coordinated within a 'grande académie'. Although the latter project failed, these efforts saw the creation of the Académie des sciences (which met from 1666), and the construction of the Paris Observatoire.<sup>44</sup>

With extraordinary energy, Colbert extended his reforming policy to other areas of cultural life. A pattern established in other areas of administration was applied, attempting to make sure that the crown was properly informed, and to impose greater central control. In 1667, for example, the number of licensed printers in Paris was reduced, in an effort to make the policing of the book trade more effective.<sup>45</sup> In the same year, Colbert launched an inquiry into the state of education in France, with a view to making reforms.<sup>46</sup> From 1671, he extended his influence over the Collège royal—an institution we shall deal with in more detail below—and tried to bring it into closer contact with the Académie des sciences and the Bibliothèque du roi.<sup>47</sup> The next year, upon the death of Chancelier Séguier, the king was made the new protector of the Académie française, which effectively gave Colbert control over that body as well.

One aspect of Colbert's cultural policy has particular relevance to the development of French Oriental studies: the organization of royal collection networks.<sup>48</sup> Colbert handled royal collecting alongside the other business of the 'bâtiments du roi'. In Colbert's correspondence, we can follow the communication between the minister and his network of agents employed in collecting rocks and plants for the gardens of

'Mäzenatentum und Ansätze systematische Kulturpolitik im Frankreich Ludwigs XIV', in A. Buck, *et al.*, eds, *Europäische Hofkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 1981), vol. 2, 123–32.

<sup>44</sup> See below, Chapter 1; D. S. Lux, 'Colbert's plan for the *Grande Académie*: royal policy toward science, 1663–67', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (1990), 177–88; more generally, A. Stroup, *A Company of Scientists: Botany, Patronage and Community at the Seventeenth-Century Parisian Royal Academy of Sciences* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990).

<sup>45</sup> R. Chartier and H.-J. Martin, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2: *Le Livre triomphant: 1660–1830*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1990), 74.

<sup>46</sup> F. de Dainville, *L'Éducation des jésuites: XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1978), 134–41.

<sup>47</sup> On Colbert's relations with the Collège see S. Saunders, 'Politics and scholarship in seventeenth-century France: the library of Nicolas Fouquet and the Collège royal', *Journal of Library History*, 20 (1985), 1–24.

<sup>48</sup> On collecting in general in this period, see O. Impey and A. MacGregor, eds, *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1985); K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1987); Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.

Versailles (under construction from the mid-1660s), exotic animals for the royal menageries, and manuscripts for the royal libraries.<sup>49</sup> These collections were testimony to the magnificence of the king, and (as the case of the garden best shows) were designed to be conspicuous to all those who visited the court. Other techniques were used to ensure such effort was not lost on those unable to come to Paris or Versailles. A decree of December 1667 commissioned a series of engravings, by artists like Sébastien Le Clerc, to depict the buildings, pictures, and sculptures in the king's possession, as well as flora and fauna from the royal gardens and menageries. The set of engravings—which eventually became known as the 'Cabinet du roi' series—could then be bound up and presented as a diplomatic gift.<sup>50</sup>

Another of Colbert's roles as head of the 'Bâtiments du roi' was the care of the Bibliothèque du roi (the ancestor of today's Bibliothèque nationale), an institution Colbert transformed. The royal library in Paris (not to be confused with the king's private libraries) was, in 1661, relatively small, and had no fixed home. Colbert had the books moved to new premises on the rue Vivienne, next to his own *hôtel* with its growing library. For Colbert, as for any seventeenth-century statesman, libraries and archives were tools of government, since political claims to rights and privileges were so frequently made with reference to historical documents. This was as true for internal affairs as it was for diplomacy or church politics. In this sense, Colbert's efforts to put the royal collections on a new footing were as much a product of his desire to reform the machinery of government as it was a reflection of the magnificence of the king. The lapsed practice of legal deposit was reinstated, new cataloguing work was commissioned, and vast new collecting efforts were organized to build up the collections of manuscripts. Collections that came up for sale were acquired, like that of the *maître des requêtes* and collector of oriental manuscripts, Gilbert Gaulmin, acquired in 1667. Moreover, a network of agents scoured the libraries and muniment rooms of provincial France to find charters relating to the crown's rights, and

<sup>49</sup> See *Collections de Louis XIV: dessins, albums, manuscrits* (Paris, 1977); A. Schnapper, 'The king of France as collector in the seventeenth century', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 17 (1986), 185–202; Schnapper, *Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe siècle*, 2 vols (Paris, 1988–94).

<sup>50</sup> A. Jammes, 'Louis XIV, sa bibliothèque, et le Cabinet du roi', *The Library*, 5th series, 20 (1965), 1–12; A. Sauvy, 'L'illustration d'un règne: le Cabinet du roi et les projets encyclopédiques de Colbert', in anon., *L'Art du livre à l'Imprimerie nationale*, 102–27; M. Grivel, 'Le Cabinet du roi', *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 18 (1985), 36–57.

bring copies back for Colbert's library.<sup>51</sup> It was no accident that the various assemblies of scholars that Colbert sponsored were to meet either in his own library or in the neighbouring Bibliothèque du roi, since the usefulness of the collection could only be realized if there were scholars on hand to transform the documents into meaningful texts. Beyond France, scholars were sent on missions to purchase both Greek and 'Oriental' manuscripts, antiquities, coins, and Moroccan leather for book-binding, in the markets of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup>

Colbert's initiatives in the patronage of Oriental learning were largely responsible for the growth of Parisian collections of Oriental texts, and laid the foundations for French Oriental scholarship in the eighteenth century. However, the emphasis on Colbert, and on royal patronage of Oriental studies, should be qualified with a caveat. The king's intervention in the cultural sphere must not be thought of as all-powerful: this would be to mistake the rhetoric of the royal cult for the reality. Rather, the cultural life of late seventeenth-century France continued to owe a great deal to the patronage of other figures, from the great nobility (*les grands*, such as the Condé or Roannez families),<sup>53</sup> through royal intendants in the provinces, down to judicial office-holders, like Gaulmin or Thévenot (whom we meet in Chapter 2). Moreover, the crown's patronage decisions were not made by Colbert alone, but through the interaction of Colbert with his advisors (the likes of Chapelain, Bourzeis, or the librarians Carcavi and Baluze), as well as the king and others at court, such as Bossuet. The efficacy of crown sponsorship of Orientalism should not be overstated, since, as we shall see, the difficulties experienced by those trying to pursue Oriental studies, whether they were sponsored by the crown or not, were immense.

<sup>51</sup> S. Balayé, *La Bibliothèque nationale des origines à 1800* (Geneva, 1988), 84–99; *Collections de Louis XIV*, 198–230. The standard history of the manuscript collections in this period is L. Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, 4 vols (Paris, 1868), vol. 1. On the politics of Colbert's libraries, see S. Saunders, 'Public administration and the library of Jean-Baptiste Colbert', *Libraries and Culture*, 26 (1991), 283–300; K. Pomian, 'Les historiens et les archives dans la France du XVIIe siècle', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 26 (1972), 109–25; and J. Soll, 'The antiquary and the information state: Colbert's archives, secret histories, and the affair of the *Régale*, 1663–1682', *French Historical Studies*, 31 (2008), 3–28; see also R. Damien, *Bibliothèque et Etat: naissance d'une raison politique dans la France du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1995).

<sup>52</sup> H. A. Omont, ed., *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 2 vols (Paris, 1902).

<sup>53</sup> For example, on the Condé family and their patronage of learning, see K. Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé: rebelles, courtisans et mécènes dans la France du Grand Siècle* (Seyssel, 1999), 356–86; for the Roannez, see J. Mesnard, *Pascal et les Roannez*, 2 vols (Paris, 1965).

Royal Professors in this period frequently had no students, and it seems that in the period before Colbert the chairs were awarded almost as sinecures, often held in combination with other posts. By the mid-seventeenth century, posts entitled *secrétaire-interprète au roi* and *à la Marine* for the Arabic and Turkish languages existed, and it became conventional for the Royal Professors of Arabic to be appointed to these *charges*. The holders of the Arabic chairs were able to use the scholarly freedom that these positions gave them to good effect in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. This was due to the arrival in Paris of an Arabic printing press, constructed in Rome by the returning French ambassador to the Ottoman empire, Savary de Brèves.<sup>54</sup> This Arabic press was used in the production of the Paris Polyglot Bible, printed by Antoine Vitré under the supervision of Guy-Michel Le Jay. The Bible included Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as well as Samaritan, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Behind the project were two of the most influential figures in the Paris learned world, Jacques-Auguste de Thou and the cardinal Jacques Davy Du Perron, as well as Savary de Brèves.<sup>55</sup> The Arabic and Syriac work was supervised by Maronite Christians who, having been trained in Rome at the Maronite College there, had accepted posts in Paris through the help of Savary de Brèves: Gabriel Sionite (Jibra'il as-Sahyuni) and Abraham Ecchellensis (Ibrahim al-Haqilani), both professors in Arabic at the Collège royal. More Maronites came to Paris in their wake, including Sergio Aliamri (Sarkis al-Gamri, *mutran* or archbishop of Damascus) who succeeded Gabriel Sionite as Royal Professor in Arabic. The production of such a technically complex book, not to mention the doctrinal politicking that went with any attempt to establish an edition of Holy Writ, inevitably entailed protracted intrigues and disagreements. Gabriel Sionite even spent some time in the dungeons of Vincennes in 1640. The fact

<sup>54</sup> G. Duverdiere, 'Les débuts de la typographie orientale: les caractères de Savary de Brèves et la présence française au Levant au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *L'Art du livre à l'Imprimerie nationale*, 68–87; J. Balagna, *L'Imprimerie arabe en occident (XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Paris, 1984).

<sup>55</sup> *Biblia: 1. Hebraica, 2. Samaritana, 3. Chaldaica, 4. Graeca, 5. Syriaca, 6. Latina, 7. Arabica, quibus textus originales totius Scripturae Sacrae . . .*, ed. G.-M. Le Jay, et al., 10 vols (Paris, 1645). See J. Lelong, *Discours historique sur les principales éditions des Bibles polyglottes* (Paris, 1713); P. N. Miller, 'Aux origines de la Polyglotte parisienne: *philologia sacra*, contre-réforme et raison d'état', *XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 194 (1997), 57–66. The project for Maronites to come to Paris dated back to 1612: H. A. Omont, 'Projet d'un collège oriental à Paris au début du règne de Louis XIII (1612)', *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, 22 (1895), 123–7.



that the book did eventually appear was an extraordinary achievement in itself, and the Paris Polyglot was to be the high-water mark for polyglot printing in France. Nevertheless, the Collège royal continued to function as a focus for the patronage of Arabic learning in Paris.<sup>56</sup>

Colbert's initiatives in the sponsorship of Oriental learning took effect on several different fronts at once, reflecting the diverse motives lying behind the support of such pursuits. For example, one of the crucial reasons for the teaching of Levantine languages was that French merchants in Ottoman ports (the so-called 'échelles du Levant') needed interpreters with a good knowledge of spoken Arabic, Turkish, and sometimes Persian. It was felt that relying on native interpreters (or *dragomans*) was injurious to French trading interests, and that loyal French interpreters would be more desirable. Such interpreters would also be useful for French diplomacy. Although the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles had a tradition of training interpreters for its merchants (Marseilles having had the monopoly on trade with the 'échelles du Levant' since the early seventeenth century), a more official organization was deemed necessary. For this reason, Colbert established the *jeunes de langues* (or *enfants de langues*), a scheme by which young French children were sent to the Capuchins in Smyrna to learn the languages from an early age. The scheme, first floated in 1669, was approved by the Conseil de commerce in 1670. There were at first to be six pupils sent every three years, but in practice the numbers sent were lower, and the pupils tended to be older than had been hoped. In 1700 a new approach was tried: Christian children from the Ottoman empire were recruited and sent to study at the Jesuit college of Louis-le-Grand in Paris, where they were known as 'Arméniens'. This may have been an attempt to establish something resembling the Maronite College in Rome, founded by Gregory XIII in 1584. How effective these steps were is not clear. The fact that the system was reorganized several times (in 1700, 1725, 1762) might well indicate that its results were not always satisfactory. Besides, there was very little investment in producing new teaching material. We know that the books used, even in the middle of the eighteenth century, were the grammars and dictionaries published in the seventeenth century

<sup>56</sup> On the Maronites, see P. Raphael, *Le Rôle du Collège maronite romain dans l'orientalisme aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Beirut, 1950); G. Duverdier, 'Les impressions orientales en Europe et le Liban', in C. Aboussouan, ed., *Le Livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900* (Paris, 1982), 157–279; P. J. A. N. Rietbergen, 'A Maronite mediator between seventeenth-century cultures: Ibrahim al-Haqilani, or Abraham Echellense (1606–64) between Christendom and Islam', *Lias*, 16 (1989), 13–41.

(and in Protestant centres of learning): in 1756 a teacher of the *jeunes* still had to buy the dictionaries of Golius for Arabic, Castell for Persian, and Meninski for Turkish.<sup>57</sup> Still, despite their somewhat chequered history, the *jeunes de langues* was an institution that lasted until the end of the *ancien régime*. Before the foundation of the Ecole spéciale des langues orientales vivantes, in March 1795, the *jeunes de langues* were the nearest thing in France to a state academy for the training of interpreters in Arabic, Turkish, or Persian.<sup>58</sup>

How did Arabic, Turkish, and Persian learning fit in to the institutional landscape of intellectual life in seventeenth-century France?<sup>59</sup> At the start of the 1660s, Oriental learning in Paris was in a period of relative decline, compared to the activity of the second quarter of the century. A high point had been reached with the appearance of the Paris Polyglot Bible in 1645. The institutional structures that had made possible an achievement like the Paris Polyglot were still in place when Colbert came to power, but they were no longer functioning in the same way. The institution with a traditional association with 'Oriental' languages in the period was the Collège royal (today's Collège de France), an 'invisible college' in the sense that it was still not housed in a building of its own, and was simply an expression designating the body

<sup>57</sup> AN, AE B<sup>III</sup>265, pièce 59: letter from Armain, teacher at the 'Chambre des enfants de langues', to an unidentified patron of one of the *enfants*, 5 Aug. 1756. He refers to J. Golius, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum* (Leiden, 1653); E. Castell, *Lexicon Heptaglotton*, 2 vols (London, 1669); F. Meninski, *Thesaurus linguarum orientalium*, 3 vols (Vienna, 1680).

<sup>58</sup> H. A. Omont, 'Documents sur les Jeunes de Langues et l'imprimerie orientale à Paris en 1719', *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, 17 (1890), 99–112; G. Dupont-Ferrier, *Les Jeunes de langues ou 'Arméniens' à Louis-le-Grand* (Paris, 1923) and *Les Jeunes de langue à Paris et à Constantinople (1762–96)* (Paris, 1923); [anon., ed.,] *L'Orient des Provençaux dans l'histoire* (Marseille, 1982), 113–14, 205–6; M. Degros, 'Les Jeunes de Langues sous la Révolution et l'Empire', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 98 (1984), 77–107; M. Hossain, 'The employment and training of interpreters in Arabic and Turkish under Louis XIV', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, [in 2 parts:] 14 (1992), 235–46; 15 (1993), 279–95; F. Hitzel, ed., *Istanbul et les langues orientales* (Paris, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> On Arabic, see G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1996), 14–52; the standard history is J. W. Fück, *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1955). For France in the sixteenth century, J. Balagna, *Arabe et humanisme dans la France des derniers Valois* (Paris, 1989). For Turkish and Persian see F. Richard, 'Aux origines de la connaissance de la langue persane en France', *Lugman*, 3 (1986–7), 23–42; S. Yérasimos, 'Le turc en Occident: la connaissance de la langue turque en Europe: XVe–XVIIe siècles', in M. Duchet, ed., *L'Inscription des langues dans les relations de voyage (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1992), 191–210. See also A. Hamilton and F. Richard, *André Du Ryer: Seventeenth-Century Orientalist and Diplomat* (Oxford, 2003).

of *professeurs royaux* and the lecture courses they gave. From its foundation by François I in 1529, the Collège had embodied the humanist commitment to the traditional three ancient languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The two chairs in Hebrew had been established in 1531 and 1533. Even in the seventeenth century, the Collège royal was the only secular institution in which Hebrew was taught. Larger Jesuit colleges and Protestant academies taught Hebrew as part of theology courses, although with varying degrees of thoroughness.<sup>60</sup> This association may have made it seem natural that the Collège should also be the home of other more specialized 'Oriental' languages. The first chair in Arabic had been added in 1587 and a second around 1619. The first Royal Professors of Arabic were holders of medical doctorates, whose studies had led them to Arabic medical texts. It seems that after they had acquired some skill in the language, they would often be given diplomatic appointments. This was the case for the first professors, Arnould de l'Isle and Etienne Hubert d'Orléans, who were both sent as ambassadors to Morocco.<sup>61</sup>

Before this project had really got off the ground, though, Colbert showed his willingness to provide patronage for young scholars of Oriental languages. Since the existing institutions were somewhat ramshackle, it may have been easier to support promising young scholars by means of direct payment. One example is provided by the case of a young Provençal scholar named Louis Ferrand (whom we shall encounter again in Chapter 2). We learn how he arrived at the centre of French patronage from a letter from Francis Vernon (once again informing us of Paris in 1671) to the Oxford Arabist, Edward Pococke. A native of Toulon (born *c.* 1645), Ferrand had profited from the 'great Concourse of Strangers, and particularly of Levantines' there, making friends with an Arab merchant who taught him Arabic. Ferrand's family sent him to Paris to study medicine, 'but his own Genius irresistibly carri[e]d him another Way, *viz.* to Oriental Studies'. As Vernon goes on:

The main part of his time he spends in the King's Library; where his great Assiduity and eminent Parts have brought him acquainted with the learned

<sup>60</sup> L. W. B. Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History* (Oxford, 1987), 120.

<sup>61</sup> My account is based on C.-P. Goujet, *Mémoire historique et littéraire sur le Collège royal de France* (Paris, 1758), vol. 3, 259–366; the notes of Martin Billet de Fanière, 'Professeurs royaux depuis la fondation', BN ms fr. 15274; and le P. Léonard's file, AN MM 267.

Persons of that resort thither: So that now he is not only known for a prodigious Proficient in Oriental Learning, among Men of Science, but is also taken notice of by Monsieur *Colbert*, who hath the Care and Superintendency of Learning, as well as of what else contributes to the Honour and Advantage of the *French Nation*. This able Minister looks upon Monsieur *Ferrand*, not only as an accomplished Scholar, but also as a useful Member, and Ornament of the State.<sup>62</sup>

The last sentence is particularly important, and we can see that it was not empty rhetoric from the way Ferrand's career continued. In the mid-1660s, Ferrand had decided to attempt a new translation of the Hebrew Bible, and had moved to Mainz, where he had encountered the young Leibniz. Back in Paris after a few years, the Bible plans shelved, he worked on the Oriental sources for the history of the Crusades, a work of obvious interest to the king (since part of the 'cult' of Louis XIV was his identification with Saint Louis). Although he seems to have drifted away from his Oriental interests in later life, it seems clear that Ferrand continued to use his scholarship in the service of his royal patron, devoting himself to controversy against the Protestants in the 1680s.<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the most brilliant example of Colbert's direct patronage for the training of Oriental scholars who could then serve the crown is provided by the Pétis de La Croix family. Three generations of Pétis de La Croix served the king, as *secrétaires-interprètes* for Oriental languages, and as Royal Professors of Arabic. François *père* (1622–95), who was often known as La Croix, served as *secrétaire-interprète au roi* from 1652 until his death. His son, François Pétis de La Croix *fils* (1653–1713), was brought up to be an Oriental scholar. Colbert paid the father a thousand *livres* a year (in addition to his usual pension) so that the son could be sent to Aleppo at the age of 16 (in 1670) in order to study Arabic, and to collect manuscripts for the Paris libraries. Pétis

<sup>62</sup> E. Pococke, *The Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pocock . . . To which is prefixed, An Account of his Life and Writings*, ed. L. Twells, 2 vols (London, 1740), vol. 1, 66–7, here 67. This is Twells's paraphrase of a letter of F. Vernon to E. Pococke, 12 Nov. 1671. Ferrand had earlier written to Pococke to ask for references on Arab historians of the Crusades.

<sup>63</sup> On Ferrand (c.1645–9), see *DLF-17*. He received a royal gratification for his *Annales regum Franciae et regum domus Othomanicae* (Paris, 1670): J.-J. Guiffrey, ed., *Comptes des Bâtimens du roi sous le règne de Louis XIV*, 5 vols (Paris, 1881–1901), vol. 1, col. 481. His later controversialist works were to provoke responses from Pierre Bayle: E. Israëls Perry, *From Theology to History: French Religious Controversy and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (The Hague, 1973), 16, 212.

de La Croix  *fils*  spent a total of ten years living in the Ottoman and Persian empires. After three and half years in Aleppo he made the long journey via Baghdad and the Persian Gulf to Shiraz and Isfahan, where he settled for two years (1674–6), studying Persian. Then he made his way back to Istanbul, where he stayed a further four years, perfecting his languages and putting his skills at the service of the French ambassador to the Sublime Porte, the marquis de Nointel.<sup>64</sup> Only then, in 1680, did he return to Paris, where he was probably the most accomplished linguist in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (native speakers aside). For the rest of his life he worked in the service of the crown, receiving the charge of *secrétaire-interprète* to the navy in 1682. This appointment brought with it more travel, as a diplomatic and military translator. Having already translated a Franco-Moroccan treaty in 1681, Pétis de La Croix  *fils*  accompanied most of the French embassies to the North African powers in the following decades. For example, in the brutal attacks on Algiers of 1683–4, he followed the French commanders, helping negotiate the truce with the Dey, producing a Turkish translation of the treaty, and accompanying the Algerian delegation back to Paris. He performed similar services for Jean d'Estrées in the naval expedition to Tunis (1685), and again for the duc de Mortemart's treaty with Morocco (1687). These services were rewarded in 1692 with one of the chairs in Arabic at the Collège royal; three years later when his father died he inherited the charge of *secrétaire-interprète au roi*. He continued to perform sterling diplomatic services: when a French envoy was sent to Persia in 1708, one of the king's many gifts to the shah was the book of the *Histoire métallique* of Louis XIV's reign, translated into Persian by Pétis de La Croix.<sup>65</sup> In addition to his work as an official interpreter, though, he also produced scholarly books: he edited his father's life-work, a history of Genghis Khan compiled from Oriental sources, whilst his own translation of a history of Tamerlane was left to his son to edit after his death. His best-known work, however, was a collection of Persian stories, the *Mille*

<sup>64</sup> On Pétis de La Croix  *fils* , see Goujet, *Mémoire*, vol. 3, 296–319; P. Sebag, 'Sur deux orientalistes français du XVIIe siècle: F. Pétis de La Croix et le sieur de La Croix', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 25 (1978), 89–117; and C. Balaÿ, 'François Pétis de La Croix et les *Mille et un jours*', *SVEC*, 215 (1982), 9–43.

<sup>65</sup> BN ms fr. 7200 (P.-V. Michel, 'Mémoire . . . sur le voyage qu'il a fait en Perse dans les années 1706–9'), pp. 127–9; Arsenal ms 5493 (list of works of Pétis de La Croix), ff. 75–6; Goujet, *Mémoire*, vol. 3, 314. On this episode see A. Kroell, *Louis XIV, la Perse et Mascate* (Paris, 1977).

*et un jours*, which appeared shortly after Galland's *Mille et une nuits*. The authenticity of the *Mille et un jours* has been questioned, and there was even some confusion in the printing process between the two collections. Nevertheless, the *Jours* sold as well as the *Nuits*, and had a comparable impact, introducing European readers to (among other stories) the fable of Turandot.<sup>66</sup>

Because the career of Pétis de La Croix  *fils* provides a good example of Oriental learning in the service of the crown, it may create the impression that the patronage machine always ran so smoothly. Another colourful career can be used to show that this was not the case: that of Johann Michael Wansleben, known in French as Vansleb. Of all the collecting agents employed by Colbert, Vansleb sent back one of the largest hauls of Oriental manuscripts; and yet he frequently showed that once outside of France he was free to disregard Colbert's commands. Originally a Lutheran from Erfurt, Vansleb had been a student of Job Ludolf, the most prominent scholar of Ethiopic in Europe. He accompanied Ludolf to London, where they collaborated on Walton's Polyglot Bible (1653–7), Ludolf's Ethiopic dictionary (1661), and the Ethiopic sections of Edmund Castell's *Lexicon Heptaglotton* (which appeared a few years later, in 1669). On his return to Germany, Vansleb received a commission from Duke Ernst of Saxe-Gotha to visit Egypt and Ethiopia, with a view to opening dialogue between the Lutheran and Abyssinian churches. Vansleb arrived in Cairo in 1664, travelled south, and spent a year in Ethiopia, meeting the Coptic Patriarch, before returning to Europe in 1666. Rather than going back to Germany, he stayed in Rome, where there were scholars and manuscripts he wanted to consult. His Lutheran faith conveniently shaken by his travels, he converted to Catholicism, taking the Dominican habit soon afterwards. This scandalized the Protestant scholars who had worked with him, and made a bitter enemy of his old teacher, Ludolf. In 1670, having met François Bosquet, the bishop of Montpellier, Vansleb got the chance to travel to Paris, where he was introduced to Colbert. Almost immediately Colbert sent him out again on a voyage of collection (1671–6), which took him to Syria and Egypt. Although Colbert wanted him to go back

<sup>66</sup> Pétis de La Croix, *Histoire du grand Genghizcan premier empereur des Mogols et Tartares . . . traduite et compilée de plusieurs auteurs orientaux . . .* (Paris, 1710); *Histoire de Timur-Bec, connu sous le nom du grand Tamerlan, écrite en persan par Charif Al Din Ali*, ed. A.-L.-M. Pétis de La Croix, 4 vols (Paris, 1722); *Mille et un jours: contes persans*, 5 vols (Paris, 1710–12); see also the introduction to François Pétis de La Croix,  *fils*, *Les Mille et un jours: contes persans*, ed. P. Sebag (Paris, 2003), 15–47.

to Ethiopia, Vansleb decided to visit Istanbul instead. Colbert wrote letters reprimanding him, but there was little that could be done.<sup>67</sup> Ludolf, still unable to forgive him for his religious treachery, accused him of having misused the funds that Colbert had sent. Despite his refusal to submit to the discipline that Colbert demanded, Vansleb nevertheless made the largest individual contribution to the growth of the Oriental collections of the Bibliothèque du roi in this period, and was responsible for the acquisition of some of the library's most treasured Oriental manuscripts.<sup>68</sup>

As well as the individual freedom of the collecting agents, there were other factors that could impede or disrupt the workings of Colbert's networks. Ships crossing the Mediterranean were always liable to attack by North African corsairs. On one occasion in the 1680s, the royal collector, Jean Foy-Vaillant, was held captive in Algiers.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, the packages of books, medals, and Moroccan leathers that the collecting agents sent back to France could be lost if the vessels carrying them happened to fall foul of pirates. In 1676, a ship carrying forty-three Hebrew and twenty-two Arabic manuscripts from the library of Mount Sinai, along with some medals and other unspecified 'curiosities', was taken by corsairs while on its way to France.<sup>70</sup>

Stories like those of Vansleb and Pétis de La Croix reveal the lengths to which Colbert was prepared to go for the improvement of the collections of the Bibliothèque du roi (and of his own library, it is worth adding). These examples have been chosen only to represent a larger group of individuals who followed similar paths, benefiting from the king's patronage of collecting agents.<sup>71</sup>

As we have seen, however, Colbert's initiatives in the sponsorship of Oriental learning were not limited to the acquisition of manuscripts.

<sup>67</sup> Clément, ed., *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, vol. 5, 374–5.

<sup>68</sup> On Vansleb (1635–79), see Omont, *Missions*, 54–174; A. Pougeois, *Vansleb, savant orientaliste et voyageur: sa vie, sa disgrâce, ses œuvres* (Paris, 1869); Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 260. On Ludolf (1624–1704), see S. Uhlig, *Hiob Ludolfs Theologia Aethiopia* (Wiesbaden, 1983). On French interest in Ethiopia, see A. de Caix de Saint-Aymour, *La France en Ethiopie: Histoire des relations de la France avec l'Abyssinie chrétienne sous les règnes de Louis XIII et de Louis XIV (1634–1706)* (Paris, 1886).

<sup>69</sup> C. E. Dekesel, 'Jean Foy-Vaillant (1632–1706): the antiquary of the king', in P. Berghaus, ed., *Numismatische Literatur 1500–1864: die Entwicklung der Methoden einer Wissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1995), 47–55. On his capture: H. D. de Grammont, *Un académicien captif à Alger, 1674–5* (Algiers, 1883).

<sup>70</sup> Clément, ed., *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, vol. 5, 377.

<sup>71</sup> Omont, *Missions*, is the fullest account of the collecting agents sent to the Levant and Egypt.

Behind the fostering of Oriental expertise lay a variety of motives. We have already touched on the first of these: the Bible. For most educated people in early modern Europe, 'Oriental languages' meant Hebrew, and any other languages that might supplement the study of the Scriptures: Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic. In seventeenth-century Europe, biblical criticism was a highly controversial affair, since the authority of the Bible was tied to issues of church discipline, and inextricably connected with politics. The extension of humanist philology to the text of the Bible had encouraged scholars to collect manuscripts of different versions, which could be used to cast light on how to interpret the difficult passages of the established text. The variant readings that different versions provided opened up the possibility of new interpretation. For example, Pietro della Valle, the famous Italian traveller, brought back to Europe a copy of the Samaritan text of the Pentateuch, referred to by the Church Fathers but long thought to be lost. The text he brought back was first published in the Paris Polyglot, and the variant readings it contained offered scope for new reckonings in biblical chronology, a topic of interest to almost all scholars of the seventeenth century.<sup>72</sup> Despite the appearance of the Paris Polyglot—which, for all the controversy surrounding its preparation, was still an official product of the French Catholic Church—the most dynamic centres of biblical learning in seventeenth-century France were the Protestant 'Academies', tolerated under the Edict of Nantes.<sup>73</sup> For all denominations, though, work on 'other' versions of biblical texts was seen as dangerous, because it might challenge the authority of the received texts. Paradoxically, Catholic theology could accommodate the proliferation of new exotic texts of the Bible more easily, because the more doubt was cast on the stability of the received text, the more the faithful needed the authority of church Tradition to be able to interpret the conflicting readings. At the same time, Catholic critics needed to produce responses to Protestant attacks, whilst also defending the authority of the divine books from the questioning of supposed 'libertines' or atheists. The biblical text, and its exegesis, was inseparable from political thought. The hostility that greeted both Spinoza's *Tractatus politico-theologicus* (1670) and Richard

<sup>72</sup> See *ODCC*, art. 'Samaritan Pentateuch'; P. N. Miller, 'An antiquary between philology and history: Peiresc and the Samaritans', in D. R. Kelley, ed., *History and the Disciplines: The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Rochester, NY, 1997), 163–84.

<sup>73</sup> F. Laplanche, *L'Écriture, le sacré et l'histoire: érudits et politiques protestants devant la Bible, en France, au XVIIe siècle* (Amsterdam and Maarssen, 1986).



Simon's *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1678)—despite their differences of approach—can serve as a reminder of this. Matters of biblical interpretation were thought of as touching on matters of church discipline, and church discipline was inseparable, in political thought and practice, from political authority.<sup>74</sup> This was the theologico-political framework of baroque Orientalism, since scholarship in the languages of the Bible and of the early Eastern Rite churches was inevitably connected with theological controversy.

It was in connection with biblical scholarship that an early directory of French Orientalists was published, Paul Colomiès's *Gallia Orientalis* (1665).<sup>75</sup> The book catalogued 152 Frenchmen who 'cultivated the Hebrew or other Oriental languages', arranged in chronological order, each entry giving basic biographical facts and quotations (almost always laudatory) from other authors. In many cases, the articles read as if the aim was to prove that the person in question did in fact know Hebrew, as if this was in doubt. Clearly, for Colomiès, 'Oriental' learning meant primarily Hebrew, and the philological study of the Bible. Colomiès (1638–92) was a Huguenot from La Rochelle educated at the Saumur Academy (renowned for its biblical teaching), where he had studied under the prominent Hebraist Louis Cappel.<sup>76</sup> *Gallia Orientalis* was dedicated to the celebrated Huguenot scholar of Caen, Samuel Bochart, known for his biblical erudition and Oriental philology. Despite the strong association of *Gallia Orientalis* with Protestantism, however, the catalogue listed Huguenots and Catholics alike.

<sup>74</sup> On biblical criticism, see F. Laplanche, *La Bible en France entre mythe et critique (XVIe–XIXe siècle)* (Paris, 1994); J.-R. Armogathe, ed., *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible* (Paris, 1989); J. Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, 2005), 26–53; J. Bennett and S. Mandelbrote, *The Garden, the Ark, the Tower, the Temple: Biblical Metaphors of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1998), 169–99; Miller, 'Aux origines de la Polyglotte'. On Richard Simon, see: J. Le Brun, 'Sens et portée du retour aux origines dans l'œuvre de Richard Simon', *XVIIe siècle*, 131 (1981), 169–98; M. de Certeau, 'L'idée de traduction de la Bible au XVIIe siècle: Sacy et Simon', *Recherches de science religieuse*, 66 (1978), 73–91; P. J. Lambé, 'Biblical criticism and censorship in ancien régime France: the case of Richard Simon', *Harvard Theological Review*, 78 (1985), 149–77; G. Stroumsa, 'Richard Simon: from philology to comparativism', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 3 (2001), 89–107.

<sup>75</sup> P. Colomiès, *Gallia Orientalis, sive Gallorum qui linguam Hebraeam vel alias Orientales excoluerunt vitæ* (The Hague, 1665).

<sup>76</sup> On Colomiès, see *DLF-17* and *Oxford DNB*; P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire [sic] historique et critique* (Rotterdam, 1697). After his death appeared Colomiès, *Italia et Hispania orientalis, sive Itolorum et Hispanorum qui linguam Hebraeam vel alias Orientales excoluerunt vitæ*, ed. J. C. Wolf (Hamburg, 1730). He ended his days as a librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The study of the Bible was part of ‘positive theology’, that branch of theology concerned with establishing the texts of the authoritative tradition (the Bible, the Councils, the Fathers) and the facts of doctrinal history. The seventeenth-century rise of historical erudition was closely bound up, in France, with the Counter-Reform revival in positive theology, which centred around the need to return to the sources of Catholic tradition in order to define Catholic teaching and reject the claims of Protestants. Even though positive theology was not a large part of college theology courses, it was one of the dominant areas of work for the scholarly religious houses—most famously the Benedictine Maurists and the Jesuit Bollandists—who rivalled each other to produce the most authoritative editions of saints’ lives or the works of the Church Fathers.<sup>77</sup> In seventeenth-century France, ecclesiastical erudition was also tied up with the Gallican cause, whereby the rights and privileges of the French Catholic Church were defended on historical grounds against the claims of the papacy. All of these currents contributed to the emergence of a new critical history, with new methods of source criticism, which was to have a lasting effect on the way historical research was done.<sup>78</sup>

The erudite collection of philological facts provides the background for another Oriental project that received Colbert’s support: Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole’s *Perpétuité de la Foi*. This was an attempt to refute the Protestant claim that the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist was a medieval innovation by finding evidence that it had been held by the early church. Curiously, and no doubt partly in response

<sup>77</sup> On ‘positive theology’ see J.-L. Quantin, *Le Catholicisme classique et les Pères de l’Eglise: un retour aux sources (1669–1713)* (Paris, 1999), 103–11, and *passim*; E. Bury and B. Meunier, eds, *Les Pères de l’Eglise au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993); Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 228–47, esp. 230–1; H. Gouhier, ‘La crise de la théologie au temps de Descartes’, *Revue de théologie et de philosophie*, 3rd series, 4 (1954), 19–54; G. Tavad, *La Tradition au XVIIe siècle en France et en Angleterre* (Paris, 1969).

<sup>78</sup> A. Momigliano, ‘Ancient history and the antiquarian’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 13 (1950), 285–315, reprinted in his *Studies in Historiography* (London, 1966), 1–39; D. Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises* (Edinburgh, 1963), 1–62 (Maurists and Bollandists); B. Barret-Kriegel, *Les Historiens et la monarchie*, 4 vols (Paris, 1988). On the links between antiquarianism and church history, see also O. Chadwick, *From Bossuet to Newman: The Idea of Doctrinal Development* (Cambridge, 1957), 49–73; B. Neveu, *Erudition et religion aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1994); A. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (London, 1997), 148–222; D. Stolzenberg, ‘Egyptian Oedipus: antiquarianism, oriental studies and occult philosophy in the work of Athanasius Kircher’ (Stanford University, Ph.D. dissertation, 2004), esp. ch. 5; P. N. Miller, ‘The “antiquarianization” of Biblical scholarship and the London Polyglot Bible (1653–7)’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62 (2001), 463–82.

to similar Protestant steps, the search for evidence was extended to the Eastern Christian churches, in an attempt to show that they, too, shared the Catholic doctrine.<sup>79</sup> In order to collect professions of faith from Eastern church leaders, scholars were sent out with the ambassador to Istanbul, Nointel, in 1670. This was the occasion for Antoine Galland's first voyage to the Orient. The project to collect testimonies from the Eastern Christians—to establish the facts of what they believed—provoked criticism, not only from the Protestants, but even from Catholic scholars (like Richard Simon) who deemed the methodology of the enquiry flawed.<sup>80</sup> The involvement of the French ambassador Nointel reveals the extent to which such enterprises were far from being the preserve of theologians. By building links with Eastern patriarchs, Nointel was bolstering the claim that the French king had the right to 'protect' the Christian churches living within the Ottoman empire, a claim that had diplomatic significance. Similar political motives can be seen at work in French attempts to foster relations with, and find out more about, the Druzes, who were seen as a potentially useful fifth column in the Ottoman empire. In 1700, a text setting out their doctrines was presented to the king by 'Nasrallah-Bingilda', a physician who had heard that the French would pay for such books. Pontchartrain ordered Pétis de La Croix to translate it.<sup>81</sup>

The policy of collecting statements of belief ('professions de foi') from Eastern churches, to be deposited in the Bibliothèque du roi, reveals an important aspect of how the royal library was conceived—as an archive of documents that supported theologico-political claims. This

<sup>79</sup> A. Arnauld and P. Nicole, *La Perpétuité de la Foy de l'Eglise catholique touchant l'Eucharistie, deffendue contre le livres du Sieur Claude*, 3 vols (Paris, 1669–74). See the remarkably pithy J. Le Brun, 'Entre la *Perpétuité* et la *Demonstratio Evangelica*', in *Studia Leibnitiana*, Supplementa, 18 (1978), 1–13; also A. Villien, *L'abbé Eusèbe Renaudot: essai sur sa vie et sur son œuvre liturgique* (Paris, 1904), 27–39; Quantin, *Le Catholicisme classique*, 321–56; Tavad, *La Tradition*, 104–12.

<sup>80</sup> On the document search for the *Perpétuité*, see: Omont, *Missions*, 175–99; A. Vandal, *Les Voyages du marquis de Nointel, 1670–80: l'odyssée d'un ambassadeur* (Paris, 1900); Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland*, 26–8. Some of the professions of faith can be seen in *Collections de Louis XIV*, 211–15. For the background pre-1600 see A. Hamilton, 'Eastern churches and Western scholarship', in A. Grafton, ed., *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture* (Washington and New Haven, 1993), 225–49; cf. his 'The English interest in Arabic-speaking Christians', in G. A. Russell, ed., *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1994), 30–53.

<sup>81</sup> BN ms Clairambault 1013–14: 'Livre de la religion des Druzes'; Delisle, *Cabinet des manuscrits*, vol. 1, 301–2. On earlier contact with the Druzes see Duverdière, 'Les débuts de la typographie orientale', 75.

was not the only function of the library, though. In official rhetoric, the ‘curiosity’ of the king was the trope that justified the appropriation of objects or texts to be sent from the Levant to Paris. Collectors would ask Colbert whether this or that object was judged ‘digne de la curiosité du roi’—if it was, then the purchase would go ahead. This rather elastic notion of ‘royal curiosity’—which it is tempting to translate as ‘public interest’—was used by Colbert to fund a policy of acquisition designed to make the royal library a centre for the advancement of learning. In keeping with Colbert’s concern that the *savants* under royal patronage pursue studies that might yield useful results, one area of interest was the discovery of techniques in the mechanical arts. These might be found either in Arabic treatises, or by learning from Oriental artisans. For example, one of the manuscripts acquired by Jean Foy-Vaillant in 1669 was al-Jazari’s *Kitab al-hiyal*, or *Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, a classic work in the tradition of Hero of Alexandria, which included descriptions of how to construct automata.<sup>82</sup> Alongside texts by Arabic authors, seventeenth-century *savants* knew it was possible that the lost parts of ancient Greek writings might be found in Arabic translations.<sup>83</sup> Colbert, in the ‘mémoires’ he sent to collecting agents like Galland, emphasized the importance of looking for Arabic translations of ancient mathematical works. The best known example from the period were the missing books of Apollonius of Perga’s treatise on conic sections, but there was always the hope that other lost works might turn up in Ottoman bookshops.<sup>84</sup> As a ‘mémoire’ from Colbert noted, ‘a noted traveller affirms that he has seen in the Levant the missing books of Livy, of Apollonius of Perga, of Diophantus of Alexandria, and many others, translated into Arabic. There are a large number of these manuscripts in the famous library of the king of Morocco’ (‘un illustre voyageur a assuré avoir veu dans le Levant les livres de Tite-Live qui nous manquent, ceux d’Apollonius Pergæus, de Diophante Alexandrin, et quantité d’autres traduits en arabe. Il y a quantité de ces manuscrits dans la célèbre bibliothèque du roy de Maroc’).<sup>85</sup> The library of the king of Morocco

<sup>82</sup> See *Collections de Louis XIV*, 216–17; R. Schaer, ed., *Tous les savoirs du monde: encyclopédies et bibliothèques, de Sumer au XXIe siècle* (Paris, 1996), 314; Al-Jazari, *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, ed. D. R. Hill (Dordrecht, 1974).

<sup>83</sup> L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1991), 55–8, 255–6 (bibliography).

<sup>84</sup> On Apollonius, see Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 229–43, and below, Chapter 2.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Mémoire des observations que l’on peut faire dans les voyages de Levant, remis à M. Galland, lors de son voyage, par M. Colbert’ [1679], in Omont, *Missions*, 203–7,

was a kind of erudite El Dorado: it had been acquired by Spanish piracy in 1611 and was kept in the library of the Escorial, but because access was strictly controlled, the scholars of Europe could only imagine the riches it might hold.<sup>86</sup> As well as the hope of finding the lost books of the Ancients, and the desire to discover new mechanical or medicinal secrets, the literary and religious texts from Oriental traditions were also deemed worthy of 'the king's curiosity'. By the late 1670s it was possible to be selective: Colbert told Galland in the same 'mémoire' that he need not acquire any more lives of Muhammad, or treatises on the Hajj, because there were already many such texts in Paris, while any books in ancient Syriac, or anything to do with Zoroastrianism, would be desirable.

The steps that Colbert took to support Oriental learning in France paved the way for the more thorough reorganization of learning that took place under the abbé Bignon in the years after 1699. Bignon, gradually given control of all cultural patronage—the Bibliothèque du roi, the book trade, the academies—gave many of the academies new foundations, and brought them into closer cooperation. It was as part of these sweeping reforms that the 'petite académie' was re-established as the Académie des inscriptions, effectively becoming a royal academy of erudition.<sup>87</sup> Within this institution, the Orientalists of the eighteenth century found their home: from Galland and his contemporaries to Fréret and the Fourmont brothers, and later, Joseph de Guignes. Bignon also reformed the system of employing translators at the Bibliothèque du roi, many of whom were Royal Professors.<sup>88</sup>

## SCHOLARLY LIVES AND LETTERS

History organized around institutions can be misleading, especially since many of the French cultural institutions founded in the late

here 204. Cf. 28: an almost identical instruction was sent to an earlier collecting agent, Monceaux.

<sup>86</sup> Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 19–20 n. 28; cf. Oldenburg, vol. 1, 269.

<sup>87</sup> J. A. Clarke, 'Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon: "moderator of the academies" and Royal librarian', *French Historical Studies*, 8 (1973), 213–35; Barret-Kriegel, *Les Historiens et la monarchie*, vol. 3.

<sup>88</sup> F. Bléchet, 'Les interprètes orientalistes de la Bibliothèque du roi', in Hitzel, *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, 89–102. The best known interpreter at the library in the Bignon era was Arcadio Huang (1679–1716, in Paris 1711–16): see J. D. Spence, 'The Paris years of Arcadio Huang', *Granta*, 32 (1990), 123–32.

seventeenth century still exist today. Where such continuity exists, it can tempt us to assume that a given institution in the earliest stage of its existence had a degree of coherence that it might only have acquired later. Institutional structures were flexible, not fixed. The 1660s illustrate this well, with Colbert adapting his plans on an ad hoc basis.<sup>89</sup> Institutions, though, are not the only subjects of hagiography. A problem endemic to the historiography of the Republic of Letters is the tension between an endlessly self-replicating 'éloge tradition' and those sources that can be found which come from outside it. As the microfiches of the *Archives biographiques françaises* make abundantly clear—juxtaposing notices from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century biographical dictionaries—most reference books before about 1900 borrowed heavily from their predecessors. Sometimes they embellished what they copied with new turns of phrase, altering the message passed on to later stages. In addition to this problem of corruption in transmission, however, there is the fact that the *éloge* of an *homme illustre* was a genre, governed by its own conventions.<sup>90</sup> Fortunately, it is possible to gain critical leverage on the 'éloge tradition' by piecing together archival evidence (mainly the correspondence of contemporaries). However, the letters exchanged by early modern *savants* are not 'transparent' sources: firstly because they, too, were self-consciously written in generic contexts (for example, that of the humanist 'familiar epistle'); secondly, because each letter was a 'speech act' performed within specific circumstances; and thirdly because the modern editions shape the way we read them.<sup>91</sup> In certain respects, then, letters between scholars are no more 'primary' sources than are the *éloges*.

A good example of the problems that can occur with the published correspondence of scholars is provided by the letters of Jean Chapelain (although similar issues are involved in other examples). Because of his position as Colbert's chief advisor on literary patronage, Chapelain's letters are an invaluable source for unearthing the negotiations behind the 'fabrication of Louis XIV'. The standard edition, published in the series 'Documents inédits sur l'Histoire de France' by Philippe Tamizey

<sup>89</sup> See the discussion below, in Chapter 1.

<sup>90</sup> C. B. Paul, *Science and Immortality: The éloges of the Paris Academy of Sciences (1699–1791)* (Berkeley, 1980); Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 147–9; D. Ribard, *Raconter, vivre, penser: histoire(s) de philosophes, 1650–1766* (Paris, 2003).

<sup>91</sup> See H. Bots, 'Editions de correspondances aux XIXe et XXe siècles: méthodes et stratégies', *XVIIe siècle*, 178 (1993), 119–29, part of a special number on 'Les correspondances franco-étrangères au XVIIe siècle'.

de Larroque, one of the prolific editors of the early Third Republic, was completed in 1883.<sup>92</sup> Although it is a standard source (and used throughout the rest of this book), Tamizey de Larroque's edition is far from satisfactory. He was unable to include all of the letters, and was forced to select some for complete transcription, others for brief summary in the footnotes. Many of the letters in the manuscript were omitted completely (although this is at least acknowledged in a table), and there are also errors of transcription. More importantly, the manuscript Tamizey de Larroque used (given to the Bibliothèque nationale by the great nineteenth-century critic Sainte-Beuve) is a collection of *copies* of Chapelain's letters, which are not necessarily accurate copies of the letters sent.<sup>93</sup> Many of the original letters that were actually sent are to be found in other libraries, including some for which copies do not appear in the Sainte-Beuve manuscript. Fortunately, some of the letters excluded from the Tamizey de Larroque edition have now been edited.<sup>94</sup> Chapelain's letters remain an indispensable source for the study of Colbert's scholarly patronage; but they should never be taken as transparent sources, or as providing a failsafe control over other kinds of source, including the scholarly 'éloges'. The letters sent around the 'Republic of Letters' remains one of our best ways of accessing the level of scholarly 'practice', but it is worth underlining that they, too, are also representations, and that our access to them is highly mediated.

As we have seen, scholarship and science in late seventeenth-century France were intimately bound up with the 'fabrication of Louis XIV', the process by which cultural life was brought into a system of representation that celebrated the magnificence of the king. It was through the royal patronage of learning that the collections of Oriental manuscripts in Paris underwent a period of expansion from Colbert's time onwards. The king himself may well have been more interested in soldiers

<sup>92</sup> *Lettres de Jean Chapelain*, ed. J.-P. Tamizey de Larroque, 2 vols (Paris, 1880–3): vol. 1 covers 1632–40, vol. 2 covers 1659–74; cf. B. Peyrous, 'L'œuvre d'éditeur scientifique de Tamizey de Larroque', *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, 76–7 (1992), 219–34.

<sup>93</sup> The 'Sainte-Beuve' ms (from which the years 1641 to 1658 are missing) is now BN n. a. fr. 1885–9. On Chapelain, see G. Collas, *Jean Chapelain: 1595–1674* (Paris, 1912, repr. Geneva, 1970); C. Jouhaud, 'Sur le statut d'homme de lettres au XVIIe siècle: la correspondance de Jean Chapelain (1595–1674)', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences sociales*, 49 (1994), 311–47; re-used in Jouhaud, *Les Pouvoirs de la littérature*, 97–150.

<sup>94</sup> See the editors' introductions in Chapelain, *Lettere inedite a corrispondenti italiani*, ed. P. Ciureanu (Genoa, 1964); and Chapelain, *Soixante-dix-sept lettres inédites à Nicolas Heinsius (1649–1658)*, ed. B. Bray (The Hague, 1966).

than astronomers (as Justel put it), but nevertheless the royal institutions—the Bibliothèque du roi, the Académie royale des sciences, the Collège royal, and so on—became centres of scholarly activity during Louis's personal rule. Eventually, this process of cultural appropriation was to produce unforeseen results. The French travellers and Oriental scholars of the Louis XIV period left behind texts that were read by eighteenth-century *philosophes* and mined for ethnographic information. Montesquieu—who as a young man talked to a Chinese interpreter at the Bibliothèque du roi—was eventually to use his knowledge of China to make criticisms of the French polity.<sup>95</sup>

However, this should not give the impression that Oriental learning was anything other than a marginal presence in early Enlightenment thought. If we look at seventeenth-century libraries, Oriental manuscripts make up a small fraction of total holdings; if we look at the production of books in print, then materials printed in Oriental languages are an almost negligible proportion of the total output, and Oriental erudition without the use of 'exotic' type is not much larger. Only in the case of travel accounts (written by Europeans) can it be said that literature on Asia occupied a significant place in the seventeenth-century market for books.<sup>96</sup> As the case studies that follow will illustrate, it was difficult for those interested in Asia to get access to the sources, the expertise, and the printing facilities that they desired; and the number of people with the necessary linguistic skills was low. However, such practical difficulties were not limited to Oriental researchers: as Adrian Johns has recently shown, very similar problems were also faced by those pursuing the new natural philosophy in Restoration England.<sup>97</sup>

All the chapters below deal with the making of texts, each of which had a rich reception history across the eighteenth century: the *Bibliothèque orientale* of Barthélemy d'Herbelot; the *Voyages* of François Bernier; the

<sup>95</sup> Spence, 'The Paris years'; E. Carcassonne, 'La Chine dans l'*Esprit des lois*', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 31 (1924), 193–205; A. H. Rowbotham, 'China in the *Esprit des Lois*: Montesquieu and Msgr Foucquet', *Comparative Literature*, 2 (1950), 354–9; L. Desgraves, 'Notes de Montesquieu sur la Chine', *Revue historique de Bordeaux et du département de la Gironde*, 7 (1958), 199–219; Montesquieu, 'Geographica', *Œuvres complètes*, ed. A. Masson (Paris, 1950), vol. 2, 923–63.

<sup>96</sup> These generalizations are based on H.-J. Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1598–1701)*, 2 vols (Geneva, 1969); C. Jolly, ed., *Histoire des bibliothèques françaises*, vol. 2: *Les Bibliothèques sous l'Ancien Régime, 1530–1789* (Paris, 1988); R. Chartier and H.-J. Martin, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2: *Le Livre triomphant: 1660–1830*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1990).

<sup>97</sup> A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998).



collection of travel accounts edited by Melchisédech Thévenot; and the Jesuits' *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. In each case, the aim has been to map the processes through which these books were made. I have also attempted to situate the production of these texts in relation to the 'culture of curiosity', which overlapped with the scientific community, and to the world of antiquarian erudition—without meaning that these two 'scenes of inquiry' were mutually exclusive. In Chapter 1, we explore Barthélemy d'Herbelot's patronage career, to show how he attempted to find a 'place' within which he could pursue Oriental learning. The story of his visit to the court of Florence in the mid-1660s, and the attempts to bring him back to Paris that ensued, reveal the weaknesses and tensions within Colbert's patronage of learning at that point. D'Herbelot's later career in Paris was to bring him into the orbit of the Maurist scholars, and therefore to the heart of the 'érudit' community. The fragility of French Oriental studies in the 1660s is highlighted again in Chapter 2, where we follow Melchisédech Thévenot in his attempts to produce an edition of an Arabic text, the *Geography* of Abulfeda. Thévenot was known as a prominent French 'curieux', a collector with a cabinet and the host of an assembly of *savants*. He was also the editor of the most important French collection of travel accounts before the eighteenth century. The chapter explores how his scientific interests and his travel interests were interrelated. In Chapter 3, we follow a member of Thévenot's circle, François Bernier, on his journey to Mughal India, and discover the connections between the context in which he found himself as a court physician there, and the intellectual culture of Paris that he had left behind. In Chapter 4, we return to d'Herbelot, and trace the process whereby his *Bibliothèque orientale* was put together from its sources, in particular his debt to the collecting networks that Colbert organized, and his reliance on the work of the Ottoman scholar Kâtib Chelebi. Chapter 5 discusses the printing history of the first substantial translation of the Confucian classics to appear in Europe, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, and once again turns to Melchisédech Thévenot, and to his involvement in this publication process as the head of the Bibliothèque du roi. Finally, the epilogue traces out the attempt by Leibniz to verify the truth of reports of a Chinese Nestorian monument by means of an elusive Arabic travelogue. The case happens to involve most of the actors covered in the previous chapters, and it usefully situates baroque Orientalism between the cultures of curiosity and erudition.

# 1

## Barthélemy d'Herbelot and the Place of Oriental Learning

This chapter is concerned with the *place* of Oriental learning within the late seventeenth-century Republic of Letters. 'Place' is meant here in several senses: geographic, institutional, and discursive. What were the settings in which Oriental studies could be pursued? How did Oriental scholarship fit in to the institutional structure of learning in the period? How did Orientalist scholars shape their identity in order to legitimize their pursuits and gain scholarly authority? These issues can be explored by following the case of Barthélemy d'Herbelot (1625–95), the French *érudit* known to posterity for a single, vast, posthumous publication, his *Bibliothèque orientale*, first published in 1697.<sup>1</sup> D'Herbelot's case affords us an entry point into the sociology of scholarship in the late seventeenth century. The chapter will reconstruct d'Herbelot's patronage career, focusing on an episode in the late 1660s. Until then, d'Herbelot had been remarkably successful, reaching a peak in 1666 when he arrived at the court of the grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando II de' Medici. It was then that attempts were made to bring him back to Paris. Colbert, acting via his patronage-brokers Jean Chapelain and François Charpentier, wanted to lure d'Herbelot back to Paris by offering him a place in a new academy of Oriental languages, a promise that proved impossible to make good. This abortive academy had been a part of Colbert's ill-fated scheme for a 'grande académie', a group of academies which would cover the whole 'encyclopedia' of disciplines. What the d'Herbelot case offers is an insight into the changing patterns in the patronage of learning in the mid-1660s, and the institutional politics surrounding oriental studies within those broader structures.

<sup>1</sup> On d'Herbelot, see H. Laurens, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme: La Bibliothèque Orientale de Barthélemy d'Herbelot* (Paris, 1978); and F. Richard, 'Le dictionnaire de d'Herbelot', in F. Hitzel, ed., *Istanbul et les langues orientales* (Paris, 1997), 79–88.

Colbert's academy scheme, and his patronage of the world of learning in general, marks not only a new relationship between the crown and scholarship, but also coincides with the emergence across Europe of a new form of scientific organization, which replaced the courtly circles inherited from the Renaissance, the state-sponsored 'academy'. On one level, d'Herbelot's movement between Florence and Paris in the late 1660s can be seen as a reflection of these changes, and of the tension between these two ideal-typical forms of scientific institution, the personal circle of a prince (Florence), and a royal academy (Paris).<sup>2</sup>

### THE *ELOGE* GENRE AND D'HERBELOT'S TRAJECTORY

Any attempt to investigate d'Herbelot's activities runs into the problem of the generic-conventional nature of the biographical sources. On the one hand there are a series of published *éloges* which operate according to a well-documented set of rhetorical conventions. On the other is a body of unpublished sources (mainly letters, but also some diary entries) which might be considered a means of 'controlling' the *éloges* were it not for the fact that they, too, operate according to generic conventions of their own. The narratives that are produced within both kinds of source can be taken as processes of scholarly self-fashioning. D'Herbelot provides a good example of the process by which obituary eulogies, copied through reference books, become fossilized into historical 'fact'. Almost identical accounts were reproduced in a tradition that began with an *éloge* on the occasion of his death by Louis Cousin, and continued in the collections of Charles Perrault, Charles Ancillon, the abbé Lambert, the abbé Goujet, and Moreri.<sup>3</sup> Perrault's collection had

<sup>2</sup> Useful contexts for d'Herbelot's experience in Florence can be drawn from: P. Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, 1994), esp. 346–92; M. Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago, 1993); 'Etiquette, interdependence, and sociability in seventeenth-century science', *Critical Inquiry*, 22 (1996), 193–238; *Galileo's Instruments of Credit: Telescopes, Images, Secrecy* (Chicago, 2006), 21–75; and C. Callard, 'Diogène au service des princes: Antonio Magliabechi à la cour de Toscane (1633–1714)', *Histoire, économie et société*, 19 (2000), 85–103. More generally, see A. Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> L. Cousin, 'Eloge de Monsieur Dherbelot', first published in *Journal des Sçavans*, 3 Jan. 1696; reprinted at head of B. d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale* (Paris, 1697), sigs. u 2<sup>v</sup>–3<sup>f</sup>. C. Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle avec*

its own particular agenda, as is well known, because the work was a part of the 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes', a celebration of the Age of Louis XIV—as Perrault puts it in the preface to *Les Hommes illustres*, the whole point of the book was to 'establish the thesis that I have always maintained, that we have the good fortune to have been born in the finest of ages'.<sup>4</sup> Even though we are able to supplement the *éloge* tradition by means of independent sources, these also need to be handled with care.<sup>5</sup>

Since d'Herbelot's only publication was posthumous, there is a stark contrast between his image for posterity, as the author of the *Bibliothèque orientale*, and his image whilst still alive. For his contemporaries, his reputation could rest only on factors other than published writings—to some degree, perhaps, on unpublished writings; and beyond that, on word of mouth. D'Herbelot's case shows, then, how a scholar could still 'fashion' himself with remarkable success without needing any contact with 'print culture'. Rather than using print to establish a reputation or to claim priority over an invention, d'Herbelot built his 'aura' through polite sociability in courtly settings. Before we move on to the events of the mid-1660s, though, a brief account of d'Herbelot's earlier career is necessary.

D'Herbelot's scholarly career is inseparable from his itineraries across the Alps: his work was shaped by the periods he spent in Rome and Florence. Although born in Paris and educated there (and possibly in Lyons), his interest in Hebrew studies led him to Italy: he travelled to Rome in 1655, in the hope of meeting native speakers of Levantine languages (then more common in Italy than Paris), and perhaps also

*leurs portraits au naturel*, 2 vols (Paris, 1696–1700), vol. 2, 71–2; C. Ancillon, *Mémoires concernant les vies et les ouvrages de plusieurs modernes célèbres dans la république des lettres* (Amsterdam, 1709), 134–47; C.-F. Lambert, *Histoire littéraire du règne de Louis XIV*, 3 vols (Paris, 1751), vol. 3, 106–9; C. P. Goujet, *Mémoire historique et littéraire sur le Collège royal de France* (Paris, 1758), vol. 3, 433–2.

<sup>4</sup> Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres*, vol. 1, sig. a 5<sup>r</sup> ('établir la these que j'ay toujours soustenüe, que nous avons le bonheur d'estre nez dans le plus beau de tous les siecles'); see B. Bernard, "'Les hommes illustres': Charles Perraults Kompendium der 100 berühmtesten Männer des 17. Jahrhunderts als Reflex der Colbertschen Wissenschaftspolitik', *Francia: Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, 18/2 (1991), 23–46.

<sup>5</sup> Particularly useful on d'Herbelot are the notes of the disalced Augustinian Léonard de Sainte-Catherine, at BN ms fr. 22582, ff. 187–91, summarized in B. Neveu, *Erudition et religion aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1994), 57. Equally important additions include: L. M. Heller, 'Le testament olographe de Jean de Thévenot', *XVIIe siècle*, 167 (1990), 227–34; M. Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland: sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1964), 85–8, 163–5.

in search of patrons and scholarly mentors. He would therefore have been in Rome at the same time as Melchisédech Thévenot, although we have no evidence of their spending any time together. We do know, however, that d'Herbelot met Thévenot's nephew, Jean de Thévenot, who was also in Rome at that time. In his travel account, Jean de Thévenot records that it was his meeting with d'Herbelot that 'made me determine to travel into the Levant'. Initially, d'Herbelot intended to travel to the Levant with Thévenot, who was 'overjoyed' to hear this: 'I hugg'd myself a long while, in hopes of so good company'. Just on the point of embarking, d'Herbelot was forced to stay behind by some 'domestick Affair' of 'great consequence'.<sup>6</sup> In the end, d'Herbelot did not follow, and Jean de Thévenot went to the Levant alone. What the 'domestick Affair' was is not clear. Besides, Rome had its attractions. It was a great centre for Oriental studies at this time: the Vatican library had one of the richest collections of Oriental manuscripts in Europe, and the press of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* was an important centre for exotic printing.<sup>7</sup> Since the late sixteenth century there had also been the 'Medicean' Arabic press in Rome, founded by the then cardinal de' Medici (later Grand Duke Ferdinando I).<sup>8</sup> Above all, there was in Rome a small group of Arabic-speaking Maronite Christians, whose usefulness had been recognized by the foundation of a Maronite College by Gregory XIII in 1584. D'Herbelot gained entry to the Roman scholarly world through contact with the papal librarians Lucas Holstenius (1596–1661) and Leone Allacci or Allatius (1586–1669), and made the acquaintance of other scholars supported by their patrons, Cardinal Francesco Barberini and Alexander VII (Fabio Chigi, pope from 1655 to 1667).<sup>9</sup> He had also made the acquaintance of the

<sup>6</sup> Jean [de] Thévenot, *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant* [part 1] (Paris, 1664), 3–4 ('le comble de ma ioye fut lors que luy mesme délibera de faire le voyage, ie me repüs long-temps du bon-heur que j'esperois d'vne compagnie si aantageuse'); the English translation is J. Thévenot, *The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot into the Levant*, tr. A. Lovell (London, 1687), 1–2. Thévenot has a long *éloge* of d'Herbelot at this point.

<sup>7</sup> W. Henkel, 'The polyglot printing-office of the Congregation', in J. Metzler, ed., *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, vol. 1/1 (Freiburg, 1971), 335–49.

<sup>8</sup> See R. Jones, 'The Medici Oriental press (Rome, 1584–1614) and the impact of its Arabic publications on Northern Europe', in G. A. Russell, ed., *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1994), 88–108. On Oriental studies in Italy, see G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1996), 20–5.

<sup>9</sup> On scholars in Rome at this time, see E. Cropper, G. Perini, and F. Solinas, eds, *Documentary Culture: Florence and Rome from Grand Duke Ferdinand I to Pope Alexander*



probably for this collection that he pensioned Oriental scholars, since a serious *amateur* could display his taste (and wealth) all the more by surrounding himself with *savants* able to talk knowledgeably about the curiosities in the cabinet and able to advise the patron on what to buy.<sup>15</sup> Fouquet gave lodgings and pensions to one of the Royal Professors in Arabic, Pierre Vattier, and also to d'Herbelot. The close contact with Vattier, and with the Oriental books in Fouquet's collection, must have made d'Herbelot's period at Saint-Mandé fruitful.<sup>16</sup>

After Fouquet's spectacular fall from grace in 1661, d'Herbelot managed to make the transition to royal patronage. The royal *charge* of 'secrétaire et interprète pour les langues orientales' was granted to him in 1661, probably after Fouquet's fall. We know that he was in possession of that office in 1662, because of a strange episode recounted by Jean de Thévenot in his last will, made before his death in Syria. According to this document, d'Herbelot and François Pétis de La Croix (*père*) tried to swindle the younger Thévenot by getting him to agree to buy the *charge* of 'truchement du roi en turc' ('secrétaire interprète au roi pour la langue turquesque') when they had no intention of actually delivering the sealed *lettres patentes* that would allow Thévenot to receive the income from that *charge*. It is not clear why d'Herbelot would have had any interest in defrauding his former friend, and nor is it entirely clear whether Thévenot's narrative can be trusted.<sup>17</sup> At the very least, though, the document reminds us that patronage negotiations could often be much less smooth than the generic *éloges* would suggest.

What happened to d'Herbelot in the early 1660s remains unknown. Within a few years, though, d'Herbelot found himself fought over by competing patrons in Florence and Paris. In all of the *éloges*, it is related that d'Herbelot enjoyed generous patronage from the grand duke of Tuscany in the mid-1660s, but that Colbert called him back to Paris. In most cases the details of this story are passed over; it is presented as something almost self-explanatory, as if the pull of the Sun King was irresistible. If we attempt to find out a little more than the *éloges* tell us,

<sup>15</sup> Likewise, fifteenth-century collectors: L. Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London, 1996), 183–228.

<sup>16</sup> On Fouquet's library, see E. S. Saunders, 'Politics and scholarship in seventeenth-century France: the library of Nicolas Fouquet and the Collège royal', *Journal of Library History*, 20 (1985), 1–24. In 1667, five Persian manuscripts from Fouquet's collection were acquired by the Bibliothèque du roi. On Pierre Vattier, see Chapter 2 below.

<sup>17</sup> L. M. Heller, 'Le testament olographe de Jean de Thévenot', *XVIIe siècle*, 167 (1990), 227–34. Thévenot blamed d'Herbelot rather than Pétis de La Croix, since he left money to the latter.

the picture becomes complicated. In the following sections we need to relate this story in some detail.

## BETWEEN THE COURT AND THE ACADEMY

In the summer of 1666, d'Herbelot was in Livorno (Leghorn). Why he was there, and what had happened since 1662 to bring him there, is unknown.<sup>18</sup> The fact that he was there at all, when he was recently granted the royal interpreter *charge*, seems odd. The *éloges* record that in Italy, d'Herbelot enjoyed 'une si grande reputation, que les personnes les plus distinguées, soit par leur science ou par leur dignité, s'empresserent à l'envi de le connoître' ('such a great reputation, that the most eminent persons, whether by learning or by rank, were anxious to meet him'). Perrault and his imitators go on to narrate how the aged grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando II de' Medici (r. 1621–70), one of the century's great patrons of the learned, gave d'Herbelot 'extraordinary marks of his esteem' ('luy donna des marques extraordinaires de son estime'). At Livorno, the grand duke and his son Prince Cosimo (who became Cosimo III, r. 1670–1723) encountered d'Herbelot, and held 'frequent conversations, with which they were so satisfied, that they made him promise to come and visit them in Florence' ('frequentes conversations, dont ils furent si satisfaits, qu'ils luy firent promettre de les venir trouver à Florence'). The French scholar duly arrived (2 July 1666), where he was received by the 'Secrétaire d'Etat' (presumably the *primo segretario*), who 'led him to a house prepared for his accommodation, with six full rooms (on one floor) magnificently furnished, with a table for four kept for him with all manner of fine foods, and a coach with the arms of his Most Serene Highness'.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> J. Gaulmier, 'A la découverte du proche-Orient: Barthélemy d'Herbelot et sa *Bibliothèque orientale*', *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg*, 48 (1969), 1–6, at 2, reproduces a letter, with no other reference than 'Bibliothèque de Florence', supposedly by d'Herbelot, dated Florence, 7 Sept. 1665. It is by no means clear whether this is from Barthélemy or his brother Edme, who also travelled in Italy.

<sup>19</sup> The secretary 'le conduisit dans une maison préparée pour son logement, où il y avoit six pieces de plein-pied [*sic*] magnifiquement meublées, & où on luy entretint une table de quatre couverts, servie avec toute sorte de délicatesse, & un carosse aux livrées de son Altesse Serenissime'. Perrault points out that 'on trouvera peu d'exemples d'honneurs aussi grands rendus par un Souverain au seul mérite d'un particulier'. This and previous quotations are from Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres*, vol. 2, 71–2, who follows Cousin and is followed by Ancillon, almost verbatim (works cited in note 3).



This display of grand ducal liberality was followed, again according to Perrault, by an even more dazzling one, 'the choice of which and the manner of its giving being no less impressive than the present itself' ('[c]es honneurs furent couronnez par un present dont le choix & la maniere ingenieuse de le donner n'ont pas semblé moins estimables que le present même, quelque magnifique & precieux qu'il fust'). It emerged that a certain library was for sale in Florence. Ferdinando II told d'Herbelot to go and examine the Oriental manuscripts that were there, set apart 'the best ones' and establish their price. When d'Herbelot had done this, the grand duke promptly bought them, and presented them to his new protégé ('ce genereux Prince les acheta, & en fit present à Mr d'Herbelot, comme de la chose qui estoit le plus selon son goust'). The gift was for d'Herbelot to keep: the sources therein were to fuel d'Herbelot's researches until the end of his life.<sup>20</sup>

In Perrault's narrative, this tale of princely liberality forms a prelude to the following remarks:

Un traitement aussi honorable que celui-là, pouvoit paroître un sujet de reproche à la France, de se priver si long-temps d'un si excellent homme. Mais Mr Colbert naturellement porté à faire du bien aux gens de Lettres, & sur tout à ne rien negliger de tout ce qui pouvoit faire honneur à la France, le fit inviter de revenir à Paris, avec assurance qu'il y recevoit des preuves solides de l'estime qu'il s'estoit acquise. Le Grand Duc qui regne à present, eut de la peine à le laisser partir, & n'y consentit qu'après avoir vû les ordres de ce Ministre qui le rappelloit.<sup>21</sup>

[Such honourable treatment might seem a reproach to France, to have deprived herself for so long of such an excellent man. But M. Colbert, naturally inclined to help men of letters, and above all slow to miss any opportunity to win honour for France, invited d'Herbelot to return to Paris, with the assurance that he would receive solid evidence of the esteem which he had acquired for himself. The presently reigning grand duke found it difficult to let him go, and only consented after having seen the orders from this Minister which called him back.]

What is worth noting here is the idea that the grand duke was reluctant to let d'Herbelot go, and wanted to see Colbert's orders before conceding.

<sup>20</sup> Francis Richard has identified this as a collection that had been passed down from the Florentine brothers Giambattista and Gerolamo Vecchiotti, who amassed the manuscripts in the Levant between 1584 and 1608: Richard, 'Le dictionnaire de d'Herbelot', 82 n. 10; cf. his 'Les manuscrits persans rapportés par les frères Vecchiotti et conservés aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque nationale', *Studia iranica*, 9 (1980), 291–300.

<sup>21</sup> Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres*, vol. 2, 71.

For Perrault, whose text is designed to celebrate Louis XIV (and who was himself a Colbert client), it was natural that Colbert should be the hero of the story, and that the humbling of the Tuscan ruler should be implied. In fact things were rather different.

The learned community of Paris were very soon made aware of the reception their compatriot had received in Florence. This is revealed in the letters sent by Jean Chapelain to the abbé Giovanni-Filippo Marucelli, who had been the Tuscan representative in Paris, and was at this point back in Florence.<sup>22</sup> Chapelain wrote to Marucelli in November 1666 that:

Mr d'Herbelot, dont vous me parlés, est en son genre un des ornemens de ce royaume et presque l'unique pour les langues orientales. S'il eust eu le corps aussi bon que le cœur, il eust accompagné Mr [Jean] Thevenot en son voyage de l'Orient le plus reculé par la grande passion qu'il a pour les choses estrangères et éloignées de nostre connoissance, afin d'en faire part à l'Europe. Je n'ay pas d'habitude avec luy, mais ses amis qui sont les miens ont obligé il y a plus de trois mois Mr son frère à m'apporter voir ce qu'il luy avoit escrit de votre ville et des honneurs et régales excessifs qu'il avoit eus et qu'il avoit encore de la magnificence de S. A. S. et de Mgrs ses frères, aussi bien que de la civilité de tout ce qu'il y a de grand et de considerable dans vostre Cour dont il se trouvoit comblé et avec des ressentimens extremes. Mr de La Croix, interprète du Roy en langue turque, m'a communiqué une pareille relation de luy. Ces lectures et sa réputation m'ont fait prendre part à toute la gloire que sa bonne fortune luy a fait obtenir chés vous et souhaiter qu'il paye par quelque service signalé un accueil et un traitement si humain et si noble.<sup>23</sup>

[M. d'Herbelot, of whom you were speaking, is, of his kind, one of the ornaments of this kingdom, and almost unique for Oriental languages. If he had been in better health he would have accompanied [Jean de] Thévenot on his voyage to the distant Orient, such is his passion for bringing foreign and exotic knowledge to Europe. I do not know him well, but over three months ago the friends we have in common sent his brother to show me his letters from [Florence], and [I read of] the excessive honours that he had received, and continues to receive, by the magnificence of his Highness and his brothers, as well as the civilities with which he was showered from all the great and considerable persons of your Court, leaving him much obliged. Mr de La

<sup>22</sup> The relevant letters are in J. Chapelain, *Lettere inedite a corrispondenti italiani*, ed. P. Ciureanu (Genoa, 1964); most of them are omitted or merely summarized in Tamizew Larroque's edition (Chapelain, vol. 2).

<sup>23</sup> Chapelain to Marucelli, 5 Nov. 1666. For the full text, *Lettere inedite*, ed. Ciureanu, 37–40, here 39–40; partially in Chapelain, vol. 2, 488–9 n. 1; both use the copy at BN ms n. a. fr. 1888, f. 243v. The letters from d'Herbelot appear to be lost.

Croix, interpreter to the King for Turkish, sent me a similar report. These readings and his reputation made me aware of the extent of the glory that his good fortune has acquired for him in Florence, and made me hope that he repay, by some signal service, such a humane and noble welcome and treatment.]

Here Chapelain's description of d'Herbelot as 'un des ornemens de ce royaume' is telling, given his increasingly conspicuous absence from France. Clearly, the honour bestowed on d'Herbelot ('honneurs et régales excessifs') by the grand duke engenders the desire to win him back. At this stage, Chapelain acknowledges that d'Herbelot has fallen on his feet, and claims to 'share his glory', but also hints that d'Herbelot's treatment raises the expectation of his performing some 'signal service'.

Later the same month, Marucelli requested more information on d'Herbelot. Chapelain delayed for a week, in the hope of being able to ask Melchisédech Thévenot, but since the latter had been at his country house in Issy all that time, Chapelain had to offer his own conjectures:

Ou[tr]e ce que je croy vous auoir mandé de sa naissance qui est entre les bonnes de nos honnestes Citoyens, il paroist bien, par l'entreprise du voyage des Indes sur sa bourse seule, qu'il doit estre personne accommodée et qu'il ne pouuoit auoir ni dependance ni pretention en Europe lorsqu'il se mit en chemin pour le faire. D'au[tr]e costé, la maladie qui le separa de son Camarade et qui l'arresta à Liuourne oste le soupçon qu'il eust rompu son dessein pour en suyure quelque a[ut]re dans la veüe de s'establir de deça. Joint que je n'ay ouy dire a personne qu'il ait esté appelé pour l'employer dans le genre de lettres qui regarde la Nauiga[ti]on ou qui pourroit regarder le commerce d'affaires avec les Princes de l'Orient à quoy seulement il seroit vtile. Je conjecture de tout cela qu'il n'a rien qui l'oblige à repasser les Monts que des interests domestiques, lesquels vne fois réglés ne l'empescheroit pas apparemment d'entendre à des propositions honnestes, et qui pourroient luy donner de plus grands establissemens que ceux qu'il possède en son païs.<sup>24</sup>

[Apart from what I think I sent you about his birth, which is from among the better part of our respectable [*honnestes*] citizens, it appears that by undertaking the voyage to the Indies from his own pocket, that he must be a person of means, and that he could not have had any dependencies or claims in Europe when he embarked. On the other hand, the illness which separated him from

<sup>24</sup> Chapelain to Marucelli, 30 Nov. 1666, BN ms n. a. fr. 1888, ff. 247v–249r, at 248r; also in *Lettere inedite*, ed. Ciureanu, 40–2, here 40–1; summarized in Chapelain, vol. 2, 492 n. Ciureanu corrects Tamizey de Larroque's reading 'nos humbles citoyens' to 'nos honnestes citoyens', and this is extremely clear in the manuscript.

his comrade and which kept him at Livorno removes the suspicion that he changed his design in order to follow another, with the aim of establishing himself over here. Plus the fact that I have not heard anyone say that he was called to be employed in that part of learning which regards Navigation, or which could touch on commerce with the Princes of the Orient, the only areas for which he might be useful. I conjecture, from all that, that he has nothing to oblige him to come back across the Alps but domestic interests, which, once dealt with, will not prevent him from listening to honest propositions, and which could give him even greater positions than those he already possesses in his country.]

Chapelain is keen to establish d'Herbelot's status as a man of independent means, and an *honnête homme*; he also seems to clear d'Herbelot of the implied suspicion that he had abandoned Jean de Thévenot out of ambition to pursue patrons in France (although from what followed, this suspicion could well have arisen). Interestingly, Chapelain seems to emphasize that d'Herbelot was *not* brought back to France in order to work on navigation or as a diplomat—the only domains, he claims, where Oriental learning could be useful. The plans that were afoot as Chapelain was writing to bring d'Herbelot back (which we will soon come to) indicate that these were not the only ways in which Oriental learning might be of interest to the likes of Colbert.

In a still later letter, Chapelain introduces the possibility that some of the other courtiers in Florence might have resented the rise of the French Orientalist. Chapelain argues that they should count themselves lucky, since at least they have d'Herbelot in Florence. He writes, candidly: 'You must not be jealous of M. d'Herbelot, much as you could keep him [in Florence], his talents having found such praise and such favourable treatment there—and we will have to repress the desire that we have here for his return.'<sup>25</sup>

However, even while Chapelain was writing to Marucelli about the repression of desire, Colbert's patronage-brokers were taking steps to woo d'Herbelot back. Approaches were made by François Charpentier, a member, like Chapelain, of the so-called 'petite académie' which advised Colbert on matters of literary patronage and on royal inscriptions. Charpentier was able to suggest that there would be a new academy in which d'Herbelot would be an honoured member. This bauble was

<sup>25</sup> Chapelain to Marucelli, 6 June 1667, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 516 ('Il ne faut pas avoir envie Mr d'Herbelot tant que vous le pourrés retenir, ses talens ayant rencontrés chés vous tant d'applaudissement et des traitemens si favorables, et il faudra que nous reprimions le desir que l'on a icy de son retour').

dangled with a certain amount of vagueness, because in fact the plan was still at an early stage—and was, in the end, destined to fall through. The putative academy—which I will be calling ‘the Bourzeis group’—was an academy of history proposed in 1666 by the abbé Bourzeis, as part of Colbert’s plan for an encyclopedic ‘grande académie’. This proposal needs to be examined in some detail at this point, before we return to d’Herbelot’s story.

## COLBERT, BOURZEIS, AND THE ACADEMY OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES

In all the standard histories of the Académie Royale des Sciences, we read that Colbert’s original plan was to create a ‘grande académie’, covering the entire realm of learning. Since this project was never in fact realized, there has been a tendency to disregard it. Projects for pansophic colleges, in which each branch of the tree of knowledge would have its own department, were common enough in the seventeenth century, and seldom materialized. However, the scientific academies of the late seventeenth century did not spring fully formed from nothing, and how they functioned was by no means pre-ordained. If we are trying to understand them historically, then we need to look at the period before their role was defined—in other words, to look at the Academy-model when it was still in the making. The unrealized schemes lying behind the creation of the new academies are therefore very revealing.<sup>26</sup>

The story of Colbert’s ‘grande académie’ can be pieced together from several sources. Writing in the early eighteenth century, Fontenelle records that Colbert originally wanted ‘an Academy composed of all the most able people in all sorts of literature’, listing ‘scholars in history, grammarians, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, orators’. The different sections would have met on different days of the week, and

<sup>26</sup> D. S. Lux, ‘Colbert’s plan for the *Grande Académie*: royal policy toward science, 1663–67’, *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (1990), 177–88; see also his ‘The reorganisation of science, 1450–1700’, in B. T. Moran, ed., *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750* (Woodbridge, 1991), 185–94. See also H. Brown, *Scientific Organizations in Seventeenth-Century France (1620–1680)* (Baltimore, 1934), 147–9; A. J. George, ‘The genesis of the Académie des sciences’, *Annals of Science*, 3 (1938), 372–401, esp. 395–6; F. A. Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1947), 304–5; R. Hahn, *The Anatomy of a Scientific Institution: The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666–1803* (Berkeley, 1971), 11–14, 52–3.

on the first Thursday of each month there would be a general assembly of the whole academy—‘ces États Generaux de la Littérature’—where the proceedings of each section would be examined by the others.<sup>27</sup> Fontenelle’s retrospective account is corroborated by a note drafted by Charles Perrault for Colbert some time in 1666, when the proposals for an Academy were still at the drawing-board stage.<sup>28</sup> He envisaged a general Academy composed under four heads (*belles lettres*; history; philosophy; mathematics), each of the four sections being subdivided: *belles lettres* into grammar, rhetoric, and poetry; history into chronology, geography, and ‘history’; philosophy into chemistry, ‘simples’, anatomy, and *physique expérimentale*; mathematics into geometry, astronomy, and algebra. The same fourfold structure can be found in a letter from Chapelain to Carlo Dati, mentioning Colbert’s design to form four academies, divided into: physics and experimentation; astronomy (that is, the mathematics section); *belles lettres*; and history and political theory.<sup>29</sup>

Why did the plan for a ‘grande académie’ have to be abandoned? In the end, only two of the proposed sections got off the ground. Over the summer of 1666, the sections for mathematics and philosophy started to meet as planned, on Wednesdays and Saturdays in the Bibliothèque du roi. These meetings eventually came to be known as the ‘Académie royale des sciences’. The other two sections failed because they were seen as trespassing on the intellectual territory—and corporate privileges—of other already-established institutions. The section for ‘Lettres’ ran aground because its remit, and presumably also its personnel, would have overlapped with the Académie française, founded in 1635. So, instead of setting up a superfluous new entity, Colbert contented himself with an extension of royal control over the Académie française: he was himself made a member in 1667; and when its patron chancellor

<sup>27</sup> [B. de Fontenelle], *Histoire de l’Académie royale des sciences* (Paris, 1733), which forms vols 1 and 2 of *Histoire et Mémoires de l’Académie Royale des Sciences depuis 1666 jusqu’à 1699*, 11 vols (Paris, 1729–33). This passage is vol. 1, 5–6 (‘une Académie composée de tout ce qu’il y auroit de gens les plus habiles en toutes sortes de littérature... les savans en Histoire, les Grammairiens, les Mathematiciens, les Philosophes, les Poëtes, les Orateurs’).

<sup>28</sup> ‘Note de Charles Perrault à Colbert pour l’établissement d’une Académie Générale’, in *Lettres, instructions, et mémoires de Colbert*, ed. P. Clément (Paris, 1861–70), vol. 5, 512–13. Clément dated this note to 1666, but no more precisely than that.

<sup>29</sup> Chapelain to Dati, 12 Nov. 1666; cited in A. J. George, ‘A seventeenth-century amateur of science: Jean Chapelain’, *Annals of Science*, 3 (1938), 217–36, here 235 n. 106 (this letter, one of six in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Fondo Baldovinetti, 258, is not in Tamizy de Larroque’s edition of the Chapelain letters).

Séguier died in 1672, the king was made its new protector, and its meetings were moved to the Louvre.<sup>30</sup>

What of the section for 'history'? What was its intellectual remit, which scholars were suggested as members, and why did it collapse? In answering these questions, it becomes clear that this section of the 'grande académie' was identical with the 'Bourzeis group' mentioned earlier, the same 'academy' that was being held out to lure d'Herbelot back from Florence. To go back to Fontenelle's account:

Ce projet [for the grande académie] n'eut point d'execution. D'abord on retrancha du corps de cette grande Académie le membre qui appartenoit à l'Histoire. On n'eut pas pû s'empêcher de tomber dans des questions, où les faits deviennent trop importans et trop chatouilleux par la liaison inévitable qu'ils ont avec le droit.<sup>31</sup>

[This project was not carried out. First the section for history was cut off. It had proven impossible to avoid falling into questions where the facts became too important and too delicate (literally 'ticklish') by the inevitable connection they have with the law.]

Fontenelle's explication, written much later, is frustratingly vague, and nods to the traditional legal distinction between matters of fact and matters of right (*ius* and *factum*) which was familiar to contemporaries, not least because it was so common in theological wrangles. We can compare other accounts, such as Jean-Baptiste Du Hamel's Latin history of the Academy, which Fontenelle drew upon. Du Hamel gives a fuller description of the 'grande académie', fleshing out that of Fontenelle, and explains why the history section was suppressed:

Cum enim historia & Ecclesiastica maximè cum Theologicis quæstionibus, iisque imprimis quæ ad publicum Ecclesiæ regimen spectant, arctissimè conjuncta videatur, atque ex iis quæ sunt facti, persæpe quæ juris sunt deducantur, periculum erat ne ille doctorum hominum congressus quos minimè opus erat, offenderet.<sup>32</sup>

[Since history and church matters were seen as very closely connected with theological questions, especially those which touched on church government, and since from facts/deeds (*facti*), matters of law (*juris*) are very often drawn out, there was a danger lest that assembly of learned men, by straying out of their province, might offend.]

<sup>30</sup> See *DLF-17*, 291–7, art. 'Colbert', here 295.

<sup>31</sup> Fontenelle, *Histoire*, vol. 1, 6.

<sup>32</sup> J.-B. Du Hamel, *Regiæ Scientiarum Academiæ Historia*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1701), 3.

This tells us more than Fontenelle's allusion to 'ticklish' questions. Clearly, the kind of history envisaged was of a politically sensitive kind, for it embraced church history and questions of positive theology, and therefore touched on matters of church government ('publicum Ecclesiae regimen'). It was for that reason that the link between investigating 'facts' and making claim to rights was politically dangerous. Which of the many ticklish questions hotly contested in the 1660s is meant, Du Hamel does not say; but (as we will see) other sources suggest that the history academy was suspected of entering the highly charged field of Gallicanism.

Slightly more information, and a link with d'Herbelot, comes from a letter of March 1667 from Henri Justel to Pierre-Daniel Huet:

Vous savez qu'il y a une Academie pour les langues Orientales dont M<sup>r</sup> l'abbé de Bourzès est le chef. Monsieur de Launay en est et un nomm[é] Capelain, le Coutelier, la Croix, M<sup>r</sup> Derbelot, et plusieurs autres. Ils pretendent travailler sur la Bible, ce qui est assez difficile. L'ouverture de ceste Societe la a esté deja faicte.<sup>33</sup>

[You know that there is an academy for oriental languages, of which the abbé Bourzeis is the head. M. de Launay has been appointed to it, and one named Capelain, Le Coutelier, La Croix, M. d'Herbelot, and several others. They hope to work on the bible, which is difficult. The society has already been opened.]

Justel is the only source that gives us a list of names, which in itself helps us to reconstruct what the purpose of the group was (given what we know of the expertise of the different members). Amable de Bourzeis (1606–72), the leader of the group, was a venerable figure in the Paris learned world, having been a founder member of both the Académie française and of Colbert's 'petite académie'. By this date, the abbé Bourzeis was a well-known preacher and apologist, who held spiritual colloquies with such court figures as Edward, the Prince Palatine, and Friedrich-Hermann Schomberg (later a maréchal de France). Bourzeis was among those 'curieux et sçavans dans l'histoire' who worked closely with Colbert, producing documentary evidence to back up the crown's claims, like the defence of Gallicanism against the pope,<sup>34</sup> or of the

<sup>33</sup> H. Justel to P.-D. Huet, Paris, 30 Mar. 1667; published in H. Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, 277–9, here 278–9 (original in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Ashburnham 1866, inserto 790).

<sup>34</sup> A.-G. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet* (Paris, 1953), 218 nn. 4–5 (on the use of scholars to collect documents on Franco-papal relations); Colbert was impressed by a mémoire drawn up by Bourzeis for the 1663 crisis (at BN ms *Mélanges de Colbert* 4, ff. 434–58).



queen's rights to lands in the Spanish Netherlands in the build-up to the War of Devolution.<sup>35</sup> Claude Le Capelain was a young Hebrew scholar, later to become a Royal Professor.<sup>36</sup> Jean-Baptiste Cotelier was another theologian, remembered today for his work on the Greek Fathers of the Church, and whom Chapelain recommended to be Colbert's librarian.<sup>37</sup> Justel's 'Monsieur de Launay' is somewhat harder to identify: it could well refer to Jean de Launoy (1603–78)—known as a 'dénicheur des saints' ('de-nicher of saints') for his critical hagiography, but also a historian of philosophy, theology, and church discipline—although a perhaps more likely candidate is the jurist François de Launay, who was a friend of Cotelier and Du Cange.<sup>38</sup> 'La Croix' almost certainly refers to François Pétis de La Croix *père, secrétaire-interprète* to the king in Arabic and Turkish.<sup>39</sup>

Justel's letter also gives 'Oriental languages' as the *raison d'être* for this group, as opposed to history or theology. This would be confusing, had Justel not gone on to explain that the group intends to work on the Bible. This is brought out in a later letter, where Justel reports the closure of the embryonic academy: 'The Academy which was composed of persons learned in oriental languages, and which touched on theology, is dispersed. This assembly became suspect in Rome because its members spoke a little too freely.'<sup>40</sup> Justel's letter helps us to understand that an

<sup>35</sup> The queen's rights occupy much of Bourzeis's surviving letters, in BN ms *Mélanges de Colbert*, 102–29 and ms Baluze 336, ff. 7–8, 12–13. On Bourzeis, see *ABF, DLF-17*; Chapelain, 'Liste de quelques gens de lettres français vivant en 1662', in *Opuscules critiques de Chapelain*, ed. A. C. Hunter (Paris, 1936), 341–64, here 356; Chapelain, vol. 2, 326 n. 3, 329 (on his contact with the Huguenot Orientalist Samuel Bochart). I have not been able to consult Yasushi Noro, 'Un littérateur face aux événements du XVIIe siècle: Amable Bourzeis et les événements dans sa biographie' (Université de Clermont-Ferrand II, doctoral thesis, 2006).

<sup>36</sup> On Le Capelain (d. 1702; Royal Professor in Hebrew, 1675–89) see *ABF*; he was in contact with Edward Pococke: *The Theological Works of... Dr Pococke*, ed. L. Twells (London, 1740), vol. 1, 68, 70.

<sup>37</sup> On Cotelier (1627/9–86) see *ODCC; DLF-17; ABF*; Chapelain, vol. 2, 369, 428 n. 1; and Chapelain, 'Liste', 351. With Du Cange, he catalogued the Greek manuscripts of the Bibliothèque du roi.

<sup>38</sup> On François de Launay (1612–93), a professor in French Law from 1680, see *ABF*; on Jean de Launoy (1603–78) see *ABF, DLF-17*. A third possibility is that Justel means Gilles de Launay (fl. 1675), a Gassendist philosopher and one of the 'historiographes de France'.

<sup>39</sup> On the Pétis de La Croix family, see above, Introduction.

<sup>40</sup> 'L'Académie qui étoit composée de personnes savantes dans les langues orientales, et qui s'occupoit en peu de théologie, est dissipée. Cette assemblée devint apparemment suspecte à Rome parce que l'on y parloit un peu trop librement': Justel to Huet, Paris, 10 Dec. 1667; as cited in Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland*, 167, who cites the copy at

academy of Oriental languages was bound to be working on theological matters; and that the church authorities might have objected to this. What is meant by 'Rome' is not clear: but given the context of tension between Louis XIV and the papacy at this time, various possibilities suggest themselves: Justel (himself a Protestant) may be using 'Rome' as a shorthand for the papal nuncio, or perhaps for the large Ultramontane element within the French Church. The idea that the academy for history and oriental languages was suppressed because of objections from the religious authorities (usually identified in only the vaguest terms) recurs in other sources.

For example, an anonymous manuscript account of the establishment of the Académie des sciences follows Du Hamel's account very closely, but adds the new detail that Clement IX's nuncio made complaints to the king.<sup>41</sup> Further information comes from the journal kept by Jean Deslyons, the doyen of the Paris Faculty of Theology, who had sympathies for the Gallican and Jansenist causes. In late November 1667, Deslyons had heard that the assembly of *savants* that had been hosted by Bourzeis every week was being suppressed, partly because the Jesuits had complained about it to the authorities in Rome, and Colbert had seen fit to distance himself from Bourzeis as a result. The group had been repressed not by direct order but simply by restricting its remit strictly to language study. Deslyons at one point notes that there had been a rumour that the academy had Jansenist tendencies, while at another he describes it as 'the assembly of Richerist and Royal doctors', meaning Gallicans.<sup>42</sup> Deslyons seems to have been almost paranoid about the machinations of the Jesuits, which means his speculations may not be reliable. But his evidence at least reinforces the sense that the

BN ms fr. 15189, p. 147; the original is Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Ashburnham 1866, inserto 804 (cited by Lux, 'Colbert's plan', 188 n. 24). Harcourt Brown also identifies the academy of Oriental languages with the history section of the 'grande académie': *Scientific Organizations*, 73, 149.

<sup>41</sup> 'De l'établissement de l'Académie royale des sciences', Arsenal ms 7464, f. 43, as transcribed in A. C. J. F. Mallon, 'Science and government in France, 1661–1699: changing patterns of scientific research and development' (Queen's University, Belfast, Ph.D. dissertation, 1983), 56–7: 'Les historiens mesmes s'estant trop librement estendus sur des faits et des questions ecclesiastiques, la Sorbonne en murmura, et le Nonce du Pape en ayant eû avis fit de très humbles remonstrances au Roy qui obligerent Sa Maj. de supprimer cette Compagnie afin de contenter Clement IX. de qui elle estoit très satisfaite.'

<sup>42</sup> BN ms fr. 24998, 'Journal de Mr des Lions, doyen de la Faculté de Théologie . . .', pp. 567, 575, 582, 587. On Deslyons and his Jansenist views, see P. Féret, *La Faculté de théologie de Paris et ses docteurs les plus célèbres: époque moderne* (Paris, 1900–12), vol. 4, 394–404.

Bourzeis group was seen as having an inevitably controversial theological remit, that it involved linguistic expertise, and that it was shut down partly in response to complaints from anti-Gallican and anti-Jansenist quarters.

A later account of the 'grande académie' scheme appeared in 1702, in a French adaptation of Bacon's *New Atlantis*, probably by Gilles-Bernard Raguét. Bacon's vision of Solomon's House was embedded within a dialogue between 'Philarque' and 'Cleon', in which the comparisons are made between Bacon's scheme and the recently founded academies in France. On the foundation of the Académie des sciences, Cleon (who represents Raguét himself) tells Philarque: 'First the sage Ophis [i.e. Colbert] had resolved to create a universal Society. He joined together natural philosophers, mathematicians, historians, and those versed in belles-lettres.'<sup>43</sup> Cleon (i.e. Raguét) goes on to note that the 'petit Corps d'Historiens' began to work on universal history (both sacred and profane), which led them into discussion of 'des points les plus délicats & les plus embrouïllez'.

C'étoit là se proposer un objet trop vague; s'exposer, des le premier pas, à choquer quelque puissance formidable; & négliger un des moyens les plus infaillibles qu'une Compagnie puisse avoir pour gagner les bonnes graces du public . . .<sup>44</sup>

[In so doing, they were setting themselves too vague an object [of study], and making it likely that they would shock some formidable power, and neglect one of the most sure ways an academy might have to gain the good graces of the public . . .]

It would have been obvious to readers of the time why matters of 'histoire universelle, tant ecclesiastique que profane' could be troublesome.

The article on Bourzeis in the 1718 edition of Moreri's biographical *Dictionary* provides a sense of the aims of the Bourzeis group. It notes that Colbert consulted Bourzeis on matters of patronage, and adds:

[Colbert] le fit Chef d'une Assemblée qui se faisoit des Gens de Lettres dans son Hôtel (c'est ce que l'on nommoit *la petite Académie*) & d'une autre Assemblée

<sup>43</sup> 'D'abord le sage Ophis avoit resolu de faire une Société universelle. Il joignit ensemble des Physiciens, des Mathematiciens, des Historiens, & des personnes versées dans les belles lettres': Bacon, *La Nouvelle Atlantide* . . . Traduite en François, & continuée: Avec des Reflexions sur l'institution & les occupations des Academies Française, des Sciences, & des Inscriptions. Par M. R. [G.-B. Raguét] (Paris, 1702), 238. On Raguét (1668–1748), see *DLF-18*.

<sup>44</sup> Bacon, trans. Raguét, *La Nouvelle Atlantide*, 241.

de Théologiens celebres que l'on forma en 1667 dans la Bibliothèque du Roi, pour examiner divers passages de l'Écriture, sur tout ceux dont les libertins se servent pour détruire l'autorité des Livres divins.<sup>45</sup>

[[Colbert] made him the head of an assembly of men of letters which was formed in his *hôtel* (known as the 'petite académie'), and of another assembly of famous theologians, formed in 1667 at the royal library to examine various passages of scripture, especially those which were used by the libertines to destroy the authority of the divine books.]

Firstly, this confirms the distinction between the 'history' section of the grande académie (the Bourzeis group) and the better-known 'petite académie'. And again, the Moreri article reinforces the notion that the aims of the Bourzeis group included biblical history, which would explain why the sources describe it variously as an academy for 'theology', 'history' or 'Oriental languages'. Regardless of whether the ultimate goal was to combat the perceived threat of the *libertins*—a remark which, if it is not simply a pious gloss added by a later writer, would make the Bourzeis group an interesting precursor to Bossuet's group in the 1670s, which included Huet and Renaudot—the connection between Oriental expertise, sacred history, and political concerns is underlined.

Perhaps the richest account for helping us understand the failure of the history section is in the *Mémoires* of Charles Perrault. Although he does not mention his sketch of the fourfold 'grande académie' cited above, he does mention the Bourzeis group:

M. l'abbé de Bourséis demanda qu'il y eût des académiciens pour la théologie, et M. Colbert l'ayant agréé, plusieurs docteurs en théologie furent nommés, entre autres l'illustre M. Ogier, le plus célèbre prédicateur de son temps . . .

Les conférences de théologie durèrent peu, car la Sorbonne, qui en fut alarmée, vint par députés s'en plaindre à M. Colbert, qui se rendit à leurs remontrances, n'ayant pas pu disconvenir qu'il y avoit du péril à laisser le pouvoir à des particuliers de disputer sur des matières de religion, qu'il falloit laisser entre les mains des Facultés établies pour en connoître. Il fut en même temps résolu que dans l'Académie occupée aux sciences . . ., on ne disputeroit point de matière de controverse ni de politique . . . Il fut encore ordonné que les astronomes ne s'appliqueroient point à l'astrologie judiciaire, et que les chymistes ne travailleroient point à la pierre philosophique, ni près, ni loin, ces deux choses ayant été trouvées très-frivoles et très-pernicieuses.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> L. Moreri, *Le Grand Dictionnaire historique, ou le mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane*, revised edn (Paris, 1718), vol. 1, 995 (art. 'Bourzeis').

<sup>46</sup> C. Perrault, *Mémoires de ma vie* (Paris, 1993), 141–2.

[The abbé Bourzeis asked that there be academicians for theology, and M. Colbert having agreed, several doctors of theology were appointed, among others the illustrious M. Ogier, the most famous preacher of his time . . .

The meetings in theology did not last long, since the Sorbonne, alarmed by them, sent a deputation to complain to Colbert, who conceded to their complaints, not having been able to deny that there was danger in letting private individuals have the right to dispute matters of religion, and that such matters had to be left in the hands of the established Faculties in those fields. At the same time it was resolved that in the Academy set up for the sciences . . . there would be no discussion of matters of (church) controversy or politics . . . It was also ordered that the astronomers would not work on judicial astrology, and that the chemists would not work on the philosopher's stone, neither directly or indirectly, both these things having been found most frivolous and pernicious.]

Even while treating Perrault's account with caution (since this is only his version of events, written later), it still adds a great deal to the picture. First, Perrault adds another name to our list. François Ogier was a friend of the Perrault family (and therefore well placed to receive Colbert's patronage), best known for his rhetorical skills, as a well-known pulpit orator and controversialist.<sup>47</sup> Above all, though, Perrault's account makes clear that what was going on was a 'boundary dispute'. As we have seen, the Bourzeis group took the risk of including sacred history within their remit. The obstacle was the Paris Faculty of Theology's assertion of its monopoly on theological learning. Perrault relates that the Faculty sent a deputation to Colbert specifically to complain about the proposed 'conférences de théologie', and that Colbert was forced to concede that it was too dangerous to allow *private individuals* ('des particuliers') the power to dispute matters of religion. This has been interpreted as a case of corporate bodies—'des Facultés établies'—defending their privileges (their authority over teaching and doctrine) against the threatened royal innovation.<sup>48</sup> It is telling, moreover, that the members of this group are called 'des particuliers' ('private persons'). This underlines, incidentally, the extent to which the category of a 'royal academy' did not yet exist. (From the Faculty's point of view, the Académie française presumably had an exceptional status, which it would not want to see extended to new entities; meanwhile the Académie des sciences did not yet exist as an official body, and was for several years known simply as the 'company

<sup>47</sup> On Ogier (1597–1670) see *DLF-17*, and Chapelain, 'Liste', 347; on his panegyric for Louis XIV see Chapelain, vol. 2, 405, 408, 649.

<sup>48</sup> See Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, 147–9; Hahn, *Anatomy of a Scientific Institution*, 11–14, 52–3; and Lux, 'Colbert's plan', 185.

assembled in the Bibliothèque du roi': it did not receive an official *règlement* until 1699, and chartered status until 1713.) Perhaps even more suggestive, if we can believe Perrault's account, is the existing context of tension between Colbert and the Faculty at this point. Since the beginning of the decade, the crown had been exerting pressure on the Faculty to ratify Gallican doctrines. Gradually the Faculty fell into line, but not without feeling indignant about being bullied in this way. One way in which the Bourzeis group might have been seen as an affront to papal authority was the attempt to produce new readings of the Bible by recourse to 'Oriental languages': something that proved controversial, for example, in the case of the Port-Royal Psalter of 1665–7.<sup>49</sup> We could speculate further that Colbert's willingness to sacrifice the 'history' section of the 'grande académie' might have been part of the price he paid for the Faculty's compliance on other matters.

More importantly, Perrault's account of Colbert's academy plans shows the erection of the boundaries that were to make the future Académie des sciences possible, by excluding any 'controversial or political' matter: astronomy is defined by the exclusion of 'judicial astrology', chemistry by the exclusion of alchemy; both demarcations still being relatively hard to make in the 1660s. It is only in this context that the defeat of the Bourzeis group makes sense. This 'exclusion crisis' shows us how much Oriental scholarship was bound up with theology, how much it lacked a secure institutional base of its own; and how difficult it was—because theological questions were so politicized—for such a 'site' for Oriental research to be established.

The tension surrounding the Bourzeis academy provides a crucial context for understanding d'Herbelot's dilemma. We left him in Florence, enjoying the patronage of the grand duke Ferdinando II, and it is now time to take up that story again.

<sup>49</sup> B. Chédozeau, 'La Faculté de théologie de Paris au XVIIe siècle: un lieu privilégié des conflits entre gallicans et ultramontains (1600–1720)', *Mélanges de la Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne*, 10 (1990), 39–102, here 73–4. On the church politics of the 1660s, see Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, 216–73. Cf. L. W. B. Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History* (Oxford, 1987), 270–2; J. M. Grès-Gayer, 'The Magisterium of the Faculty of Theology of Paris in the seventeenth century', *Theological Studies*, 53 (1992), 424–50. It might be that the Bourzeis group was seen as potentially Gallican and that the Ultramontane majority of the Faculty complained to Colbert. If indeed the papal nuncio complained, this would have echoed the complaint made by the nuncio in 1665 about the Gallican sentiments voiced in the newly founded *Journal des Sçavans*, which had close links to Colbert (*DLF-17*, 294).

## D'HERBELOT IN FLORENCE

The fact that Justel told Huet in 1667 that d'Herbelot had been named a member of the Bourzeis group (along with Le Capelain, Cotelier, Pétais de La Croix *père*, and 'Monsieur de Launay') does not mean that he was ever physically present when the group met. From the extant letters it seems clear that d'Herbelot remained in Florence throughout the period of the Bourzeis academy's short existence. Fortunately three letters have survived, between d'Herbelot and François Charpentier, which shed some light on the negotiations. The original letter from Charpentier to d'Herbelot is lost, and we take up the dialogue with a letter from d'Herbelot dated from Florence, 3 September 1666:

J'ay appris par les lettres de M<sup>r</sup> de la Croix et par celles de mon frere toutes les bontéz que vous avéz eu pour moy pendant mon absence. Je vous prie bien fort de croire que ie n'en ay pas esté moins touché pour auoir differé iusques a present a vous en tesmoigner ma reconnoissance. L'exces de la grace que vous m'avez fait aussy bien que celuy de la ioye que iay ressenty d'auoir rencontré un si bon Patron et un si parfait amy ont de besoin de quelque temps pour me faire reconnoistre moy mesme, et pour me donner lieu de vous remercier avec plus de connoissance . . . en effet ie ne vois pas ce qui vous a pu porter a me rendre de si bons offices puisque ie ne m'apparois point encores d'auoir acquis ny aupres de vous ny aupres du public aucun caractere de service qui m'en rende digne, mais vostre generosité Monsieur, vous a fait passer sur ces considerations . . . Je ne refuseray point d'engagement qui me soit procuré de vostre main, et quoy que l'eloignement m'ayant fait prendre des pensées de ne pas quitter si tost une conioncture assez fauorable a ma fortune, vous ne trouuez point neantmoins en moy de resistance en tout ce que vous m'ordonnez . . .<sup>50</sup>

[I have learned, from the letters of M. de La Croix and of my brother, of all that you have done for me during my absence. Please believe that I have not been less touched for having so long delayed telling you how grateful I am. The excess of grace that you have done me, as well as the joy that I have felt for having met such a good patron and perfect friend, have taken some time for me to appreciate, and to lead me to thank you all the more mindfully . . . Indeed I do not see what led you to carry out such good offices for me, because I do not see myself as having acquired, neither with you, nor with the public, any character of service which would make me worthy of them; but your generosity, Sir, has led you to pass over these considerations . . . I would not refuse any

<sup>50</sup> BN ms fr. 12764, ff. 66–7: d'Herbelot to François Charpentier, Florence, 3 Sept. 1666.

engagement procured for me by your hand, and although being so far away had made me think that I should not so soon leave a conjuncture so favourable to my fortune, you will not find in me, nevertheless, any resistance in anything that you arrange for me . . . ]

Here we see d'Herbelot performing a delicately balanced diplomatic move: hoping to keep up the interest in him, he pays lip-service to Charpentier's power as a patronage-broker, whilst indicating that it will still take rather a lot to attract him back. In Charpentier's reply, things start to become a little more explicit:

Je pensois que nous aurions le bien de vous auoir a Paris plus tost que vostre derniere lettre ne me donne sujet de l'esperer. Je vois bien que vous tenez fortement au coeur des Princes au pres de qui vous etes, et je ne cherche pas de meilleure preuue de leur bon goust et de la justice qu'ils rendent au merite extraordinaire. Mr de la Croix vous aura sans doute entretenu amplem[en]t du sujet qui m'obligeoit a vous souhaiter icy et il est mesme demeuré d'accord de vous ecrire au long a cet ordinaire; je n'ajouteray donc rien a ce quil peut vous mander sinon que vous auez le choix du lieu ou vous trouuerez le plus auantageux de vous arreter et que bien heureux sera celuy qui vous possedera.<sup>51</sup>

[I thought we would have the pleasure of having you in Paris sooner than your last letter gives me reason to hope. I see that you have considerable loyalty to the Princes in whose service you are, and I would not look for any better proof of their good taste, and of the reward they give to extraordinary merit. Mr de La Croix will no doubt have informed you amply as to why I wanted you here, and he even agreed to write to you fully by this post; I will therefore add nothing to what he will say, except that you can choose whichever place you find the most advantageous to stay, and that whoever possesses you will be very fortunate.]

From Charpentier's tone, it might be that the Parisians were now resigned to the fact that they could not compete with the favours that d'Herbelot had obtained in Florence.

Behind the scenes, Chapelain was also pulling strings. In late December 1666, he asked Marucelli to assure d'Herbelot of the 'particular case that I am making for his ability . . . Your princes could not find a better recipient for their patronage.'<sup>52</sup> A few months later he added that

<sup>51</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 6262, f. 31: Charpentier to d'Herbelot, undated. A later hand has added '1667'.

<sup>52</sup> Chapelain to Marucelli, 29 Dec. 1666, BN ms n. a. fr. 1888, f. 253v ('. . . et de le bien assurer du cas particulier que je fais de sa vertu. Mr de la Croix, son ami, aura desjà fait le mesme office à ma prière. Mgrs vos Princes ne scauroient mieux employer leurs bons traitemens qu'en sa personne'); in *Lettere inedite*, ed. Ciureanu, 44; mentioned in Chapelain, vol. 2, 494 n.



the plans in Paris, although secret, were 'in the best possible state'.<sup>53</sup> These cryptic remarks make sense only in the context of the ongoing negotiations to offer d'Herbelot some kind of royal patronage.

D'Herbelot replied to Charpentier in June 1667, almost a year after his arrival in Florence, complaining that he still did not know what Paris was offering as an alternative to his position in Florence. Even Pétis de La Croix, who had told d'Herbelot about the establishment of 'an academy', and of his nomination to it, had not been able to explain in enough detail what the new position might involve, and whether it would be enough to warrant giving up the 'considerable advantage' that d'Herbelot enjoyed in Florence.<sup>54</sup> Here, for the first time, the 'academy' (the Bourzeis group) is mentioned. If the relevant letters from Pétis de La Croix (*père*) to d'Herbelot had survived, we might know more about Colbert's scheme for the 'grande académie', and about the Bourzeis group that was a part of it.<sup>55</sup> Clearly, the plans looked vague from d'Herbelot's point of view, and he sensed—correctly, as it turned out—that it was not necessarily going to offer better conditions than those he had found in Florence. Being a member of a putative new royal academy in Paris was not enough.

The degree to which d'Herbelot was able to resist the call from Paris has not always been appreciated, partly because the length of his absence has not been known.<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, Chapelain was still sending

<sup>53</sup> Chapelain to Marucelli, 21 Apr. 1667, in *Lettere inedite*, ed. Ciureanu, 59 ('Je vous garderay le secret à l'égard de Mr D'Herbelot. Il ne sera pas fâché de sçavoir que les choses, dont je luy fis donner avis par Mr de la Croix, sont au meilleur estat du monde').

<sup>54</sup> BN ms fr. 12764, ff. 68–9: d'Herbelot to Charpentier, Florence 3 June 1667: 'Mr dela Croix m'escrit suiuant ce que vous me marquez de la liberte du choix qu'on me laisse un peu plus au long que vous ne faites, mais il ne m'en dit pas pourtant dauantage car ie ne sçais pas encores entre quelles choses il faut que i'establisse mon choix. [V]ous ne m'avez parlé par vostre precedente que fort generalement. Mr de la Croix m'a un peu plus particularisé les choses en m'apprenant qu'on auoit estably une Academie de laquelle i'auois esté nommé. C'est un grand honneur a la verité que i'ay receu et duquel ie pourrois tirez beaucoup de vanité si ie me méconnoissois, mais on n'[a] point parl[é] d'autre chose qui puisse me porter a quitter un auantage considerable que i'ay icy. Si vous m'avez fait le grace de m'en esclarcir i'auois eu plus de suiet de faire reflexion sur ce choix. J'espere Monsieur de vostre extreme courtoisie qui vous a fait embrasser les interests d'une personne si peu considerable et qui vous a esté tousjours si inutile, que vous vous ennuiez un peu plus a moy sur ce sujet.'

<sup>55</sup> I have not seen the undated letter Pétis de La Croix (*père*) sent to d'Herbelot when the latter was in Pisa, at BN ms supplément turc 1196, ff. 155–6.

<sup>56</sup> Within the *éloge* tradition there is no precise date for d'Herbelot's return from Florence to Paris; most modern sources therefore assume, without evidence, that he must have come back in 1667 (see e.g. Richard, 'Le dictionnaire de d'Herbelot', 83).

greetings to d'Herbelot in Florence in April 1668.<sup>57</sup> In fact, it seems that d'Herbelot came back to Paris in late 1670 or early 1671.<sup>58</sup> A small detail in the earliest *éloges*, mistakenly obliterated by their imitators, is crucial here. Both Cousin and Perrault are careful to state that it was 'le Grand Duc qui regne à present' (writing in the 1690s, this means Cosimo III, r. 1670–1723) who was unwilling to let d'Herbelot leave Tuscany, rather than his father, Ferdinando II, who had welcomed d'Herbelot to Florence in 1666.<sup>59</sup> This detail would suggest that d'Herbelot left Florence in Cosimo III's reign, after the death of Ferdinando II (23 May 1670). This would mean that d'Herbelot was in Florence for four years, from July 1666 to the summer of 1670.

A Florentine perspective on why d'Herbelot left the Tuscan court, found in a reminiscence written thirty years later, lends further weight to this hypothesis. On hearing the news of d'Herbelot's death, Antonio Magliabecchi, librarian to the Medici, wrote to Leibniz:

La morte del Sig. D'Erbelot non mi era nota. Viveva esso ritiratissimamente molti anni sono in Livorno. Un anno, mentre che vi era la Corte, nell'istesso tempo, ricevei due Lettere, una di propria mano del Ser<sup>mo</sup> e Rev<sup>mo</sup> Sig. Principe Cardinal Leopoldo di gloriosa memoria; e l'altra del Ser<sup>mo</sup> nostro Gran Duca [Cosimo III], che era allora Principe. L'uno e l'altro mi scriveva di aver parlato al Sig. D'Erbelot, lodandolo infinitamente, e soggiugnendomi, che esso bramava solamente di venire a Firenze per veder me. Il Ser<sup>mo</sup> e Rev<sup>mo</sup> Sig. Principe Cardinale, mi sovviene, che trà le altre cose, nella sua Lettera mi scriveva queste precise parole[.] *Io l'hò scoperto e 'l Sig. Principe me l'hà levato.* Tanta era la stima che avevano di esso, che era si può dire qualche gelosia trà loro, per averlo ogniuno di essi appresso di se. Venne di Livorno a Firenze, trattato con ogni generosità, e con grosse provvisioni, e per molto tempo sempre si acquistò nella Corte maggiore stima. In ultimo, l'invidia cominciò talmente a perseguirlo,

<sup>57</sup> *Lettere inedite*, ed. Ciureanu, 86 (Chapelain to Marucelli, 25 Sept. 1667), 123 (12 Apr. 1668). Incidentally, this shows that the 'Mr d'Erbelot' who accompanied Magalotti on his visit to the Bibliothèque du roi in May 1668 was the younger brother: L. Magalotti, *Relazioni di viaggio in Inghilterra, Francia e Svezia*, ed. W. Moretti (Bari, 1968), 148, 159. Barthélemy was the elder of the d'Herbelot brothers, as the notes of le P. Léonard make clear (Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 57; BN ms fr. 22582, p. 187).

<sup>58</sup> Latest dates are provided by Francis Vernon to Henry Oldenburg, 8 Mar. 1671, where d'Herbelot 'is some time since returned from Florence' (Oldenburg, vol. 7, 497–8); Valentin Conrart to Lorenzo Magalotti, 29 May 1671 (d'Herbelot has returned 'depuis peu': V. Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, ed. G. Berquet and J.-P. Collinet (Saint-Etienne, 1981), 112, cf. 104 n. 2).

<sup>59</sup> Ancillon and later writers do not distinguish the two grand dukes (compare Cousin, 'Eloge', and Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres*, vol. 2, 71, with Ancillon, *Mémoires*, 136). The fact that the older sources take care to distinguish the two grand dukes would seem to suggest that they are more reliable.

che vedendo esso di non esser più chiamato in Corte, né fatto conto di esso, si licenziò, e se ne tornò in Francia.<sup>60</sup>

[I did not know about the death of Signor d'Herbelot. Many years ago he was living in great seclusion in Livorno. One year, while the court was there, I received two letters at the same time, one from the very hand of the Most-Serene and Most-Reverend Prince, Cardinal Leopoldo of glorious memory, and the other from our Most-Serene grand duke [Cosimo III], who at that time was still Prince. Both of them wrote that they had conversed with d'Herbelot, praising him infinitely, and adding that his one wish was to come to Florence to see me. The . . . Cardinal Prince, I recall, wrote, among the other things in his letter, these precise words: *I discovered him, and my lord the Prince has stolen him from me*. They held him in such esteem that there was a sort of jealousy between them, since each of them wanted to have him in attendance upon them. He came from Livorno to Florence, was treated with every generosity, and with great remuneration, and for a long time his reputation at Court went up and up. Eventually, the envy [that this caused] began to torment him so much that, seeing as he was no longer asked to court, and was no longer taken account of, he took his leave and returned to France.]

This anecdote, written so much later, needs to be handled with care. But there are certain details which are valuable additions to the narrative: the fact that Princes Leopoldo and Cosimo 'discover' d'Herbelot (Ferdinando II hardly features in this version of events), something we found hinted at in one of Chapelain's letters above.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps the most telling element in Magliabecchi's story is that d'Herbelot was not 'pulled' away from Florence at all, but rather 'pushed' by the decline of his fortune at the Tuscan court—an all too familiar pattern in the careers of courtly favourites.

By linking d'Herbelot to the patronage of Prince Leopoldo—a prominent patron of 'scientific' activity of the day—the Magliabecchi anecdote allows us to understand d'Herbelot's experience in the light of other research on Medici patronage at this time.<sup>62</sup> Such work has drawn attention to the ways in which scholarly activity was part of the courtly form of life. The ageing Ferdinando II and his brother Prince Leopoldo were engaged in patronage on a large scale at this

<sup>60</sup> Magliabecchi to Leibniz, Florence 14 Jan. 1696, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/12, 324–7, here 325.

<sup>61</sup> The moment of 'discovery' was also generic: see Callard, 'Diogène au service des princes', 92.

<sup>62</sup> See works cited in note 2. For Florentine patronage in this period, see E. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries: 1527–1800* (Chicago, 1973), 229–313; E. L. Goldberg, *Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage* (Princeton, 1983).

time. Leopoldo was the major patron of the natural-philosophical group known as the Accademia del Cimento (which ceased to meet only in 1667), and was keen to attract foreign scholars to the court. Perhaps the most famous of these, who came to Florence in the same year as d'Herbelot, was the Danish prodigy Nicholas Steno, who had made his name in Paris at the assembly hosted by Melchisédech Thévenot. Other highly prized virtuosi at the Tuscan court at this time were Vincenzo Viviani, the disciple of Galileo, and Francesco Redi; overtures were also made, though without success, to another of Thévenot's protégés, the Dutch naturalist Jan Swammerdam.<sup>63</sup>

The collection of books bought for d'Herbelot by Ferdinando II can serve as a point of entry for understanding d'Herbelot's reception in Tuscany. The gift was an aspect of the display of princely liberality, a traditional ritual of royal power. The prince displayed (or asserted) his power by the generosity of the gift and, just as importantly, by the regal manner of the giving.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, from the point of view of the patron, the new protégé was a trophy, or a fine specimen—as is revealed by Magliabecchi's account of Leopoldo and Cosimo fighting over their 'discovery'.

The patron's gift was in effect a tacit contract. What d'Herbelot got out of this contract is clear: splendid accommodation, servants, a coach; prestige and honour (simply by having had these gifts bestowed on him); and the priceless collection of Oriental manuscripts itself. In addition, he gained the use of the grand ducal library and its Oriental collection, and access to other Florentine scholars. Perhaps more important, though less tangible, was that d'Herbelot gained an institutional space in which he could pursue his studies. Mario Biagioli has analysed Galileo's successful use of the Medici court as a means of bypassing the usual disciplinary divide between mathematics and philosophy.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, d'Herbelot's research—in Oriental philology—was in need of legitimation, because of the lack of a secure boundary between Oriental learning and theology. We can see this in

<sup>63</sup> Findlen, 'Controlling the experiment: rhetoric, court patronage and the experimental method of Francesco Redi', *History of Science*, 31 (1993), 35–64; Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 394; *The Letters of Jan Swammerdam to Melchisedec [sic] Thévenot*, trans. G. A. Lindeboom (Amsterdam, 1975), 72.

<sup>64</sup> Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier*, 36–54; P. Findlen, 'The economy of scientific exchange in early modern Italy', in Moran, ed., *Patronage and Institutions*, 5–24. On the importance of the manner of giving and receiving, see the satirical comments in La Bruyère, *Les Caractères*, 'De la cour', section 45.

<sup>65</sup> Biagioli, works cited in note 2.

the collapse of the Bourzeis academy at the protest of the Paris theology faculty—although of course d'Herbelot could not have known of this at the time that he moved to Florence. Nevertheless, finding a place within the private coterie of the Medici princes provided a haven for his pursuits.

What did the Medici get out of d'Herbelot? Nothing, of course, on the surface level: the whole point of a princely gift was that it should appear to be freely given. But as Chapelain noted, d'Herbelot's generous treatment could only mean that he would have to perform some 'signal service' in return. The usual way for d'Herbelot to pay his patrons back would be to produce an impressive work of scholarship (or at least an occasional poem) which could be dedicated to the prince and spread his reputation as a friend of learning. This d'Herbelot did not do. He did not publish any books in his lifetime. Instead, it seems that d'Herbelot was able to ignore the call of 'print culture' by successfully mastering the art of courtly conversation. One of the features of scientific life in the coterie of Prince Leopoldo was the importance attached to rhetorical skill and polite *conversazione*.<sup>66</sup> Perrault and Magliabecchi concur that the Medici princes were impressed at Livorno by their 'frequent conversations' with d'Herbelot, 'dont ils furent si satisfaits'. At the Florentine court in the 1660s the fashion was for *exotica*, delights, and marvels: a taste the naturalists Redi and Steno had to cater for. It seems likely that d'Herbelot was able to present the fruit of his Oriental reading in a suitably elegant fashion.

The best evidence of this comes from a letter from Lorenzo Magalotti. Just after the arrival of the French scholar, he wrote that:

io no ho veduto, in dieci anni che sono a questo paese, capitarvi un uomo e mantenersi per qualche tempo con aura maggiore e più universale di quella ch'egli acquistò a Livorno subito che fu noto alla Corte, che portò, e che conserva, anzi accresce ogni giorno in Firenze.<sup>67</sup>

[I have not seen, in ten years in this country, anyone arrive and stay for a while with a greater or more universal reputation [*aura*] than the one he acquired in Livorno as soon as he became known to the Court; one that he maintains, and which even increases every day in Florence.]

<sup>66</sup> J. Tribby, 'Of conversational dispositions and the *Saggi*'s proem', in Cropper, *et al.*, eds, *Documentary Culture*, 379–90.

<sup>67</sup> This and the following passages from Magalotti to Alessandro Segni, Florence 24 Aug. 1666, in L. Magalotti, *Scritti di corte e di mondo*, ed. E. Falqui (Rome, 1945), 275–6.

What makes d'Herbelot even more impressive is that he contradicts the Florentine stereotype of the Parisian intellectual:

V. S. Ill<sup>ma</sup> averà veduto in Parigi molti Francesi avventati e si sarà maravigliata della loro moltitudine, ma creda certo che, imparando a conoscer quest'uomo, rimarrebbe attuata la sua maraviglia, considerando esser colato in lui tutto quello che di sodezza, di civiltà e di maturo accorgimento manca a tant'altri de' suoi paesani.

[Your Illustrious Lordship will have seen in Paris many foolhardy Frenchmen, and will have been amazed at how numerous they are, but believe me, getting to know this man would make you even more amazed, considering that he has distilled in him all the solidity [*sodezza*], civility [*civiltà*] and mature discernment [*accorgimento*] that is lacking in so many of his compatriots.]

After these remarks, Magalotti goes into more detail on the reception d'Herbelot found at court.

Io non ho ancora trovato in Corte chi non lo stimi sommamente: il Gran Duca rade volte passa per l'anticamera, alla quale fin da principio fu abilitato, che non ne faccia la sua tirata; il sig. Principe di Toscana [Cosimo] passa il più delle veglie con esso seco e il sig. Principe Leopoldo non si sta punto.

[I have not yet found anyone in the Court who does not esteem him highly: the grand duke rarely goes past the antechamber in which [d'Herbelot] has been lodged since he arrived without a lengthy speech; the Prince of Tuscany [Cosimo] spends most evenings with him, and Prince Leopoldo does not lag far behind.]

Clearly, the place d'Herbelot occupies at the court is the private space of the princes, where he can be engaged in private conversation. However, it also emerges that d'Herbelot was made a member of the Florentine Accademia della Crusca, the Medici academy for polishing the Tuscan language. Magalotti describes how the exoticism of d'Herbelot's knowledge added to his credit among the Florentine court scholars:

I nostri letterati hanno veduto qualch'uomo erudito, ma finalmente par che tutti sappiano l'istesse cose; questo solo li conduce in un mondo nuovo, per un mare di studi pellegrini, che non può tentarsi senza una buona provvisione di perfetta intelligenza delle più famose lingue orientali, nelle quali egli è versatissimo. Noi l'abbiamo ascritto tra i nostri Accademici della Crusca, tra quali vi è taluno che si contenterebbe di scriver toscano pensatamente com'egli parla all'improvviso. In somma egli è così buono a leggere in cattedra, come a discorrere in su'l tappeto, cose molto difficili se non incompatibili ad accoppiarsi insieme. Io gli ho posto uno stretto assedio e perché non mi possar esser così da tutti ritrovato il conto del mio profitto, mi son messo a studiare la lingua arabica, della quale

a gran pena comincio a leggere i libri stampati, coniugo i verbi e ritrovo la costruzione.

[Our Florentine *letterati* have seen some learned men, but in the end they always seem to know the same things: this man alone takes them into a new world, through a sea of exotic studies [*per un mare di studi pellegrini*], something which can not be attempted without a perfect knowledge of the most famous Oriental languages, in which he is extremely proficient. We have admitted him to the Accademia della Crusca—some of the members of which would be happy to be able to write in Tuscan as well as he speaks it off the cuff. Overall, he is just as good at lecturing [*a leggere in cattedra*] as he is at impromptu conversation [*a discorrere in su'l tappeto*], two things which it is very difficult (if they are not incompatible) to find together. I have lain siege to him, and so that it will not be obvious to all what I have got out of him, I have begun to study Arabic, in which I am beginning with great difficulty to read printed books, to conjugate verbs and to understand constructions.]

It is clear that d'Herbelot's success was a result of his ability to speak well, in Tuscan, and to attune his eloquence to the different keys of academic and polite discourse. This is nicely revealed by the fact that Magalotti claims to be learning Arabic simply in order to have closer contact with d'Herbelot. Elsewhere, Magalotti described the discourse that d'Herbelot delivered to the Accademia della Crusca on Arabic and Persian etymology.

in materia d'origini l'accademia [della Crusca] aveva fatto grande acquisto con la persona di Mr d'Erbelot, il quale ne aveva già fornito molte ingegnosissime cavate dalle radici della lingua arabica e della persiana, mostrandone la derivazione appoggiata a buonissimi fondamenti. Se ne rise asserendo che da questi fonti la nostra lingua non ha attinto pur una gocciola, e tutto questo con una magistralità come s'egli fosse il Bembo, il Casa o il cavalier Salviati, quando le sue, almeno quelle ch'egli stima tanto, sono una spezie d'indovinelli fatti a capriccio, i quali al più mostrano la possibilità della derivazione ma non n'adducono alcun riscontro.<sup>68</sup>

[in etymological matters, the Accademia della Crusca had made a great acquisition in the person of Mr d'Herbelot, who had already provided very ingenious findings drawn from the roots of the Arabic and Persian, showing their derivations upon the best grounds. He joked about the fact that our language has not drawn even a single drop from these sources, and all this with magisterial

<sup>68</sup> Magalotti, *Relazioni di viaggio*, 139–40. Magalotti is recounting to Prince Cosimo a conversation he had with Gilles Ménage in Paris in May 1668.

authority [*magistralità*], as if he was [Pietro] Bembo, [Girolamo della] Casa, or [Leonardo] Salviati, even when his [findings], or at least those that he likes so much, are just a kind of whimsical riddle [*indovinello fatti a capriccio*] that at most show the possibility of the derivation but do not adduce any proof.]

Once again, Magalotti emphasizes the exceptional quality of d'Herbelot's performance, and his ability to suit the conventions of the setting in which he is working. The general work of the Crusca was to research the Tuscan language, and yet as Magalotti makes clear, d'Herbelot's discourse on Arabic and Persian etymology was not directly related to this project. Rather, d'Herbelot's knowledge was presented as a diverting and elegant display of ingenuity, of virtuosity, which in the end can be described as an 'indovinello fatti a capriccio'.

In addition to his performance in princely academies, d'Herbelot could fulfil a valuable role as a human supplement to the grand ducal collection of Oriental manuscripts. As was the case with Fouquet, it was a logical extension of a great patron's collecting practice to keep a *savant* to make use of and to catalogue the collection. We know that whilst he was in Florence d'Herbelot produced a catalogue of the Medici collection of Oriental manuscripts, the first of its kind.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, Prince Leopoldo may have been embarrassed by the shortage of Arabic expertise in Florence at the time: a decade earlier, when Giovanni Alfonso Borelli took up the long-running project to publish the Medici library's Arabic manuscript of the lost books of Apollonius of Perga's *Conic sections*, he was obliged to go to Rome to get the help of the Maronite Abraham Ecchellensis to translate it. The chequered history of that publication project might explain why the Medici were interested in protecting Oriental scholarship, not least from possible church censorship.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> D'Herbelot's catalogue of the grand duke's oriental books (dated 1666) is at Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms Magl. X, 5 (II. II. 115), ff. 305–62 (I have not seen this copy); d'Herbelot's copy of this is at BN ms italien 480, ff. 1–83. See A. M. Piemontese, 'Les fonds de manuscrits persans conservés dans les Bibliothèques d'Italie', *Journal asiatique*, 270 (1982), 273–93, esp. 284–5; and his *Catalogo dei manoscritti persiani conservati nelle biblioteche d'Italia* (Rome, 1989).

<sup>70</sup> W. E. Knowles Middleton, *The Experimenters: A Study of the Accademia del Cimento* (Baltimore, 1971), 314–15—and 299; M. Thévenot offered to have the work printed in Paris (a somewhat ambitious offer, given how difficult he found it to get his own Abulfeda printed). In the end, the Borelli–Ecchellensis version appeared only as a Latin translation: *Apollonii Pergae Conicorum lib. V. VI. VII. paraphraste Abalphato Asphahanensi* (Florence, 1661). See Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 23–5; see also below, Chapter 2, and Apollonius, *Conics: Books V to VII*, ed. Toomer (New York, 1990), vol. 1, xxi–xxv.



Perhaps equally important, the Medici could be seen to maintain their honour by sponsoring someone with such a curriculum vitae. After all, in 1666, d'Herbelot was in the pay of Louis XIV; going backwards, the roll-call of his previous patrons was impressive, including as it did Fouquet, and the cardinals Grimaldi, Barberini, and Chigi. The Medici may have been glad to have him under their aegis, because such a pedigree guaranteed that d'Herbelot was suitable material for them, but also because to be seen to 'out-bid' such famous patrons was in itself a demonstration of magnificence. Ferdinando II's patronage was fuelled by the need to maintain the image of his House, which could claim an unrivalled history of protecting great men in the arts and sciences.<sup>71</sup> As we have seen, the Medici name was already attached to Oriental learning, at least since the reign of Ferdinando I in the late sixteenth century. It was through his patronage (while he was still merely a cardinal) that the Medicean Arabic press had been established in Rome, in 1584. Before d'Herbelot, Ferdinando II had shown support for other visiting Oriental scholars, such as John Greaves, who visited Tuscany on his way back from his voyage to Egypt.<sup>72</sup> We could speculate that the Medici saw in d'Herbelot a scholar who could revive this association.<sup>73</sup>

Dynastic pride was inseparable, of course, from its international dimension. The display of liberality on the part of Ferdinando II was almost certainly designed to send signals to other courts. There was a long history of rivalry between the kings of France and the Medici, in which the longer Italian reputation for cultural superiority was the source of some anxiety on the part of the French rulers—or to use the terms of the day, an anxiety caused by the need to 'emulate' past patrons.<sup>74</sup> The fact that Louis XIV managed to attract to his service such Italian luminaries as the sculptor Gianlorenzo Bernini (from Rome, in 1665), or the astronomer Giovanni-Domenico Cassini I (from papal Bologna, in 1669), or the mathematician Christiaan Huygens (from the Dutch Republic, from 1666 to 1681), was a great triumph for the French crown. But we must not assume that it was natural or

<sup>71</sup> J. Tribby, 'Florence, cultural capital of cultural capital', *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 35 (1994), 223–40; Tribby, 'Club Medici: natural experiment and the imagineering of "Tuscany"', *Configurations*, 2 (1994), 215–35.

<sup>72</sup> Greaves arrived in Livorno 1639. To help ease his entry to the Medici library, he composed a Latin Ode in praise of Ferdinando II, which celebrated the grand duke's victory over Barbary pirates (from Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 142).

<sup>73</sup> On the Medicean press, see works cited in note 8.

<sup>74</sup> For other examples of Louis XIV's emulation of Medici patronage, see P. Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1992), 187–91.

inevitable that they should come to Paris. In fact, these two cases were exceptional—perhaps even exceptions that prove the rule. It needed generous payments to keep the likes of Cassini and Huygens in France.<sup>75</sup>

Besides the famous cases like Bernini, Huygens, or Cassini, if we turn to the years just before the d'Herbelot case, further examples can be found of the tension between Paris and Florence caused by Louis XIV's cultural policy. When the system of royal 'gratifications aux gens de lettres' was set up, the question of foreign scholars' loyalties had arisen. In order to justify the idea that scholars serving foreign rulers could accept Louis XIV's 'gratifications' (usually given in return for a book dedication or a published panegyric), Chapelain argued that they could accept them in their capacity as a man of letters ('en qualité de lettré') rather than as a servant of their ruler. For example, Chapelain told Nicholas Heinsius, the Dutch scholar:

Ces grands hommes qui gouvernent chés vous sçavent bien qu'il y en a deux en vous, et que vous estes homme de lettres avant que d'estre homme d'Etat et leur ministre. Ils n'ont garde d'interpreter mal les bonnes intentions de ce grand prince; au contraire ils reputeront à honneur pour leur république que Sa Majesté y cherche et y trouve des sujets de sa munificence en matière qui ne regarde aucunement les affaires publiques.<sup>76</sup>

[These great men who govern in your country know very well that there are two [men] in you, and that you are a man of letters before being a man of state and their minister. They have no need to misinterpret the good intentions of this great prince; on the contrary, they should consider it an honour for their republic that His Majesty searches and finds subjects for his munificence in matters which do not touch in any way upon public affairs.]

This reasoning sets up a watertight partition between the two realms; it insists that the Republic of Letters and real republics ('les affaires publiques') function on two incommensurable levels.

A case in point is that of the papal librarian Leo Allacci, who had been a mentor to d'Herbelot in Rome. He was among the foreign *gens de lettres* offered a gratification by Chapelain, but had to turn it down because of the diplomatic tension between Pope Alexander VII and

<sup>75</sup> Cassini's gratification (of 9,000 *livres*) was far higher than that of other *gens de lettres* except Huygens; see J.-J. Guiffrey, ed., *Comptes des Bâtiments du roi sous le règne de Louis XIV*, 5 vols (Paris, 1881–1901), *passim*.

<sup>76</sup> Chapelain to N. Heinsius, 21 Sept. 1663, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 327–8. Two years later, Heinsius was forbidden by the Dutch Estates General to accept a subsequent gratification (400–1 n. 3).

Louis XIV (in 1663).<sup>77</sup> Chapelain, in explaining this to Colbert, adds that the Allacci affair had made waves through the Italian courts, to the great honour of the king, and that Ferdinando II had even declared that were such an honour to befall one of *his* Tuscan subjects, he would make no objection, but would consider it an honour to himself and to his 'nation'.<sup>78</sup> Chapelain took this to mean that the way was clear for Colbert to approach scholars at the Tuscan court, such as the mathematician Vincenzo Viviani. Indeed, in 1665, when the French king offered a 'gratification' to Viviani, it caused *éclat* at the Florentine court, the grand duke and his brothers 'taking it as an honour done to themselves', Chapelain told Colbert, so that 'the king's name and your own are highly praised there'.<sup>79</sup> Following the example of Louis XIV's generosity, Ferdinando II improved Viviani's position.<sup>80</sup> What these examples show is that when d'Herbelot arrived in Florence in 1666, there was already a certain climate of rivalry between Florence and Paris, with Ferdinando II trying to keep pace with Louis's generosity, out of 'emulation', whilst at the same time pretending not to mind the younger monarch's gestures, on the grounds that they added to his own honour.

In the case of d'Herbelot, though, the competition was not only between two rival patrons but also between two modes of scholarly patronage: the princely coterie and the royal academy. On the one

<sup>77</sup> Chapelain, vol. 2, 305, 328, 336, 344; Guiffrey, *Comptes*, vol. 1, col. 62; R. Pintard, *Le Libertainage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1943), 112. For other cultural ramifications of the clash with Alexander VII, see Burke, *Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 64–5.

<sup>78</sup> Chapelain to Colbert, 8 Jan. 1664, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 344 (also *Lettres . . . de Colbert*, vol. 5, 595): 'cela avoit fait un grand bruit à Rome, au grand honneur du Roy et au vostre, et que le Grand Duc n'auroit eu garde d'empescher ses sujets de profiter d'une pareille faveur, si le Roy en avoit regardé aussi favorablement quelqu'un, connoissant que cela tourneroit à la gloire de sa nation et à la sienne propre.'

<sup>79</sup> Chapelain to Colbert, 26 Mar. 1665, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 390–1 ('pour la part que le propre Grand-Duc et les princes, ses frères, y ont prises, se l'appliquant comme faite à eux-mesmes . . . en sorte que le nom de Sa Majesté et le vostre y sont en bénédiction'). Much the same sentiments are expressed in two letters of Jan. 1666 (434, 436–7). Viviani, recommended for his work on Apollonius of Perga (which Chapelain judged better than that of Borelli), later proposed to send Louis XIV his biography, and a bust, of Galileo (492 n. 1, 493, 530). Because the king could not accept the return gift, the life was not published, and the bust decorated the palace Viviani had built with his gratification money.

<sup>80</sup> Chapelain, vol. 2, 493: 'il [Viviani] se trouve tout à coup avoir l'obligation d'en estre deschargé [from his former duties] par son prince, à l'exemple de la magnanimité du Roy'; likewise 436: the Holy Roman Emperor, hearing of the liberality of Louis towards J. H. Boecler, 's'est piqué par émulation de luy en faire une pareille'.

hand was the model of scholarly sociability within the personal space of a royal or aristocratic patron. This model might be exemplified by Prince Leopoldo's dealings with the Accademia del Cimento, but no doubt other examples could be used. Here an individual aristocrat (in Leopoldo's case, a prince of the ruling family, but *not* the ruler) with a personal interest in 'letters' takes scholars into his private space, and interacts with them on a personal level. The work of the assembly has to follow the patron's whims and the etiquette of courtly discourse (which often includes a tendency not to publish), and the scholar is always prey to common pitfalls of court life, the death of princes and the jealousy of rivals (as d'Herbelot's case shows). On the other hand, in the model of the nascent academies, associated with Colbert, the monarch remains distant from the activities of each academy, partly because of a lack of interest on the part of his private person, and partly because of the requirements of the sovereign's dignity in his public persona. Crucially, the king's patronage is left in the hands of his minister, Colbert, whose success depended on *not* repeating the mistakes of his predecessor Fouquet. Whereas Fouquet's style of patronage was comparable to that of Prince Leopoldo, with scholars chosen to adorn his private sphere, Colbert had to find new methods. Although in fact the academic model was not fully realized until the beginning of the eighteenth century, under the reforms of the abbé Bignon, Colbert's innovations certainly departed from the model of the princely coterie.<sup>81</sup> It is worth noting, though, that even when the abbé Bignon managed to re-establish the Académie des inscriptions, along with the other academies, at the turn of the new century, he had to order that they abstain 'from writing and speaking of things which relate to theology, to politics, and other similar matters, which are not under the academy's remit', showing that it was still necessary to mark disciplinary boundaries in much the same way as in the 1660s.<sup>82</sup> Rather than meeting in the private space of the prince, the Paris model has the academicians meeting in a semi-public space, the Bibliothèque du roi. The new royal institutions of the Colbert era assumed a very ambiguous position within the existing institutional landscape; and this ambiguous status brought them into conflict with the

<sup>81</sup> My typology here is adapted from Biagioli, 'Etiquette, interdependence, and sociability'. On the Bignon era see J. A. Clarke, 'Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon: "Moderator of the Academies" and Royal librarian', *French Historical Studies*, 8 (1973), 213–35.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in Abdel-Halim, *Galland*, 354, from *Registre-Journal de l'Académie*, 28 Jan. 1707 ('d'écrire ny de parler de choses qui ont rapport à la théologie, à la politique, et autres matières semblables qui ne sont pas du ressort de l'Académie').

pre-existing corporate bodies, keen to preserve their rights and privileges. The failure of the 'grande académie' project emphasizes, then, that the new academies were still unstable and weak in the late 1660s; and that the emerging 'royal academy' model of scholarly organization was established only with considerable effort, after certain controversies had been resolved.

### D'HERBELOT IN PARIS, 1670–95

Ironically, when d'Herbelot finally returned to Paris, he did not find a place in any of the academies that Colbert set up. In a sense, Bourzeis's proposal for an Academy for History was not to be fulfilled until after 1701, when the Académie des inscriptions was re-founded as a much expanded version of Colbert's 'petite académie'. It was there that Antoine Galland, and several other Orientalist scholars of the eighteenth century, were to find their institutional base. Before then, though, the 'petite académie' had not yet found its role as the Parisian centre of historical and philological erudition.<sup>83</sup>

D'Herbelot's career in Paris after his return offers a useful coda to the story that we have so far outlined. If we examine the ways in which he pursued his work in the last twenty-five years of his life, we can see all the more how the received image, in which he is summoned back from Florence by Colbert, is in need of rectification. That image would be acceptable if we could telescopically collapse the two decades that followed d'Herbelot's return, and have him move straight from the Medici court to his appointment to a chair at the Collège royal in 1692. But d'Herbelot did not find himself returning to a position comparable to the one he had enjoyed in Florence. His place within the erudite community of Paris was somewhat different.

Some accounts record that Louis XIV allowed him an audience ('le Roy lui fit l'honneur de l'entretenir plusieurs fois'), perhaps out of a sense that whatever had delighted the ears of the Medici might be worth a try. Even though he had been right to feel cautious about

<sup>83</sup> On the Académie des inscriptions, see *DLF-17*, and *DLF-18*, arts. 'Académie'; B. Barret-Kriegel, *Les Historiens et la monarchie*, 4 vols (Paris, 1988), esp. vol. 2: *La Défaite de l'érudition* and 3: *Les Académies de l'histoire*; C. Grell, *Le Dix-huitième siècle et l'antiquité en France, 1680–1789*, 2 vols, SVEC, 330–1 (Oxford, 1995); J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1999), 137–68.

how much the French crown could offer him, d'Herbelot did enjoy some royal patronage when he came back. Shortly after his return, in January 1672, he was included in Colbert's list of 'gratifications aux gens de lettres' for the first time. He received payments of 1,500 *livres* somewhat irregularly over the succeeding years, his award being listed as 'in consideration of his deep knowledge of Oriental languages, and of the various works on which he is working'.<sup>84</sup> It may be that the works he was preparing—of which only the *Bibliothèque orientale* was to see print after he died—were intended by Colbert to be 'royal' productions. Alternatively, these 'travaux' may refer to the work he did to help with the cataloguing of Oriental manuscripts at the Bibliothèque du roi.<sup>85</sup> In the archives of the library we can read entries recording payments to porters (*crocheteurs*) for carrying Oriental manuscripts back and forth between the library and d'Herbelot's home.<sup>86</sup>

As an extension of the world of the Bibliothèque du roi, d'Herbelot frequented the erudite circles around such figures as Bossuet and Mabillon. He was part of Bossuet's 'petit concile', a group of churchmen and biblical scholars that the then bishop of Condom gathered in the mid-1670s at his rooms at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, while he was preceptor to the Dauphin. The aim was to discuss the text of the Bible, with a view to producing commentaries. The group sat around a large Bible (possibly the Paris Polyglot), each member commenting in turn on the text. A synthesis of the comments would then be written in to the margins. The meetings of Bossuet and his 'rabbis' were designed to further the cause of Controversy: to allow the French Church to meet the challenge of *libertins* and Protestants on their own ground.<sup>87</sup> In that sense, it seems clear that Bossuet's 'petit concile' was concerned

<sup>84</sup> Cousin, 'Eloge'; Guiffrey, *Comptes*, vol. 1, cols 565 ('en consideration de la profonde connoissance qu'il a des langues orientales, et de divers ouvrages auxquels il travaille'), 649, 715, 991, 993, 1205; vol. 2, cols 101, 238: eight payments of 1,500 *livres* were made, the first in 1672, the last in 1682.

<sup>85</sup> Nicolas Clément asked d'Herbelot to help with the cataloguing in 1682; d'Herbelot worked on the catalogue now at BN ms n. a. fr. 5408 (cf. Richard, 'Le dictionnaire de d'Herbelot').

<sup>86</sup> BN ms Archives de l'Ancien Régime 1, ff. 4–90.

<sup>87</sup> Bossuet, *Correspondance*, eds. C. Urbain and E. Levesque (Paris, 1909–25), vol. 2, 102–3; vol. 4, 82, listing Toinard, Caton de Court, Pellisson-Fontanier, Huet, Fleury, Fléchier, Cordemoy, and Renaudot. See Floquet, *Bossuet précepteur du Dauphin*, 420–51, mentioning d'Herbelot (422); E. de Broglie, *Mabillon et la société de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain des Prés à la fin du dix-septième siècle, 1664–1707*, 2 vols (Paris, 1888), vol. 1, 89–90; R. M. de La Broise, *Bossuet et la Bible: étude d'après les documents originaux* (Paris, 1891), xxxii–xlvi; Barret-Kriegel, *La Défaite de l'érudition*, 245–6.

with much the same issues as the academy Bourzeis proposed in the mid-1660s.

Most of the scholars listed by Justel as nominees to the Bourzeis group were to find themselves, in the later 1670s and 1680s, attending the scholarly assemblies that met at the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.<sup>88</sup> The Maurists did not restrict their learning to members of their own religious community; within the orbit of Mabillon came other scholars, including secular clergy and laymen. Within this group d'Herbelot mixed with other scholars, like Du Cange, Cotelier, the abbé Eusèbe Renaudot and Antoine Galland.<sup>89</sup> In a later chapter we shall discover the ways in which the methods of the erudite community were to shape d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale*. As well as visiting the *assemblées* and *conférences* of other scholars and *curieux*, d'Herbelot ran meetings of his own. Sometimes, these meetings were held at d'Herbelot's own lodgings, in the evenings after seven o'clock.<sup>90</sup> On some occasions he was so overwhelmed with visitors that he had to lead them off to a coffee house called Makara's in the rue Mazarine. These meetings stopped after d'Herbelot suffered a series of robberies.<sup>91</sup>

It was not until 1692 that d'Herbelot was appointed to a chair at the Collège royal, largely through the intervention of the minister Pontchartrain. D'Herbelot was actually made professor of Syriac, a function which had until then been attached to the second of the two chairs in Arabic. When Pierre d'Auvergne, the incumbent of the second chair since 1652, died in 1692, François Pétiſ de La Croix *ſils* succeeded him, whilst the Syriac chair was set up as a separate appointment, and given to d'Herbelot. Two sources record, however, that d'Herbelot never made his inaugural lecture (or 'harangue'), and so did not formally take possession of the chair, or give any lectures. Royal Professors often found themselves without an audience at this

<sup>88</sup> On the Maurists in general, see D. Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises* (Edinburgh, 1963), 33–62; M. Ultec, *The Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 1981).

<sup>89</sup> On the circle of scholars around Mabillon, see Broglie, *Mabillon*, vol. 1, 52–71; Barret-Kriegel, *Les Historiens et la monarchie*, vol. 1: *Jean Mabillon*, 52–9; Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 175–233.

<sup>90</sup> Laurens, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme*, 15 n. 1, citing N. de Blégny, *Le Livre commode des adresses de Paris pour 1692* (Paris, 1878), vol. 1, 28. See also C. Nicaise, *Les Sirènes, ou discours de leur forme et figure* (Paris, 1691), 12.

<sup>91</sup> Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 57, citing BN ms fr. 22582, pp. 187–91: 'Comme les étrangers le voyent, estant accablé de visites, il s'en est déſait de plusieurs en les menant chez Makara qui distribue du thé, [du] café . . . dans la rue Mazarine. Il y a tous les jours [chez lui] quantité de monde qui s'assemble dans une longue gallerie.'

period, so this may not reflect any particular failing on d'Herbelot's part.<sup>92</sup>

When d'Herbelot died (8 December 1695) he was buried at Saint-Sulpice. There followed a sequel to the events of the 1660s. Once again there was tension between the French court and the Medici, this time over his library. According to the notes of le Père Léonard, the two hundred Oriental manuscripts that d'Herbelot owned at this death were largely the gift of Ferdinando II, and his successor Cosimo III expressed some interest in buying the collection back. In response to this, d'Herbelot's heirs approached the abbé Bignon to ask whether the Bibliothèque du roi might buy the manuscripts, but Bignon turned the offer down.<sup>93</sup> In the end, they seem to have been acquired by the abbé Eusèbe Renaudot, another Oriental scholar, and he in turn left them to the Maurists when he died in 1720. During the French Revolution, most of d'Herbelot's collection entered the Bibliothèque nationale along with the other books from the abbey of Saint-Germain, although a few escaped to Saint Petersburg.<sup>94</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In one sense, of course, the writers of the *éloges* for d'Herbelot were right. He did not stay in Florence; he did return to France; and he did receive patronage within the royal institutions of learning. Furthermore, after his death, d'Herbelot continued to be remembered as a part of the French erudite community. However, as his experiences in Paris proved, d'Herbelot was also right to refuse to come back to Paris in 1666: Paris was not able to offer him all that he had found in Florence. The closest he came to the French court was his participation in Bossuet's 'petit

<sup>92</sup> Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland*, 117. Ménage said of Pierre de Montmaur, professor in Greek, who also had no auditors, that he was a 'voice crying in the wilderness': A. Galland, *et al.*, eds, *Menagiana: ou les Bons mots et remarques critiques, historiques, morales et d'érudition, de Monsieur Menage, recueillies par ses amis*, 3rd edn, 4 vols (Paris, 1715), vol. 1, 85. Léonard records (Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 57) that d'Herbelot never took possession of his chair; this is confirmed in M. Billet de Fanière, 'Professeurs royaux', BN ms fr. 15274, f. 22.

<sup>93</sup> Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 57, citing BN ms fr. 22582, p. 190: 'Il a laissé 200 Mss. en langues orientales. C'estoit des présens que feu le Grand-Duc qui le considéroit et le chérissoit, luy avoit faits. Son fils le Grand-Duc les veut acheter (1695). On a fait demander par l'abbé Bignon si le Roy les vouloit prendre en payant. Il a respondu que non.'

<sup>94</sup> Richard, 'Le dictionnaire de d'Herbelot', 82.



concile'. What d'Herbelot's patronage career exemplifies is the fact that Louis XIV's 'cultural policy' had to be built through hard work and delicate negotiations. The vagaries of court life were to prove fatal to d'Herbelot's fortunes in Tuscany; on the other hand the terrain in Paris was equally unsettled, although structured in different ways. There were, as we have seen, institutional obstacles to Colbert's academic schemes; and the crown's patronage of scholarship worked in parallel with a patchwork of relatively autonomous institutions, like the Maurist abbey of Saint-Germain. The wider significance of d'Herbelot's case, then, might lie in a twofold lesson: it shows that Oriental scholars had to follow procedures that were held in common with other *gens de lettres* (whether natural philosophers, classicists, or historians); and that the shift in the organization of science and scholarship—from the private circles of princes to semi-public academies—was by no means a simple or straightforward process, with non-royal structures of patronage carrying as much weight as the projects of Colbert.

## 2

# ‘Toutes les Curiosités du Monde’: The Geographic Projects of Melchisédech Thévenot

John Locke kept abreast of the scholarly news from France through the regular correspondence of Nicolas Toinard, an antiquarian and biblical scholar from Orleans. In the summer of 1680, a mutual friend added an enquiry of his own. This friend was Melchisédech Thévenot (c.1622–92), whom Locke had met during his years in France (1675–9). Thévenot explained that, while reading the English travel collection *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, he had found a reference to some papers of Richard Hakluyt’s that had not been printed; Purchas seemed to imply that these texts deserved to be made public, and Thévenot asked Locke to make enquiries as to where these manuscripts might be. Thévenot was already a reasonably well-known collector, who had published a four-volume travel compilation, the *Relations de divers voyages curieux*.<sup>1</sup> He hoped that the missing Hakluyt papers might be found and printed, both for the benefit of the ‘Public’, and as a tribute to Hakluyt, to whom posterity would always be grateful for having brought so many texts to light which would otherwise be lost.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Thévenot, ed., *Relations de divers voyages curieux, qui n’ont point esté publiées; ou qui ont esté traduites d’Haclyut, de Purchas, & d’autres Voyageurs Anglois, Hollandois, Portugais, Allemands, Espagnols; et de quelques Persans, Arabes, et autres Auteurs Orientaux . . .*, 4 vols, large quarto (Paris, 1663–72); augmented reissue in 2 vols (Paris, 1696). There was also a supplementary volume in octavo: *Recueil de voyages* (Paris, 1681; reissued 1682).

<sup>2</sup> J. Locke, *Correspondence*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 8 vols (Oxford, 1976–89), vol. 2, 229–30 (Toinard to Locke, 14/24 August 1680): Thévenot writes, ‘Purchas en parle comme de pieces qui meritent d’estre données au public[.] Il faudroit s’informer en quelles mains peuvent estre tombes ces escrits, et sauver ces ouvrages en faveur du Public et d’un homme [i.e. Hakluyt] dont on se souviendra tousjours pour l’obligation que nous luy avons de nous avoir sauvé beaucoup de bonnes choses. Il a sauvé des pieces et

Thévenot's note to Locke illustrates the importance of travel texts within the baroque 'culture of curiosity'.<sup>3</sup> Thévenot, tantalized by a reference to lost Hakluyt papers, hopes to appropriate them within his own series (itself an emulation of Hakluyt); he duly sets about finding them using the method he knows best: by writing to fellow members of the Republic of Letters. In this note to Locke, most of the key terms and images that we will find recurring as we follow Thévenot's case are present: the encyclopedic compilation, seen as a resource for posterity; the privileging of certain source-texts (usually manuscripts, and often unattainable); and, above all, the desire to bring potentially useful and hitherto hidden knowledge (especially from overseas) into public circulation, via translation and print.

A second example from the Toinard–Locke letters offers a variation on these themes. Toinard and Locke had been discussing Robert Boyle's latest book, in which Boyle described cooking meat and fish in an evacuated air-pump; this prompted Toinard to wonder whether it might be possible to use an air-pump to transform sea water into healthy drinking water. He then relates that Thévenot had once told him that in Holland, some years earlier, a man claimed to have 'found this important secret' (i.e. of making sea water potable) and had tried to sell his discovery to the Dutch East Indies Company, for the sum of 10,000 *écus*. The Company refused, and so the secret died with the man. Later, apparently, the Company regretted its decision.<sup>4</sup>

Such stories of ill-fated inventors abound in the correspondence and the periodicals of the time. Thévenot's Dutch anecdote can be connected with a broader project to 'discover' (in the sense of 'uncover') hidden knowledge, specifically the 'secrets' of the *arts* (artisanal

des ouvrages de quelques uns de nos conquerans François[.] Je voulderois bien estre assez heureux pour luy rendre la pareille et sauver de l'oubly . . . quelques-uns de ses ouvrages.' Toinard (or Thoynard, 1628–1706) was an antiquarian and biblical scholar, and one of Locke's most diligent correspondents.

<sup>3</sup> On the 'culture of curiosity', see, amongst others: K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1987), 61–80; P. Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, 1994); L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1998), 215–328; N. Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford, 2004), 160–308.

<sup>4</sup> Toinard to Locke, 24 Sept. 1680, in Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 256: 'Mr Tevenot m'a autrefois dit que l'on estoit tres persuadé en Holande qu'un particulier avoit trouvé il y a du temps ce secret important [i.e. of making seawater potable] avec lequel il est mort, parceque la compagnie des Indes Orientales qui s'en est bien repentie, luy avoit refusé dix mille écus qu'il demandoit pour le dire.'

techniques). Discovering the 'arts' also meant devising new techniques, new instruments and machines.<sup>5</sup> As we will find, this programme for collecting the 'arts' is connected with travel and navigation in two senses. First, there is an emphasis on techniques that will be useful for the art of navigation; second, there is the emphasis on using travel itself as a form of *experience* which, if properly accumulated in print, will allow knowledge of nature and of techniques to be discovered and exchanged.

For historians of early modern science, Thévenot figures in the story of the private scientific assemblies that existed just before the establishment of the Académie Royale des Sciences (in 1666).<sup>6</sup> For historians of travel literature, he is known for the *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, the first large-scale French travel collection, frequently cited by early Enlightenment readers. Locke made notes on Thévenot's collection and cites it, along with other travel accounts, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.<sup>7</sup> Thévenot's collection also features in the library catalogues of Voltaire, Turgot, d'Holbach, de Brosses, and William Beckford.<sup>8</sup> Usually, these twin aspects of Thévenot's career—his scientific club, and his compilation of travel accounts—are kept apart. If, however, we attempt to read the sources without dividing his interests into present-day categories, a relationship between these activities emerges. As we will see, Thévenot's travel compilation was the product of a particular social network, and of a particular intellectual programme: the desire to compile a natural history of the arts. Indeed, viewed in the context of the late humanist 'culture of curiosity', Thévenot's role as a cabinet host, an experimental scientist, a publisher

<sup>5</sup> On 'secrets' and the 'arts' in the scientific culture of the period, see W. Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, 1994); P. O. Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> H. Brown, *Scientific Organizations in Seventeenth-Century France (1620–1680)* (Baltimore, 1934), 135–60; D. J. Sturdy, *Science and Social Status: The Members of the Académie des Sciences, 1666–1750* (Woodbridge, 1995), 16–21.

<sup>7</sup> Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), 71 (I.iii.9), 87 (I.iv.8). Locke's notes on Thévenot are Bod. ms Locke f. 2, pp. 246–58. See G. D. Bonno, *Les Relations intellectuelles de Locke avec la France* (Berkeley, 1955), 83–4, 168; J. Lough, 'Locke's reading during his stay in France (1675–1679)', *The Library*, 5th series, 8 (1953), 229–58, at 239–40. See also D. Carey, 'Locke, travel literature, and the natural history of Man', *The Seventeenth Century*, 11 (1996), 259–80.

<sup>8</sup> M. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (Paris, 1971), 486; H.-J. Martin and R. Chartier, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1989–91), vol. 2, 24 (Beckford's copy).

of travel accounts, and a collector of Oriental texts, can seem almost conventional, rather than puzzling.<sup>9</sup> For that reason, Thévenot's case can be taken as representative of the 'curious' mode of knowledge-making in the late seventeenth century, and, at the same time, his case highlights the importance of 'Oriental' knowledge for the intellectual culture of the period.

### THEVENOT'S TRAJECTORY

As with so many other scholars of the period, the sources on Thévenot's life can be divided into two kinds, those which belong to an 'éloge tradition' and those which do not. Most of the biographical dictionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reproduce material that can be traced back to an obituary in the *Journal des Sçavans* and an autobiographical fragment prefacing the sale catalogue of his library.<sup>10</sup> The autobiographical text has to be treated with extreme care: it seems that some of the claims Thévenot makes about his past achievements are somewhat exaggerated. We cannot know whether this exaggeration is the fault of Thévenot himself (writing shortly before he died and perhaps with failing memory) or of the text's editor, Antoine Galland.<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, it is possible to supplement these sources with information taken from outside the 'tradition', like the unpublished letters and notes of contemporaries.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For humanist precedents, see J. Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel, 1550–1800* (Amsterdam, 1995), 95–153.

<sup>10</sup> For a modern summary, see C. S. Gillmor in *DSB*, vol. 13, 334–7. The *éloge* tradition begins with the unsigned 'Eloge' in *Journal des Sçavans*, 20 (17 Nov. 1692), 646–9, by either Louis Cousin or Jean Gallois. This is largely repeated in Moreri, vol. 10, 138–9. See also P. Colomiès, *Gallia Orientalis: sive Gallorum qui linguam Hebraeam vel alias Orientales excoluerunt Vitæ* (The Hague, 1665), 265–6; and Condorcet, 'Liste alphabétique des membres de l'ancienne Académie', in *Œuvres*, ed. A. Condorcet O'Connor and M. F. Arago (Paris, 1847), vol. 2, 91.

<sup>11</sup> Thévenot's autobiographical fragment is presented in *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana sive Catalogus impressorum et manuscriptorum librorum bibliothecae viri clarissimi D. Melchisedecis Thevenot* (Paris, 1694), unmarked sig., 2r–3v. For Galland as its editor, see Daniel Larroque to Leibniz, 14 Nov. 1693 (Leibniz, *A*, 1/9, 614). Galland worked for Thévenot as a translator at the Bibliothèque du roi in the years 1688–91: M. Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland: sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1964), 82 n. 6, 85 n. 21, 165, 476.

<sup>12</sup> e.g. le P. Léonard's notes, BN ms fr. 22583, ff. 34–5, summarized in B. Neveu, *Erudition et religion aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1994), 55.

Nicolas Melchisédech Thévenot was born in Paris around 1620. He came from a family of royal office-holders,<sup>13</sup> and it seems that his collecting and scholarly projects were funded largely from inherited wealth.<sup>14</sup> He is still sometimes confused with his nephew, Jean [de] Thévenot (1633–67)—one-time friend of Barthélemy d'Herbelot and godfather to François Pétis de La Croix  *fils*—who made two voyages, one to the Levant, one to Persia and India (meeting his death on the way back), and wrote one of the 'classic' travel accounts of the period (alongside those of Tavernier, Chardin, and Bernier), long studied by those interested in seventeenth-century India and Persia.<sup>15</sup> It needs to be made clear, given the confusion, that Melchisédech Thévenot never set foot in the Orient himself. However, he did spend some time touring Europe in his youth, possibly in the company of his nephew.

Especially important for his intellectual development were Thévenot's two visits to Rome (1643–5 and 1652–5), where he formed scholarly friendships with such figures as Galileo's student Vincenzo Viviani (1622–1703) and the mathematician Michelangelo Ricci (1619–82). He also developed an interest in Oriental scholarship. Even by the mid-1640s, Thévenot had begun to collect Arabic manuscripts, and he had met Abraham Ecchellensis, who was then a professor of Arabic at the Maronite College in Rome.<sup>16</sup> It was after these travels, in 1647, that he was appointed to the diplomatic post of 'resident' in Genoa. By this time, he was also in contact with the minim friar Marin Mersenne

<sup>13</sup> On the family, see BN ms fr. 29303 (pièces originales, vol. 2819), dossier 62724 ('Thévenot à Paris'), items 22–31 for Melchisédech Thévenot, 'conseiller du Roy en ses conseils d'estat'. His father Jehan (d. before 1633) had been 'conseiller du roi en son Châtelet' in Paris (AN, Minutier Central, CXII–249, XII–37, XII–41). His middle name was presumably given after his maternal grandfather, Melchissédec Garnier (d. 1637) who had been 'avocat au parlement de Paris' (AN, Minutier Central, XIV–26).

<sup>14</sup> Chapelain, vol. 2, 616: Chapelain to J. F. Gronovius, 5 Feb. 1669. Chapelain says of Thévenot: 'Son application a ceste sorte d'estude est d'autant plus noble qu'elle n'a rien de sordide et qu'au lieu d'y chercher autre interest que celui de l'avantage du genre humain, il y employe avec son temps la richesse qu'il a héritée de ses pères.' His mother, Marie Garnier, had died in 1661; he was the sole heir (see C. H. Boudhors, 'Une amie de Pascal? Marie Perriquet et sa sœur Geneviève', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, [in 4 parts:] 35 (1928), 321–53, 481–94; 36 (1929), 1–17, 355–87, at 324 n. 6).

<sup>15</sup> J. Thévenot, *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant*, 3 vols (Paris, 1664–84); 'standard' edition, 5 vols (Paris, 1689), reprinted (Amsterdam, 1727); translations: Dutch (Amsterdam, 1681–8), English (London, 1687), German (Frankfurt, 1693). See also L. M. Heller, 'Le testament olographe de Jean de Thévenot', *XVIIe siècle*, 167 (1990), 227–34.

<sup>16</sup> See A. Ecchellensis, *Semita Sapientiae* (Paris, 1646), sig. ā iv r (where Ecchellensis has used Arabic, Persian and Turkish books 'apud clarissimum iuuenem, & literarum

(1588–1648), whose correspondence connected the European scientific community of the period.<sup>17</sup> Thévenot was prevented from carrying out his mission to Genoa (his account continues) by the disruption of the Fronde. He claims to have followed the French court until 1652, when he was sent on a new mission, this time to the papal curia. He spent the years 1652–5 in Rome, where his brief was the ‘affaires de Naples’ and the exploits there of Henri, duc de Guise (1614–64). He was still in Rome at the death of Innocent X in 1655, and wrote to Mazarin with reports on the conclave of cardinals which elected Fabio Chigi as Alexander VII.<sup>18</sup> In the autobiographical note, Thévenot writes that the king’s orders ‘were addressed to me’ (‘les ordres de Sa Majesté m’y furent adressez’) until the arrival of Hugues de Lionne, Mazarin’s envoy.<sup>19</sup> In Rome at the same time were Thévenot’s nephew, Jean, and Barthélemy d’Herbelot. When the conclave was over, Jean departed on his first voyage to the Levant, while d’Herbelot (who was to have gone with him) stayed behind.<sup>20</sup> It seems highly probably that d’Herbelot met Melchisédech Thévenot in Rome, although the evidence is lacking. Thévenot describes his movements after the conclave rather elusively, claiming that he had carried out his orders to the satisfaction of Mazarin, and that he travelled with the Cardinal in Flanders:

Au sortir du Conclave où Alexandre VII fut élu, je reçus un ordre & une commission que l’instruction qu’on me donna marquoit pour être très-dangereuse & que j’exécutai avec succès & approbation de M. le Cardinal Mazarin que [sic] je suivis dans les voïages qu’il fit en Flandres & ailleurs.<sup>21</sup>

[At the close of the conclave which elected Alexander VII, I received an order and a commission, marked in my instructions as most dangerous, which I

amantissimum, studiosissimumque linguarum Nicolaum Melchisedech Theuenot’); and Echellensis, *Chronicon Orientale*. . . cui accessit ejusdem Supplementum Historie Orientalis (Paris, 1651), 147 (where Thévenot is described as ‘de studiis Orientalibus egregie meritus’).

<sup>17</sup> M. Mersenne, *Correspondance*, ed. P. Tannery, et al., 17 vols (Paris, 1945–88), vol. 1, xl, mentions ‘Mr Tevenot, nommé Resident pour le Roy à Genes’ among the friar’s contacts; cf. vol. 5, 598; vol. 13, 309; vol. 15, 198, 229, 289, showing that Thévenot inherited some papers from the Mersenne circle.

<sup>18</sup> Thévenot, fragment in *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, sig. 2r–3v. Letters from Thévenot to Mazarin include (from Rome, 1654–5) BN ms fr. 10729, and (from Lyons, 6 June 1653) BN ms Baluze 175, f. 84. On the conclave of 1655, see Cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*, part 3, in *Œuvres*, ed. A. Feillet, et al. (Paris, 1870–96), vol. 5, 1–63.

<sup>19</sup> This, and quotations earlier in the paragraph, as well as the dates of Thévenot’s movements, from the fragment in *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, sig. 2r–v.

<sup>20</sup> J. de Thévenot, *Relation d’un voyage fait au Levant* [part 1] (Paris, 1664), 3–4.

<sup>21</sup> *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, sig. 2r–v.

executed with success and with the approval of Cardinal Mazarin, whom I followed in the voyages that he made in Flanders and elsewhere.]

However, we know that Thévenot was back in Paris in 1655, because in that year Christiaan Huygens was able to make his acquaintance when he visited Paris—a connection that was to affect both their later lives.<sup>22</sup>

Thévenot returned to Parisian intellectual life, frequenting the salons, clubs and assemblies in which the learned and the curious interacted in urbane, 'polite' (sometimes mixed-sex) settings. At this stage he seems to have moved in such circles with relative ease.<sup>23</sup> In the 1650s and 1660s, Thévenot was frequently described as an *honnête homme* (indeed 'un des meilleurs et des plus honnests hommes de Paris'),<sup>24</sup> and had links with the writers who articulated this particular ethic of sociability. To a certain extent, Thévenot's entry to the world of the Parisian salons was afforded by his family connections. His brother Jacques (father of the traveller Jean) had been married to Marthe Pavillon (sister of Nicolas, the prominent Jansenizing bishop of Alet). After Jacques's death, Marthe Pavillon married Nicolas Faret, a member of the Académie française best known for his book *L'honneste-homme, ou l'art de plaire à la court* [*sic*] (1630), one of the most successful civility manuals of the period. It was to Marthe Pavillon (now 'Mme Faret'), his mother, that Jean de Thévenot dedicated his travel account.<sup>25</sup> The extent to which Thévenot was thought of in this period as both a salon socialite and a freethinker is revealed by a passage in the memoirs of the Jesuit René Rapin. When discussing Pascal's more worldly and scientific phase (which is described in the language of *libertinage* and 'curiosity'), Rapin mentions that Pascal's companions in this 'straying' ('égarement')

<sup>22</sup> J. Mesnard, 'Les premières relations parisiennes de Christiaan Huygens', in R. Taton, ed., *Huygens et la France* (Paris, 1982), 33–40; H. L. Brugmans, *Le Séjour de Christiaan Huygens à Paris et ses relations avec les milieux scientifiques français, suivi de son journal de voyage à Paris et à Londres* (Paris, 1935).

<sup>23</sup> Although he never married, Thévenot seems to have fathered a child with Sophie Baudoin, daughter of Jean Baudoin (of the Académie française, a translator of Bacon). In later life he was said to keep a 'servant' who was in fact his 'fils naturel': Galland, *Journal parisien (1708–1715)*, ed. H. A. Omont (Paris, 1919), 42; L. Magalotti, *Relazioni di Viaggio in Inghilterra, Francia e Svezia*, ed. W. Moretti (Bari, 1968), 168.

<sup>24</sup> Huygens to L. Huygens, 7 Dec. 1661, in Huygens, vol. 3, 395.

<sup>25</sup> On Faret, see M. Magendie, *La Politesse mondaine et les théories de l'honnêteté en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle de 1600 à 1660* (Paris, 1925); E. Bury, *Littérature et politesse: l'invention de l'honnête homme (1580–1750)* (Paris, 1996), 45–82; J. de Thévenot, *Relation d'un voyage*, sigs. a 3<sup>r</sup>–a 4<sup>r</sup>.



were the chevalier de Méré, Damien Mitton—both known for their writings on *honnêteté*—and ‘les Thévenot’.<sup>26</sup>

It was true that, in the mid-1650s, Thévenot had close links with the so-called *libertins érudits*, those Parisian scholars who pursued Sceptical and Epicurean philosophy, especially the circle around Pierre Gassendi and Henri-Louis Habert de Montmor.<sup>27</sup> It was in this period, that of the unofficial scientific clubs that proliferated in the 1650s and 1660s, that Thévenot flourished as a private patron, a host to scholars, and a letter-writer. He was what might have been called in England a ‘gentleman virtuoso’. With his private wealth, he was able to create a ‘cabinet’ (a private museum and library, with some scientific instruments) in which he could hold meetings of scholarly friends and play host to foreign scholars when they visited Paris, without giving up the desire to be recognized as a fellow-participant in their pursuits. He also kept up a certain amount of correspondence with his scholarly acquaintances (often figures who had passed through Paris and attended his ‘assembly’).

Despite (or perhaps because of) his prominent role as an academy host, when Colbert founded the Académie Royale des Sciences in 1666, Thévenot was not made a member, and for the next eighteen years he withdrew somewhat from Paris intellectual life.<sup>28</sup> In the years 1666–85, he was no longer the urban salon guest that he had been, but pursued his studies in private in his country house at Issy (then just outside Paris on the way to Versailles).<sup>29</sup> It was only at the end of 1684 (after Colbert’s death, 1683) that Thévenot enjoyed any direct royal patronage, when

<sup>26</sup> ‘La trop grande vivacité qu’il [Pascal] avoit luy donna une si grande légèreté d’esprit que, pour chercher à se convaincre de la religion, . . . il s’abandonna à tout ce que la curiosité a de plus affreux pour évoquer le diable des enfers par ce qu’il y a de plus noir dans la science des [h]ommes, et pour voir des esprits, étonné qu’il étoit du profond silence qu’il trouvoit dans toutes les créatures sur la religion. Ce fut là son occupation pendant les premières emportemens de l’âge, et il eut pour compagnon de son égarement le chevalier de Méré, Mitton, Tevenot et d’autres, dont il eut tant de honte dans la suite’; R. Rapin, *Mémoires . . . sur l’Eglise, la Société et la Cour, la Ville, et le Jansénisme*, ed. L. Aubineau, 3 vols (Lyons and Paris, 1865), vol. 1, 214–15 (cf. Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vol. 1, 911 n.).

<sup>27</sup> Brown, *Scientific Organizations*; R. Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1943; repr. Geneva, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> Erica Harth portrays him as one of Colbert’s ‘mandarins’, which is misleading: *Ideology and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France* (Ithaca, 1983), 243–50.

<sup>29</sup> Various sources portray Thévenot’s retreat to Issy as a form of scholarly retirement. See, for example, Chapelain to N. Steno, 27 May 1667, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 514: ‘Mr Thévenot s’est opiniasté, depuis dix-huit mois, à ne prendre point de maison à Paris pour philosopher et spéculer, dit-il, avec plus de liberté à la campagne.’

he was appointed *commis à la garde* of the Bibliothèque du roi, and was made a member of the Académie des sciences a month later. He lost the library post in 1691, and died at Issy on the 29 October 1692. In those six and a half years at the Bibliothèque du roi he enjoyed a return to the heart of Parisian intellectual life (as we shall see in a later chapter). At this point, however, we need to return to the 1660s, and the activities of Thévenot's 'assembly'.

## THEVENOT'S 'ASSEMBLY' AND THE COLLECTION OF THE ARTS

In the historiography of French science, Thévenot is known for his role as a member of the Gassendi–Montmor group (the so-called 'Montmor academy'), which Thévenot hosted in the last two years of its existence (1663–5).<sup>30</sup> As far back as the first histories of the Académie des sciences, by Du Hamel and Fontenelle, Thévenot's group plays the role of precursor to the Académie.<sup>31</sup> This idea seems to have been 'in the air' in the 1690s.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps it was spread by Thévenot himself.<sup>33</sup> However, the relationships both between the Montmor academy and Thévenot's 'assembly', and between these groups and the Académie des sciences, were in fact rather looser.<sup>34</sup> The literature's traditional focus

<sup>30</sup> On the 'Montmor academy', see Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, 64–134; Sturdy, *Science and Social Status*, 16–21.

<sup>31</sup> J.-B. Du Hamel, *Regiae Scientiarum Academiae Historia*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1701), 7–8; B. de Fontenelle, *Histoire de l'Académie royale des sciences depuis son établissement en 1666 jusqu'à 1686* (Paris, 1733), vol. 1, 4.

<sup>32</sup> The English physician Martin Lister mentions (recording a conversation with Thévenot's heir, Garnier, in 1698) that 'this Man was, as it were, the Founder of the Academie des Sciences' (Lister, *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698* [London, 1698], 102). See also A. Galland, et al., eds, *Menagiana, ou les Bons mots et remarques critiques, historiques, morales et d'érudition, de Monsieur Menage, recueillies par ses amis*, 3rd edn (Paris, 1715), vol. 2, 175: '[Thévenot] tenoit autrefois chez lui [une] assemblée de gens savans, où chacun rapportoit les découvertes qu'il avoit faites dans les sciences. Ce qui donna occasion de faire l'Académie des sciences qui s'assemble à présent à la Bibliothèque du Roi.'

<sup>33</sup> Thévenot, fragment in *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, sig. 2r–3v; trans. in Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, 136.

<sup>34</sup> T. McClaughlin, 'Sur les rapports entre la Compagnie de Thévenot et l'Académie royale des sciences', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 28 (1975), 235–42; idem, 'Une lettre de Melchisédech Thévenot', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 27 (1974), 123–6; R. M. McKeon, 'Une lettre de M. Thévenot sur les débuts de l'Académie royale des sciences', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 18 (1965), 1–6; D. S. Lux, *Patronage and Royal Science in Seventeenth-Century France: The Académie de Physique in Caen* (Ithaca, 1989), 29–56.

on the Académie des sciences has led historians to 'reify' the private academies of the period, to imagine them as 'scientific organizations', with a greater degree of programmatic coherence than the sources really support. In many ways, the 'assemblies' that met *chez* Montmor and Thévenot were social settings resembling the other clubs and salons of the mid-century, and to some degree sharing participants and projects with them. It is important to distinguish between two different, though overlapping, roles that Thévenot played in Parisian scholarly life: on the one hand, he acted the cabinet host who welcomed visitors and held occasional ad hoc meetings at his home (whether in Paris or in Issy) both before and after 1666;<sup>35</sup> and on the other, he held slightly more formalized sessions of the Montmor group at his Paris home between 1663 and 1665.<sup>36</sup> But in both cases, there was an overlap between the audiences attending different groups or clubs, and there was always a close relationship between the twin senses of the term 'cabinet'—the physical space in which objects and books were housed and displayed; and the group of scholars who came to meet in such places.<sup>37</sup>

Thévenot's group is best remembered today for the activities of its most celebrated members, Steno, Jan Swammerdam, and Christiaan Huygens. Steno's dissections in particular caused a stir—as witnessed by the letters that André Graindorge sent to Pierre-Daniel Huet describing the spectacular dexterity of the Dane.<sup>38</sup> Jan Swammerdam, the Dutch

<sup>35</sup> Huygens, vol. 7, 213: C. Huygens to L. Huygens, 5 Aug. 1672: 'Hier apres dîner je fus avec 5 ou 6 de nos curieux a Issy chez Monsieur Thevenot, ou nous fismes des experiences avec des Trompettes parlantes comme vous scavez qu'on en a inventez en Angleterre. Il y en avoit de huit differentes facons (Monsieur Thevenot dit qu'il y en avoit assez pour le jour du jugement)'; cf. V. Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, ed. G. Berquet and J.-P. Collinet (Saint-Etienne, 1981), 134, mentioning freezing experiments carried out at Issy in 1672 with 'un Danois'.

<sup>36</sup> Thévenot, *Recueil de voyages* (Paris, 1681), 'Discours sur l'Art de la Navigation', 8: 'l'Assemblée qui s'estoit formée chez Monsieur de Montmort, a travaillé les deux dernières années qu'elle s'est tenue chez moi; ce temps sera conté un jour pour bien employé lors que les observations & les experiences qui s'y sont faites seront données au public.'

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, tends to over-reify the groups. Contemporary sources make clear that the audiences of the various assemblies overlapped. See O. Borch, *Olai Borrichii Itinerarium 1660–1665: The Journal of the Danish polyhistor Ole Borch*, ed. H. D. Schepelern, 4 vols (Copenhagen and London, 1983), vol. 3, 79–477, and vol. 4, 1–148, which makes clear that many of those who attended Thévenot's meetings would also attend those held by the abbé Bourdelot.

<sup>38</sup> Lux, *Patronage and Royal Science*, 38–42; J. Schiller and J. Théodoridès, 'Sténon et les milieux scientifiques parisiens', in G. Scherz, ed., *Steno and Brain Research in*

microscopist, was also Thévenot's protégé at the same time, and collected insects on the hill of Meudon whilst staying with Thévenot in Issy. They stayed in contact, and Thévenot was later to inherit Swammerdam's papers.<sup>39</sup> Huygens was a regular visitor to the Paris group from the mid-1650s, and his letters are a major source for its activities, including the attempts in Paris to replicate experiments with the air-pump.<sup>40</sup>

The presence of such canonical figures as Huygens, Steno, and Swammerdam (and the likes of Reinier de Graaf, Ole Borch, and Bernard Frénicle de Bessy) has meant that Thévenot's group is usually conceived as being exclusively concerned with experimental natural philosophy.<sup>41</sup> However, like most contemporary scientific groups, the Thévenot circle set itself a wide remit, which included the improvement of navigation and the use of travellers to collect observations. It seems Huygens conceived of this as akin to a Baconian natural history.<sup>42</sup> We find evidence of Thévenot's continued commitment to collecting 'the arts' in the letters he exchanged with Leibniz, who had made Thévenot's acquaintance in Paris in the 1670s. As well as their diplomatic experiences, the two scholars shared an eclectic, polyhistoric curiosity.<sup>43</sup> Thévenot was among Leibniz's more vociferous supporters in Paris, offering to help bring any of his projects to completion, 'sur toute l'Enciclopedie'; Leibniz, for his part, tirelessly commended Thévenot to other correspondents, saying that he was

*the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1968), 155–70; B. Papisoli, 'Il soggiorno Parigino di Niccolò Stenone (1664–65)', in [anon., ed.,] *Niccolò Stenone 1638–1686: due giornate di studio* (Florence, 1988), 97–117.

<sup>39</sup> J. Nordström, 'Swammerdamiana: excerpts from the Travel Journal of Olaus Borrichius, and two letters from Jan Swammerdam to Thévenot', *Lychnos*, 15 (1954–5), 21–65; G. A. Lindeboom, ed., *The Letters of Jan Swammerdam to Melchisédech Thévenot* (Amsterdam, 1975), in which much of the editorial information on Thévenot is inaccurate.

<sup>40</sup> Huygens, esp. vols 3–5; S. Shapin and S. Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, 1985), 265–76.

<sup>41</sup> Among those known to have attended are: Henri Justel; Jean Chapelain; Henri-Louis Habert de Montmor; Adrien Auzout; Bernard Frénicle de Bessy; Thomas de Martel; Samuel Fermat; Etienne d'Espagnet; Pierre Borel; Pierre Petit; Isaac Vossius; Jacques Rohault; Pierre Alliot; Claude Clerselier; Géraud de Cordemoy; Claude Tardy; Martin Fogel; Coenraad van Beuningen; Corfitz Braem; and Vincent Hotman.

<sup>42</sup> In a note for Colbert attributed to Huygens (c.1666), Bacon is mentioned as a model for the then nascent Académie des sciences: Huygens, vol. 6, 95–6; also in *Lettres, instructions, et mémoires de Colbert*, ed. P. Clément (Paris, 1861–70), vol. 5, 523–4.

<sup>43</sup> On Leibniz and 'curiosity', see R. Ariew, 'Leibniz on the unicorn and various other curiosities', *Early Science and Medicine*, 3 (1998), 267–88.

'one of the most universal [men] that I know; nothing escapes his curiosity' ('un des plus universels que je connoisse; rien n'échappe à sa curiosité').<sup>44</sup>

What Leibniz seems to have admired in Thévenot's work was his desire to compile and then preserve in printed form knowledge that might otherwise be lost. One of the aims of Thévenot's group in the early 1660s had been the recovery of forgotten inventions.<sup>45</sup> Leibniz seems to have associated Thévenot with this sort of work, as he explains in a letter of 1678 to Henri Justel, another prominent Paris *savant* and a friend of Thévenot's (Justel, too, hosted an 'academy', edited a collection of travel accounts, and kept up correspondence with the learned community abroad). For some time, there had been rumours that Justel was working towards a 'history of commodities'.<sup>46</sup> This prompted from Leibniz a long rhapsody on how useful it would be to have a modern version of the elder Pliny's *Historia naturalis*:

car on trouve dans Pline une infinité d'observations sur l'origine des arts . . . Il y a quantité de choses qui sans Pline seroient perdues. C'est pourquoy je souhaiterois qu'une personne capable voulut laisser à la posterité un pourtrait fidele de nostre temps; à l'égard des mœurs, coustumes, decouvertes, monnoyes, commerce, arts & manufactures; luxe, depenses, vices, corruptions, maladies qui regnent, et leur remedes. Il negligeroit ce qu'on peut apprendre de l'histoire, et il ne s'attacheroit qu'à ce qui s'oublie, et merite neantmoins de n'estre pas oublié, plus peustestre que ce qui se remarque ordinairement. Mais il faut pour cela une personne d'experience, consommée en mille belles connoissances. En un mot je ne connois presque que vous [Justel] et Mons. Tevenot capables de le donner.<sup>47</sup>

[for one finds in Pliny an infinity of observations on the origins of the arts . . . There are a great many things which, without Pliny, would be lost.

<sup>44</sup> M. Thévenot to Leibniz, undated (autumn 1681), in Leibniz, *A*, 1/3, 504; Leibniz to Pellison-Fontanier, 28 Mar. 1692, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/7, 293. Thévenot's admiration is often mentioned in letters to Leibniz from other Parisians.

<sup>45</sup> 'Project de la Compagnie des Sciences et des Arts' (?1663), in Huygens, vol. 4, 325–9, here 328.

<sup>46</sup> Some trace of what Justel's 'history of *commodités*' might have looked like can be found in Justel to Locke, 17 Sept. 1679, in Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 106. Justel edited a *Recueil de divers voyages faits en Afrique et en l'Amerique, qui n'ont point esté encore publiez* (Paris, 1674). On Justel, see H. Brown, 'Un cosmopolite du grand siècle: Henri Justel', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français*, 82 (1933), 187–201; R. Ternois, 'Les débuts de l'anglophilie en France: Henri Justel', *Revue de littérature comparée*, 13 (1933), 588–605; and Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, 161–84.

<sup>47</sup> Leibniz to Justel, 14 Feb. 1678, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/2, 317. This letter is translated in Brown, *Scientific Organizations*, 178–9.

That is why I wish that a capable person would leave to posterity a faithful portrait of our times, in respect of manners, customs, discoveries, coinage, commerce, arts and manufactures; luxury, spending, vices, corruptions, the diseases which reign, and their remedies. This person would neglect what one could learn from history, and would only attend to that which gets forgotten, and yet deserves not to be—perhaps more so than what is normally remarked. But all that requires a person with experience, with a vast range of knowledge. In a word, more or less the only people I know who are capable of providing this are you [i.e. Justel] and Monsieur Thévenot.]

He adds that once such a compendious work was complete, posterity would follow their example, and the resulting encyclopedia would constitute 'une véritable histoire du Monde'. What Leibniz refers to here are the passages giving descriptions of 'the arts'.<sup>48</sup> This interest in a 'history of trades', or what Bacon called 'history mechanical', was shared by many in the *savant* community of the day, and continued to inform the famous encyclopedic projects of the next century.<sup>49</sup> What is striking is that Leibniz associated this sort of work with Justel and Thévenot.

With Leibniz's comments in mind, we can turn back to consider the activities of the Thévenot group in its heyday of the early 1660s. One document in particular has been identified as a blueprint of the Thévenot group's ambitions, an unsigned manuscript entitled 'Project de la Compagnie des Sciences et des Arts'. Much of what this 'Project' sets out is characteristic of many other schemes for the advancement of learning to be found at the time. However, this only serves to highlight the importance of 'travel' within the goals of the Thévenot circle. The opening statement of intent is that 'the design of the Company is

<sup>48</sup> Like the extraction of purple dyes described in Pliny, *Natural History*, book 9, chapter 133, or the accounts of minerals, mining, painting, and sculpture that occupy books 33–7.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, in 1693, Leibniz was excited to hear a rumour that the abbé Bignon was planning to found a royal academy of arts in Paris, which would be a sister to the Académie des sciences. One of the initial projects for this academy was to compile a history of the arts—the first instalment of which was to have been the history of printing. However, the results were so unsatisfactory that the project was shelved. See Leibniz to Bossuet, 29 Mar. 1693 (*A*, 1/9, 88; Bossuet, *Correspondance*, ed. C. Urbain and E. Levesque, 15 vols (Paris, 1909–25), vol. 5, 339); D. Larroque to Leibniz, 14 Nov. 1693 (*A*, 1/9, 614). See also C. Salomon-Bayet, 'Un préambule théorique à une Académie des arts', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 23 (1970), 229–50; A. Stroup, 'The political theory and practice of technology under Louis XIV', in B. T. Moran, ed., *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750* (Woodbridge, 1991), 211–34. On the history of trades idea, see W. E. Houghton, Jr, 'The History of Trades: its relation to seventeenth-century thought, as seen in Bacon, Petty, Evelyn, and Boyle', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2 (1941), 33–60.

to work towards the perfection of the Sciences and the Arts, and to search comprehensively for everything that could be of some utility or convenience to the human race, and particularly to France' ('Le dessein de la Compagnie est de trauailler à la perfection des Sciences et des Arts, et de rechercher generalement tout ce qui peut apporter de l'utilité ou de la commodité au Genre humain et particulierem[en]t à la France'). The document then lists various desiderata: experiments will be done, using instruments where possible, to make new discoveries in the heavens and the earth; dissections carried out, to improve medicine; new machines will be invented; the secrets of craftsmen and inventors will be made public, and proposed inventions will be tested; and 'finally, we will make every effort to disabuse the World of all the Vulgar Errors that have passed for so long as truths, for want of having tried the necessary experiments to prove them false' ('enfin, on s'estudiera à detromper le Monde de toutes les Erreurs Vulgaires qui passent depuis si long temps pour des veritez, faute d'auoir faict une fois les experiences necessaires pour en decouurir la fausseté'). The aim of disabusing the vulgar of their errors—another familiar theme—is balanced by an emphasis on the mechanical Arts, and the need to acquire and publicize the knowledge of artisans ('les Ouuriers').

All this provides the framework for the next item, concerning travel: 'we will apply ourselves to finding the means to facilitate navigation, to allow the growth of Commerce, and to create the opportunities for discovering the marvels which are found in unknown countries' ('on s'appliquera à rechercher les moyens de faciliter la nauigation pour augmenter le Commerce et pour auoir les occasions de decouurir les merueilles qui se rencontrent dans les pays inconnus'). Once again there is a rhetoric of utility—a standard feature of such documents, often written for the benefit of potential patrons. Discovering new worlds is described as profitable to the state because of the new mines that will be discovered. Still, as we will see, the aim of facilitating navigation, in order to improve French commerce with the Indies, could be used as a justification for several of the group's activities. Moreover, the 'Project' notes that 'whenever curious persons travel to, or live in, foreign countries, they shall be given questionnaires [*mémoires*], and they will be asked to examine . . . whatever is judged to be remarkable both in Nature and in the Arts' ('dans toutes les occasions ou des personnes curieuses voyageront ou resideront dans des pays estrangers, on leur donnera des Memoires et on les priera d'examiner les Lieux ou ils iront ce qu'on jugera y estre remarquable tant dans la Nature que

dans les arts.')

(In a later chapter we will discover how this proposal was carried through in the case of François Bernier, then living in Northern India.) As well as sending questions to 'curious persons' who just happen to be in foreign parts for other reasons, the 'Project' takes the obvious next step, by suggesting that 'experts' should be sent out with any long-distance voyages, and 'even in long-distance voyages we will attempt to send out intelligent persons specifically to remark all that is curious in the New Lands, as much in metals, animals, plants, as in Inventions and Arts' ('et mesmes dans les grandes navigations l'on taschera d'envoyer esprés des personnes jntelligentes pour remarquer tout ce qu'il y aura de curieux dans les Terres nouvelles, tant dans les metaux, les animaux, et les plantes, que dans les Jnventions des arts'). These expert emissaries should endeavour to exchange technical knowledge with the people they encounter, and in order to improve the terms of artisanal trade, they should take suitable gifts:

Et pour cela l'on portera dans les pays policez les modeles ou les desseins des Machines dont nous nous seruons icy, à fin s'ils ne les ont pas de leur en apprendre l'usage de quelques unes et de troquer les autres, contre celles que Nous n'avons pas, ou contre les secrets de leurs arts que nous ignorons, que l'on auroit peut estre difficilement pour de l'argent, ou par d'autres voyes. L'on enverra aussi toutes les curiositez de l'optique, Dioptrique etc. de l'aimant etc. pour s'introduire par ce moyen et de faire estimer, puis que l'on scait que c'a esté par de semblables voyes que l'on a eu entrée dans de puissans Royaumes.<sup>50</sup>

[And to that end, when visiting civilized countries (*les pays policés*), travellers will carry models or diagrams of the machines which we use here, so that if the foreigners do not have them, we can teach them how to use some of them, and exchange some of them for those which we do not have, or for the secrets of their arts which we do not know—something which perhaps would be difficult to get by paying money, or by some other means. Also, we will send out [with travellers] all the curiosities of optics, dioptrics, etc., of the magnet, etc., so that the travellers can introduce ourselves by these means, and make themselves esteemed, since we know that it was by such means that entry was gained into some powerful kingdoms.]

It seems likely that this was an imitation of the Jesuit mission to China, which, as the century went on, made increasing use of ornate instrument-gifts to improve their position at the Chinese imperial court.<sup>51</sup> The idea

<sup>50</sup> All quotations from 'Project de la Compagnie des Sciences et des Arts' (?1663), in Huygens, vol. 4, 325–9.

<sup>51</sup> On the Jesuits' use of instruments as gifts, see F. C. Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China* (Chicago, forthcoming).



of sending specially trained scientific observers to distant lands was later to be realized by the Académie des sciences, partly at the instigation of Huygens and Adrien Auzout, both members of Thévenot's group who were made members of the Académie.

One reason for accepting that this document has some relation to Thévenot's group is that many of the same sentiments are echoed in a 'Discours sur l'Art de la Navigation' that he published as part of the supplementary *Recueil de voyages* of 1681. In this text, one of the few pieces of extended prose by Thévenot, there is much made of the familiar opposition between artisanal knowledge and the worthless 'jeu de l'esprit' of the established sciences. Whereas 'gens de lettres' have filled their libraries with endless commentaries on Aristotle, the art of navigation has got better by the accumulated experience of pilots on the seas ('ces gens de Mer, ces gens de peu de discours'). The fact that long-distance voyages are now practicable is owed to this accumulation of experiential knowledge:

Nous devons ces connoissances & ces avantages aux écrits utiles, & aux observations exactes des Navigateurs des siècles passez. La Geographie & beaucoup d'autres Arts se sont perfectionnez de même, & on auroit fait un semblable progrès dans les Sciences si on y voit [sic: for avoit] employé de la mesme sorte les experiences & les observations.<sup>52</sup>

[We owe this knowledge and these advantages to the useful writings and the exact observations of the navigators of past ages. Geography, and many other Arts, have likewise been improved; and similar progress would have been made in the Sciences, too, if experiments and observations had been employed in the same way.]

If seamen had imitated the learned, they would never have crossed the Torrid Zone, the New World would not have been discovered, and half the world would still be in the 'cahos où l'ignorance des siècles passez l'avoit laissée' ('chaos in which the ignorance of past ages had left it'). If, conversely, physicians had imitated the navigators in accumulating experience, medicine might have made more progress, and mankind would be enjoying the benefits of a great store of remedies, rather than the ill-founded dogma and false eloquence of the doctors.

It was because of the need for the accumulation of experiential knowledge that Thévenot set himself the task of collecting and translating travel accounts, mainly from English and Dutch long-distance voyages.

<sup>52</sup> 'Discours sur l'Art de la Navigation', in Thévenot, *Recueil de voyages*, sep. pag., 5.

Because these accounts contain practical navigational matter they could be of use to any future travellers, particularly French merchants. Compiling accounts which were not yet available in French and sometimes not yet even in print into a single collection ('recueil') had the advantage of allowing the seafarer to collate scattered data by leafing through one book. Just like the bubble levels developed in the meetings of Thévenot's group, the collection of travel texts was an instrument designed to be of practical use for navigation.<sup>53</sup> The same concern for publishing technical knowledge that might be useful for seafaring probably lies behind the book on the 'art of swimming' that Thévenot later published, and which was read throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup>

With wonderful optimism, the 'Project' proposes that the 'compagnie' will enter into communication with 'all other Academies', with *savants* of every country, to share news of books and to exchange local knowledge of both nature and the arts ('s'instruire reciproquement de ce qu'il y a de particulier dans la Nature et dans les arts').<sup>55</sup> A network of correspondence is necessary for the circulation of reports on experiments and observations, including thermometer readings, magnetic variation, tides, eclipses, and comets ('pour observer par ce moyen en tous les Lieux, les Saisons, les vents, le plus grand chaud, le plus grand froid, la declinaison de l'Aimant, les flux et reflux des Mers, des Eclipses, les Cometes'). This will make possible 'the most universal natural history possible' ('une histoire de la Nature la plus universelle qui soit possible'). This history of nature is, clearly, impossible without collective action and transparent communication—even if this ideal might be difficult to realize in practice.<sup>56</sup>

What remains of Thévenot's correspondence reveals that he played his part in the transmission of scholarly news, particularly between Paris,

<sup>53</sup> On this invention, see A. J. Turner, 'Melchisédech Thévenot, the bubble level, and the artificial horizon', *Nuncius: annali di storia della scienza*, 7 (1992), 131–45. See also O. Griffith, 'Melchisédech Thévenot and the origins of calibration', *Two Nine Two: Essays in Visual Culture* [Edinburgh], 2 (2001), 57–72.

<sup>54</sup> M. Thévenot, *L'Art de Nager démontré par figures avec des avis pour se baigner utilement* (Paris, 1696) with reprints 1781 and 1782; English trans: *The Art of Swimming* (London, 1699), reprinted 1764 (twice), 1789, 1838. Thévenot portrays swimming as a 'mechanical art' and calls for the establishment of public academies of swimming. It was with Thévenot's manual that Benjamin Franklin taught himself to swim (see *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. L. W. Labaree, et al. (New Haven, 1964), 104).

<sup>55</sup> 'Project', 327.

<sup>56</sup> See Lux and Cook, 'Closed circles or open networks?'; L. Daston, 'The ideal and the reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment', *Science in Context*, 4 (1991), 367–86; Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 174–218.

Florence, and the Netherlands. He was in contact with Henry Oldenburg, the intelligencer for the English natural philosophers; he also acted as a Parisian contact for the Florentine community of scholars: he was in touch with Michelangelo Ricci at first, who passed his name on to Borelli, who then told Prince Leopoldo of him in 1658. Thévenot wrote to Leopoldo for the first time in 1660, and was soon in contact with Viviani as well.<sup>57</sup> Later on, in the 1670s, Thévenot was still in contact with Florence, as we learn from the letters of Valentin Conrart to Magalotti.<sup>58</sup> As we will see, this network of contacts sustained by correspondence was to be an important resource for Thévenot in his various projects.

Thévenot's 'cabinet' was not just a meeting place for *savants*, where experiments were tried, and letters from abroad read out and discussed, but also a private museum, where visitors could examine 'curiosities' and books. Like most other cabinets, Thévenot's was a site to be visited by scholars who came through Paris on *voyages littéraires*.<sup>59</sup> His collection included Greek sculpture—he acquired some of the marbles brought back from Greece by the marquis de Nointel<sup>60</sup>—and presumably also some scientific instruments, but it was for his collection of Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and other manuscripts that Thévenot was probably best known. The abbé Eusèbe Renaudot, describing a visit to Thévenot's house at Issy, remarked that 'he is perhaps the private individual with the

<sup>57</sup> Thévenot was writing to Magalotti from 1658 (*Scientific Organizations*, 135). The fullest account of Thévenot's links with Florence is W. E. Knowles Middleton, *The Experimenters: A Study of the Accademia del Cimento* (Baltimore, 1971), 296–308. There are twenty-three letters between Thévenot and Viviani, from 1643 to 1691, catalogued in A. Procissi, ed., *La collezione Galileiana della Biblioteca nazionale di Firenze* (Rome, 1959–94), of which only six have been published, in P. Galluzzi and M. Torrini, eds, *Le opere dei discepoli di Galileo Galilei: Carteggio* (Florence, 1975), vol. 1, 62, 70, 72, 117–18, 127–8, 145–6, 158, 179, 188, 260, 265, 293, 537. He was known in Italian as Niccolò Tevenotti or Tevenello.

<sup>58</sup> Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, 110, 127, 132, 134, 141.

<sup>59</sup> The Florentines, Magalotti and Panciatici, visited Thévenot when passing through Paris, in May 1668 and Jan. 1671 (Magalotti, *Relazioni di Viaggio*, 168; L. Panciatici, *Scritti vari*, ed. C. Guasti [Florence, 1856], 267, 269). The Dane Corfitz Braem visited Thévenot's 'cabinet' in Apr. 1666 (quoted in G. Scherz's introduction to Steno, *Epistolae et epistolae ad eum data*, ed. G. Scherz (Copenhagen and Freiburg, 1952), 12). Thévenot is listed in J. Spon, *Recherche des Antiquités et Curiosités de la Ville de Lyon . . . avec un Mémoire des Principaux Antiquaires & Curieux de l'Europe* (Lyons, 1675), 217; C.-C. Baudelot de Dairval, *De l'utilité des voyages . . .* (Paris, 1686), vol. 2, 685. Even after his death Thévenot's cabinet (chez his heir, Garnier) was visited by Martin Lister, *Journey to Paris*, 102–4.

<sup>60</sup> E. Bonnaffé, *Dictionnaire des amateurs français au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1884), 304. These marbles later entered the collection of Charles-César Baudelot de Dairval, who in turn left them to the Académie des inscriptions; they are now in the Louvre.

richest collection of manuscripts in Europe' ('C'est l'homme particulier le plus riche en MS qui soit peut estre en Europe').<sup>61</sup> After his death, the library was put on the market, and a printed catalogue, entitled *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, was edited by Antoine Galland. The sale was delayed for a long time. Martin Lister records that in 1698 many Oriental manuscripts were still unsold and that the collection had been secured by the abbé Bignon for the king's use.<sup>62</sup> The remaining collection was not acquired by the Bibliothèque du roi until 1712. Leibniz, rather late in the day, made an attempt to secure the Oriental manuscripts, but in vain.<sup>63</sup>

Rather than separating his collecting from his 'academy', we should conceive of the 'assemblée' as the social use of the cabinet: a collection of *curiosités* and a collective of *curieux*. The *savants* who met there would discuss the objects, the instruments, the experiments and dissections; and read the correspondence coming in, which often included the travel accounts Thévenot was translating. The cabinets of the *curieux* were the period's sites par excellence for contemplating the relationship between nature and art, and for representing materially the Plinian 'history' that Leibniz had dreamt of. It is within such a site of knowledge-production that we can locate the production of the *Relations de divers voyages curieux*.

## THE CURIOUS VOYAGES

In the autobiographical fragment published in the sale catalogue of his library, Thévenot describes the project to publish a collection of travel texts as a direct offshoot of the work of his 'assembly':

. . . chacun d'eux [the members of the group] s'étoit proposé sa tâche & son occupation. La mienne fut de mettre ensemble & de donner en François ce que

<sup>61</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7478, f. 253r–v. Renaudot mentions that Thévenot had 'three or four hundred' oriental manuscripts, including 'les Mss Samaritans de Mr de Peyresc'. One of the only accounts of Thévenot as a collector of Oriental mss is in F. Richard, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*, vol. 1: *Ancien fonds* (Paris, 1989), 11–14.

<sup>62</sup> Lister, *Journey to Paris*, 104.

<sup>63</sup> BN ms latin 17173, f. 1r: 'Tous les msscrits de Mons. Melch. Thevenot furent portés dans la Bibliothèque du Roy a la fin de l'Annee 1712. et acquis pour la somme de deux mille francs, payés en livres doubles de la Bibliothèque aux libraires qui les avoient achepste des heritiers de feu M. Thevenot.' See F. Bléchet, *Les Ventes publiques de livres en France, 1630–1750: répertoire des catalogues conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale* (Oxford, 1991), 67; M. Palumbo, *Leibniz e la res bibliothecaria: bibliografie, historiae literariae e cataloghi nella biblioteca privata leibniziana* (Rome, 1993), 153–6; Galland, *Journal parisien*, 129, 131–2.

les autres Nations ont de meilleur pour les Arts . . . Et pour rendre la Géographie plus parfaite, je mis ensemble & donnai au public trois grands volumes d'un recueil de Voïages auquel je travaillois depuis long-temps . . .<sup>64</sup>

[Each member of the group proposed for himself a task and occupation: mine was to put together and translate into French those things in which other Nations surpass us in the Arts . . . And in order to make Geography more perfect, I put together and gave to the public three [*sic*] large volumes of a collection of Travels which I had been working on for a long time . . .]

Here, as in numerous other sources, the task associated with Thévenot's name is the 'illustration of geography' for the purpose of facilitating commerce. Such knowledge is presented as useful, contributing to the well-being of the French people, indeed of the entire human race. Galland sings the praises of Thévenot's 'genius for anything that he thought could contribute to the good and advantage of men assembled in society' ('génie pour tout ce qu'il croïoit pouvoir contribuer au bien & à l'avantage des hommes assemblez pour vivre les uns avec les autres').<sup>65</sup> The same emphasis on social utility crops up elsewhere: Chapelain noted that the goal of Thévenot's collection was to serve as a beacon for French navigators, and to facilitate commerce,<sup>66</sup> but also, as he told a correspondent, to 'contribute something to exercise the reasoning of the contemplators of nature' ('apporter de quoy s'exercer au raisonnement des contemplateurs de la nature').<sup>67</sup> Similar language is used to describe both the travel-publishing project and the 'assembly'. Indeed, at one point it is implied that the voyage narratives, along with an account of one of Swammerdam's insect investigations, are being brought to light from the records of the Thévenot group.<sup>68</sup>

The collection of travel accounts was already a genre with a history. What Thévenot was doing was to follow where Ramusio and Hakluyt

<sup>64</sup> Thévenot, autobiographical fragment, *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, sigs. 2r–3v.

<sup>65</sup> Galland, introductory paragraph to the autobiographical fragment in *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana*, sig. 2r.

<sup>66</sup> Chapelain, 'Liste de quelques gens de lettres', in *Opuscules critiques*, ed. A. C. Hunter (Paris, 1936), 345: 'qui a pour but de servir de flambeau à nos navigateurs et la facilité au commerce, ce qu'il accompagne de cartes très sûres qu'il a recouvrées, et qu'il fait graver avec soin à ses dépens.'

<sup>67</sup> Chapelain, vol. 2, 349 (Chapelain to Carrel de Sainte-Garde, 6 Feb. 1664).

<sup>68</sup> The title page of one section of the *Recueil de voyages* reads: 'Les Histoires naturelles de l'Ephemere et du Cancellus ou Bernard l'Hermitte décrites & représentées par Figures par Mr Swammerdam, pour servir de Supplément à ce qu'Aristote & les autres en ont écrit, Tirées avec les Voyages precedens du Recueil des Ouvrages de l'Assemblée, qui s'est tenuë chez Mr Thevenot' (my emphasis).

had led: to compile many different travel accounts, by a variety of writers, into a convenient set of volumes. France had not seen many collections of this kind, and the way was open for an impressive collection along the lines of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* or *Purchas his Pilgrimes*.<sup>69</sup> Thévenot's collection was issued in a series of fifty-five fascicles in large quarto format, which were separately paginated but issued in four parts, each part being given a title page and paratext. What became the first part appeared in 1663, the second in 1664, the third in 1666 (together with a reissue of parts 1 and 2), and the fourth in 1672, again with a reissue. Several fascicles were printed over subsequent years for a projected fifth part—incomplete at Thévenot's death—and were therefore added to a complete reissue in 1696. Although new title pages were printed for the reissues, it seems that there was really only one impression of each fascicle.<sup>70</sup>

When the second part appeared in 1664, Thévenot added a dedication to Louis XIV. In the dedicatory epistle we find a conjunction of claims being made: how it is now the turn of France to establish a trading empire (after the Portuguese and Dutch); how Louis XIV is the glory of the age, and that only France has enough men to colonize effectively; how the extremities of the world will be drawn out of obscurity by the king; and how it is reserved to Louis XIV to make 'the whole human race . . . richer, more knowledgeable, better informed of all the advantages that men can draw from the Arts or from Nature'.<sup>71</sup> Explorers would bring back 'new specific remedies' unknown to European medicine, and other technical innovations—just as, Thévenot went on, in centuries past, silk, gunpowder, and printing had been transferred from China to Europe. The glory that would redound to Louis would be great indeed: it was for this sort of thing that kings were deified in Antiquity.

<sup>69</sup> There was at least one other French travel compilation before Thévenot: see R. O. Lindsay, 'Pierre Bergeron: a forgotten editor of French travel literature', *Terrae Incognitae*, 7 (1976), 31–8.

<sup>70</sup> A.-G. Camus, *Mémoire sur la Collection des grands et petits voyages* [des de Bry] *et sur la collection des voyages de Melchisedech Thévenot* (Paris, 1802), 279–341, with an introduction (279–85), a list of the contents (286–92), and notes on each item, including summaries of what P.-D. Huet noted in his copy (293–341). See also 'Description of the collection of the voyages of Thévenot', *Contributions to a Catalogue of the Lenox Library*, 3 (New York, 1879).

<sup>71</sup> 'C'est à [votre majesté] à rendre [le genre humain] plus riche, plus abondant, plus sçauant, & mieux informé de tous les secours que les hommes peuuent tirer des Arts ou de la Nature', Thévenot, ed., *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, part 2 (Paris, 1664), sig. ä ij<sup>r</sup>–iij<sup>r</sup> ('Au Roy'). In the original edition, this came after the title page for part 2, but in the 1696 reprint it is moved to the start of the whole work.

What Thévenot's rhetoric does is to combine the language of scientific instauration that we have seen in the documents surrounding his 'academy' with the conventions for celebrating the *gloire* of the king. It seems highly probable that the dedication to the king was made possible (and probably stylistically controlled, too) by Chapelain, Thévenot's friend and Colbert's literary patronage broker.

The appearance of Thévenot's collection coincided with a renewed effort—largely inspired by Colbert—to put French colonial trade on a better footing. The dedication to the king was added in the same year (1664) that Colbert launched a new *Compagnie des Indes orientales*.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, the contents of Thévenot's series reflects the preoccupation with the need for France to emulate the Dutch. The title page of the first part makes plain that some of the texts are translated from Hakluyt and Purchas, although in the end only eight of the fifty-five texts in the series were from these English collections: many more were from Dutch travel accounts. Perhaps more importantly, Thévenot's collection is comprised almost entirely of materials relating to Asia. Of the fifty-five items published, only four related to the New World (all in the fourth part, 1672), whereas over forty related to Asia. Most of the pieces were extracts rather than complete texts, and the vast majority were translations from printed European sources. There were several that had not been printed before. In addition, the octavo volume of 1681 included other pieces alongside its nine voyage texts, like an account of the *Kunstammer* of Swammerdam's father, and Thévenot's 'Discours' on the art of navigation.<sup>73</sup> The texts translated included, for example, a 'Mémoire sur la Géorgie' by the famous Italian traveller Pietro della Valle, which had been sent to Urban VIII in 1627; a portion of Thomas Roe's relation of the Mughal empire first published by Purchas; and extracts from John Greaves's *Pyramidographia*, which had first appeared in English in 1646.<sup>74</sup> The collection did not only include modern travel narratives, though: the first volume included an extract from the sixth-century Greek travelogue of Cosmas Indicopleustes (because it included descriptions of animals from the East Indies), and brief extracts from the *Geography* of Abū 'l-Fidā', while the fourth part included Prospero

<sup>72</sup> See G. J. Ames, *Colbert, Mercantilism, and the French Quest for Asian Trade* (DeKalb, IL, 1996).

<sup>73</sup> *Recueil de voyages* (Paris, 1681).

<sup>74</sup> On the latter, see Z. Shalev, 'Measurer of all things: John Greaves (1602–52), the Great Pyramid, and early modern metrology', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 63 (2002), 555–75.

Intorcetta's translation of the second book of the Confucian canon, the *Zhongyong*, or Doctrine of the Mean, under the title *Sinarum scientia politico-moralis*.<sup>75</sup>

Since the workings of the Thévenot group were intimately bound up with the reading and writing of letters to other scholarly circles, it comes as no surprise to find that the collection of travel texts was put together from that correspondence. Chapelain told his contacts abroad to look out for travel accounts suitable for translation.<sup>76</sup> Thévenot made use of his contacts in the United Provinces to get texts relating to the Dutch East Indies trade: it was Huygens, for example, who sent Thévenot François Caron's description of Japan, which came out in the second part of the collection.<sup>77</sup> Other scholars in Holland were also brought in: Isaac Vossius obtained for Thévenot the text of Cosmas Indicopleustes that appeared in the first part.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, Lorenzo Magalotti in Florence sent travel texts and maps to Thévenot, sometimes by the intermediary of travelling scholars, like the abbé Panciatici.<sup>79</sup> The short fragment of Abū 'l-Fidā' published in the first part of the series was transcribed from a manuscript in the Vatican library by Abraham Ecchellensis.<sup>80</sup> This dependence on the correspondence network is occasionally acknowledged in Thévenot's prefatory notes. After all, it was a familiar feature of textual scholarship to acknowledge where a manuscript was from: by stating that a text had been sent to him by

<sup>75</sup> This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 below.

<sup>76</sup> Among numerous examples, see Chapelain, vol. 2, 349–50 (Chapelain to Carrel de Sainte-Garde, 6 Feb. 1664).

<sup>77</sup> Huygens, vol. 3, 395: Huygens to L. Huygens, 7 Dec. 1661. Huygens was related to Caron by marriage; we might speculate that the Huygens–Thévenot link facilitated Caron's move to Paris in 1665, where he was to play an important role in the history of French trade with India: see S. P. Sen, *The French in India: First Establishment and Struggle* (Calcutta, 1947). Caron's book first appeared as *Beschrijvinghe van het Machtigh Coninckrijcke Japon* (Amsterdam, 1648).

<sup>78</sup> Huygens, vol. 3, 347: Thévenot to Huygens, 25 Sept. 1661. However, in his 'Avis, Sur le dessein, & sur l'ordre de ce Recueil' (Thévenot, *Relations*, vol. 1 (1663), sig. a ij<sup>r</sup>–iv<sup>v</sup>, here iij<sup>v</sup>) Thévenot states that 'Le Fragment Grec du Cosmas vient de Monsieur [Emeric] Bigot, qui l'a copié dans la Bibliothéque de Florence'. Presumably both Vossius and Bigot were involved.

<sup>79</sup> Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, 110 (29 May 1671), 121 (10 Sept. 1671), 132 (22 Jan. 1672).

<sup>80</sup> See the contents page of the first part and the short 'Avis' to the Abū 'l-Fidā' section (vol. 1, sig. i i<sup>v</sup>, [sep. pag., 18]), mentioning only 'un fameux traducteur', 'Arabe de Nation'; then in the 'Avis' to part 3 (sig. a v<sup>r</sup>): '... Abulfeda, que le Signor Abraham Echellense avoit commencé à me transcrire d'un Manuscrit du Vatican, & que Messieurs Vossius & Golius m'ont fait copier depuis sur trois Manuscrits Arabes de la Bibliothéque de Leyde.'



Magalotti, or from the Vatican library, Thévenot was making a claim for the authenticity of the documents he was presenting.<sup>81</sup>

Once the texts had been collected, Thévenot would translate his selections and see them through the press. Like the process of collecting, the business of printing the *Relations* was a function of the social network which Thévenot manipulated: the royal censor who signed the letters patent granting him the *privilège* to publish was his friend Henri Justel (whom we have already met), while the person named as the beneficiary for the *privilège* was his uncle, one Girard Garnier.<sup>82</sup> This *privilège* was a particularly advantageous one, in that it specified protection for a period of twenty years (rather than ten), to be counted from the appearance of each volume (rather than the first). This, presumably, was arranged in recognition of the fact that the book would appear in several sections. But because the complete contents of the series could not be specified on the original *privilège*, this meant that the series was effectively open-ended. Such a flexible arrangement was presumably facilitated by Thévenot's friendship with Justel.<sup>83</sup>

Once printed, the instalments of Thévenot's series went out through the circuit of correspondence again. Thévenot would send the fascicles as gifts to those scholars he was in touch with, including Robert Boyle, Edward Bernard, and Thomas Hyde.<sup>84</sup> They could then circulate

<sup>81</sup> For example, in the 'Avis' to the first part, Thévenot claimed that his collection would be 'autant-plus fidele & plus exacte, que ie la feray sur de meilleurs Originaux, & sur la foy de Personnes choisies entre ceux qui les ont couruës & obseruées avec plus de soin'; in the 'Avis' for the fourth part, he added 'j'ay fait chercher dans les plus fameuses Bibliothèques les pieces qui pouvoient l'enrichir, & il y a peu de gens de cette erudition que je n'aye entretenus & consultez sur ce dessein'.

<sup>82</sup> Girard Garnier is named as beneficiary in the *privilèges* for all four parts (though in the first it is misprinted as Garnel). A 'Mr Garnier' is identified as Thévenot's uncle in a note attached to Thévenot's letter to Colbert (BN ms Mélanges de Colbert 152, f. 271r, discussed below), and also in Chapelain's letters (e.g. vol. 2, 640). Girard Garnier seems not to have been a *libraire*, though: he is not listed in either P. Renouard, *Répertoire des imprimeurs parisiens: libraires et fondeurs de caractères en exercice à Paris au XVIIe siècle* (Nogent-le-Roi, 1995), or J.-D. Mellot and E. Queval, *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles): état en 1995 (4000 notices)* (Paris, 1997). Why Garnier held the *privilège*, and not Thévenot, is unclear.

<sup>83</sup> On the *privilège* system, see L. Febvre and H.-J. Martin, *L'Apparition du livre*, 3rd edn (Paris, 1999), 338–46. This form of 'package' *privilège* is described in E. Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System, 1498–1526* (Cambridge, 1990), 131–6.

<sup>84</sup> For Boyle, see Oldenburg, vol. 2, 430 (Oldenburg to Boyle, 4 July 1665: 'Monsr Thevenot hath sent you the 2d Tome of his Curious Voyages in folio, fairely bound, wherein are contained, as far as my cursory perusall could informe me, severall things not unpleasing, and instructive both for Navigation, Policy, and Natural Philosophy,

them further: Bernard, for instance, sent one copy to Job Ludolf, the Frankfurt-based scholar of Ethiopic.<sup>85</sup> The recipients, if they were in the position to do so, could then send copies of their own books in return: Robert Boyle made sure Thévenot, along with Huygens, got a copy of his *Observations and Experiments about the Saltness of the Sea*.<sup>86</sup>

What these examples underline for us is that the *Relations* were produced by collecting texts sent 'in' to Thévenot by various correspondents, and then (once translated and printed) circulated back 'out' again through the same network. In order to produce the series in Paris and Issy, Thévenot and his associates had to make other people, in remote locations, work for them. This is just one example of how the Republic of Letters functioned: by a continual mutual exchange of services, sustaining its sense of communal identity through cooperation.<sup>87</sup>

Thévenot's collection of 'curious voyages' can be counted as one of his successful projects. However, as any encounter with the book makes plain, its success in bringing the series of texts together in print was somewhat qualified by the practical effects of the publication process. Firstly, the fact that the voyages were printed as independent fascicles meant that the collection as a whole was only a series of discrete fragments. Unlike later travel compendia, the accounts are not organized (either by geography or by date), nor is there an index for retrieving the information. As a result, Thévenot's volumes are difficult for readers to use. Thévenot did publish lists of the contents of the series, but these were probably designed to allow the owner of a copy to check that no parts were missing. Each fascicle of the series was printed separately, as we have seen, and could be distributed as if it were an individual book.

though most of it be but Traduction') and 444 (Boyle's reply: 'I have now Receiv'd Monsr Thevenot's Booke of Voyages, where I find some few things Curious enough, & however should find cause to be sensible of the Givers Civilitys'). For Bernard and Hyde see Bod. ms Smith 8, pp. 3–5 (Thévenot to Bernard, 1673) at p. 4b; Smith 11, p. 15 (Hyde to Thévenot, 24 June 1673).

<sup>85</sup> Bod. ms Smith 5, p. 151 (Ludolf to Bernard, thanking him for Thévenot's edition of Intorcetta's text, no date); p. 153 (Ludolf to Bernard, 15 Dec. ? 1677, again thanking him: 'pro libro La science des Chinois dicto gratias tibi ago . . .'). Ludolf was also in contact with Thévenot (here pp. 155, 157, letters of 20 Mar. 1678 and 31 Dec. 1683).

<sup>86</sup> Oldenburg, vol. 10, 419–24, at 422: J.-B. Du Hamel to Oldenburg, 6 Jan. 1674.

<sup>87</sup> For further examples see Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*; also Lux and Cook, 'Closed circles or open networks?'

A set of the fragments had to be arranged by the owner before being bound; as a result, the make-up of surviving copies is always slightly different, either because some fragments are missing, or because they are differently ordered.<sup>88</sup>

Thévenot was aware of this problem of order within his book. In the list of contents for the first part, he wrote that readers could choose whether to put the extract from Greaves's *Pyramidographia* at the start or at the end of the volume; in the 'Avis' prefacing the fourth part, he admitted that the original scheme that he had had in mind had been abandoned as he accumulated more texts ('il me sera impossible dans la suite de m'arrester à l'ordre que je m'estois proposé au commencement'). The problem of order was discussed again in an 'avertissement' prefacing the reissue of the whole collection that appeared in 1696 (after Thévenot's death). The writer of this text, probably the bookseller Thomas Moëtte, noted that Thévenot was always so busy adding new texts to the series that there was 'some confusion in all his works' ('quelque confusion dans tous ses Ouvrages'), which were 'those kind of miscellanies which have no order, neither by content or chronology' ('ces sortes de Recueils, qui n'ont point de suite déterminée par les faits ny par les temps'). The same text makes clear that this textual disorder is partly a function of the book's printing history:

Le grand nombre de différentes Relations, les interruptions dans la suite d'une Impression, & plusieurs Ouvriers qui travailloient quelquefois chacun en [par]ticulier sur un mesme Ouvrage pour des raisons qu'on ne peut pas dire, y apportoient une espece de desordre, qu'il étoit bien difficile d'éviter . . . On ne sera donc pas surpris, si parmy ce Recueil on trouve de fausses signatures, & des chiffres qui ne suivent pas; & l'on pourra avoir recours à la Table, pour sçavoir si l'on a tout ce qu'on peut avoir de ces ouvrages.<sup>89</sup>

[The large number of different Relations, the interruptions in the sequence of one impression, and [the fact that] several different workers sometimes (for reasons that are unclear) worked separately on the same text, produced a kind of disorder, which was very difficult to avoid . . . One should not be surprised, then, if within this Collection one finds false signatures and page numbers which are out of sequence; and one can use the Table to find out whether one has the complete set.]

<sup>88</sup> These issues are discussed in Camus, *Mémoire sur la Collection*, 286–92.

<sup>89</sup> Thévenot, *Relations*, 'nouvelle édition' in 2 vols (Paris, 1696), vol. 1, sig. \* i r–v. This 'avertissement' was not signed.

The bookseller goes on to assert that the disorder within the series is not to be ascribed to moral failings on Thévenot's part—in particular, that 'jealousy' typical of the *curieux* (even if, as we shall see, this might have been protesting too much). It seems clear that the writer wanted to distance Thévenot from the more negative associations of the culture of curiosity. The fact that he was engaged in *commerce littéraire* with so many other respected members of the Republic of Letters is offered as proof of his seriousness. Nonetheless, the problem of order remains, and is explained by referring to Thévenot's constant deferral of bringing the book to a close.

Thévenot's collection is a composite text that seems constantly to be in danger of collapsing. The difficulties surrounding the ordering of the information presented are inseparable from the text's material composition. Adrian Johns has emphasized the degree to which the familiar bibliographic categories that we take for granted as modern readers (author, text, publisher, date) become unstable when we consider the world of early modern print. If such problems of textual stability were particularly acute, as Johns shows, in the case of natural-philosophical publishing, the Thévenot case reminds us that this is equally true of travel-editing enterprises.<sup>90</sup>

## THEVENOT AND ABULFEDA

So far, we have seen how Thévenot's group functioned by drawing in information from a network of informants and by collating that information for redistribution. In this section, we will explore in more detail one particular project of Thévenot's: his attempt to produce an edition and translation of 'the *Geography* of Abulfeda' (Abū 'l-Fidā'). As we have already seen, a small fragment of the Abū 'l-Fidā' appeared in the first part of the *Relations de divers voyages curieux*. Thévenot's attempt to publish a fuller edition was an outgrowth of the work of his 'assembly' (and therefore of the travel collection), but one which occupied a great deal of Thévenot's energies over a long period. Because the project ultimately failed—the edition never appeared—the project to edit Abū 'l-Fidā' has not received the attention of historians. But this incompleteness does not make it any less useful for

<sup>90</sup> A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998).

our purposes. Retracing Thévenot's steps illustrates the ways in which the 'curious' could carry out Oriental scholarship during this period. Above all, the fact that the project was never finished makes clear how great the obstacles to Oriental erudition were in the late seventeenth century. While Thévenot was able to get his *Relations de divers voyages curieux* into print, the attempt to produce an edition of Abū 'l-Fidā' posed far greater difficulties. In the end, the skills and the funding necessary for such an ambitious scheme were lacking. It is as if, within the 'curious' style of working, it was possible to accomplish a certain amount, but once Thévenot embarked on a full-scale Arabic edition, he ran into problems that proved insurmountable. Before we go on to the details of the story, though, the motives for the project need some explanation.

There was something of a vogue for Abū 'l-Fidā' in the middle third of the seventeenth century. European scholars knew very little about the historical Abū 'l-Fidā', but they tended to fetishize their 'Abulfeda' as a geographical authority of enormous importance.<sup>91</sup> Isma'il Abū 'l-Fidā' had been a governor of Hama in Syria in the early fourteenth century, and was known as the author of encyclopedic works on universal history and geography. The text that interested European *savants*—what they called 'the *Geography* of Abulfeda'—was the *Taqwīm al-buldān* [*Survey of Countries*], a geographic compilation based largely on previous Arabic authors, but with the addition of latitude and longitude tables for towns in the Middle East.<sup>92</sup> Interest in this text among the scholars of Western Europe went back to the 1530s, when Guillaume Postel had brought a manuscript back from his travels in the Levant. In Postel's time, some fragments were published in Ramusio's collection of *Navigazioni e viaggi* (the original inspiration for Thévenot's collection). In the seventeenth century, the text was sought

<sup>91</sup> A brief history of European interest in Abū 'l-Fidā' is given in E. Renaudot, *Anciennes relations des Indes et de la Chine, de deux Voyageurs Mahometans, qui y allerent dans le neuvième siecle; traduites d'arabe avec Des Remarques sur les principaux endroits de ces Relations* (Paris, 1718), ix–xvii. In what follows, I use the Europeanized name 'Abulfeda' to distinguish the Europeans' imagined author from the historical Abū 'l-Fidā'.

<sup>92</sup> On Abū 'l-Fidā' (AD 1273–1331; AH 672–732), see *EI-2*, vol. 1, 118–19, cf. *EI-1*, vol. 1, 85–6. For other Arabic geographers see J. F. P. Hopkins, 'Geographical and navigational literature', in M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham, and R. B. Serjeant, eds, *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period* (Cambridge, 1990), 301–27. On European interest in Arabic geography, see M. Tolmacheva, 'The medieval Arabic geographers and the beginnings of modern Orientalism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27 (1995), 141–56.

after and worked on by some of the most eminent Arabists (many of them mathematicians): Erpenius in Leiden; Schickard in Tübingen; Edward Pococke, John Greaves, Samuel Clarke, Edward Bernard, and Thomas Hyde in Oxford.<sup>93</sup> Greaves had even managed to get a portion of it printed in Arabic with a Latin translation.<sup>94</sup> Since Peiresc had also been aware of the text, it seems likely that his correspondents (among whom were Mersenne, Saumaise, and the Dupuy circle) also shared the fascination with Abulfeda.<sup>95</sup> Given this background, the fact that the Thévenot group was interested in Abulfeda should not be surprising. Despite all this interest, though, none of the attempts by European scholars to produce an edition of Abū 'l-Fidā' succeeded, and it was only in the nineteenth century that the full text (in Arabic with a French translation) appeared.<sup>96</sup>

The appeal of 'Abulfeda's *Geography*' for Thévenot and his circle is expressed particularly well in Chapelain's letters. Chapelain repeatedly refers to Thévenot's 'zèle pour l'avancement de la géographie', and to the Abulfeda text as an important means of 'illustrating' and perfecting geography, pursued 'pour l'avantage du public'.<sup>97</sup> This and other references to 'l'utilité publique' recalls the language used to describe the travel collection.<sup>98</sup> More specifically, it was the longitude and latitude figures for cities in the Middle East that the Europeans were interested in. What is worth noting is the very fact that so many members of the community of natural philosophers thought it desirable, at one time or another, to produce an edition—to be printed in Arabic with a Latin translation—of this medieval Arabic scientific text, especially when its value was thought to be largely in the numerical observational data it

<sup>93</sup> G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1996), 28, 172–5; R. Mercier, 'English Orientalists and mathematical astronomy', in G. A. Russell, ed., *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden, 1994), 158–214.

<sup>94</sup> J. Greaves, ed., *Chorasmiae et Mawaralnahrae, hoc est regionum extra fluvium Oxum descriptio, ex tabulis Abulfeda Ismaelis* (London, 1650).

<sup>95</sup> I have not been able to consult the 'Excerpta ex Geographia Ismaelis Abulfeda' from Peiresc's papers in the Bibliothèque Municipale, Carpentras, ms 1774, ff. 182–98.

<sup>96</sup> *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, ed. and trans. J. T. Reinaud, et al., 4 vols (Paris, 1840–83); various sections of the work had been published in Arabic with or without translations in the eighteenth century.

<sup>97</sup> Chapelain to I. Vossius, 12 Sept. 1666, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 476 n. In his list (of 1663) Chapelain had written of Thévenot's 'passion violente pour l'illustration de la géographie': Chapelain, 'Liste de quelques gens de lettres', 345.

<sup>98</sup> Chapelain to M. Thévenot, 21 Dec. 1668, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 608: 'un si noble dessein et si despoüillé de tout autre interest que de celuy de l'utilité publique.'

contained. Although John Greaves had already called into question the reliability and usefulness of the *Taqwīm al-buldān* before Thévenot and his colleagues began their project, the Parisian scholars seem not to have been aware of such doubts.<sup>99</sup>

As we have seen (in the Introduction), seventeenth-century *savants* were well aware of the possibility that lost, or imperfectly transmitted, ancient Greek texts might be restored if they had survived in Arabic versions. One of the most notable examples was the hunt for the missing books of Apollonius of Perga's treatise on conic sections (which occupied many scholars, including Jacob Golius, Christian Ravius, Edmund Halley, John Pell, Edward Bernard, Isaac Barrow; and in Italy, Viviani, Borelli, and Abraham Ecchellensis). The Parisians had been aware of the planned Ecchellensis–Borelli edition, and Thévenot had even offered to help.<sup>100</sup> In Oxford in the 1670s, Bernard projected a vast edition of the ancient mathematicians, which was to include Apollonius.<sup>101</sup> In the case of Apollonius' *Conics*, the point was to restore three missing books of an ancient Greek text by using an Arabic translation. In the case of Abū 'l-Fidā', what seems to have been uppermost in the minds of Thévenot and his colleagues was the desire to collect figures for longitude and latitude for cities in the East. In the Parisians' hunt for 'Abulfeda', the authority of the medieval Arabic author is largely taken for granted (despite the unnoticed warnings from Greaves), and the coordinate figures are treated as the best available data for the location of cities which, after all, few European travellers had visited. Indeed, the *authority* of 'Abulfeda'—and changing attitudes to it—is the most important element in the story. Whether 'Abulfeda' was treated with respect because of an awareness of his canonic status within the Arabic scientific tradition, or because of the recommendations of sixteenth-century compilers like Ramusio, is difficult to judge; it might be that the figures for longitude and latitude were thought of merely as data to be used *faute de mieux*. There were other medieval Islamic texts that were at least as (if not more) respected by the European

<sup>99</sup> Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 173, citing a letter from Greaves to E. Pocock, 28 Oct. 1646.

<sup>100</sup> On this edition, see Chapter 1 note 70, above. Middleton relates (*The Experimenters*, 299) that Thévenot had written to Abraham Ecchellensis, offering to have the Arabic Apollonius printed in Paris (from a letter from Borelli to Prince Leopoldo, 23 Sept. 1658); Richard White also offered to print it in London. In the light of his experience with Abū 'l-Fidā', it seems clear that Thévenot's offer was made rashly.

<sup>101</sup> Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 235–43.

natural-philosophical community, such as the astronomical tables of al-Battānī and of Ulugh Beg.<sup>102</sup> The combination of a traditional ‘author-function’ with the desire to collect reports of observations is an example of how the proponents of the ‘new science’ were far from hostile to the textual methods of knowledge-making inherited from the past—even while the relationship between observational and textual authority remained in tension.<sup>103</sup>

To edit Abū ’l-Fidā’, the Thévenot group needed somebody with, at the very least, sufficient linguistic skill to be able to translate the latitude and longitude tables. The lack of such skill in their immediate circle is well illustrated by a scene vividly recounted in one of Chapelain’s letters. Through the mediation of Isaac Vossius, who had attended Thévenot’s group on a visit to Paris, Chapelain had managed to persuade the great Leiden scholar Jacob Golius to loan them a manuscript copy of the star tables of Ulugh Beg. This was brought to Paris by Coenrad van Beuningen, the Dutch diplomat and virtuoso (a friend of Vossius’s and a former secretary to Hugo Grotius), who also attended Thévenot’s club when he could.<sup>104</sup> Chapelain admitted that Thévenot and his associates did not know what to expect from the Ulugh Beg text: Chapelain wrote that it was only after they got the manuscript that they realized that it dealt with astronomy, and not geography (‘c’est un effet de nostre peu de connoissance en cette langue’).<sup>105</sup> This lack of linguistic knowledge was keenly felt. When the Ulugh Beg arrived, Steno, Chapelain, and Thévenot examined it together. Chapelain writes:

Il [Thévenot] le parcourust en ma présence et en celle de Mr Stenon. Je ne sçay point d’Arabe; et il n’en sçait guères plus que moy. Néantmoins par quelques conjectures, il s’est persuadé à son grand desplaisir que ce MS. n’est pas Arabe mais Persan, car cette langue est bien moins connüe parmi nous que l’au[tr]e, ce qui fera que nous ne trouverons pas facilement par qui en faire traduire ce que

<sup>102</sup> For the use of Ulugh Beg and al-Battānī, see Mercier, ‘English Orientalists and mathematical astronomy’, and Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 170, 249–50.

<sup>103</sup> This tension between observation and textual authority in matters of geographical fact was normal: see for example J. Greaves, ‘An account of the latitude of Constantinople, and Rhodes’, *Philosophical Transactions*, 15 (1685), 1295–1300, in which Greaves compares modern observations with the reported figures in traditional authors, including Abulfeda.

<sup>104</sup> For Beuningen’s other scientific activities see H. J. Cook, ‘The new philosophy in the Low Countries’, in Porter and Teich, eds, *The Scientific Revolution in National Context*, 115–49, at 133.

<sup>105</sup> Chapelain to Vossius, 23 Apr. 1665, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 393 (BN ms n. a. fr. 1888, ff. 74r–75r).



nous en désirons, qui est la position des Villes par leurs degrés de Longitude et de Latitude.<sup>106</sup>

[He [Thévenot] looked through it in the presence of Mr Steno and myself. I do not know any Arabic, and he barely knows any more than I. Nevertheless, by some conjectures, he convinced himself that this manuscript is not Arabic, but Persian—to his great displeasure, for this language is much less known among us than the other. Which means it will be difficult to find someone to translate what we want, which is the position of towns by degrees of longitude and latitude.]

The fact that Thévenot and his associates did not know what the Ulugh Beg manuscript would contain seems more surprising than the fact that they did not know that it would be in Persian (since versions of Ulugh Beg exist in both Arabic and Persian), although both are indicative of the rudimentary level of Oriental learning among the group, especially since the astronomer-prince of Samarkand was rather better known to the seventeenth-century Republic of Letters than he is in Europe today.<sup>107</sup> To make up for this lack of linguistic skill,<sup>108</sup> Thévenot needed to make use of the local Oriental linguists Claude Hardi (a mathematician), Pierre Vattier (Royal Professor of Arabic), and the magistrate Gilbert Gaulmin. Gaulmin was one of the few people in the Paris learned world with any claim to know Persian, and so Chapelain planned to ask him to look at the Ulugh Beg. Unfortunately, Gaulmin died later the same year (1665).<sup>109</sup> With competent local help

<sup>106</sup> Chapelain to Vossius, 29 Apr. 1665, BN ms n. a. fr. 1888, f. 77r (also in Chapelain, vol. 2, 395 n. 1).

<sup>107</sup> On Ulugh Beg, see *El-I*, vol. 4.2, 994–6. English scholars had already edited some of Ulugh Beg's astronomical tables, the *Zij-i Jadid-i Sultani* (of which versions exist in both Persian and Arabic): J. Bainbridge (ed. J. Greaves), *Canicularia . . . quibus accesserunt insigniorum aliquot Stellarum Longitudines, & Latitudines ex Astronomicis Observationibus Vlug Beigi, Tamerlani Magni nepotis* (Oxford, 1648); Greaves, *Epoche celebriores . . . ex traditione Ulug Beigi* (London, 1650). At this point, the tables were in the process of being edited anew by Hyde: T. Hyde, ed., *Tabule long. ac. lat. stellarum fixarum ex Observatione Ulugh Beighi Tamerlanis Magni Nepotis* (Oxford, 1665). See Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 169–70, 249–50.

<sup>108</sup> Thévenot's lack of Arabic is mentioned in Huet's memoirs: P.-D. Huet, *Commentarius de rebus ad eum pertinentibus* (The Hague, 1718), 318–19; Huet, *Mémoires (1718)*, ed. P.-J. Salazar, trans. C. Nisard (Toulouse, 1993), 120. This contradicts the claim made in Cousin's 'Eloge' that Thévenot could read Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Syriac and Hebrew.

<sup>109</sup> On the oriental interests of Gaulmin (1585–1665), a *maître des requêtes* and sometime *Intendant* of the Nivernais, see H. A. Omont, 'Gilbert Gaulmin, de Moulins, et sa collection de manuscrits orientaux', *Revue bourbonnaise*, 3 (1886), 120–40; F. Secret, 'Gilbert Gaulmin et l'histoire comparée des religions', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 177

thin on the ground, the Thévenot group had to mobilize more distant contacts, while making use of the few Arabic-speaking travellers and diplomats available in Paris. As Justel wrote to Oldenburg (in September 1667), 'M. Thevenot has translated the Abulfeda from Arabic into Latin. He has redone it with a gentleman from Marseilles who understands perfectly that language' ('Monsieur Thevenot a traduit l'Abulfida de l'arabe en latin. Il la remit avec un chevalier de Marseille qui entend parfaitement bien ceste langue là'). This 'chevalier de Marseille' was one of those whom Thévenot employed, the traveller and diplomat Laurent d'Arvieux.<sup>110</sup>

As we have seen, the communication with distant scholars was made possible by intermediaries, like the diplomat van Beuningen, but also by Chapelain's network of correspondence, which had a wide European range because of the recently established system of royal 'gratifications aux gens de lettres'. The incentive of royal reward was not enough for Jacob Golius, though. The great Dutch Orientalist seemed unwilling to let the Parisians have access to his manuscript of Abulfeda. As Chapelain complained:

Ça esté vne fascheuse rencontre que M. Golius se soit emparé d'un tel Exemplaire puis qu'il en envie l'vsage à la Société. . . je pense qu'il seroit bon d'obtenir des Curateurs de l'Academie de Leyde, qu'on pust copier celuy de la Biblioteque publique par vn Armenien qui est là, et qui s'en aquiteroit très bien. Mr Thevenot founiroit l'argent dont on seroit conuenu avec le copiste pour sa peine. Il faudroit faire faire par le mesme vne Copie des Tables

(1970), 35–63; S. Kerner, 'Gilbert Gaulmin, érudit et hébraïsant français, 1585–1665', *Archives juives*, 10 (1974), 35–9, 61–7; and Richard, *Catalogue*, 3–6. Of Gaulmin's Oriental manuscripts 557 went to the Bibliothèque du roi in 1668, of which there were 127 Hebrew, 261 Arabic, about 100 Turkish, and 55 Persian. Gaulmin also published a version of Kalilah and Dimnah: *Le Livre des lumières, ou la Conduite des Roys composé par le sage indien Pilpay* (Paris, 1644).

<sup>110</sup> Oldenburg, vol. 3, 485 (25 Sept. 1667). On d'Arvieux in general, including his links to Thévenot and to Molière, see M. Hossain, 'The chevalier d'Arvieux and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (1990), 76–88; 'The employment and training of interpreters in Arabic and Turkish under Louis XIV', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, [in 2 parts:] 14 (1992), 235–46; 15 (1993), 279–95. The main source is d'Arvieux's account of his travels, edited posthumously by Jean de La Roque: L. d'Arvieux, *Voyage fait par ordre du roy Louis XIV, dans la Palestine, vers le Grand Emir, Chef des Princes Arabes du Desert, connus sous le nom de Bedouïns, ou d'Arabes Scenites. . . Avec la Description generale d'Arabie, faite par le Sultan Ismaël Abulfeda, traduite en François sur les meilleurs Manuscrits, avec des Notes. Par Monsieur D. L. R* (Paris, 1717). The translation of a passage from Abū 'l-Fidā' appended to the text seems to be La Roque's work, rather than d'Arvieux's.

d'Ulughbeg qu'on payeroit aussi, et surtout obliger l'Escruvain à estre très exact en la transcription.<sup>111</sup>

[It is most regrettable that Mr Golius has kept this copy to himself, because he does not want the public to have use of it. . . I think it would be good to get [permission] from the curators of Leiden university for us to have a copy made from the copy that is in the Leiden public library, which could be done by an Armenian who is there, and who will do a fine job. Mr Thévenot will provide the money which will be agreed with the copyist for his trouble. We should have the same person make copies of the tables of Ulugh Beg, which we will pay for as well, and above all [we must] make sure the scribe is very careful in his transcription.]

Again, we see local resources (the 'Armenian' in Leiden, probably a Maronite) being employed. However, the promise that Thévenot would pay the expenses proved hard to keep.<sup>112</sup>

It was difficult to maintain control over the supposed allies, even those closer to Paris. The case of Pierre Vattier illustrates this well. Vattier, formerly a protégé of Gaston d'Orléans and then of Fouquet, was a physician and Royal Professor of Arabic.<sup>113</sup> As soon as the Leiden text arrived in September 1666, Chapelain wrote to Vattier with long instructions on how to translate it. At the time, Vattier was ill, and living in Montreuil (in Picardy), but was expected to come to Paris soon to give his lectures as Royal Professor of Arabic. Chapelain instructed Vattier that since Abū 'l-Fidā' was based on Ptolemy he should prepare himself by carefully re-reading all of Ptolemy's *Geography*. He was also to write 'une ample préface' explaining the similarities and differences between Arabic and Greek geography:

Pour cet effet il faudra fort méditer sur la matière à mesure que vous lirés le texte grec et le texte arabe, et noter sur un papier à part les choses que vous y trouverés digne de consideration pour en composer les articles d'un avant-propos qui serve à diriger le lecteur dans cette lecture et qui face [*sic*, for *fasse*] voir en mesme temps vostre erudition et vostre jugement. Je vous donne ce conseil

<sup>111</sup> Chapelain to Vossius, 12 March 1665, BN n. a. fr. 1888, f. 62r (in Chapelain, vol. 2, 386 n. 3). It is possible that Chapelain's reference to 'la société' refers to Thévenot's scientific group, but in the context it seems more likely that he is referring to the public at large.

<sup>112</sup> Chapelain to Vossius, 5 Nov. 1666, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 490: 'sa bourse [i.e. Thévenot's] s'y est opposée à son grand regret.'

<sup>113</sup> On Vattier (1623–67), Royal Professor of Arabic from 1658, see *ABF*; *DLF-17*; Colomiès, *Gallia orientalis*, 229–30; and C.-P. Goujet, *Mémoire historique et littéraire sur le Collège royal de France* (Paris, 1758), vol. 3, 291–4.

pour ce que de son execution depend vostre honneur et que c'est le seul moyen que j'auray de vous maintenir dans les gratifications que je vous ay procurées auprès du Roy par Mr Colbert. Disposés vous y donc sérieusement et me faites sçavoir quand vous pensés venir commencer à mettre la main à l'œuvre.<sup>114</sup>

[To this end, you must meditate carefully on the subject matter, as you are reading the Greek and Arabic texts, and note on a separate paper the things you find worthy of consideration, to compose the articles of an Introduction, which will serve to direct the reader, and which will make plain at the same time your erudition and judgement. I give you this advice, because it is on your execution of this task that your honour depends, and because this is the only means I will have to keep you in the gratifications that I have procured for you from the King and M. Colbert. So, take this advice seriously, and let me know when you think you will begin work on this.]

Vattier did not reply for several months, and when he did, said that he was not coming to Paris until March 1667. This seems to have annoyed Chapelain, who threatened him (once again invoking Colbert):

vous estes professeur royal et obligé de faire vos leçons, si vous ne voulés perdre vos gages, et peut estre vostre gratification. Vous n'ignorés pas la sévérité du Ministre qui ne paye qu'à ceux qui s'aquient de leur devoir, et qui a des surveillans pour se faire instruire de ce qui se passe dans vos escholes.

[you are a royal professor, and obliged to give your lessons, if you do not wish to lose your wages, and perhaps your gratification. You are not unaware of the severity of the Minister, who only pays those who carry out their duty, and who has overseers to keep him informed of what happens in your schools.]<sup>115</sup>

Vattier's argument that the other Royal Professors did no more work than him was not an acceptable excuse, nor was the fact that Vattier was ill. Chapelain's attempt to make Vattier toe the line was to no avail, however, since the illness proved fatal: Vattier died on 7 April 1667. This situation, in which the death of an Orientalist could put the whole project at risk, only underscores the rarity of Oriental linguistic skill in 1660s Paris.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to these problems keeping their allies in line, there were tensions within the Paris group. It seems that Thévenot fell out with Colbert's librarian, the mathematician Pierre de Carcavi, over the

<sup>114</sup> Chapelain to Vattier, 18 Sept. 1666, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 477–8.

<sup>115</sup> Chapelain to Vattier, 11 Feb. 1667, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 500–1.

<sup>116</sup> Of the younger generation of scholars, Barthélemy d'Herbelot was away in Florence (see Chapter 1), and both Antoine Galland and François Pétis de La Croix *filis* were still too young.

project. Late in 1668, Thévenot had left France for the United Provinces, after a disagreement with Carcavi over 'quelque livre Arabe'.<sup>117</sup> Some observers thought that Thévenot had been sent to the Netherlands to try to acquire Oriental books for Paris, perhaps to make offers on behalf of the Bibliothèque du roi for the books of Golius (who had died in 1667).<sup>118</sup> However, the main purpose of the visit was to find a bookseller willing to publish the *Abulfeda*.<sup>119</sup> This proved to be the biggest stumbling block of all. Following the standard set earlier in the century by the Dutch and English Orientalists, Thévenot had the ambition of printing the text of the *Taqwīm al-buldān* in the original Arabic. Printing in Arabic was extremely expensive and difficult, though, because the equipment and personnel needed were so rare. It was not just that typesetters able to compose Arabic were in short supply. Earlier in the century, Arabic texts had been printed in Paris, the last occasion being perhaps the most famous, Le Jay's Polyglot Bible of 1645.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, the set of Arabic type owned by the Imprimerie royale—known as the 'Savary de Brèves set' after the diplomat who had had it made—was deemed one of the finest in Europe. This set of Arabic type had been in the care of Antoine Vitré, who had been since 1630 'imprimeur et libraire ordinaire du roy pour les langues orientales', and had been involved in the printing of the Paris Polyglot. By the late 1660s it was thought to be lost, and when Joseph de Guignes rediscovered the set, in the late eighteenth century, he reckoned it had been missing for over a hundred years.<sup>121</sup> Scholars are still unable to

<sup>117</sup> Huygens, vol. 6, 344 (C. Huygens to L. Huygens, from Paris, 11 Jan. 1669): 'Je n'avois pas sceu que Monsieur Thevenot estoit allè en Hollande et il a tort de m'avoit pas dit adieu. Il est mal avec Monsieur de Carcavi pour quelque livre Arabe, et cela fait qu'il evite cette maison icy [Huygens was lodged at the Bibliothèque du roi], dont je suis bien fachè, car de l'aller voir a Issy ou il se tient tousjours, cela n'est pas commode. S'il est encore la, vous luy ferez s'il vous plait mes baisemains et mes reproches.'

<sup>118</sup> This was seen as a possibility by English scholars in Holland: Thomas Marshall told Samuel Clarke, 12/22 Feb. 1669, that 'This Gentleman [i.e. Thévenot] I look upon as the French Agent for the Golian MSS', BL ms Add. 22905, f. 90; cf. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 227 and 252 n. 191. My thanks to G. J. Toomer for sending me his notes on this.

<sup>119</sup> As Chapelain told François Bernier in February 1669: 'Il est présentement en Hollande pour l'impression de l'Abulfeda, qu'il publie en arabe avec la traduction', Chapelain, vol. 2, 622.

<sup>120</sup> P. N. Miller, 'Aux origines de la *Polyglotte* parisienne: *philologia sacra*, contre-réforme et raison d'état', *XVIIe siècle*, 194 (1997), 57–66.

<sup>121</sup> The standard source is J. de Guignes, *Essai historique sur la typographie orientale et grecque de l'Imprimerie Royale* (Paris, 1787); cf. C. F. Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica* (Halle, 1811), 500–6. See G. Duverdier, 'Les débuts de la typographie orientale: les

explain this disappearance: certainly the set was jealously guarded, partly because of its rarity, and partly because of the fear that it would fall into the hands of Protestants, who could use it to spread heresy in the Holy Land. In the late 1650s, the Assembly of the Clergy paid 6,000 *livres* to Vitré to reimburse him and to take charge of the type, with the idea that printers could use them on the condition that the title page of any book printed with them carry the words 'ex Typis Cleri Gallicani'.<sup>122</sup> Although the type itself remained (as far as we know) in Vitré's care, no more books had been printed with it by the time of Thévenot's *Abulfeda* project, and the abbé Renaudot described them as lost in 1670.<sup>123</sup>

This situation explains why Thévenot had to go to Holland to try to print the *Abulfeda* in Arabic. Even there, problems remained. Edward Bernard, who was in Holland in 1670, informed Edward Pococke that 'so great was the Decay of Oriental Learning' in Holland that 'Mr. *Thevenot* cannot find a Bookseller, either there [Leiden], or at *Amsterdam*, to undertake his *Abulfeda*.'<sup>124</sup> Scholars of Bernard's stamp missed no opportunity to lament the decay of learning, and it seems more likely that the Dutch printers were wary of taking on an unmarketable Arabic edition during economically uncertain times. More importantly, there seems to have been some objection from Paris against Thévenot

caractères de Savary de Brèves et la présence française au Levant au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *L'Art du livre à l'Imprimerie nationale*, 68–87; and his 'Les impressions orientales en Europe et le Liban', in C. Aboussouan, ed., *Le Livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900* (Paris, 1982), 157–279, esp. 220–34; J. Balagna, *L'Imprimerie arabe en occident (XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Paris, 1984), 87; A. Bernard, 'Antoine Vitré et les caractères orientaux de la Bible polyglotte de Paris', *Bulletin du bibliophile belge*, 2nd series, 3–4 (1856–7), 337–52, 390–405, 43–61. I have not been able to verify Balayé's unlikely claim that Thévenot acquired Vitré's set after his death (10 July 1674): S. Balayé, *La Bibliothèque nationale des origines à 1800* (Geneva, 1988), 117 and n. 232.

<sup>122</sup> AN, AJ<sup>17</sup> carton 2, unnumbered bundle 'Caractères orientaux', containing extracts from the sessions of the Assemblée générale du Clergé de France of 4–6 Oct. 1656 and 4 Apr. 1657. To prevent the set being pirated, the punches (*poînçons*) and matrices used to cast the type were to be kept apart—the punches in the Chambre des Comptes (where Garamont's Greek set had been held since François I's day); and the matrices in the Bibliothèque du roi.

<sup>123</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7478, f. 253v: Renaudot, writing in 1670, notes that 'Le Clergé auoit acheté les caracteres Arabes de Mr Vitray, l'argent estoit donné & ils sont perdus[;] on en uouloit imprimer le Catechisme Turc de Mr de Lodeue. Vitray deuoit 4000 ll a la succession de Mr de Breves pour ses caracteres qui ont esté aussi perdus.'

<sup>124</sup> E. Pococke, *The Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pocock. . . . To which is prefixed, An Account of his Life and Writings. . . .*, ed. L. Twells, 2 vols (London, 1740), vol. 1, 66. These are not Bernard's words but Twells's paraphrase of a letter from Bernard to Pococke, 19 Mar. 1669.

taking his work to Holland. This we learn from the only letter that survives from Thévenot to Colbert, written from Amsterdam in spring 1669.<sup>125</sup> In this letter, Thévenot reminds Colbert of the aims of his assembly:

Monseigneur, Vous m'auez fait l'honneur de m'écouter plusieurs fois sur le dessein de cette assemblée qui se tenoit chés moy, et sur vne tache particuliere que Je me suis donnée il y a fort long temps de mettre en françois ce que les autres nations ont de meilleur dans leur langue pour la navigation, pour la geographie, et pour les autres arts.

[Monseigneur, You did me the honour of listening to me several times on the plan for that assembly which I hosted, and on a particular task that I gave myself a long time ago to translate into French those things in which other Nations surpass us in their language for navigation, geography and the other Arts.]

This underlines once again that the work which produced the *Relations de divers voyages curieux* was connected to the work of Thévenot's 'assembly'. Thévenot recalls that Colbert ordered him to meet with the abbé de Bourzeis and Chapelain (no date is given) to discuss 'what could be done for the establishment of this assembly' ('ce qui se pouvoit fair pour l'establissement de cette assemblée'). Thévenot says that even after 'the measures which have since been taken' ('les mesures qu'on a prises depuis', presumably the foundation of the Académie des sciences in 1666), he continued his own work, 'even though I thought I should discontinue this assembly out of respect' ('quoy que J'aye crû devoir discontinüer cette assemblée par respect'). Crucially, he claims that his trip to Holland is a continuation of the same programme ('la passion d'avancer ce dessein est le suiet du sejour que Je fais icy'). After briefly reminding Colbert of his 'recueil de voyages' (the *Relations*), Thévenot says that he has collected a number of manuscripts for the edition of Abulfeda, 'which is a supplement to what is lacking for the geography of Asia' ('qui est vn supplément de ce qui manque à la geographie de l'Asie'). He then moves on to the reason for his writing: to ask for money.

<sup>125</sup> Thévenot to Colbert, Amsterdam, 23 May 1669: BN ms Mélanges de Colbert 152, ff. 271–4. The letter is ff. 273–4; f. 271r has a note headed 'Mem[oir]e concernant Mr Theuenot' (to which a later hand has added 'de Carcavy'). Whether this really is by Pierre Carcavi, Colbert's librarian, is uncertain. The letter, without the accompanying note, was published in McCloughlin, 'Une lettre de Melchisédech Thévenot'.

Je trauaille avec plaisir a ce dessein que J'espere Monseigneur vous devoir estre vn iour agreable & utile a ma patrie. Je n'y ay rien epargnè de ce que J'ay pù tirer de mon bien, mais il me reste encore a faire la depence de ramasser quelques autres pieces et celle des nouveaux caracteres pour l'Abulfeda afin de donner le texte Arabe avec la version latine que j'en ay faite et la rendre plus digne d'estre presentée a Sa Maiestè. C'est au reste une necessité de faire de nouveaux caracteres, a cause que ceux que Vitrè retient sont trop gros, il faudra aussi engager a ce trauail quelqu'un de ces quartiers qui puisse composer en Arabe.

[I am happily working on this project, which I hope will one day be agreeable to you, Monseigneur, and useful to my country. I have spared nothing from what I could draw from my own wealth, but I am still facing the expense of collecting some other pieces, and that of [making] the new characters for the Abulfeda, in order to publish the Arabic text with the Latin translation that I have made, and [thereby] make it more worthy of being presented to His Majesty. New characters are needed anyway, because the ones Vitre has are too large. It will also be necessary to hire someone from this area who can do composition in Arabic.]

Having exhausted his own means, Thévenot is appealing for extra funding, by claiming that Colbert had once made promises of royal funding for the activities of his group (both the voyage series and the experiments):

Je ne sçay Monseigneur si Je puis prendre là dessus la libertè de vous faire souvenir de ce que vous m'avés dit autres fois sur le suiet du receüil [sic] des voyages et des experiences qui se sont faites chés moy l'espace de deux ans que le Roy y contribueroit si j'en auois besoin, Je continueray touiours ce dessein et J'y employray tout ce que J'ay tant qu'il me restera quelque esperance qu'il vous puisse estre agreable et util au public et Je considereray ce trauail comme le meilleur moyen pour meriter l'honneur de vostre protection.

[I do not know, Monseigneur, if I may, on that note, take the liberty of reminding you of what you once said to me on the subject of the collection of voyages, and the experiments which were done at my home for two years: that the King would contribute to them if I needed it. I will continue this design, and I will employ all [the means] that I have, as long as I still have hope that it might be agreeable to you, and useful to the public. And I will consider this work the best means to earn the honour of your protection.]

Even though Thévenot is making these claims in the hope of gaining patronage, his identifying the Abulfeda project with the work of his 'assembly' was legitimate, in that the publication of the *Relations* was part of the assembly's work. What the letter does not tell us is what had



led Thévenot to Holland. The picture becomes somewhat clearer when we add a note attached to this letter, possibly by Carcavi:

N'ayant rien veu des memoires dont Mr Theuenot fait mention dans la lettre qu'il a plu a Monseigneur de m'enuoyer, je ne scauerois luy en rien dire. Je me souviens seulement que Mr Chapelain luy ayant parlé il y a cinq ou six ans pour venir d'Hollande un traitté Arabe d'Abulfeda, Monseigneur nous ordonna d'en prendre soing, ce nous fismes, mais led[it] Sr Theuenot changea de dessein, et au lieu qu'on proposoit de le faire imprimer icy dans l'Imprimerie du Louvre, il voulut le faire imprimer luy mesme, Mr Garnier son oncle qui a esté con[seill]er au Grand con[sei]l m'a dit depuis peu de Jours qu'il croit qu'il a encore la mesme pensée, et que n'ayant vraysemblablement pu s'accommoder avec Mr Vitray pour les caracteres Arabes, il est allée en Hollande pour tascher de faire sa condition plus auantageuse avec quelqu'autre Imprimeur, a quoy il faut peut estre despencer maintenant dauantage qu'il ne s'estoit persuadé, n'ayant pas mis en ligne de conte les auances que les gens de ce pays là ont coustume de faire aux françois, Il est cependant tres fascheux que nous soyons priuez de toutes les belles choses qu'on m'a dit qu'il a recueillies de diuers endroits.<sup>126</sup>

[Not having seen the documents that Mr Thévenot mentions in his letter (which it pleased Monseigneur to send me), I am unable to comment on them. I only remember that, Mr Chapelain having spoken to him about five or six years ago about bringing from Holland an Arabic treatise by Abulfeda, Monseigneur [Colbert] ordered us to take care of this, which we did. But the said M. Thévenot changed the plan, and instead of printing it here at the Imprimerie Royale, as had been proposed, he wanted to have it printed himself. His uncle, Mr Garnier, a former *conseiller au Grand conseil*, told me a few days ago that he thinks [Thévenot] still had this idea, and having, it seems, not been able to come to an agreement with Mr Vitré on the Arabic characters, he went to Holland, to try to improve his position with some other printer, for which it may be that he has to pay more than he believed, not having taking into account the advances which the Dutch tend to demand from the French. It is nonetheless extremely irritating that we should be deprived of all the good things that they say he has collected from various places.]

This lends a completely new sense to Thévenot's decision to head for Holland. Although the original plan had been to print the text at the Imprimerie royale, Thévenot had taken the matter into his own hands, and finding Vitré difficult, had been driven to try the Dutch. At least Thévenot's presence in the United Provinces allowed Chapelain to maintain his relations with the Dutch scholars: Thévenot stayed with

<sup>126</sup> BN ms Mélanges de Colbert 152, f. 271r: 'Mem[oir]e concernant Mr Theuenot'.

J. F. Gronovius, who continued to receive gratifications from the French king.

In June 1669, the project encountered a new obstacle. Thévenot told Chapelain that somebody connected to Colbert had ordered him to discontinue his edition in Holland. This Chapelain found hard to believe at first. He wrote to Thévenot, advising him to continue the printing (if already begun), and to make plans to offer the book, when finished, to Louis XIV, with a suitably humble dedication.<sup>127</sup> In his next letter, Chapelain changed his mind. Although he had thought Thévenot's complaint a false alarm, he was now persuaded otherwise, and offered new advice. If the printing process had not yet begun, Thévenot should postpone it, and then claim that the purpose of the trip to Holland was primarily for other business, and to make enquiries about obtaining Arabic type—with the excuse that the royal Arabic type in Paris was too large. Again Chapelain advises presenting the book to Louis XIV, with 'vignettes, lettres grises et fleurons, des armes et devises du Roy'. If, on the other hand, the impression had already been done, Thévenot should write a dedication to the king—'dans les termes les plus respectueux et les plus magnifiques que vous pourriés'—explaining to the reader why the book has not used the king's Arabic characters, despite the fact that they are the most beautiful in Europe ('quoique les plus beaux de l'Europe'). The explanation would be, Chapelain goes on, that a smaller type was required to print the tables of longitude and latitude. Chapelain adds that all should be well, since Thévenot's motive has always been 'la gloire du Roy et le profit du public'. Even so, he notes that the best course would be to return to Paris without starting the printing.<sup>128</sup>

It seems, then, that Thévenot's enterprise had been put at risk because of a disagreement with someone in Paris. The most likely explanation, given the elements of the story outlined so far, is that Carcavi had made a complaint to Colbert. This would explain the serious, secretive tone adopted by Chapelain, who also depended on Colbert's approval. (Indeed, Chapelain tells Thévenot not to complain directly to Colbert: should Thévenot wish to protest, he was to do so by way of Vincent Hotman, a financier married to one of Colbert's cousins,

<sup>127</sup> Chapelain to Thévenot (in Leiden) 4 June 1669, BN ms n. a. fr. 1889, f. 64, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 651–2.

<sup>128</sup> Chapelain to Thévenot (now in Amsterdam), 8 Nov. 1669, n. a. fr. 1889, f. 109r–110r, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 667–8.

and an acquaintance of Thévenot's.) Clearly, there was also a sense of embarrassment about the fact that Thévenot had taken his project to Holland, and the fact that no Arabic type was available in Paris (since Vitré had either lost, or was unwilling to provide, the Savary de Brèves set). There are signs, moreover, that Thévenot was considering other sources of patronage at this point. It may be that he was trying to angle for support by writing to Prince Cosimo de' Medici in January 1670.<sup>129</sup> Cosimo had visited Holland whilst Thévenot was there; Thévenot's friend Steno was established at the Tuscan court in Florence; and whilst in Holland, Cosimo made overtures to another of Thévenot's friends, Swammerdam. There is no evidence, though, that Thévenot did receive any Medici support.

Thévenot's inconclusive Dutch mission was being recounted thirty years later. The English traveller Martin Lister, in his account of a visit to Thévenot's heir, Garnier, in 1698, recorded another version of events.

[Garnier] shewed me the MS. of Abulfeda, with its Latin Version, done by Monsieur Thevenot; and the Matrices and Forms of Arabick Letters, which he had, at his own Charge, caused to be cut for the Printing of certain proper Names in it. He went or designed to go into England and Holland to get it Printed, but was called back by Monsieur Louvois's Order, to Print it in France at the King's Charge; but the late Wars coming on, it was set aside, and is like to be so . . .<sup>130</sup>

Although this seems a garbled account, it does at least offer some possibilities for speculation, since it confirms the notion that Thévenot had taken steps to have new Arabic type privately made, and also the idea that he was called back from his trip to Holland by the Paris authorities. In the absence of any further evidence, though, the details of the story remain obscure.<sup>131</sup>

In the spring of 1670, Thévenot came back to Paris, his Abulfeda still not printed.<sup>132</sup> Undeterred by the intrigues that undermined his

<sup>129</sup> M. Thévenot to Prince Cosimo, 24 Jan. 1670 (original in Archivio de Stato, Florence, Mediceo 4260, f. 249), in: G. J. Hoogewerff, *De twee Reizen van Cosimo de' Medici prins van Toscane door de Nederlande (1667–1669)* (Amsterdam, 1919), 391–2.

<sup>130</sup> Lister, *Journey to Paris*, 102.

<sup>131</sup> Lister's reference to Louvois seems likely to be a mistake here (probably caused by his confusing events from the early 1670s with the period after 1683). All other sources would lead us to infer that Colbert was the minister who recalled Thévenot from Holland.

<sup>132</sup> Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, 63: '[Thévenot] est revenu depuis peu de Hollande' (6 June 1670).

trip to Holland, he did not abandon the project, but seems to have pushed ahead on other fronts. As soon as the Leiden manuscript had been obtained in 1666, the Paris group had taken steps to acquire other copies of the text. They knew that a copy had been made for the German mathematician Wilhelm Schickard from a manuscript in the imperial library in Vienna. Schickard had also compiled his own notes on several Abulfeda copies. Chapelain had asked Vossius in 1666 to look into getting hold of the Schickard manuscript, by way of Golius, hinting that Golius might be rewarded for a second favour to the Parisians.<sup>133</sup> The attempt to get hold of Schickard's manuscript was to come to fruition in 1671–2. By this point, it seems, Colbert was willing to back the proposal to produce an edition at the Imprimerie royale (possibly because Carcavi was now pursuing an Abulfeda project of his own). The negotiations, lasting almost a year, were made possible by a fortuitous series of connections.<sup>134</sup> The young Provençal Orientalist Louis Ferrand (discussed above, in the Introduction) was in Mainz in the late 1660s, studying the Hebrew Bible. At the court of the Archbishop-Elector, he befriended the equally young Leibniz, who was looking for an opportunity to move to Paris.<sup>135</sup> After his return to the French capital, Ferrand stayed in touch with Leibniz, and kept him informed of literary news whilst his own career advanced (he was soon in the service of Colbert). Leibniz at this time was procuring books for the French in order to curry favour with patrons, with a view to a possible move to Paris. He happened to know that one Magnus Hesenthaler, a professor at Tübingen, had acquired Schickard's manuscript from his heirs.<sup>136</sup> When Ferrand became aware of Thévenot's project to edit Abulfeda, he seems to have suggested that a deal be struck with Hesenthaler,

<sup>133</sup> Chapelain to Vossius, 12 Nov. 1666, in Chapelain, vol. 2, 476–7 n. (n. a. fr. 1888, f. 224v).

<sup>134</sup> A useful summary of this episode is in R. Bodéüs, ed., *Leibniz–Thomasius Correspondance, 1663–1672* (Paris, 1993), 343–46. The story can be traced through: Leibniz, *A*, 1/1, 118, 153, 155, 157, 160, 163–4, 167–8, 170–1, 173, 175–6, 178–9, 189–90, 197, 453; and 2/1, 195. On Schickard see F. Seck, ed., *Wilhelm Schickard 1592–1635: Astronom, Geograph, Orientalist, Erfinder der Rechenmaschine* (Tübingen, 1978).

<sup>135</sup> On Leibniz's situation in Mainz, see K. Moll, 'Von Ehrhard Weigel zu Christiaan Huygens: Feststellungen zu Leibnizens Bildungsweg zwischen Nuernberg, Mainz und Paris', *Studia Leibnitiana*, 14 (1982), 56–72; cf. W. H. Barber, *Leibniz in France from Arnauld to Voltaire: A Study in French Reactions to Leibnizianism (1670–1760)* (Oxford, 1955), 2. Leibniz did not come to Paris until 1672; Ferrand was his first French contact.

<sup>136</sup> Hesenthaler (1621/3–1681) was one of Henry Oldenburg's less diligent correspondents: see Oldenburg, vol. 13, 345–7, 415–16.

although he soon began to hint that he might want to edit Abulfeda himself. The French 'resident' at the court of Mainz, the abbé Gravel, was the agent for Paris, while Leibniz acted for Hesenthaler. Once Hesenthaler realized that the likes of Colbert were behind the Paris project, he set a high price for the Schickard manuscript. He demanded copies of the Abulfeda when it appeared, and a shipment of some of the most sumptuous publications that Paris could offer: a complete set of the 'Byzantine du Louvre' (the Jesuit-edited *Corpus Historie Byzantinae*, then still in progress), an eight-volume Bible, both from the Imprimerie royale, as well as Gassendi's works in six folio volumes. All this was to be exchanged for Schickard's Abulfeda manuscript at the Frankfurt book fair of March 1672. Gravel was told to find someone in Frankfurt with Arabic to check the manuscript, to ensure there was no trickery. The deal was a success. The Schickard volumes—and Leibniz, too—arrived in Paris safely.<sup>137</sup>

As well as bringing the German scholars into cooperation with the project, Thévenot was also able to make use of English scholarship on Abū 'l-Fidā'. In October 1671, Thévenot wrote to Oldenburg asking for help. Edward Bernard had offered to compare Thévenot's text with the copies of Abū 'l-Fidā' in English libraries. Oldenburg then asked John Wallis to make enquiries in Oxford. Wallis reported that Edward Pococke had good copies, and that Samuel Clarke had put in a lot of work comparing all the copies in England with a view to an edition, before his death in 1669.<sup>138</sup> Whilst Thévenot was still in the Netherlands, he had met the English scholar Thomas Marshall, who was doing research on Clarke's behalf, and they had discussed the possibility of sharing their work. Marshall told Clarke:

At Leiden I spent an hour with Monsieur Thevenot, & mentioned the offer of your preparations for Abulfeda, which he took thankfully, & showed me his Copie with the Lat. Translation, intended for the Presse. Whether this Translation was his, or the deceased Monsieur Vatie's, I know not: but the Arab. was transcribed for, & said to be translated by the Latter. Since, considering what Mr Bernard hath told me concerning your ample provision for

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Guiffrey, *Comptes*, vol. 1, col. 503: 20 Nov. 1671, 'au Sr Carcavy, pour dépenses qu'il a payées, sçavoir, au Sr Gravelle, résident à Mayence, pour livres qu'il a achetés en Allemagne, £3301.' The Schickard copies had been made from what is now Österreichische Nationalbibliothek ms Arabic 1265. The volumes procured by Leibniz are now at BN ms arabe 2241–2.

<sup>138</sup> Thévenot to Oldenburg, 28 Oct. 1671, in Oldenburg, vol. 8, 310–13; Wallis to Oldenburg, 23 Nov. 1671, *ibid.* 372–3, and 27 Nov. 1671, 387–9.

that noble Work; I wish you to bethink your self, whether your edition out of severall good Copies, with Annotations &c would not more gratify the publick, than this which supposedly will fall much short in the same particulars.<sup>139</sup>

Clearly the Oxford scholars did not think Thévenot's edition would be as scholarly as their own. Despite the frequent invocations of international cooperation for the good of the Republic of Letters, feelings of rivalry simmered beneath the surface.<sup>140</sup> Once Clarke was dead, though, the Oxford scholars might have felt they should support Thévenot. Edward Bernard seems to have encouraged him to continue work on Abū 'l-Fidā' in the early 1670s.<sup>141</sup>

These examples reveal that Thévenot and Carcavi were both able to involve scholars with whom they were only remotely connected: Hesenthaler in Germany (through the links of Ferrand and Leibniz); or Pococke in Oxford (via Wallis and Oldenburg). Despite this success on the organizational level, the Abulfeda project still did not have enough momentum to reach completion. We know that Thévenot remained interested in Abulfeda when he was running the Bibliothèque du roi. In 1687, he drew up a list of manuscripts that should be sought in the Ottoman empire for the French ambassador Girardin, which included 'the Geography of Abulfeda, because *it is to be printed here*' ('la Géographie d'Abulféda, à cause qu'elle *se doit imprimer icy*').<sup>142</sup> Also in his period at the library, Thévenot employed Antoine Galland to work on translating Abū 'l-Fidā' from Arabic into French (as opposed to Latin). We learn from a letter to Leibniz written by one of Galland's friends after Thévenot's death that the Latin translations were far from complete:

[Galland] m'a dit qu'effectivement Mr Thevenot avoit fait une traduction latine de la Geographie d'Abulféde, mais que cet ouvrage n'est qu'une ébauche qui demanderoit autant de soins qu'on en a pris pour la tracer. Ce même Mr Galand m'a dit qu'il a traduit cet autheur en françois, mais qu'il avoit omis tout ce qui

<sup>139</sup> Marshall to Clarke, 22 Feb. 1669, BL ms Add. 22905, f. 90, as cited in Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 227. Clarke's work on Abū 'l-Fidā' is now at Bod. ms S. Clarke 1–4.

<sup>140</sup> See works cited above, note 56.

<sup>141</sup> Thévenot to Bernard, 18 [?] Feb. 1673, Bod. ms Smith 8, p. 3–4, here p. 3: '... Pour l'Abulfeda ie ne le quitte point de veuë, et vostre aprobation me donne un nouveau courage d'en acheuer l'entreprise. J'ay bien des remarques que i'y puis ajouter, qui viennent du mesme pays.'

<sup>142</sup> Thévenot's memoire to Girardin, 5 July 1687, from BN ms fr. 7169, ff. 347–50, cited in H. A. Omont, ed., *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1902), 257–8 (my emphasis).

regardoit les longitudes et latitudes des lieux, parce qu'il avoit moins dessein de s'en servir pour la topographie, que pour cette histoire des Turcs à laquelle il travaille par ordre de feu Mr de Louvois.<sup>143</sup>

[Galland told me that indeed Thévenot had done a Latin translation of the geography of Abulfeda, but that this work was only an outline, which would need as much work as it had already taken to sketch it out. The same M. Galland told me that he had translated this author into French, but that he had omitted everything to do with the longitudes and latitudes of places, because he had less interest in using it for topography, than for the history of the Turks on which he was working by order of the late Mr de Louvois.]

The whole point of translating Abū 'l-Fidā' had been to obtain the data for latitude and longitude, and yet the first time Thévenot had an experienced student of Arabic at his disposal, these tables had been left out. Nothing more became of Thévenot's efforts, although they lived on in the memory of his friends: long after Thévenot's death, Leibniz continued to think of Abulfeda as Thévenot's old project.<sup>144</sup> Some Orientalists were sceptical of the merit of the whole enterprise and were critical of Thévenot's efforts. Eusèbe Renaudot, surveying the history of the European obsession with Abulfeda from Ramusio onwards, gave a summary of Thévenot's work:

Feu M. Thevenot s'estoit engagé a donner Abulfeda au public: en Arabe et en Latin: et il avoit en achevé la traduction, ou pour mieux dire, il en avoit une a laquelle plusieurs personnes avoit travaillé, elle estoit neantmoins fort imparfaite et il n'avoit joint aucunes notes, ny preface sans quoy elle n'eust pas esté fort utile. Apres sa mort la copie qui se trouva parmy ses papiers a esté achetée par des Estrangers et on ne scais pas encore ce qu'elle est devenue, Ainsi ceux qui n'ont pas fait une estude particuliere des auteurs Arabes ne connoissent encore pas Abulfeda, mais il en ont une grande idee sur le temoignage de la plupart des sçavants des deux derniers siecles.

[The late M. Thévenot had committed himself to giving Abulfeda to the public, in Arabic and in Latin, and he had finished the translation, or to be more precise, he had one which had been the work of several people. It was nevertheless still very imperfect, and he had added no notes and no preface, without which it could not have been very useful. After his death, the copy

<sup>143</sup> Daniel Larroque to Leibniz, 14 Nov. 1693, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/9, 614–15. In 1713 Galland rediscovered the translations he had done for Thévenot, when cataloguing Thévenot's manuscripts for the Bibliothèque du roi (Galland, *Journal parisien*, 132).

<sup>144</sup> A. Birembault, P. Costabel, and S. Delorme, 'La correspondance Leibniz-Fontenelle et les relations de Leibniz avec l'Académie royale des sciences en 1700–1701', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 19 (1966), 115–32, esp. 118 and 129.

which was found among his papers was bought by foreigners, and we still do not know what became of it. Thus, those who have not made a special study of Arabic authors still do not know [of] Abulfeda, but they have a grand idea of him, based on the testimony of most of the *savants* of the last two centuries.]

He concluded: 'It seems that there is some curse on the publication of this author, since for so many years, none of those who have promised a translation have given it, which has augmented still further the curiosity which exists about it.'<sup>145</sup>

The Paris project to edit Abū 'l-Fidā' is far from being a unique case. Frustrations of a practical nature were probably the rule rather than the exception in natural-philosophical printing. There are some close parallels between Thévenot's Abū 'l-Fidā' experiences and the Royal Society's project to publish Ulugh Beg's star catalogue (again, envisaged as an international 'prestige' edition), which ran into the problem of the scarcity of suitable type. While the Royal Society got tied up in monopoly disputes, Thomas Hyde produced an edition at his own expense.<sup>146</sup> Similarly, in the 1640s, it was only with difficulty that John Greaves found the type needed for his works, and he was driven to the extreme of stealing the Oxford University Press type and having an illegal copy of it made in London.<sup>147</sup> Likewise, the fact that Thévenot tried to get the Abū 'l-Fidā' printed in Holland is representative of the book trade as a whole at the time. There are numerous examples of English 'scientific' publishing projects being forced to try Holland (usually Amsterdam) as a cheaper alternative to English printing, including Moses Pitt and his *English Atlas*, and John Wallis, who found that 'even the Dutch were loath to undertake his book' on algebra.<sup>148</sup>

Above all, the case of the Paris Abū 'l-Fidā' project highlights the fragile state of Oriental learning in Paris in the 1660s. The people with the linguistic skills needed to carry out these ambitious projects were thin on the ground; and as with so many other scholarly and

<sup>145</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7478, f. 7 ('Il semble qu'il y ait eu quelque fatalité sur l'édition de cet auteur, puisque depuis tant d'années aucun de ceux qui en avoient promis la traduction ne l'[']a donnée, ce qui a encore augmenté la curiosité sur son sujet'); compare Renaudot, *Anciennes relations*, xii–xiii.

<sup>146</sup> Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 496–7; on Hyde's edition, see also Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 249–50.

<sup>147</sup> Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 171–2.

<sup>148</sup> Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 447–52. See also 170–1 for Dutch pirating of English Bibles and 515–18 for attempts to pirate the *Philosophical Transactions*.



natural-philosophic ambitions, the biggest problem was the lack of an adequate funding supply. In theory, there was a framework in place for Oriental studies in Paris (the Collège royal, the Imprimerie and Bibliothèque royales, and the secrétaires-interprètes); but this system was clearly not up to the task of printing an Oriental text. Despite Colbert's willingness to lend more support to Oriental learning, the situation had only just begun to change—and, as we have seen, the existence of royal patronage was sometimes more of a hindrance than a help (witness the embarrassment caused by Thévenot's need to use Arabic type other than that of the Imprimerie royale). It might well be that the practical obstructions to projects like Thévenot's are part of the reason why attempts to publish texts like this ('Oriental' scientific texts) became less frequent over the last decades of the seventeenth century.

One of the things that this unsuccessful project underlines for us is the fact that the natural philosophical community, the people we associate with the new experimental philosophy, were still interested in using libraries and manuscripts as a legitimate way of making knowledge—not only libraries and manuscripts, but 'Oriental' texts brought to Europe in modern times. This in itself makes the story worth telling. At the same time, the Abū 'l-Fidā' story emphasizes just how much patronage, patience, and luck were required in bringing large-scale collaborative projects to completion.

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Leibniz had always been impressed by Thévenot's range of activities, but was also aware of the danger of spreading one's interests too widely and never finishing anything. He jokingly compared Thévenot to Briareus, the hundred-handed monster.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, after Thévenot's death, Leibniz regretted how much had been lost with him. He explained this with a striking image: 'M. Thevenot had too many good things to give. He was like a woman giving birth to more than one child: often one obstructs the other, especially when there is no

<sup>149</sup> Leibniz to M. Thévenot, 23 Mar. 1691, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/6, 410: 'vous deuvriés estre *centimanus* comme ce Briarée de la fable. C'est à dire vous deuvriés avoir une centaine de gens propres à executer les mille belles veues que vous avés.'

help.<sup>150</sup> This was the negative side of curiosity—that there were always too many projects and too little time.

Concerns of a different nature were voiced by other former members of Thévenot's circle. In 1678, Thévenot received a letter from his old friend Steno. Writing on the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul (25 January), Steno—who had recently become a Catholic and a missionary bishop in Hanover—was inspired to reflect on his own conversion. Marvelling at how much his life had changed since his Paris days, Steno thanked his former host for having introduced him to Marie Perriquet, one of Thévenot's cousins, and via her, to the devout life.<sup>151</sup> For this, Steno said, he gave daily thanks to God. He pressed the point: 'Alas, Monsieur, all the curiosities of the world are but vanities, and what there is that is solid is so little in comparison with what we will see in our first glimpse of the divine essence' ('Helas Monsieur, que toutes les curiositez du monde ne sont que vanitez, et ce qu'il y a de solide est si peu à l'égard de ce que nous verrons à la première œillade que nous donnerons à la divine essence!').<sup>152</sup>

The identification of curiosity with vanity was a commonplace with a very long lineage.<sup>153</sup> Steno's warning was probably a sincere one. Unfortunately, we have no evidence of how Thévenot—who was still interested in the things Steno had left behind—received this potentially hurtful communication. A constant element in the discourse on curiosity in the period was the sense that curiosity was dangerous, although the danger could be expressed in secular or religious terms. Leibniz seemed aware that Thévenot's eclecticism was a hindrance to his productivity, even if his projects were laudable. Steno echoed the more traditional theological argument, that curiosity was a vice because it could lead one to place too great a confidence in the capacities of

<sup>150</sup> Leibniz to E. Spanheim, 16 Apr. 1696, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/12, 541: 'M. Thevenot avoit trop de belles choses à donner, il luy est arrivé ce qui arrive à des femmes qui sont en travail de plus d'un enfant, c'est que souvent l'un empeche l'autre sur tout quand il y a faute d'assistance.'

<sup>151</sup> On Marie Perriquet (1624–69), also known to Huygens, see Boudhors, 'Une amie de Pascal?'

<sup>152</sup> N. Steno to M. Thévenot, 4 Feb. [25 Jan. OS] 1678, in Steno, *Epistolae et epistolae ad eum data*, ed. G. Scherz, 2 vols (Copenhagen and Freiburg, 1952), vol. 1, 371–2.

<sup>153</sup> Pascal uses the phrase 'curiosité n'est que vanité' in the *Pensées* (Laf. 77/Brg. 152). For Patristic sources, see P. Sellier, *Pascal et saint Augustin* (Paris, 1970), 175–82; G. Defaux, *Le Curieux, le glorieux et la sagesse du monde* (Lexington, 1982), 69–110. On the meanings of the term 'curiosity', see N. Kenny, *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe: Word Histories* (Wiesbaden, 1998).

human learning, thereby falling into the sin of pride, and that it might lead the unwise reader into heresy. Sometimes both arguments were made at once: Claude Fleury argued that excessively curious pursuits required disproportionate effort for little scholarly profit, while noting that the study of Oriental languages was probably 'the most dangerous', since it also led the student into sinful pride.<sup>154</sup>

Jean de La Bruyère, in a now-famous satire on curiosity in the *Caractères*, included a passage that some contemporaries decoded as a reference to Thévenot:

Quelques-uns, par une intempérance de savoir et par ne pouvoir se résoudre à renoncer à aucune sorte de connaissance, les embrassent toutes et n'en possèdent aucune; ils aiment mieux savoir beaucoup que de savoir bien, et être faibles et superficiels dans diverses sciences que d'être sûrs et profonds dans une seule . . . ils sont les dupes de leur [vaine] curiosité . . .<sup>155</sup>

[Some, by an unchecked desire to know, and by an inability to renounce any kind of knowledge, embrace them all and end up possessing none. They prefer to know a lot rather than to know well, and to be weak and superficial in various sciences than to be sure and deep in one . . . they are the dupes of their [vain] curiosity.]

It may be that Thévenot was, in the end, duped by his own curiosity, and that the 'curious' way of pursuing knowledge that he embodied led him to underestimate the difficulties of editing and translating Abū 'l-Fidā'. In this sense, at least, Leibniz, Steno, and La Bruyère were right.

<sup>154</sup> C. Fleury, *Traité du choix et de la méthode des études* (Paris, 1686), 249: 'La curiosité la plus dangereuse en ce genre [i.e. learning languages], est celle des langues orientales', cited by Kenny, *Uses of Curiosity*, 216.

<sup>155</sup> The word 'vaine' was added by La Bruyère to later editions. La Bruyère, *Les Caractères*, xiii ('De la mode'), §2; the Coste 'key' names 'MM. Thévenot et [Pétis de] La Croix': La Bruyère, *Œuvres*, ed. G. Servois, 4 vols (Paris, 1865–78), vol. 2, 139, 358.

### 3

## The Double Eclipse: François Bernier's Geography of Knowledge

As we have seen, one of the aims of Thévenot's group was to advance the natural-historical cause by making use of travellers. The 'Project de la Compagnie des Sciences et des Arts', a text thought to be a document of that group's ambitions, describes their aim to send questionnaires to suitable people who might find themselves in foreign parts.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we move on to consider one such traveller who was in correspondence with the Thévenot circle: François Bernier (c.1625–88). Bernier, like Thévenot, had come of age in the Paris intellectual community of the 1640s and 1650s, but then left Europe and travelled to northern India. Whilst he was there in the 1660s, Thévenot's friend Chapelain wrote to him with literary news from Europe. In turn, Bernier sent letters back to his contacts in France. Extracts from two of his earlier letters appeared in Thévenot's series of *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, and for a while, it seems, Thévenot intended to publish more. When Bernier came back to France and published his book, however, it appeared in its own right, and became one of the most successful travel accounts of the period. The first sections to appear were presented as 'histories' of the recent revolution in the Mughal empire by which the Emperor Aurangzeb had come to the throne; later sections were published as letters, explicitly addressed to Bernier's patrons and supporters—La Mothe Le Vayer, Chapelain, and most strikingly, Colbert.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Project de la Compagnie des Sciences et des Arts' (?1663), in Huygens, vol. 4, 325–9, at 326: 'dans toutes les occasions ou des personnes curieuses voyageront ou resideront dans des pays estrangers, on leur donnera des Memoires et on les priera d'examiner les Lieux ou ils iront ce qu'on jugera y estre remarquable tant dans la Nature que dans les arts.'

<sup>2</sup> Bernier's travels appeared in several sections, grouped into four *tomes*. Tomes 1 and 2 appeared together (*Histoire de la derniere Revolution des Etats du Grand Mogol, dediée au*

Bernier's book—which for the sake of convenience we can call by its early eighteenth-century title, *Voyages*—has long found a place in the canon of 'classic' early modern travel accounts. The latter half of the seventeenth century saw a growth in the publication of *récits de voyages* to the East, some of which rapidly acquired a favoured status, like those of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Jean Thévenot (Melchisédech's nephew), Jean Chardin, and Bernier.<sup>3</sup> In each case there were numerous reissues and translations, often printed in Holland, throughout the last third of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth. These travel books—based on journeys made in the middle of the seventeenth century, first printed in the late seventeenth century, then reprinted in the early eighteenth—were mined by the *philosophes* for information about the extra-European world.<sup>4</sup> Montesquieu, for example, made use of all of these authors in the preparation of *De l'Esprit des lois*.<sup>5</sup> The reception history of François Bernier's book follows a particular path after Montesquieu, mainly because of the use made of it by Karl Marx.

*Roy. . . ; and Evenemens particuliers. . .*) (Paris, 1670); followed by tomes 3 and 4 as *Suite des Memoires. . .* (Paris, 1671). The whole set was quickly pirated at The Hague (1671); and translated into English (London, 1671–2), Dutch (Amsterdam, 1672), Italian (Milan, 1675), and German (Frankfurt, 1672–3). The French was later republished as *Voyages de François Bernier*, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1699), and reissued in 1709–10, 1711, and 1723–4. A good bibliography is in Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, trans. A. Constance, 2nd edn, revised by V. A. Smith (London, 1914), xxv–xlii. For convenience, references will be given to the Amsterdam editions of the French text (since they have identical pagination), to the Oldenburg translations (available readily via Early English Books Online), and to the 1914 translation (available in modern reprints). I have not been able to consult this new edition: *Un libertin dans l'Inde moghole: les voyages de François Bernier (1656–1669)*, ed. F. Tinguely, A. Paschoud, and C.-A. Chamay (Paris, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> J.-B. Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages*, 2 vols (Paris, 1676–7); J. Chardin, *Journal du voyage du chevalier Chardin en Perse et aux Indes orientales* (London, 1686); both with numerous translations and reissues. See C. Joret, 'Le voyage de Tavernier (1670–89)', *Revue de géographie*, 12 (1889), 161–74, 267–75, 328–41; C. R. Boxer, 'Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, controversial Huguenot traveller and trader, 1605–89', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, 24 (1985), 202–9; L. Labib-Rahman, 'Sir Jean Chardin, the great traveller (1643–1712/3)', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, 23 (1981), 309–18; D. Van der Cruyssen, *Chardin le Persan* (Paris, 1998). For Jean Thévenot see Chapter 2.

<sup>4</sup> M. Dodds, *Les Récits de voyages: sources de L'Esprit des lois de Montesquieu* (Paris, 1929); M. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot* (Paris, 1971), esp. 65–136.

<sup>5</sup> Montesquieu, 'Geographica', in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. A. Masson (Paris, 1950), vol. 2, 923–63, esp. 953–5 on Bernier. 'Ce livre est bien & judicieusement écrit & fait souhaiter que l'on fasse des voyages avec autant de talents, de sçavoir & d'esprit pour en profiter' (955). Bernier is used, for instance, in *De l'Esprit des lois*, Book 14, chs 3 and 10; Book 24, chs 24 and 26 (*Œuvres complètes*, ed. R. Caillois (Paris, 1951), vol. 2, 478, 482, 733, 734).

The case of how Marx read Bernier has become well known because of its importance in the history of the concept of 'Oriental despotism'.<sup>6</sup> Marx made notes on Bernier's *Voyages* whilst he and Engels were brushing up their Oriental reading in order to meet the demand for newspaper comment on British policy in India, between March and May 1853.<sup>7</sup> At the time, Marx and Engels were in the process of developing the concept of the 'Asiatic mode of production', which allowed them to incorporate their hastily garnered Oriental expertise into their schema of history. They turned to what was already the most famous part of Bernier's book: the 'letter to Colbert' on the size of Hindustan, on the circulation of gold and silver, and so on, topics designed to appeal to Louis XIV's *contrôleur général des finances*.<sup>8</sup> Here they thought they had found evidence of the absence of private land ownership in the Mughal empire—which then became a basic tenet of the 'Asiatic mode of production'. Bernier was, for Marx as for so many others, a transparent window onto the reality of seventeenth-century India, read with a naivety that is surprising when we consider how, by the late eighteenth century, Bernier's reliability had already been called into question. Perhaps the most important of the critics to do so was the French Orientalist Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, who as early as 1778 had realized the importance of Bernier in Montesquieu's construction of 'Oriental despotism'.<sup>9</sup> What is remarkable is that Marx was able to ignore Anquetil-Duperron, in that he provided a new economic account of the

<sup>6</sup> On the history of the idea: R. Koebner, 'Despot and Despotism: vicissitudes of a political term', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 14 (1951), 275–302; F. Venturi, 'Oriental despotism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 24 (1963), 133–42; B. Brentjes, 'Zur Geschichte des Begriffs des "asiatischen Despotie"', *Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift (Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe)*, 28 (1979), 15–20; A. Grosrichard, *Structure du sérail: la fiction du despotisme asiatique dans l'Occident classique* (Paris, 1979), 7–33; L. Valensi, *Venise et la Sublime Porte: la naissance du despote* (Paris, 1987); R. Inden, 'Orientalist constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 20 (1986), 401–46; and most recently J.-P. Rubiés, 'Oriental despotism and European orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9 (2005), 109–80, esp. 136–58 on Bernier.

<sup>7</sup> The main source is the correspondence between May and June 1853, in *Marx/Engels Gesamtausgabe*, 3. Abteilung, Band 6 (Berlin, 1987), 175–6, 180–4, 189–90, 199–200, 819.

<sup>8</sup> Bernier, 'Lettre a Monseigneur Colbert. De l'Etendue de l'Hindoustan, Circulation de l'or & de l'argent pour venir s'y abîmer, Richesses, Forces, Justice, & Cause principale de la Decadence des Etats de l'Asie', in *Evenemens particuliers* [i.e. tome 2] (Paris, 1670), 191–294; in *Voyages* (Amsterdam, 1699), vol. 1, 269–[330].

<sup>9</sup> A.-H. Anquetil-Duperron, *Législation orientale* (Amsterdam, 1778), esp. 7–9, 134–5, singling out Bernier for particular criticism. See Venturi, 'Oriental despotism'.

pseudo-phenomena of 'Oriental despotism'—including the supposed absence of private landownership—without questioning whether these phenomena really existed. His conception of the 'Asiatic mode of production' was, in turn, to play a crucial role in his defence of the British rule in India, which he saw as a necessary step on the road to socialism.<sup>10</sup>

The importance within Indian historiography of questions like the nature of landownership or the notion of 'Oriental despotism' has led, understandably, to the privileging of certain themes in Bernier's text over others. This shaped perceptions of the work, and probably influenced its later publishing history. It comes as no surprise to note that Bernier's book was most frequently reprinted in English in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when it was retranslated and republished within collections of 'classic' texts dealing with India—collections with titles like 'Constable's Oriental Miscellany'. Such series were designed to form a corpus of writings defined by the colonial territory: if a traveller's narrative had originally covered other countries as well (as was the case for Jean Thévenot and Tavernier, also retranslated at this time) these extra-Indian passages were cut.<sup>11</sup> In more recent historiography, the most common way of commenting on the 'Letter to Colbert' is to read Bernier's description of the politics of India as a form of allegory on what is usually thought of as the nascent 'absolutism' of Louis XIV—which is to say, once again, that Bernier foreshadows the author of the *Persian Letters*.<sup>12</sup>

Important though it is, the 'Letter to Colbert' will not be the focus of attention for this chapter. Instead, another segment of Bernier's

<sup>10</sup> For earlier links between 'Oriental despotism' theory and the justification of British rule, see K. Teltscher, *India Incribed: European and British Writing on India, 1600–1800* (Delhi, 1995), 113–14. For an example of how Bernier's book could be sold as an apology for the 'clemency' of British rule see Bernier, *The History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of the Great Mogol* (Bombay, 1830), 'Prospectus' (sep. pag.), 4–6, reprinted in Bernier, *Travels* (London, 1914), xxxiv–vi.

<sup>11</sup> Tavernier, *Travels in India*, ed. W. Crooke (London, 1925); *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. S. Sen (New Delhi, 1949). English versions of Bernier were published: London, 1671, 1676, 1684, 1745, 1808, 1826, 1891, 1914; Calcutta, 1826, 1866, 1904; Bombay, 1830.

<sup>12</sup> See S. Murr, 'Le politique "au Mogol" selon Bernier: appareil conceptuel, rhétorique stratégique, philosophie morale', *Purusartha*, 13 (1990), 239–311; Teltscher, *India Incribed*, 28–34. See also S. J. Tambiah, 'What did Bernier actually say? Profiling the Mughal empire', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, n.s., 32 (1998), 361–86; and P. Burke, 'The philosopher as traveller: Bernier's Orient', in J. Elsner and J.-P. Rubiés, eds, *Voyages and Visions: Towards A Cultural History of Travel* (London, 1999), 124–37.

travels will provide a basis for an exploration of how Bernier's text can be connected with other aspects of his life. Bernier is, like Thévenot, a hybrid figure in historiography, because he appears on two distinct stages which are rarely connected: the history of travel and the history of philosophy. As well as being the author of his *Voyages*, Bernier was a pupil of the philosopher Pierre Gassendi, and dedicated much of his later life to the promotion of his master's thought.<sup>13</sup> This means that there are two separate traditions of work on Bernier, one focusing on his book on the Mughal empire, the other on his role as a member of the Gassendist circle.<sup>14</sup> Although the two ways of approaching Bernier are understandably separated by historians with different interests, if we are attempting to follow Bernier's itinerary (and to understand his writings contextually), then we need to keep both aspects in view. While it is true that most of Bernier's publications after he had written his *Voyages* were to be expositions of Gassendi, Bernier's writings do not in fact keep his two interests completely distinct: on the one hand, his *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* is larded with references to his experience in India; on the other, there is a section of the *Voyages* that expounds Bernier's views on atomism and on human understanding.<sup>15</sup>

However, for the purposes of this chapter, the passage that allows us to explore the relationship between the two halves of Bernier's hybrid image is the description of Hindu religion and philosophy in the 'Letter

<sup>13</sup> On Bernier and Gassendi see S. Murr, 'Bernier et Gassendi: une filiation déviationniste?', in idem, ed., *Gassendi et l'Europe (1592–1792)* (Paris, 1997), 71–114; and the special issue (ed. Murr) of *Corpus: revue de philosophie*, 20/21 (1992) on 'Bernier et les gassendistes'; T. M. Lennon, *The Battle of the Gods and Giants: The Legacies of Descartes and Gassendi, 1655–1715* (Princeton, 1993), 60–2, 78–87, 144–8, 157–60; and his art. 'François Bernier' in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, new edn, *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2/1, *Frankreich und Niederlande*, ed. J.-P. Schobinger (Basel, 1993), 242–50.

<sup>14</sup> Bernier also figures in the history of concepts of race, based on his idiosyncratic (and very short) text, 'Nouvelle division de la Terre, par les différentes Espèces ou Races d'hommes qui l'habitent', *Journal des sçavans* (24 Apr. 1684), 85–9. On this text, see S. Stuurman, 'François Bernier and the invention of racial classification', *History Workshop Journal*, 50 (2000), 1–21, and 51 (2001), 247–50; P. H. Boulle, 'François Bernier and the origins of the modern concept of race', in S. Peabody and T. Stovall, eds, *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham, NC, 2003), 11–27.

<sup>15</sup> For example Bernier, *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, ed. S. Murr and G. Stefani, 7 vols (Paris, 1992), vol. 4, 403–5; Bernier, 'Lettre a Mr Chapelle, sur le dessein qu'il a de se remettre à l'étude, sur quelques points qui concernent la doctrine des Atômes, & sur la nature de l'entendement humain', in *Suite des Memoires* (Paris, 1671), [i.e. tome 3], sep. pag., 1–69; *Voyages*, vol. 2, 169–205. The letter to Chapelle was omitted from most editions after the eighteenth century, because of its incongruousness. However, the fact that it follows on from the section on Hindu philosophy is probably significant.



to Chapelain'.<sup>16</sup> This section of the *Voyages* sets out, as its title puts it, to represent the 'Superstitions, étranges façons de faire, & Doctrine' of the 'gentiles' of India (a then standard way to denote the Hindus), to prove to the reader that 'there is no opinion so ridiculous and so extravagant that the human mind is incapable of holding it' ('il n'y a Opinion si ridicules & si extravagantes dont l'Esprit de l'homme ne soit capable'). The bulk of the letter is concerned with discussion of Hindu beliefs, with some account of the *Vedas*, a portrayal of the brahmins, pandits, and yogins, and also certain aspects of Hindu practice that had already become stock features of travel texts on India, such as the 'juggernaut', or the self-immolation of widows (*sati*).<sup>17</sup> Even though there are passing references in other parts of the book to religious phenomena, it is this section of the *Voyages* that is devoted to the description of beliefs, specifically those of Hindus. Indeed, it has not always been noted that the whole basis of the 'Letter to Chapelain' is the distinction between the Muslim Mughals and the Hindu populace. The unstated assumption is that Islam is already sufficiently familiar to the European reader, and that (in contrast) there is a premium attached to descriptions of the 'Gentiles' or 'idolaters' of Hindustan.<sup>18</sup> What Bernier does not make explicit, however, is the degree to which his description of Hinduism might have been shaped by his own position as a retainer in a Muslim court. By picking up the clues left in Bernier's text we can put Bernier back into the context of his position in India. This means that Bernier is not simply writing from a European or Christian viewpoint, but that his text, in spite of itself, also incorporates something of the Muslim perspective on Hinduism.

<sup>16</sup> Bernier, 'Lettre a Monsieur Chapelain, Enuoyee de Chiras en Perse, le 4. Octobre 1667. Touchant les Superstitions, étranges façons de faire, & Doctrine des Indous ou Gentils de l'Hindustan; D'où l'on verra qu'il n'y a Opinion si ridicules & si extravagantes dont l'Esprit de l'homme ne soit capable', in *Suite des Memoires* (Paris, 1671), [tome 3], sep. pag., 1–137; and in *Voyages*, vol. 2, 97–168.

<sup>17</sup> For other travel writers on such topics see Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, 37–73, and M. Nanda, *European Travel Accounts during the Reigns of Shajahan and Aurangzeb* (Kurukshestra, 1994), 114–17, 138–56.

<sup>18</sup> For other European accounts of Hinduism in this period, see S. Murr, 'Généalogies et analogies entre paganisme ancien et "gentilité des Indes" dans l'apologétique jésuite au siècle des Lumières', in F. Laplanche, ed., *Les Religions du paganisme antique dans l'Europe chrétienne: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1988), 141–61; J. Biès, *Littérature française et pensée hindoue des origines à 1950* (Paris, 1974); W. Sweetman, *Mapping Hinduism: 'Hinduism' and the Study of Indian Religions, 1600–1776* (Halle, 2004); I. G. Zupanov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (New Delhi, 1999); J.-P. Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (Cambridge, 2000), 308–87.

To organize the discussion of Bernier's text in this chapter, we can make our focus the rhetorical device that Bernier employs at the beginning of the 'Letter to Chapelain'. Bernier juxtaposes two solar eclipses that he has witnessed, one in Paris in 1654 and the other in Delhi in 1666. He gives long descriptions of the responses to the eclipses in both countries, and concludes that in both cases the ordinary people displayed the same degree of *superstition*. Because of the importance of this passage in the argument that follows, it is worth quoting in full.

Monsieur, Quand je vivois des siecles entiers, je ne sai si je pourrois oublier ces deux Eclipses de Soleil, dont je vis l'une en France l'an 1654 & l'autre dans les Indes à Delhi en 1666 si j'ai bonne memoire. Celle-là me semble très-remarquable, pour cette credulité enfantine de nôtre populace, & la terreur panique qui lui avoit saisi si fort le cœur, que quelques-uns achetoient de la Drogue contre l'Eclipse, les autres se tenoient à l'obscurité dans leurs caves ou dans leurs chambres bien closes & bien fermées, & les autres se jettoient à la foule dans les Eglises; ceux-là apprehendans quelque maligne & perilleuse influence, & ceux-ci croyans d'être parvenus à leur dernier jour; Que l'Eclipse s'en alloit ébranler les fondemens de la Nature, & la renverser sans dessus dessous; quoi que les Gassendys, les Robervals, & plusieurs autres fameux Astronomes & Philosophes peussent dire & écrire contre cette fole persuasion, démontrans que cette Eclipse étoit de même nature que tant d'autres qui avoient precedé sans aucun malheur, & que c'étoit un accident connu, preveu & ordinaire, qui n'avoit rien de particulier que ce que la fourberie de quelque Astrologue Charlatan pourroit avoir inventé.

Celle que je vis à Déhli me sembla aussi très-remarquable pour les ridicules erreurs & superstitions des Indiens. Au temps qu'elle devoit arriver je montai sur la Terrasse de ma maison qui étoit située sur le bord du Gemna; delà je vis les deux côtes de ce fleuve près d'une lieuë de long, couverts de Gentils ou Idolâtres qui étoient dans l'eau jusqu'à la ceinture, regardans attentivement vers le Ciel, pour se plonger & se laver dans le moment que l'Eclipse commenceroit: Les petits garçons & les petites filles étoient tout nus comme la main, les hommes l'étoient aussi, hormis qu'ils avoient une espece d'Escharpe bridée à l'entour des cuisses pour les couvrir; & les femmes mariées & les filles qui ne passoient pas six ou sept ans étoient couvertes d'un simple drap: Les personnes de condition, commes les Rajas ou Princes Souverains Gentils, qui sont ordinairement à la Cour au service & à la paye du Roi, & les Serrafs ou Changeurs, Banquiers, Jouiailliers, & autres gros Marchands, avoient la plûpart passé de l'autre côté de l'eau avec toute leur famille, & y avoient dressé leurs Tentés, & planté dans la Riviere des Kanates, qui sont une espece de Paravent pour faire leurs Ceremonies, & se laver à leur aise avec leurs femmes sans être vûs de personne. Ces Idolâtres ne se furent pas plûtôt apperceus que le Soleil commençoit de s'éclipser, que j'entendis un grand cri qui s'éleva, & que tout d'un coup ils se

plongèrent tous dans l'eau je ne sais combien de fois de suite, se tenans par après debout dans cette eau, les yeux & les mains élevées vers le Soleil, marmotans tous & prians, comme on diroit en grande devotion, prenans de temps en temps de l'eau avec les mains, la jettans vers le Soleil, s'inclinans la tête profondement, remuans & tournans les bras & les mains tantôt d'une façon et tantôt d'une autre, & continuans ainsi leurs plongemens, leurs prieres & leurs singeries jusqu'à la fin de l'Eclipse, que chacun se retira en jettant des pièces d'argent bien avant dans l'eau, & faisant l'aumône aux Brahmens ou gens de Loi, qui n'avoient pas manqué de se trouver à cette ceremonie. Je remarquai qu'au sortir de cette riviere ils prirent tous des vêtemens nouveaux, qui les attendoient tous pliez sur le sable, & que mêmes plusieurs des plus devots laisserent là leurs anciens habits pour les Brahmens. C'est ainsi que de ma Terrasse je vis celebrer cette grande Fête de l'Eclipse . . .<sup>19</sup>

[Monsieur, I have witnessed two solar eclipses which it is scarcely possible I should ever forget. The one I saw from France in the year 1654, the other from Delhi in the Indies in 1666. The sight of the first eclipse was impressed upon my mind by the childish credulity of the French people, and by their groundless and unreasonable alarm; an alarm so excessive that some bought drugs as charms to defend themselves against the eclipse; some kept themselves closely shut up, and excluded all light either in carefully-barred apartments or in cellars; while thousands flocked to their respective churches; some apprehending and dreading a malign and dangerous influence; others believing that the last day was at hand, and that the eclipse was about to shake the foundations of the world. Such were the absurd notions entertained by our countrymen, notwithstanding the writings of Gassendi, Roberval, and other celebrated astronomers and philosophers, which clearly demonstrated that the eclipse was only similar to many others which had been productive of no mischief; that this obscuration of the sun was known and predicted, and was without any other peculiarity than what might be found in the reveries of ignorant or designing astrologers.

The eclipse of 1666 is also indelibly imprinted on my memory by the ridiculous errors and strange superstitions of the Indians. At the time fixed for its appearance I took my station on the terrace of my house, situated on the banks of the Gemna, when I saw both shores of the river, for nearly a league in length, covered with Gentiles or idolaters, who stood in the water up to the waist, their eyes riveted to the skies, watching the commencement of the eclipse, in order to plunge and wash themselves at the very instant. The little boys and girls were quite naked; the men had nothing but a scarf round their middle, and the married women and girls of six or seven years of age were covered

<sup>19</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 97–101; the English translation is from *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 300–2; cf. Oldenburg translation in 'A letter written to Mr Chapelain', in *A Continuation of the Memoires of Monsieur Bernier, Concerning the Empire of the Great Mogol* (London, 1672) [vol. 3 of 4], 103–73, here 103–7.

with a single cloth. Persons of rank or wealth, such as Rajas (Gentile sovereign princes, and generally courtiers in the service and pay of the King), Serrafs or money-changers, bankers, jewellers, and other rich merchants, crossed from the opposite side of the river with their families, and pitching their tents fixed kanates or screens in the water, within which they and their wives washed and performed the usual ceremonies without any exposure. No sooner did these idolaters perceive that the obscuration of the sun was begun than they all raised a loud cry, and plunged the whole body under water several times in quick succession; after which they stood in the river, lifted their eyes and hands toward the sun, muttered and prayed with seeming devotion, filling their hands from time to time with water, which they threw in the direction of the sun, bowing their heads very low, and moving and turning their arms and hands, sometimes one way, sometimes another. The deluded people continued to plunge, mutter, pray, and perform their silly tricks until the end of the eclipse. On retiring they threw pieces of silver at a great distance into the Gemna, and gave alms to the Brahmens, who failed not to be present at this absurd ceremony. I remarked that every individual on coming out of the water put on new clothes placed on the sand for that purpose, and that several of the most devout left their old garments as presents for the Brahmens. In this manner did I observe from the roof of my house the solemnisation of the grand eclipse-festival . . .]

Other scholars have drawn attention to this passage as an example of Bernier's position in a sceptical tradition connecting Montaigne with the Montesquieu of the *Persian Letters*.<sup>20</sup> However, the example of the twin eclipses can also be interpreted in another way, one which places Bernier in both of his social contexts, Paris and Mughal India. So, at the same time, the two eclipses allow us to bridge the divide between those two aspects of Bernier's life usually treated separately: his role as a disciple of Gassendi, and his role as a visitor to Mughal India. It becomes possible, then, to construct a commentary on this opening passage of the 'Letter to Chapelain' that can serve as an interpretation of Bernier's work as a whole.

## THE PARIS ECLIPSE: *LIBERTINAGE* VERSUS SUPERSTITION

By reminding his readers of the recent eclipse seen in France, Bernier was invoking a debate that would have been familiar to them, and in

<sup>20</sup> E. G. O'Flaherty, 'Relativism and criticism in seventeenth-century French thought' (University of Cambridge, Ph.D. thesis, 1987), 153–62 on Bernier, 157 on the eclipses, casting Bernier as a sceptical anthropologist descended from Montaigne and Naudé.

which he himself was known to have participated. Bernier's passage needs to be put in to the context of Gassendi's struggle against astrology. This in turn requires us to retrace some of the story of Bernier's quarrel with Gassendi's rival at the Collège royal, the astrologer Jean-Baptiste Morin.<sup>21</sup>

Like so many other French *gens de lettres*, the network within which Bernier moved did not enjoy institutional security in the political tumult of the early 1650s.<sup>22</sup> Bernier's problems were caused by the fact that Morin enjoyed the favour of Cardinal Mazarin, then effectively ruling France. The tension between Morin and Gassendi went back at least as far as the mid-1640s, springing from Morin's hostility to the Copernican system and his defence of Aristotelian natural philosophy. Gradually their relations worsened, to the point where Bernier had taken it upon himself to defend his teacher in two scoffing pamphlets.<sup>23</sup> Thus provoked, Morin decided in 1653 to denounce Gassendi, accusing him of teaching 'heresies concerning the eternity of God, and false doctrines against the council of Trent' ('des Heresies touchant l'Eternité de Dieu, & des faux dogmes contre Le Concile de Trente'), and of having written (through Bernier) the pamphlets, which Morin claimed included phrases that might be read as slurs upon Mazarin. He urged that Bernier be arrested and questioned—'with the threat of the noose or the galleys' ('avec menaces de la corde ou des galeres')—in order to confirm Gassendi's guilt. Having heard rumours of the denunciation, Bernier left Paris in early October 1653.<sup>24</sup> Tempting though it might seem, the conclusion that Bernier's journey to India was a flight from Morin and Mazarin should be resisted. Although Bernier did flee Paris

<sup>21</sup> On Morin (1583–1656), a royal professor in Mathematics, see P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 4 vols (Rotterdam, 1697), art. 'Morin'; *DSB*, vol. 9, 527–8; D. Garber, 'J.-B. Morin and the Second Objections', in R. Ariew and M. Grene, eds, *Descartes and his Contemporaries: Meditations, Objections, and Replies* (Chicago, 1995), 63–82.

<sup>22</sup> O. Ranum, *Artisans of Glory: Writers and Historical Thought in Seventeenth-Century France* (Chapel Hill, 1980), 159: in the wake of the Fronde, Ménage had to leave Cardinal de Retz's household; in Jan. 1650 when Conti and the duc de Longueville were arrested, their respective clients Jean-François Sarasin and Chapelain were in grave danger.

<sup>23</sup> Bernier, *Anatomia ridiculi muris* (Paris, 1651); Bernier, *Favilla ridiculi muris* (Paris, 1653); M. Martinet, 'Chronique des relations orageuses de Gassendi et de ses satellites avec Jean-Baptiste Morin', *Corpus: revue de philosophie*, 20/21 (1992), 47–64.

<sup>24</sup> Two copies exist of Morin's denunciation: BN ms Clairambault 442, pp. 1033–5, and AAE, *Mémoires et Documents*, France 891, ff. 396–9 (from Mazarin's correspondence of 1653). See the transcription and discussion in *Corpus: revue de philosophie*, 20/21 (1992), 215–20.

temporarily, he did not leave France for the East until two years later—since he tells us he was back in Paris for the eclipse of August 1654, and since he claims to have attended Gassendi's deathbed in October 1655.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the Paris of Mazarin was a threatening place for Bernier, and he left France soon after his master's death. Rather than using the quarrel between Morin and Gassendi as a motive for Bernier's departure, we should bear it in mind as the background to the events of 1654.

The solar eclipse of 12 August 1654 excited a great deal of controversy among European intellectuals.<sup>26</sup> As was usual, prognosticatory pamphlets circulated in the months before the celestial event. One of these in particular, which interpreted the eclipse as a herald of the apocalyptic Deluge of Fire, drew forth a host of refutations. Whilst numerous Jesuits and Protestant writers used theological arguments against the millenarian significance of the eclipse, Gassendi and Pierre Petit—though not Roberval, as Bernier says—used arguments based on natural philosophy. As Bernier put it: 'this eclipse was of the same nature as so many others which had preceded it without mishap, and that it was a known, expected and ordinary event' ('cette Eclipse étoit de même nature que tant d'autres qui avoient précédé sans aucun malheur, & que c'étoit un accident connu, preveu & ordinaire'). Meanwhile, Bernier's friend Chapelle wrote private verses satirizing the behaviour of the ordinary Parisians. The reference in Bernier's passage to buying a 'drug' against the effects of the eclipse seems not to be exaggerated: prophylactic candles were sold by the Lyons-based physician Lazare Meyssonier.<sup>27</sup> Bernier's description of the behaviour of the people of Paris as 'folle' and 'enfantine' rhetorically places astrological superstition on a level with the beliefs of children and madmen. This was typical of the libertine attitude to marvels and prodigies.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, he also points the finger of blame at the 'trickery of some charlatan astrologer'

<sup>25</sup> R. Pintard, *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva, 1893 [f. p. 1943]), 640 n. 3. Gassendi died in Paris, 24 Oct. 1655.

<sup>26</sup> Fortunately, a study of the responses to this eclipse exists: E. Labrousse, *L'Entrée de Saturne au Lion: l'éclipse de soleil du 12 août 1654* (The Hague, 1974). See also B. Rochot, 'Les sentiments de Gassendi sur l'Eclipse du 12 août 1654', *XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 27 (1955), 161–77. Cf. K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth, 1973), 354–6 (and 416–18 on Gassendi vs. Morin).

<sup>27</sup> Labrousse, *L'Entrée de Saturne au Lion*, esp. 28–30 on Gassendi and Morin; 33–6 on Meyssonier.

<sup>28</sup> J.-M. Goulemot, 'Démons, merveilles et philosophie à l'âge classique', *Annales: E. S. C.*, 35 (1980), 1223–50, esp. 1225–8.

(‘la fourberie de quelque Astrologue Charlatan’), which almost certainly means Morin. As if to clear up the ambiguity, Bernier goes on to target Morin, this time explicitly, at later points in the ‘Letter to Chapelain’.

Gassendi and his circle observed the eclipse of 12 August 1654 from the roof of the house of his friend and host, Henri-Louis Habert de Montmor.<sup>29</sup> It is tempting to place Gassendi’s response to the eclipse within a narrative in which a nascent scientific community wages war on astrologers and alchemists, representatives of outmoded ways of thinking. This, though, would obscure as much as it clarifies, by imposing an anachronistic conception of science. In the seventeenth century, the new natural philosophy was far from divorced from the world of scholarship, and it frequently found *de facto* allies among *érudits* in attacking accepted beliefs across a wide range of domains simultaneously. It would be more apt to use a contemporary category—perhaps as broad as ‘the learned’ or *les savants*—in which the exponents of experimental natural philosophy were grouped together with textual scholars, united in a commitment to criticizing doctrines and beliefs that were inherited or untested (‘vulgar errors’).<sup>30</sup> The attack on astrology led by Gassendi in 1654 entailed not so much an opposition between city and countryside (since astrological books were read by an urban public, and the ‘sottises’ Bernier describes are set in Paris), nor even between elite and popular culture, but a division between a critical-philosophic elite and all other people.<sup>31</sup>

This raises the question: who made up this self-appointed philosophic elite? Bernier is one of those figures who was seen by the eighteenth-century *philosophes* as a spiritual ancestor, and as a result has been viewed in such a light ever since. He did, after all, once sign off a letter to Pierre Bayle with the words ‘sapere aude’ (‘dare to know’), the tag which was later to be Kant’s chosen watchword for the Enlightenment.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This is made clear in Gassendi’s notes, at BN n. a. fr. 5856, ff. 102–3.

<sup>30</sup> At a later date, the clerics would also find themselves ‘rejetés du côté de la superstition’, as Michel de Certeau notes in his review of Labrousse in *Annales: E. S. C.*, 30 (1975), 1138–41, here 1140.

<sup>31</sup> Bernier makes this more explicit in the section attacking astrology in his *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, vol. 4, 399: ‘Et sous le mot de Vulgaire on ne doit pas seulement entendre le bas peuple, mais aussi tous ceux que les plus grandes Dignitez elevent au dessus des autres, si ce n’est que l’excellence de la Nature, ou de la bonne Education, ou l’Experience, et l’Erudition leur fasse mieux juger des choses.’

<sup>32</sup> Bernier to Bayle, 12 Sept. 1686, in E. Gigas, ed., *Lettres inédites de divers savants de la fin du XVIIe siècle et du commencement du XVIIIe siècle*, 3 vols (Copenhagen, 1890–3), vol. 1: *Choix de la correspondance inédite de Pierre Bayle, 1670–1706*, 194.

The significance of such emblematic evidence is, however, extremely difficult to gauge. When we learn that the Horatian tag had been the motto of Gassendi, it seems less like a portent of Enlightenment and more the token of the humanist ideal of free erudite enquiry (*libertas philosophandi*).<sup>33</sup> The problem of what 'sapere aude' meant in 1686 is representative of the wider debate on how to interpret the 'free thought' (or *libertinage érudit*) of the seventeenth century. There are clues that Bernier was seen in his lifetime as an *esprit fort*: his friend the 'libertin' Saint-Evremond attributed to him the maxim that the only sin is the abstinence from pleasure.<sup>34</sup> Bernier was indeed a young follower of the group of writers known today as the *libertins érudits*. Understanding that group, however, has proven extraordinarily difficult because of the danger of conflating the stereotyped 'libertine' constructed by Christian apologists with the reality of the people targeted.<sup>35</sup> Just as Pierre Bayle's reputation underwent revision in the work of Elisabeth Labrousse (from proto-*philosophe* to a more subtle Protestant sceptic), the somewhat two-dimensional model of Bernier as a freethinker, as 'le joli philosophe', has been challenged by recent researchers.<sup>36</sup>

If we were looking for evidence that Bernier was a 'modern', it would be easy enough to gather. After his return from India to Paris, he was party (with Boileau) to a satirical attack upon the Sorbonne when it tried to ban innovations in philosophy teaching;<sup>37</sup> he was the most prominent disciple of Gassendi and the first to present his

<sup>33</sup> See F. Venturi, 'Was ist Aufklärung? Sapere aude!', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 71 (1959), 119–28, and L. Firpo, 'Ancora a proposito di "Sapere aude!"', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 72 (1960), 114–17, esp. 116; cf. Pintard, *Libertinage érudit*, 152.

<sup>34</sup> See Murr, 'L'image de François Bernier', *Corpus: revue de philosophie*, 20/21 (1992), 211–13. La Bruyère's quip that 'quelques-uns [des esprits forts] achèvent de se corrompre par de longs voyages, et perdent le peu de religion qui leur restait', could be a reference to Bernier: *Les Caractères*, xvi. 4, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. J. Benda (Paris, 1951), 470.

<sup>35</sup> The standard study is Pintard, *Libertinage érudit*; see the reappraisal in R. H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, 2nd edn (Berkeley, 1979), 87–109; and Pintard's response in *Libertinage érudit*, xiii–xliii. See also J. S. Spink, *French Free Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire* (London, 1960); L. Godard de Donville, *Le Libertin des origines à 1665: un produit des apoloètes* (Paris, Seattle, and Tübingen, 1989).

<sup>36</sup> É. Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle*, 2 vols (The Hague, 1963–4). This point is made for Bernier in Burke, 'The philosopher as traveller'.

<sup>37</sup> 'La "Requête des Maîtres ès Arts" et l' "Arrêt burlesque"', ed. Murr, in *Corpus: revue de philosophie*, 20/21 (1992), 231–9; T. McClaughlin, 'Censorship and defenders of the Cartesian faith in mid-seventeenth-century France', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40 (1979), 563–81; E. Magne, *Molière et l'Université: documents inédits* (Paris, 1922), 99–109; R. Ariew, 'Damned if you do: Cartesians and censorship, 1663–1706', *Perspectives on Science*, 2 (1994), 255–74. On Bernier's role see A. Galland, *Journal . . . pendant son séjour à Constantinople*, ed. C. Schefer (Paris, 1881), vol. 1, 165.



ideas in French;<sup>38</sup> he was a salon guest of Marguerite de La Sablière, a hostess renowned for her scientific interests, and to whom he introduced Bayle's works;<sup>39</sup> and he sprang again to the defence of the mechanical philosophy when a Jesuit tried to argue that Cartesianism contradicted the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>40</sup> We might add that Bernier was acquainted with John Locke, who went to see him in the south of France;<sup>41</sup> and, as we have seen, he corresponded with Bayle, who incorporated some of Bernier's information into his *Dictionnaire*.<sup>42</sup> Nor was Bernier's propagation of modern philosophy restricted to Europe: he claims in the *Voyages* to have produced a Persian version of Descartes and Gassendi whilst he was in India.<sup>43</sup> However, the status of so many biographical facts, frequently repeated in the secondary literature, needs to be called into question if they serve only to support an anachronistic view of Bernier's significance: what Bernier did and wrote can only be made sense of within the context of a somewhat thicker description.

Even though his *Voyages* were well known, Bernier's life excited little interest until the middle of the nineteenth century, when new research was done by Angevins celebrating a local worthy.<sup>44</sup> Since then his

<sup>38</sup> On Bernier's transmission of Gassendi, see works cited in note 13.

<sup>39</sup> Menjot d'Elbenne, *Madame de La Sablière: ses Pensées chrétiennes et ses lettres à l'abbé de Rancé* (Paris, 1923); L. Petit, 'Madame de La Sablière et François Bernier', *Mercur de France*, 308 (1950), 670–83.

<sup>40</sup> L. Le Valois, SJ [alias 'de la Ville'], *Sentiments de M. Descartes touchant l'essence et les propriétés des Corps, opposez à la doctrine de l'Eglise . . .* (Paris, 1680). Bernier, 'Eclaircissement sur le livre de M. de la Ville', privately printed pamphlet, at BN ms fr. 15506, ff. 151r–157v; reproduced in [P. Bayle, ed.,] *Recueil de Quelques Pièces curieuses concernant la Philosophie de Monsieur Descartes* (Amsterdam, 1684), 45–90. See R. Ariew, 'Bernier et les doctrines gassendistes et cartésiennes de l'espace: réponses au problème de l'explication de l'eucharistie', *Corpus: revue de philosophie*, 20/21 (1992), 155–70.

<sup>41</sup> On Locke's interest in Bernier, see Lennon, *Battle of the Gods and Giants*, 78–87, 157–60, 323–6. See also D. Carey, 'Locke, travel literature, and the Natural History of Man', *The Seventeenth Century*, 11 (1996), 259–80.

<sup>42</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, articles 'Brachmanes', 'Bourignon', 'Gymnosophistes', 'Rosarius', 'Sommonacodom', 'Spinoza (note A)', among others.

<sup>43</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 134.

<sup>44</sup> L. de Lens, *Documents inédits ou peu connus sur François Bernier* (Angers, 1873); *Les Correspondants de François Bernier pendant son voyage dans l'Inde: lettres inédites de Jean Chapelain* (Angers, 1872); H.-L. Castonnet Desfosses, *François Bernier: documents inédits sur son séjour dans l'Inde* (Angers, 1885); *François Bernier: ses voyages dans l'Inde* (Angers, 1888). There was also a trio of short *thèses* by Angevin medics in the 1930s: E. Stora, 'Un médecin au XVIIe siècle: François Bernier: 1620–1688' (Paris, 1937); L. Bouger, 'François Bernier, sa vie, ses voyages, sa classification des races' (Paris, 1937); B. Bachelot, 'Le grand voyage de François Bernier (médecin de la Faculté de Montpellier) 1620–1688' (Paris, 1940).

biography has been rounded out by further archival discoveries, made by René Pintard in the 1930s, and Sylvia Murr most recently.<sup>45</sup> Born in the Anjou in 1620,<sup>46</sup> he moved to Paris to complete his education, where his family connections brought him under the protection of a *maître des requêtes* named François Luillier. As it happened, the philosopher employed by Luillier to provide lessons for his illegitimate son (known as Chapelle) was Gassendi. Bernier was allowed to sit in on the tuition, and soon began to circulate within Gassendi's network of friends and patrons—François de La Mothe Le Vayer, Gabriel Naudé, Guy Patin, the group that met chez the Dupuy brothers—in other words, the circle known as the *libertins érudits*. In fact, Bernier's first publications were products of this group, satirical pamphlets against Morin. The long-standing tension between Gassendi and Morin was to affect Bernier, as we have seen. After a few years' moving in the circles around Luillier and Gassendi, Bernier had the opportunity in March 1648 to accompany the French embassy to Poland led by Louis, vicomte d'Arpajon, on a two-year expedition that included a visit to the United Provinces and to Danzig (Gdansk). On his return to France, Bernier rejoined Gassendi in the south to assist him in his scientific work,<sup>47</sup> and to complete a medical education which he must already have begun.<sup>48</sup> The following May (1653), Gassendi, Bernier, and Chapelle were back in Paris, and were soon taking part in the meetings of *curieux* that took place at the home of Gassendi's supporter, Habert de Montmor.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Pintard, *Libertinage érudit*, 328–9, 384–6, 409–12, 424, 429, 432. For a synthesis of his life see Murr, 'Bernier et Gassendi', 74–8. Still useful is T. Morison, 'Un Français à la cour du Grand Mogol', *Revue historique*, 156 (1927), 83–97.

<sup>46</sup> Castonnet Desfosses, *François Bernier: ses voyages* (1888), 1 n. 1, cites a baptismal certificate dated 25 Sept. 1620, at Joué, near Chemillé, in the Anjou.

<sup>47</sup> Including a repeat performance of Pascal's 1648 Puy-de-Dôme experiment on a hill overlooking Toulon (5 Feb. 1651), according to Bernier, *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, vol. 4, 395.

<sup>48</sup> He matriculated at Montpellier on 5 May 1652, took the *licence* in medicine on 3 Aug., and proceeded to the MD on 26 Aug. (praising Epicurus in his disputation: see the 'Eloge' read 9 Jan. 1689 at the Angers Academy by Nivard, in Lens, ed., *Documents inédits ou peu connus*). The speed of Bernier's progress through these degrees has sometimes been seen as evidence that he was no real physician; in fact, such speed was common for those who had already studied elsewhere: L. W. B. Brockliss and C. Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1997), 195.

<sup>49</sup> On the 'Montmor academy', see H. Brown, *Scientific Organizations in Seventeenth-Century France (1620–1680)* (Baltimore, 1934; repr. New York, 1967), 64–134; and D. J. Sturdy, *Science and Social Status: The Members of the Académie des Sciences, 1666–1750* (Woodbridge, 1995), 16–24.

Among the Paris *savant* community there was a keen interest in travel. Some studied Oriental languages, like Michel Baudier, Gilbert Gaulmin, and Jacques Gaffarel.<sup>50</sup> Others managed to travel to the Levant themselves, like Ismaël Boulliau (whom La Mothe Le Vayer and Luillier were on the point of joining).<sup>51</sup> One of the motives for this interest in travel was the example set by the sceptical tradition (available in Charron or Montaigne), in which the diversity of customs in different parts of the world was used as an argument for the suspension of judgement (in the sceptics' vocabulary, *epoche*) on their relative morality. Perhaps because of the larger volume of travel literature available to him, La Mothe Le Vayer was able to make this point more forcefully than his predecessors had.<sup>52</sup> Throughout his life, he made efforts to befriend travellers and interview them, from the Jesuit Nicolas Trigault through to Jean-Baptiste Tavernier. Alongside the interest in the diversity of *mœurs*, the Gassendi group kept up with the antiquarian interest in the Levant (as a source of information for ancient and biblical history) and the Egyptological speculations of Kircher, Saumaise, and Peiresc.<sup>53</sup> All this interest in travel in the circles around Bernier make it less surprising that he should embark on his voyage. It seems probable that Bernier, learning from Gassendi and La Mothe Le Vayer, would have been quite familiar with the sceptical argument on the diversity of customs; and that he could also have inherited from them their interest in the East (he tells us, after all, that his intention had been to visit the Levant rather than India).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> On Baudier (1589–1654), and Gaffarel (1601–81), see *DLF-17* (with bibliographies), and Pintard, *Libertinage érudit*, 183–4, 187–90, 221–5. On Gaulmin, see above, Chapter 2, note 109.

<sup>51</sup> H. Nellen, *Ismaël Boulliau (1605–1694): astronome, épistolier, nouvelliste et intermédiaire scientifique: ses rapports avec les milieux du 'libertinage érudit'* (Amsterdam, 1994), 139–80.

<sup>52</sup> Pintard, *Libertinage érudit*, 372, argues that he accentuates cultural difference more than Montaigne did; see also Popkin, *History of Scepticism*, 90. For further examples of the cultural diversity problem see O'Flaherty, 'Relativism and criticism'; and Z. S. Schiffman, *On the Threshold of Modernity: Relativism in the French Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1991).

<sup>53</sup> S. H. Aufrère, *La Momie et la tempête: Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc et la 'Curiosité Égyptienne' en Provence au début du XVIIe siècle* (Avignon, 1990); S. H. Aufrère, M.-P. Foissy Aufrère and C. Loury, *Egypte et Provence: civilisation, survivances et 'Cabinet de Curiositez'* (Avignon, 1985); P. N. Miller, 'An antiquary between philology and history: Peiresc and the Samaritans', in *History and the Disciplines: The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Donald R. Kelley (Rochester, NY, 1997), 163–84.

<sup>54</sup> Bernier explains at the opening of the *Voyages* that he visited Palestine and Egypt first, spending over a year in Cairo. His aim had been to reach Ethiopia via the Red Sea,

In his dialogue 'De la vie privée' (that is, concerning *otium*)—in which the art of speculation itself is compared to a voyage of discovery—La Mothe Le Vayer described the time he had spent travelling around Europe as 'the best-spent period of my life' ('le temps de ma vie que j'estime avoir le mieux employé'), and portrayed travel as a kind of regimen for the mind, a spiritual change of air. By experiencing the variety of customs in the world, the traveller was able to see which parts of his own mental make-up were inherited blindly from the past, so that the true philosophy could break free from them: 'the wishes of my parents had bound me to a thousand servitudes; Philosophy gave me a full and true liberty' ('Les vœux de mes parens m'y avoient attaché à mille servitudes, la Philosophie m'y a mis en pleine et veritable liberté'). The bondage of custom, or what he calls 'la violance des mauvaises habitudes, la tyrannie des coustumes', is clearly identified with 'le torrent de la multitude', thereby opening up a distinction between those who have the good fortune to guide their minds properly and the vast flock of ordinary people.<sup>55</sup> All these themes and images, themselves developed from ancient sources, find their echoes in Bernier's writings.

As the passage from La Mothe Le Vayer implies, the sceptics' interest in the diversity of customs combined a curiosity for the peoples of newly discovered worlds with a sense of the distance between the philosopher and the 'vulgar' within Europe. In spite of their reputation as enemies of the church, the *libertins érudits* actually shared a certain amount of common ground with those elements of the hierarchy moved by the ideals of Catholic Reform. Both groups were, after all, drawn largely from the same social elite. In particular, we can see such shared values in the attitude of both Catholic reformers and freethinking *savants* to what can be called 'popular culture'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, these categories—Catholic reformers and *libertins érudits*—collapse into each other when we

but because Ethiopia was considered too dangerous he boarded an Indian vessel taking pilgrims from Mocha to Surat. Perhaps because there were many other accounts of these areas in print, he rarely refers to these experiences in his books.

<sup>55</sup> F. de La Mothe Le Vayer, *Dialogues faits à l'imitation des anciens*, ed. P. Pessel (Paris, 1988), 144–8. This argument inherits the theme that the 'vulgar' were always closer to their soil, and therefore geographically 'determined', whereas the civilized humanist was cosmopolitan, and free from customary habits (hence, in one sense, *libertin*).

<sup>56</sup> On the historiography of 'popular culture' in early modern Europe, see C. Ginzburg, 'Preface' to *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller*, trans. J. and A. Tedeschi (Harmondsworth, 1992 [f. p. 1976]), xiii–xxvi, 129–34; and P. Burke, 'Introduction to the revised reprint' of *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 1994 [f. p. 1978]), xiv–xxvii.

consider certain figures, such as Jean de Launoy, the doctor of theology known as the 'dénicheur des saints' for his critical hagiography, who also frequented the *libertin* circles. Indeed, Launoy's polemical history of Aristotelianism in Paris was first published alongside one of Bernier's pamphlets against Morin.<sup>57</sup> Across the French seventeenth century, the passion for *critique* was pursued on several fronts at once, by overlapping groups of *savants* and *curieux*, who could be laymen or clerics. The criticism of religious practice—the attempt to distinguish between those practices which had the sanction of church tradition and those which were unwarranted deviations or 'popular tradition'—went hand in hand with the criticism of 'vulgar errors' in medicine or natural philosophy. The disdain for 'enthusiasm' that was to be so important for the defence of the new science in the later seventeenth century maintained, for a while, an uneasy union with what Peter Burke has termed the 'triumph of Lent'.<sup>58</sup> (An example of this is that another of Gassendi's disciples, Neuré, wrote a pamphlet against the popular Corpus Christi festivities in Aix-en-Provence.)<sup>59</sup> At the same time, while the critique of the errors of the 'vulgar' had become a familiar tenet of Catholic Reform, parallels could be drawn between the situation within Christendom and that in the Indies. In the missions 'to the interior' (within Europe), it was a commonplace to describe

<sup>57</sup> R. Lenoble, 'Histoire et physique: à propos des conseils de Mersenne aux historiens et de l'intervention de Jean de Launoy dans la querelle gassendiste', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 6 (1953), 112–34, esp. 120–34; see also J. M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton, 1997), 153–61. Launoy's ambiguity is also brought out in M. de Certeau, *La Fable mystique: XVIe–XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1987 [1982]), 298–9 and n. 64.

<sup>58</sup> On these broad themes, see: Burke, *Popular Culture*, 207–86; N. Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), esp. ch. 8; R. Briggs, *Communities of Belief: Cultural and Social Tension in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1989), esp. 364–413; M. de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire* (Paris, 1975), 153–212; J. Revel, 'Forms of expertise: intellectuals and "popular" culture in France (1650–1800)', in S. L. Kaplan, ed., *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Berlin, New York, and Amsterdam, 1984), 255–73; Goulemot, 'Démons, merveilles et philosophie'; S. Pumfrey, P. Rossi, and M. Slawinski, eds, *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe* (Manchester, 1991); L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1998), 329–63 ('The enlightenment and the anti-marvelous').

<sup>59</sup> M. Neuré, *Querela ad Gassendum* (n. p., 1645); 'Plaintes à Gassendi sur les usages peu chrétiens de ses compatriotes, et sur l'indécence de leurs mœurs, et l'occasion des bouffonneries ridicules avec lesquelles on célèbre à Aix la fête du Saint-Sacrement: traduit librement du latin', in *Collection des meilleurs dissertations, notices et traités*, eds. C. Leber, J. B. Salgues, and J. Cohen, 20 vols (Paris, 1826–38), vol. 10, 83–101; on Neuré see Pintard, *Libertinage érudit*, 331–2, 385–7.

the remotest provinces as 'another Indies', implying that there was as much missionary work to be done among European peasants as in the furthest-flung reaches of the New World or the Far East.<sup>60</sup>

All this serves as a context for the eclipse of 1654 that Bernier places at the opening of the 'Letter to Chapelain'. Starting off like a sceptic, Bernier reminds his readers that there are superstitions in France as well as India—a rhetorical move akin to Montaigne's point that the supposed cannibalism of the Indies is no worse than the atrocities of the French wars of religion.<sup>61</sup> He departs from a strictly sceptical position, though, in that the relativism he gestures towards is not left open-ended (unresolvable in the face of insurmountable doubt). The sceptical argument on the diversity of beliefs was that a true philosophy might exist, but that we can not know how to reach it. For Bernier—in keeping with the later 'mitigated scepticism' of Gassendi—a way out of the sceptical suspension of judgement (*epochê*) is possible, and the superstitious multitude can be transcended.<sup>62</sup> By referring to 'les Gassendys, les Robervals, & plusieurs autres fameux Astronomes & Philosophes' (he does not invoke the Jesuit or Protestant theologians), Bernier hints at what the solution might be: the new philosophy.

## THE DELHI ECLIPSE: THE POLITICS OF ASTROLOGY IN MUGHAL INDIA

We now turn to the second half of Bernier's comparison, the eclipse he witnessed in Delhi in 1666. In some ways, this passage can be seen as setting the tone for the rest of the letter, which sets out to show the 'superstitions of the gentiles'. We might expect Bernier's analysis, in keeping with other writings on non-Christian peoples, to be based on the bifurcation between the Christians and the rest, between 'self' and 'other'.<sup>63</sup> But as we have already seen, the fact that Bernier has already

<sup>60</sup> On 'popular culture' and contact with non-Europeans see P. A. Goddard, 'Christianization and civilisation in seventeenth-century French colonial thought' (University of Oxford, D.Phil. thesis, 1990); F. Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (Yale, 1994); Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, 215–73 (chs 5 and 6).

<sup>61</sup> Montaigne, 'Des Cannibales', *Essais*, bk. 1, ch. 31, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. A. Thibaudet and M. Rat (Paris, 1962), 200–13.

<sup>62</sup> Popkin, *History of Scepticism*, 141–50.

<sup>63</sup> As can be seen in European descriptions of American 'savages': see for example M. de Certeau, 'Le lieu de l'autre. Montaigne: "Des cannibales"', in M. Olender, ed.,

described the Paris eclipse means that any stable dualism between Europeans and 'Indians' has already been undermined. Although it is possible to read Bernier's book as an early sign of the emerging European sense of superiority (scientific, technological, medical),<sup>64</sup> this disturbance of the East–West division seems too important to ignore.

Just as Bernier's account of the Paris eclipse can be related to a specific context within his own experience, the reference to the eclipse in Delhi can also be related to his life in India. Admittedly, it is not possible to give a completely symmetrical account of the two eclipses. For Bernier's readers, there was a sharp imbalance between his reference to the Paris eclipse (which some readers may have remembered, and the context for which Bernier suggests by mentioning Gassendi) and his mentioning the Delhi one, where the local situation would have seemed unfamiliar and exotic. There is also a similar imbalance at the level of historical interpretation of the two events. We are able to reconstruct the context for the 1654 eclipse because of the detailed researches of historians interested in the seventeenth-century 'decline of magic'; this wealth of supporting research does not exist for the Delhi context of the 1666 eclipse. However, by reading Bernier's *Voyages* alongside other sources, it not only becomes possible to construct a historical context for Bernier's experience in India, but also to suggest that this context for the second eclipse is actually implied in Bernier's own text.

Astrology and astronomy were very important parts of Indian life. Just as in seventeenth-century Europe, almanacs were among the most widespread form of books, and astronomical knowledge, because of its centrality to the religious calendars for both Muslims and Hindus, was intimately bound up with social and political order.<sup>65</sup> In the *Voyages*, Bernier drew attention to the importance of astral knowledge: he noted by way of an example that military commanders would not begin battles unless an auspicious conjunction (the 'sahet' or *sa'at*) had been

*Pour Léon Poliakov. Le racisme: mythes et sciences* (Brussels, 1981), 187–200; available as 'Montaigne's "Of Cannibals": the savage "I"', in Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1986), 67–79.

<sup>64</sup> M. N. Pearson, 'The thin end of the wedge: medical relativities as a paradigm of early-modern Indian-European relations', *Modern Asian Studies*, 29 (1995), 141–70, esp. 165–7. See also D. V. S. Reddy, 'François Bernier: a French physician at the Mogul court in India in the seventeenth century and his impressions of Indian medicine', *Annals of Medical History*, 3rd series, 2 (1940), 225–33; and M. Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, 1989), 55–7.

<sup>65</sup> I follow the account given in C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge, 1996), 247–52.

announced.<sup>66</sup> At one point, he makes a similar rhetorical move to that used in the eclipse passage, by comparing the astrologers in a Delhi bazaar to the mountebanks and jugglers ('bateleurs') who assembled on the Pont Neuf in Paris. Nor is the link purely of Bernier's imagining, since one of the astrologers he encounters in Delhi turns out to be a Luso-Indian ('un Mestice de Portugais') from Goa, who uses an old mariner's compass for an astrolabe and a Portuguese prayer-book for an almanac.<sup>67</sup>

Bernier does admit that both Muslims and Hindus use some form of astrology.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, historians of Mughal India emphasize the highly complex interaction between Hindu and Mughal traditions. Nevertheless, this relationship between the court and Hindu culture, particularly under Aurangzeb, can be characterized as an attempt to bring what were seen as excesses under tighter control. Since the early seventeenth century (if not earlier), members of the Muslim elite had been interested in an anthropology of Hindu practices, collecting folk-tales and recording traditions, thereby 'folklorizing' the culture of the governed. As Chris Bayly points out, this also 'embodied a political strategy', reflecting 'the growing dependence of Indo-Muslim rulers on the Hindu population'. The Mughal appropriation (and patronage) of Hindu culture was 'a programme of political incorporation', although it was far from an unmitigated success. Aurangzeb was more concerned than his predecessors to discipline what he saw as the excesses of the Hindu populace.<sup>69</sup>

It is possible to situate Bernier within this context. He was attached to the court of Danishmand Khan, a Persian merchant who had risen to the office of paymaster of the army under Shah Jehan, becoming governor of Delhi under Aurangzeb. Danishmand Khan was interested in the sciences, particularly astronomy, geography, and anatomy. It was for him—whom Bernier calls his 'Agah' or 'Navaab'—that Bernier claims to have translated Descartes and Gassendi into Persian. Bernier makes frequent references to his own knowledge of Persian, which was the language of the court, and presumably that used in the household of

<sup>66</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 1, 213–16, repeated in *Abrégé*, vol. 4, 403–5.

<sup>67</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 12–14. <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

<sup>69</sup> Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 20–30 (27 for Aurangzeb). Bayly argues that 'the Persian, Turkish and central Asian nobles and intelligentsia who served the Empire could be seen as the first "Orientalists"' (28–9). For further discussion of European Orientalists' debt to both Muslim and Hindu categories, see the remarks in Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance*, 279–92.



Danishmand Khan. However, in his accounts of Hindu beliefs, Bernier makes clear that he did not learn Sanskrit. Furthermore, although Bernier's text sets out to give the impression that he held one-to-one conversations with the pandits and brahmins, he makes clear in passing that this encounter with the spokesmen of Hinduism was mediated:

Ne vous étonnez pas d'abord, si, quoi que je ne sçache pas le Hansrit, qui est la langue des Doctes . . . je ne laisserai pas de vous dire beaucoup de choses qui sont tirées des Livres écrits en cette langue, car vous sçavez que mon Agah Danechmend-kan, partie à ma sollicitation, partie pour sa propre curiosité, prit à ses gages un des plus fameux Pendets qui fût dans toutes les Indes & qui autrefois avoit eu pension de Dara le fils aîné du Roi Chah-Jehan . . .

[Do not wonder, if, though I know not the *Hanscrit*, the language of the Learn'd . . . [I] do notwithstanding tell you many things taken out of Books written in that Tongue. For you must know, that my *Agah Danechmend-kan*, partly upon my sollicitation, partly out of his own curiosity, took into his service one of the famousest *Pendets* that was in all the *Indies*, and that formerly had had a Pension of *Dara*, the Eldest Son of King *Chah-Jehan* . . .]

Bernier adds that this pandit—who some scholars identify as the poet Kavindracarya Sarasvati—was his ‘constant companion during a period of three years’, and also introduced him to other pandits.<sup>70</sup> Danishmand Khan's curiosity for Hindu teaching can clearly be placed within the Mughal tradition of folkORIZATION discussed earlier. It is telling, though, how Bernier uses the first person plural:

Quand j'étois las d'expliquer à mon Agah ces dernières découvertes d'Harveus & de Pecquet sur l'Anatomie, & de raisonner avec lui sur la Philosophie de Gassendi & de Descartes (car ç'a été la ma plus grande occupation pendant cinq ou six ans) le Pendet étoit nôtre Refuge, & alors c'étoit à lui à raisonner, & à nous conter ses fables, qu'il nous debitoit serieusement & sans jamais rire, il est vrai que nous nous degoûtâmes si fort à la fin de ses raisonnemens bourrus, que nous ne le pouvions presque plus entendre.<sup>71</sup>

[When I was weary of explaining to my *Agah* those late discoveries of *Harvey* and *Pecquet* in *Anatomy*, and of discoursing with him of the Philosophy of *Gassendi* and *Des-cartes*, which I translated to him into *Persian* (for that was my

<sup>70</sup> For the identification with Kavindracarya, see S. Pollock, ‘The death of Sanskrit’, *Comparative Studies of Society and History*, 43 (2001), 392–426, at 407–8. Various other literary and philosophical figures have also been suggested, but conclusive evidence is wanting.

<sup>71</sup> This and the previous quotation from Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 133–4 (cf. 147); *A Continuation* [vol. 3 of 4], 103–73, here 143–4.

chief employment for five or six years) that *Pendet* was our refuge, and then he was obliged to discourse, and to relate unto us his stories, which he deliver'd seriously and without ever smiling. 'Tis true, that at last we were so much disgusted with his tales and uncouth reasonings, that we scarce had patience left to hear them.]

Far from being an idealized portrayal of a three-way colloquy between Muslim, Christian, and Hindu, Bernier clearly describes a hostility shared by Muslim and Christian to the 'fables' of the pandit. This characterizes the model that recurs most often within Bernier's text. We can find further examples of this process of identification between Bernier and his Muslim patrons. At several points in the 'Letter to Chapelain', there are references to the political tension between the Muslim rulers and the Hindu populace. Bernier states that the Mughals permit the 'superstitious practices' of the Hindus, as if in tolerance of religious diversity, but at the same time records that they did 'all in their power' to suppress *sati*.<sup>72</sup> In his pages on widow burning, Bernier quite clearly allies himself with the Muslims: he even claims that, when he himself went to dissuade a *sati* from suicide, he was called to the scene in his capacity as servant to Danishmand Khan.<sup>73</sup>

The identification of the Hindus with 'fable', in contrast to a rationality shared by Muslim and Christian, is one of the overall themes of the 'Letter to Chapelain', and this distinction clearly echoes that between the humanist philosopher and the 'vulgar herd' that Bernier uses in reference to the Parisians. The rhetorical association made in the eclipse passage—by which the suspicions of the 'vulgar herd' are put on the same level as that of the Hindu populace—is found repeated in other parts of Bernier's text. Bernier distinguishes between doctrines found in the Hindu scriptures and the 'Tradition vulgaire', which he even calls 'mother goose tales'.<sup>74</sup> The folklorization of superstition that Bernier encountered in India reproduces the processes at work in Europe—as we found earlier, Bernier identifies astrology with 'children's tomfoolery'

<sup>72</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 101 ('Le Grand Mogol, quoique Mahumetan, permet ces anciennes superstitions aux Gentils, parce qu'il ne veut, ou n'ose pas les choquer dans l'exercice de leur Religion'); on *sati*, 106–7 ('les Mahumetans, qui tiennent à present le Gouvernement, sont ennemis de cette barbare coûtume, & l'empêchent tant qu'ils peuvent'). Bernier notes that Mughals do not totally suppress *sati* 'de crainte de quelque Revolte'.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* 108.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 142 ('une Tradition vulgaire qu'on ne trouve point dans leurs Livres'); 142–3 ('contes de ma mere l'Oye').

and 'old wives' tales'.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, he identifies some of the elements of Hindu mythology with classical mythology, suggesting that—'to speak as our ancient idolaters did'—the Deutas might be the same as the Romans' numina, genii, demons, or even fairies.<sup>76</sup>

Bernier seizes every opportunity to implicitly identify Gassendi's vanquished philosophical foes with Hinduism. He uses the same terms ('les Mysteres de la Cabale') to describe Morin's astrology and the teachings of the *yogins*.<sup>77</sup> When describing the mystic ecstasies of the *yogins*, he adds that perhaps they resemble those of Girolamo Cardano (the sixteenth-century philosopher used by Bernier elsewhere as a representative of astrology). Later, Bernier notes that the idea of the 'world-soul' was shared by ancient philosophers, Hindu pandits, Muslim sufis, and the English hermeticist Robert Fludd—whose doctrine, Bernier reminds us, 'our great Gassendi has so learnedly refuted'.<sup>78</sup>

Years later, Bernier was to continue to use his Indian knowledge to score points in French debates: just before his death, at the beginning of the vogue for Quietism in France, he published a *mémoire* comparing the European mystics of the school of Molinos to the mystics of India. What is new here is the degree to which Bernier skates across multiple Asian religions, lumping together a variety of spiritual traditions (which he knew to be different) in order to identify them with the Quietists: Muslim Sufi *fakirs*, Hindu *yogins*, and even the Buddhist 'bonzes' of China, whom Bernier had read about in the introduction to the recent book *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687). After establishing the similarity between these exotic mystics and those closer to home, he reproduces a familiar judgement: 'since, all over the world, men have more or less the same temperament, and consequently the same bodily illnesses, they also have more or less the same maladies of the mind, the same thoughts, the same madneses, the same extravagances.'<sup>79</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Bernier, *Abrégé*, vol. 4, 357–405, esp. 358 ('badineries d'Enfans'; 'contes de Vieilles').

<sup>76</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 144 ('pour parler comme nos anciens Idolâtres . . . des Numina, des Genii, des Demones, ou si vous voulez des Esprits ou des Fées').

<sup>77</sup> Bernier, *Abrégé*, vol. 4, 373–4 ('les Mysteres de la Cabale' of astrologers); *Voyages*, vol. 2, 128 ('le grand Mystere de la Cabale des Jaugis'), 163.

<sup>78</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 127 for Cardano, 163–4 for Fludd ('nôtre grand Gassendi a refutée si doctement'). Further attacks on Cardano occur in Bernier, *Abrégé*, vol. 4, 380, 384, 396–7, 401.

<sup>79</sup> 'Memoire de Mr. Bernier sur le Quietisme des Indes', *Histoire des Ouvrages des Sçavans*, 4 (Sept. 1688), 47–52 ('Tant il est vray que comme par toute la terre les hommes ont à peu près le même temperament, & consequemment les mêmes maladies

It is also worth noting that Bernier's texts show signs of how the alliance of *savants* against the vulgar was susceptible to fracture. In much of the 'Letter to Chapelain', he explains the prevalence of Hindu 'superstition' with reference to the conniving brahmins, invoking the Lucretian argument against priestcraft (in which priests deceive the ordinary people for political purposes, and do not believe the doctrines they teach). After all, this is the tenor of the passage from Lucretius which Bernier cites at the climax of his description of *sati*—the lines which end 'tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!' ('such are the evils to which men are driven by religion').<sup>80</sup>

This section has tried to suggest how we might be able to understand Bernier's attitude to Hinduism within the context of his position in the household of Danishmand Khan. Although the debt that Bernier owed to that context is not acknowledged in explicit terms, through a close reading of Bernier's text it can be traced.

## BERNIER AND THE THEVENOT GROUP

So far we have seen how the making of Bernier's book can be understood within two local contexts of knowledge production, conveniently represented by the twin eclipses that Bernier uses at the opening of his 'Letter to Chapelain'—the France of the 1650s and the Mughal empire of the 1660s. In this section we move on to consider the production of Bernier's book, which involves bringing him into a closer relation with the circle around Melchisédech Thévenot. The book can arguably be thought of as a product of that group. However, when Bernier came back to Paris and saw his *Voyages* through the press, he seems to have moved into new territory, pitching his book towards a more fashionable readership. We have seen how Bernier achieved the status of a 'classic' travel author in the centuries after his death. The correspondence of his patrons and advisors reveals that this was not just a posthumous accident, but something striven for, and for which models and methods were prescribed.

Jean Chapelain had been connected with Gassendi since the 1630s, and perhaps took it upon himself to look after the philosopher's pupils

du corps, ils ont aussi à peu près les mêmes maladies d'esprit, les mêmes pensées, les mêmes folies, les mêmes extravagances').

<sup>80</sup> Bernier, *Voyages*, vol. 2, 119, citing Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, bk 1, lines 82–6, 101. The passage was already a commonplace for sceptical thinkers: cf. Montaigne, 'Apologie de Raymond Sebond' (bk. 2, ch. 12) in *Œuvres complètes*, 502.

after his death. He wrote to Bernier whilst he was in India, to keep him up to date with developments in Europe but also to urge him to make the most of this opportunity.<sup>81</sup> It is clear from Chapelain's earlier letters that he was writing to Bernier on behalf of the group that met *chez* Habert de Montmor, a group that Bernier had of course attended before leaving Paris. We learn from his first letter that Bernier had written to Montmor, and Chapelain tells him to address his letters either to Montmor, to Thévenot, or to Cureau de La Chambre. Thévenot, who had heard about Bernier from Chapelain, sent a series of questions for Bernier, along with some jewellery that he could use as gifts to impress possible patrons ('quelques bijoux et quelques bagatelles de peu de conte de deça, mais qui pourront servir à vous faire vostre cour de delà auprès des personnes de qualité curieuses') (170).<sup>82</sup> For the same purpose, Chapelain sent political news from Europe (171).

As well as news, the Parisian group sent packets of books to India. Bernier had heard about the edition of Gassendi that appeared in Lyons in 1658 under Montmor's patronage, and so asked for a copy to be sent. The thought of consigning the precious volumes to so risky a voyage proved too much for Montmor (620), who sent him a life of Epicurus instead. Several times, Gassendi sent him manuscripts of *La Pucelle*, his (famously bad) epic poem on the life of Joan of Arc (170). Sending such packages so far involved great uncertainty. The route from Marseilles via Aleppo, Baghdad, Basra, and Surat was long enough for Chapelain to have to write four letters without having heard any reply. Even if a package reached its destination, Chapelain could not be sure that Bernier would still be there when it did. He mentions that Bernier had considered travelling to China, after all (171). When possible, a messenger was used: one letter was carried by Tavernier, at the request of La Mothe Le Vayer (265), and another was conveyed by Chardin (621).<sup>83</sup> The advantage of using travellers was that information too secret to be written down could also be conveyed (266).

<sup>81</sup> The link Gassendi–Chapelain is made in A. J. George, 'A seventeenth-century amateur of science: Jean Chapelain', *Annals of Science*, 3 (1938), 217–36. The letters of Chapelain to Bernier were first published in Lens, *Les Correspondants*; re-edited with numerous corrections in Chapelain, *Lettres*, vol. 2, 166–72, 223–6, 264–7, 470–1, 619–23, 640–1, 662–3. Further quotations from vol. 2 are given in the main text, in brackets.

<sup>82</sup> This strategy of taking gifts in order to gain credit whilst abroad was mentioned in the 'Project' of the group (see above, Chapter 2).

<sup>83</sup> This shows that there was a certain amount of contact between the famous French travellers, although it would be rash to overemphasize their connectedness.

Chapelain's letters, especially the lengthy first one, fall into the contemporary genre of 'advice to travellers'.<sup>84</sup> Imagining the 'gloire' that might accrue to Bernier upon his return, Chapelain writes: 'you could be the classic author of this famous part of the world' ('vous seriez l'auteur classique de cette fameuse partie de la terre', 172). The theme of literary immortality returns frequently in Chapelain's letters, but—crucially—this *gloire* will only be won if Bernier's writing conforms to a *méthode* ('écrire méthodiquement'). In order to become the classic author 'of Hindustan, Bernier is urged to fashion his text according to Chapelain's advice. Chapelain even suggests specific authors as models (referring to the accounts published by Adam Olearius and the Jesuit Martino Martini),<sup>85</sup> and spells out, perhaps needlessly, that Bernier should send his reports back by way of the Dutch and English merchants, sending one copy back and keeping one for himself ('à mesure que vous avancerez, envoyés-nous une copie de ce que vous aurés appris et remarqué, gardant l'original par devers vous', 170).

There is an urgency in Chapelain's letters that stems from his sense of who Bernier was—a man who held an 'honourable rank among men of letters' ('un rang honorable parmi les lettrés') because of his 'talents naturels' and 'sciences acquises' (167). The travel accounts from India that were already available left something to be desired, in Chapelain's estimation, having been written by 'ignorant merchants or biased missionaries' ('marchands ignares ou par des missionnaires intéressés', 221). Bernier had the potential to produce something better, especially if he followed Chapelain's advice:

ayés une particulière attention à vous bien éclaircir de tous les chefs que je vous ay marqués, et d'écrire méthodiquement vos descouvertes pour nous envoyer

<sup>84</sup> On this genre, see J.-P. Rubiés, 'Instructions for travellers: teaching the eye to see', *History and Anthropology*, 9 (1996), 139–90; and J. Stagl, K. Orda, and C. Kämpfer, *Apodemiken: eine räsionierte Bibliographie der reisetheoretischen Literatur des 16., 17., und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn, 1983).

<sup>85</sup> Adam Olearius, mathematician and *Kunstkammer*-curator to the court of Gottorp in Schleswig-Holstein, accompanied an expedition to Russia and Persia. A. Olearius, *Vermehrte neue Beschreibung der Muscovitischen und Persischen Reyse*, 2nd expanded edn (Schleswig, 1656 [f. p. 1645]); trans. A. de Wicquefort as *Relation du Voyage . . . en Moscovie, Tartarie, et Perse* (Paris, 1659). See T. Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität: Reiseberichte im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert: Genre-geschichtliche Untersuchung zu Adam Olearius, Hans Egede, Georg Forster* (Paderborn, 1994), 57–122. The writings of Martino Martini SJ (1614–61) dominated European knowledge of China in the period 1654–87. Extracts were translated in Thévenot's collection, part 3. See F. Demarchi and R. Scartezini, eds, *Martino Martini: A Humanist and Scientist in Seventeenth-Century China* (Trent, 1995).

des copies qu'on puisse monstrer de deçà à vostre gloire, et qui sentent l'homme de lettres, comme celles d'Olearius de la Moscovie et de la Perse . . . (171–2)

[take especial care to find out about all the headings that I have given you, and to write up your discoveries methodically, so as to send us copies that we can show over here, to your greater glory, and which reveal you to be a man of letters, like those of Olearius on Muscovy and Persia . . .]

Since not all travel accounts are equal, Chapelain urges Bernier to write a 'relation' that fulfils certain requirements: 'une très curieuse relation' (621), 'une description exacte et authentique' (622), and 'une relation exacte et capable de vous donner l'immortalité' (264). These requirements should be fulfilled in Bernier's case, since he is a 'sçavant' and a 'curieux' (169) with 'un esprit autre que de marchand', writing 'en philosophe et en homme de sens' (622); but his text should still cover certain topics if it is to qualify—hence the list of 'heads' for investigation that Chapelain includes: 'enrich yourself with all the knowledge that you can, be it about the political state of this great Empire, or about the nature of the arts that they have which are different to ours' ('enrichissés vous y de toutes les lumières qui vous sera possible, soit concernant l'estat politique de ce grand Empire, soit concernant celui de la nature et des arts qui y sont differens des nostres', 168). Bernier is advised to learn Persian, the language of the Mughal court, in order to familiarize himself with their written culture:

Il seroit bon encore que vous recouvraissés tous les livres principaux et estimés parmi ces peuples, d'où vous tirerés de notables instructions pour toutes leurs sortes de connoissances, et qui passeroient dans l'Europe pour un trésor, en les y apportant (168–9).

[It would also be good if you good recover all of the principal books esteemed among those peoples, from which you could draw notable information on all their kinds of knowledge, and which would pass for a great treasure when brought back to Europe.]

Chapelain was of course aware of the premium placed on the collection of Oriental manuscripts, and hoped that Bernier would bring back manuscripts of the best Persian poets, historians, and philosophers, which 'le Roy pourroit acheter chèrement pour en orner sa bibliothèque' (225). He went on:

Par là vous auriés moyen de faire voir en combien de sortes de disciplines ils sont instruits, et jusqu'où ils ont poussé leurs connoissances; comment ils conduisent leur raisonnement, de quelle morale ils [se] servent; quelle est leur

religion gentile ou mahométane, ou toutes deux; comment ils contemplent les choses de la nature, soit pour la physique simple, soit pour la médecine; quelles observations ils font des astres, et s'ils y suivent la doctrine Grecque ou l'Arabe, ou quelque autre qui leur soit particulière. . . (169)

[In that way, you will have a way of showing the different disciplines in which [the Indians] are knowledgeable, and how far they have pushed their knowledge; how they conduct their reasoning; what moral system they use; what their religion is, gentile or Mahometan, or both; how they contemplate the things of Nature, either in natural philosophy or for medicine; what observations they make of the stars, and whether [in astronomy] they follow the Greek or Arabic doctrine, or some other of their own. . .]

The list of topics continues, covering the geography of the country, the military forces, the education of children—all of which might be gleaned from the Mughal literature. But books alone will not suffice: to understand in detail the mechanical arts of the Indians, Bernier will need to use other sources, 'seures relations' and 'bon garants' (169). More topics follow: as we might expect from a regular salon guest and *honnête homme*, Chapelain identifies civility with 'the manner in which women are treated there' ('la manière dont on traite-là les femmes'); he asks especially for comparisons with Turkey and Persia. The question of whether women receive visitors from outside their household is important, because this plays a role in making language more polite. This affirmation of the civilizing effects of mixed conversation, although still controversial in society as a whole, was commonplace in the Parisian salon milieu in which Chapelain had spent his days. As we shall see, Bernier was no stranger to that mode of sociability himself.<sup>86</sup>

Chapelain clearly urges Bernier to a particular model of travel writing, but also with the new philosophy, or in his words with 'that philosophy which is not of the Schools, and which is worthy of a well-formed mind, having no other object than public utility' ('cette philosophie qui n'est point de collège et qui est digne d'un esprit bien fait, ne se proposant pour objet que l'utilité publique', 662–3). This identification becomes

<sup>86</sup> Chapelain writes: 'car cela sert fort à rendre les langues polies, à cause qu'on leur veut plaire, et à cause que, dans la communication avec elles [women], les hommes apprennent à adoucir la rudesse de la prononciation, que la mollesse naturelle des organes des femmes amollit et facilite insensiblement' (169). On the connection between language and the salons, see I. Maclean, *Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature, 1610–1652* (Oxford, 1977), 141–52; see also *DLF-17*, articles 'Langue classique', 'Galant, galanterie', 'Préciosité', and 'Honnête homme'. On salons see C. C. Lougee, *Le Paradis des femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France* (Princeton, 1976).



clearer when Bernier's writings are placed in the context of Thévenot's publication programme.

As was normal practice at the time—and as Chapelain mentions—the letters that Bernier sent back were not kept private. In fact, it is clear that some of Bernier's letters were first sent to François Boysson, seigneur de Merveilles, one of his friends and patrons in Provence, who then duplicated them for Paris, where they were read aloud to assembled groups.<sup>87</sup> Although on one occasion Chapelain refers to reading Bernier's letters 'en nostre assemblée chés Mr le Chancelier' (171), which probably means the Académie française,<sup>88</sup> it seems clear that most of the time, the Montmor–Thévenot group is meant. The first letters that Bernier sent back had arrived by April 1662, and Chapelain told Bernier of their intention to include them in Thévenot's collection of *Relations*:

nous avons pensé de les faire entrer dans un volume de relations exquisés et non veües encore parmi nous, de la plupart des choses de l'Orient, pour en informer les curieux et contribuer à vostre réputation, puisque nous ne pouvons faire davantage pour vous dans une si difficile communication que la nostre. En attendant que le volume sorte à la lumière, je feray part de ces deux lettres à nos habiles amis, surtout à M<sup>rs</sup> de la Mothe le Vayer et de la Chambre, sans obmettre M<sup>r</sup> de Neuré . . . M<sup>r</sup> Thévenot, qui publie ces relations . . . a résolu de vous escrire aussi bien que moy, et je croy qu'il le fera. C'est un ami que je vous ay donné et qui ne vous fera pas de honte (224).

[We thought about putting them in to a volume of remarkable [travel] accounts, not seen before in French, and mainly of the Orient, in order to inform the curious and contribute to your reputation, since we can not do much more for you, given the difficulties of our communication. As we wait for the volume to appear, I will tell our able friends about your two letters, especially Messrs La Mothe Le Vayer, [Cureau de] La Chambre, Neuré . . . Mr Thévenot, who edits these travel accounts . . . has decided to write to you as well, and I believe he will. He is a friend that I have given to you, and who will not let you down.]

These early letters occupied only two pages in part one of Thévenot's collection.<sup>89</sup> After that, no other pieces of Bernier's appeared in Thévenot's

<sup>87</sup> The evidence of Merveilles' patronage of Bernier is in Chapelain, vol. 2, 166 n. 2, 223. Lens implies that Merveilles had travelled with Bernier on the d'Arpajon embassy to Poland. Pintard says (*Libertinage érudit*, 385) that Bernier made a trip to Italy with Merveilles in the early 1650s. I have been unable to find out anything else about M. de Merveilles.

<sup>88</sup> Both Chapelain and La Mothe Le Vayer were members of the Académie française, which met at that time at the *bôtel* of Pierre Séguier, Chancelier de France.

<sup>89</sup> M. Thévenot, ed., *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, part 1 (Paris, 1663), 'Discours sur les Memoires de Thomas Rhoë', sep. pag., 9–10.

series. In Bernier's book, there appeared a section at the end where he replied to a set of Thévenot's questions. Thévenot had asked for Bernier's remarks on the Monsoon; on the tides and winds around India; on how rich Bengal was; on the old question of the origins of the Nile; and on whether there were Jews in Kashmir, and if so, what text of the Bible they might have.<sup>90</sup> This, though, was the only sign of Bernier's connection with Thévenot to appear in the *Voyages*.

If the most important institutional context for Bernier's writings was the network of correspondence linking him (via Merveilles in Provence) to the Chapelain circle in Paris, it is important to note at least one other point of contact with the French patronage system that Bernier had while in India: his brief connection with the Compagnie des Indes Orientales. While serving Cardinal Mazarin in the 1650s, Colbert was involved in colonial administration, and was therefore well aware of the importance of first-hand information from 'men on the spot' for the establishment and development of trade.<sup>91</sup> It seems that Chapelain may have brought Bernier to Colbert's attention himself (663). So, when the envoys sent out on behalf of the Compagnie to establish links with 'the Great Mogol' happened to meet Bernier (who was on his way back to France) in Surat in March 1668, the opportunity to ask his advice was not missed. François Caron, the Compagnie's representative, interviewed Bernier, and it was on his request that Bernier produced a 'Mémoire sur l'Établissement du Commerce dans les Indes'.<sup>92</sup> The information Bernier gave the Compagnie did prove useful (some of the contacts he mentions, like the French physician La Palisse, ended up working for them). However, Bernier does not seem to have kept up his connection with the Compagnie after his return to France, and seems not to have had much contact with the minister. Apart from this document, the only surviving sign of any contact is the fact that the most influential part of Bernier's book, the letter on the place of Hindustan in the worldwide circulation of precious metals, was the letter addressed to Colbert.

<sup>90</sup> Bernier, *Voyages* (1699), vol. 2, 314–53.

<sup>91</sup> See P. P. Boucher, 'Comment se forme un ministre colonial: l'initiation de Colbert, 1651–1664', *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 37 (1983), 431–52.

<sup>92</sup> AN Colonies C<sup>2</sup> 62, ff.14–22. This is transcribed in Castonnet des Fosses, *François Bernier: documents inédits* (Angers, 1885), 11–30. See G. J. Ames, *Colbert, Mercantilism, and the French Quest for Asian Trade* (DeKalb, IL, 1996), 45–6. A note written on the document, presumably by Colbert, reads 'J'ai lu ce mémoire en entier et l'ai trouvé d'un très bon sens et plein de bonnes et utiles instructions pour l'établissement du commerce dans les Indes.'

## THE MAKING OF THE BOOK: *GALANTERIE* OVER ERUDITION

In the transition from the manuscripts circulated among his friends—which are now lost—to the printed text of the *Voyages*, certain decisions were taken which affected the way the text was presented and received. When Bernier returned to Paris in 1669 he would have found, among other changes, that under the regime of Colbert he now had friends in high places. Several of Bernier's acquaintances had emerged, during his absence, as prominent *gens de lettres*: Molière, Boileau, La Fontaine, Saint-Evremond, to name only the best known today. It was perhaps through these friends that Bernier was able to publish his travel account with the prominent *libraire* Claude Barbin, who published (*inter alia*) the *Mercurie Galant* and works by Molière, Boileau, La Fontaine, Saint-Evremond, La Rochefoucauld, Racine, and Mme de Lafayette. Barbin also had a good line of travel books, including the travels of Tavernier (1676), and was later involved in the printing of d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* (see Chapter 4).<sup>93</sup> The fact that Barbin was to develop a special interest in travel books should not prevent us from noting, however, other aspects of the presentation of the *Voyages*.

There are signs that Bernier chose to ignore some of the advice Chapelain had sent him. Chapelain seems to have hoped that Bernier would act as an erudite collector, who might come back laden with manuscripts for the Bibliothèque du roi. This Bernier did not do. Nor did he fit in to the Colbert–Chapelain system of patronage very well, despite having so many well-placed friends. He was not made a member of any of the Paris academies, nor was he given any other post (such as a translating post at the Bibliothèque du roi, or that of *secrétaire-interprète*). Bernier's only contact with the crown patronage system came in the last months of his life (1688), when he was made a member of the recently founded academy in Angers, which he never attended.<sup>94</sup> This failure to achieve preferment might not reflect any political or intellectual

<sup>93</sup> On Barbin see G. E. Reed, *Claude Barbin: libraire de Paris sous le règne de Louis XIV* (Geneva, 1974). His widow published, along with Perrault's *Contes* and Fénelon's *Télémaque*, Antoine Galland's *Mille et une nuits* (1704–17).

<sup>94</sup> On the Angers academy, founded in 1685, see D. Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en province: académies et académiciens provinciaux 1680–1789*, 2 vols (The Hague/Paris, 1978), vol 1: 15–31, vol 2: 7–12, and bibliog., 214–18.

obstacle. After all, Bernier was spending quite a lot of time in the south of France after his return. Another factor may well have been the death of La Mothe Le Vayer (1672), Chapelain (1674), and the retreat of Melchisédech Thévenot to his country house at Issy. However, by far the simplest explanation would be that Bernier did not need to seek patronage because he had brought back from India a gift from his patron of ten thousand rupees, the equivalent of fifteen thousand *livres* (662).

The signs of divergence between Bernier's writings and the methods of the Thévenot group can be seen, once again, in the Chapelain correspondence. When Chapelain told Merveilles in April 1662 that Bernier's letters were to be published by Thévenot, he added that 'I would take care to purge them of their impurities of language and their too-familiar gaities which could rob them of the authority and the gravity which are necessary for the public in such matters' ('j'auray soin de les purger de leurs impuretés de langage et gayetés trop familières qui leur pourroient oster l'autorité et la gravité qui sont nécessaires pour le public en de semblables matières', 221). Here, Chapelain is not just playing the stylistic purist of the Académie française; he recognizes that a particular style of language has to be used (appropriate to the subject matter) in order to maintain authority in the eyes of the readership. The difference in genre between Thévenot's collection and Bernier's book is quite clear: Thévenot's collection was printed as a series of large quarto volumes, and included some untranslated texts. Bernier's book, in contrast, was printed by Barbin as a fashionable duodecimo. Similarly, Bernier's book carried few signs of having been modelled on the examples Chapelain offered (Martini and Olearius).

Through his association with Boileau and other writers published by Claude Barbin, he identified his book with the *galant* literary milieu, based in polite salons like those of Mme de La Sablière. This makes more sense when we note that Barbin was associated with the vogue for *galanterie*, to the extent that publications in the *galant* style were sometimes called 'barbinades'.<sup>95</sup> The style of language, the epistolary format, and the way the text is presented in dedications and other paratext can be identified with *galanterie*, and thereby with a social group and a particular ethos of intellectual activity.<sup>96</sup> It seems clear from Bernier's

<sup>95</sup> See *DLF-17*, art. 'Barbin'.

<sup>96</sup> Bernier's dedication to the king would lend itself to analysis in this regard. On *galanterie* see A. Viala, 'D'une politique des formes: la galanterie', *XVIIe siècle*, 182 (1994), 143–51.

career after 1670 that he took his vocation as a salon guest seriously: his connection with Mme de La Sablière was the occasion for most of his later publications, including his large-scale exposition of his teacher's thought, the *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*. If Bernier had decided that this was the path he wished to follow, it no longer seems strange that his book did not appear in Thévenot's collection, or that Chapelain felt that Bernier's text would have needed revision. Within a more erudite genre, the 'impuretés de langage et gayetés trop familières' would jeopardize the text's *autorité* and *gravité*; whereas the same features might be the hallmarks of 'galanterie'. An *histoire* written in the galant mode would function within the generic conventions of that style. It would seem, then, that Bernier had opted for eloquence over erudition. In this way, the assessment of Bernier that was to be made by Friedrich Engels—'old, matter-of-fact, clear French, which hits the nail on the head throughout, without seeming to be aware of so doing'—proved to be right, albeit for social reasons that Engels seems not to have considered.<sup>97</sup>

This shift in the cultural space occupied by Bernier's text did not, however, mark any complete break with the Thévenot circle that had supported him. On the contrary, learned correspondence was crucial in the distribution of the book. The English translation of Bernier's book—which was to inspire Dryden's tragedy *Aureng-Zebe* (1676)—was made by none other than Henry Oldenburg, the secretary of the Royal Society, with whom the Thévenot group had long been in contact. The book was first sent to Oldenburg by André de Monceaux, another *curieux* who had travelled in the Levant.<sup>98</sup> In his letter, which later appeared as a preface to Oldenburg's translation, Monceaux praised Bernier's qualities as a writer: namely, that he was 'un tres *galant* homme', and a pupil of Gassendi.<sup>99</sup> Monceaux hoped that the Royal Society would pass judgement on the book. Oldenburg, clearly, was sufficiently impressed to translate the work himself (whilst

<sup>97</sup> Engels to Marx, 6 June 1853, in *Marx/Engels Gesamtausgabe*, 3. Abteilung, Band 6 (Berlin, 1987), 190: 'Die Sachen vom alten Bernier sind wirklich sehr schön. Man freut sich ordentlich einmal wieder etwas von einem alten nüchternen, klaren Franzosen zu lesen der überall den Nagel auf den Kopf trifft sans avoir l'air de s'en apercevoir.'

<sup>98</sup> G. Meynell, 'André de Monceaux, FRS 1670', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 47 (1993), 11–15; H. A. Omont, ed., *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1902), 27–53. Huygens had written to Oldenburg to introduce him.

<sup>99</sup> Monceaux to Oldenburg, 16 July 1670, in Oldenburg, vol. 7, 85–9; cf. 61–2 and 141 (my emphasis). The English translation appeared as a preliminary text in Oldenburg's translation.

also translating Steno's work on fossils, the *Prodromus*).<sup>100</sup> This English version was printed by Moses Pitt, a 'stationer-virtuoso' with close links to the Royal Society.<sup>101</sup> For these circumstantial reasons, ironically, the London version of Bernier's book might be seen as somewhat closer to the original *savant* context of the book's production than was the Paris original.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Calcutta, in 1904, the Oldenburg translation of Bernier's travels was once more republished. The anonymous writers of the Preface and Introduction for the Bangabasi Press allowed that '[Bernier's] works are more critical than inventive and are even now regarded by some European savants as the model of exactitude', and even acknowledged that 'he inherited from Gassendi, his tutor, his powers of acquisition, acuteness of logical reasoning, and liveliness of imagination'. This indulgence only prepares for the barrage that follows. In the letter to Chapelain, they write, 'the veteran disciple of Prof. Gassendi committed an egregious mistake. Few, if any, of the Europeans have as yet been able to make out the true meaning of the religious rites and ceremonies of the Hindus.' There follows a brief summary of Hindu beliefs, and then a vigorous attack on the uncomprehending attitude of Western 'science' towards Hindu spirituality:

To the western savants, the System of 'Yoga' still appears as a mysterious process . . . That is all that can be expected from them . . . The virility of European nerve and muscle, nurtured by their peculiar climate and haughty civilization, inevitably creates and fosters a materialistic turn of mind, which is quite incapable of grasping the true meaning of the pure spiritualism of the Hindus. Hence we maintain that the East is East and the West is West, and never the twain shall meet.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Bernier, *The History of the Late Revolution of the Empire of the Great Mogol* (London, 1671); *A Continuation of the Memoires of Monsieur Bernier, Concerning the Empire of the Great Mogol* (London, 1672).

<sup>101</sup> A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998), 68; cf. 111 n. 102, 145, 447–53, 498 n. 108. Pitt later published Bernier with Tavernier in *Collections of Travels through Turkey into Persia, and the East-Indies* (1684); and also the first edition of Chardin's travels (1686).

<sup>102</sup> Bernier, *Travels in Hindusthan: Or The History of the Late Revolution of the Dominions of the Great Mogol, from 1655 to 1661*, trans. H. Oldenburg (Calcutta, 1904). Preface, i–iii, and Introduction, v–xiii, here xi–xii. Copy seen is at BL 09057 a.10.

The preface goes on to point out that Bernier did not learn Sanskrit, and that most of his information on Hinduism must have come to him through Muslim intermediaries.

In some ways, the judgement of this 1904 Calcutta preface to Bernier anticipates, and supplements, the argument of this chapter. At the very least, it shows that the scientific authority of Bernier's text (so important for Marx, for example) could be challenged by Indian voices. However, it could be argued that, in spite of the clear affirmation of difference within their text, the Calcutta editors had appropriated—along with the Kipling—certain narratives (of climatic determinism; of the identification of mysticism with the East and science with the West) that had been developed by Europeans like Montesquieu partly on the basis of sources like Bernier.

The author of the Calcutta preface was not the first to raise the problem of how Bernier's information was mediated. By the late eighteenth century, Bernier's authority had already been called into question. Among these critics was the aged Voltaire, who wrote to Jean-Sylvain Bailly (the astronomer, and later mayor of Paris), who had just addressed to him his *Lettres sur l'origine des sciences, et sur celle des peuples de l'Asie* (1777):

Si un Bernier indou était venu à Paris ou à Rome entendre un professeur de la Propagande, ou du collège des Cholets, & s'il jugeait de nous par ces deux animaux, ne nous prendrait-il pas tous pour des fous et des imbéciles?<sup>103</sup>

[If a Hindu Bernier had come to Paris or to Rome and heard a professor of the Propaganda Fide, or of the college des Cholets, and if he formed his judgements on us based on these two animals, would he not take us for madmen and imbeciles?]

As Europe's Sanskrit renaissance was dawning, it became more apparent to Enlightened readers that perhaps Bernier had been talking to the wrong people.

In this chapter we have seen something of the processes lying behind the making of Bernier's *Voyages*. In one sense, we have turned the tables on Bernier, using the arguments that he used to denigrate astrology

<sup>103</sup> Voltaire to J.-S. Bailly, 9 Feb. 1776, letter D 19912 in Voltaire, *Correspondence*, ed. T. Besterman, 51 vols (Geneva and Oxford, 1968–77), vol. 42, 394. On Bailly's history of Indian astronomy, see D. Raina, 'Nationalism, institutional science and the politics of knowledge: ancient Indian astronomy and mathematics in the landscape of French Enlightenment historiography' (Göteborgs Universitet, doctoral dissertation, 1999), 133–81.

or Hinduism to analyse his own workings. The modern philosopher established his own authority by identifying the 'fables of the vulgar' as the product of local conditions, such as the climate, or the customs and institutions of the area. Such locally produced discourses can only be, for Bernier, non-knowledge—in contrast to a universal, true reason. We have seen, though, how Bernier's own discourse can also be connected to its specific local contexts of production, whilst being mediated via a long network of communication.<sup>104</sup> The unspoken intellectual alliance with the Mughal attitude to Hinduism is one example of this—another, the way Bernier is able to use his knowledge of the *fakirs* and *yogins* to ridicule Cardano or the Quietists. Because his discourse is one of a universal reason, Bernier's rhetoric necessarily obscures the local traces of its own production.

It is true, in one sense, that the travelogues of early modern Europeans were 'récits qu'un milieu se raconte'.<sup>105</sup> Pearson and Adas have seen Bernier as a herald of the European sense of superiority over the East, a divide which they identify as an index of modernity.<sup>106</sup> However, such a model implies that European travellers produced knowledge of the cultures they encountered in an uncomplicated or transparent manner, unaffected by the people they met. What we learn from Rubiés, Bayly, and others is that such a model is misleading, since cultural understandings were mediated in local settings and in complex ways. Our account cannot be based around one 'centre' producing knowledge about the outside world; it should, rather, be one in which knowledge is made by actors moving through a series of distinct settings, each with its own cultural and political dynamics.

<sup>104</sup> See Latour, *Science in Action*, 179–213 (ch. 5); cf. 258–9: 'Irrationality is always an accusation made by someone building a network over someone else who stands in the way.'

<sup>105</sup> Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, 217.

<sup>106</sup> Pearson, 'The thin end of the wedge'; Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*.



## 4

# The Making of d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale*

When François Bernier died in 1688, he was buried in the church of Saint Barthélemy in Paris. One of the witnesses to the *acte de décès* was Barthélemy d'Herbelot.<sup>1</sup> For want of evidence, we cannot say very much about the relationship between Bernier and d'Herbelot; in many ways, they represent opposing tendencies. As we have seen, Bernier seems to have decided to present his travel account in a *galant* or *mondain* style, eschewing erudition, while d'Herbelot's way of proceeding kept him much more within the orbit of the Saint-Germain scholars. Unlike Bernier, d'Herbelot had very little contact with the *libertins érudits*, or indeed with the natural-philosophical community. But the presence of d'Herbelot at Bernier's funeral reminds us that however much we might divide the scholarly world, the people interested in Oriental studies in Louisquatorzian Paris had more in common than not, and that relationships could always work across the boundaries that we impose.<sup>2</sup>

D'Herbelot's patronage career was the subject of detailed analysis in Chapter 1. In this chapter we turn to the book for which he is known, the *Bibliothèque orientale* (1697).<sup>3</sup> To 'Orientalists', the name of d'Herbelot has long been familiar. The *Bibliothèque orientale* still sits on open shelves in some libraries. Certain things are often written about the *Bibliothèque*: that it marks the birth of the modern

<sup>1</sup> H.-L. Castonnet Desfosses, *François Bernier, ses voyages dans l'Inde* (Angers, 1888), 78 (no reference is given for the document). The date of the burial was 23 Sept. 1688. St Barthélemy's church no longer stands.

<sup>2</sup> Some have speculated that d'Herbelot and Bernier were in close contact: see R. Schwab, *La Renaissance orientale* (Paris, 1950), 152.

<sup>3</sup> B. d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale, ou Dictionnaire universel contenant généralement tout ce qui regarde la connoissance des peuples de l'Orient*, ed. and preface by A. Galland (Paris, 1697).

discipline of Orientalism, or that it was a baroque precursor of the twentieth century's *Encyclopedia of Islam*.<sup>4</sup> Because the book had to be edited after d'Herbelot's death by Antoine Galland, some have seen the *Bibliothèque orientale* as a sprawling appendix to Galland's translation of the *Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>5</sup> All these evaluations, while having some truth about them, need to be suspended: they are symptoms of the fact that d'Herbelot's book is more often referred to than read, and its author more often invoked as a founding father of Oriental studies than as a member of the seventeenth-century scholarly community.<sup>6</sup>

As with the texts discussed in previous chapters, one might look for the significance of d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* in its reception history, since the book was a source for the eighteenth-century *philosophes* in their reading on Asia. A recurring theme in responses to d'Herbelot is precisely the reader's desire for narrative, and its frustration by the text's alphabetical order. Voltaire, who used the book when researching his *Essai sur les mœurs*, seems to have valued it for the stories that it contained, calling it 'the Arab and Tartar tales that go by the name of the *Bibliothèque orientale*' ('les contes arabes et tartares sous le nom de la *Bibliothèque orientale*')—as if the book was to be read as an Arabian Nights in dictionary form.<sup>7</sup> Edward Gibbon, using the *Bibliothèque orientale* for the later volumes of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, admitted that without the guidance of 'two learned Frenchmen'—d'Herbelot and Joseph de Guignes—he 'should be blind indeed in the Eastern world'.<sup>8</sup> However, when he introduces d'Herbelot in a footnote, he complains that 'his work is an agreeable miscellany, which must gratify every taste; but I never can digest the

<sup>4</sup> See for instance J. W. Fück, *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1955), 98–100; and M. Rodinson, *La Fascination de l'Islam* (Paris, 1982), 70.

<sup>5</sup> R. Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (Harmondsworth, 1994), 19.

<sup>6</sup> On d'Herbelot in general, the only extended account is H. Laurens, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme: La Bibliothèque Orientale de Barthélemy d'Herbelot* (Paris, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> Voltaire to R.-L. de Voyer de Paulmy, marquis d'Argenson, 11 Dec. 1742, letter D 2698 in Voltaire, *Correspondence*, ed. T. Besterman, 51 vols (Geneva and Oxford, 1968–77), vol. 8, 310.

<sup>8</sup> E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. D. Womersley, 3 vols (Harmondsworth, 1994), vol. 3, 541 n. 41 [ch. 57]. Gibbon is referring to J. de Guignes, *Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols, et des autres Tartares occidentaux, &c. avant et depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu'à présent*, 4 vols (Paris, 1756–68). See R. Minuti, 'Gibbon and the Asiatic barbarians: notes on the French sources of *The Decline and Fall*', in D. Womersley, ed., *Edward Gibbon: Bicentenary Essays*, SVEC, 355 (Oxford, 1997), 21–44. Gibbon relies heavily on d'Herbelot in chs 42, 46, 50–2, 57, 65.

alphabetical order'.<sup>9</sup> The tension between the desire for narrative history and the frustrations of alphabetic order—summed up in the contrast between Voltaire's assessment and that of Gibbon, and found repeatedly in responses to d'Herbelot—provides a framework for discussing the relationship between how the *Bibliothèque orientale* is structured and how it represents the Orient.

The *Bibliothèque orientale* had an even warmer reception at the close of the eighteenth century. Then, novelists and poets like William Beckford and Robert Southey plundered it, lending authority to their Oriental tales with quasi-erudite footnotes, and lifting plots, like that of *Vathek*.<sup>10</sup> However, these examples should not lead us to think of the *Bibliothèque orientale* as a reference work consulted throughout the eighteenth century, like the dictionaries of Moreri or Bayle. After the first edition of 1697, there were no further editions of d'Herbelot's work until the late 1770s; 'Moréri', first published in 1674, was in its twenty-first edition by 1759. The story of how d'Herbelot was read in the eighteenth century has not yet been told, but it seems likely that the publishing history of the book would be an important part of the tale. The second edition produced a pirated version, a popularized version, and a German translation, all within a decade.<sup>11</sup> It is not clear what the relationship was between this rebirth of the *Bibliothèque orientale* and the vogue for Oriental reading of the late eighteenth century, but the late eighteenth-century editions certainly seem to have made d'Herbelot's work better known. By the early nineteenth century, it was possible for a would-be English translator to write: 'it may be a matter of surprise that a Work so frequently cited by Lord Byron, and many of our most popular Writers[,] should never yet have been presented to the Public

<sup>9</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. 3, 238–9 n. 15 [ch. 51].

<sup>10</sup> On Romantic footnoting see N. Leask, '“Wandering through Eblis”; absorption and containment in Romantic exoticism', in T. Fulford and P. J. Kitson, eds, *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780–1830* (Cambridge, 1998), 164–88; a good example is Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (London, 1801), where d'Herbelot is often cited. I am grateful to Jim Watt for these references.

<sup>11</sup> The second edition is: B. d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale, ou Dictionnaire universel contenant Tout ce qui fait connoître les Peuples de l'Orient*, 4 vols quarto (The Hague, 1777–9). The pre-emptive pirated version: *Bibliothèque orientale ou Dictionnaire universel contenant généralement tout ce qui regarde la connaissance des peuples de l'Orient* (Maastricht, 1776), one vol. in folio. The 'popularizing' version: *Bibliothèque orientale . . . Nouvelle Edition, réduite & augmentée par M. D.* [attrib. N.-T. Lemoyne Desessarts], 6 vols octavo (Paris, 1781–3). The German trans. by J. C. F. Schulz: *Orientalische Bibliothek oder Universalwörterbuch, welches alles enthält, was zur Kenntniss des Orients notwendig ist*, 4 vols octavo (Halle, 1785–90).

in an English Dress.<sup>12</sup> Clearly the later editions had allowed the work to reach a wider and less scholarly public, who were able to appropriate what they read in ways rather different from the book's earlier and more erudite users.

Despite this late burst of popularity, it needs to be emphasized that eighteenth-century readers of d'Herbelot did not always accept what they read. Even before the second edition came out, many scholars who consulted the book left notebooks filled with criticisms, in the hope that one day a corrected edition could be produced: in Paris, members of the Académie des inscriptions, like Fourmont, Leroux Deshauterayes, and Bréquigny;<sup>13</sup> in England, the physician Joseph Letherland.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, when the second edition was produced, it incorporated the additions and corrections of Johann Jakob Reiske and Hendrick Albert Schultens, and was usually accompanied by a *Supplément* (1780), which grouped together texts by Antoine Galland and Claude de Visdelou. Visdelou (1656–1737)—who had been one of the six Jesuit 'Mathématiciens du roi' sent to China in 1685—wrote his comments on d'Herbelot while living in exile in Pondichéry after being forced to leave the Society of Jesus because he disagreed with its line in the Rites Controversy. His remarks attempt to redress the imbalance in d'Herbelot's treatment of Chinese and Indian matters.<sup>15</sup> All these examples show that the *Bibliothèque orientale* of the Beckford period was already a multi-voiced text, laminated with commentaries and supplements. It had been removed from the context of its production, stripped of some of its idiosyncrasies, brought up to date. Far from reproducing the

<sup>12</sup> CUL, ms Add. 7513: 'Prospectus of a Work entitled A Selection of curious and interesting Passages from the Bibliotheque Orientale of D'Herbelot. Translated from the French by E. H. Howes', p. 1. It is clear from the preface that Howes was using the six-volume edition, which was the 'popularized' version. He intended the abridgement to be a single octavo volume. It seems that Howe's version was not published.

<sup>13</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 8973, ff. 142–62, [E.] Fourmont, 'Index de noms propres (A–C) de la Bibliothèque Orientale'; BN ms fr. 12405 and fr. 25689, 'Suppléments' to the *Bibliothèque Orientale* attributed to M.-A. A. Leroux Deshauterayes; BN ms Bréquigny 24, ff. 87–91, 'Remarques sur la Bibliothèque Orientale de M. d'Herbelot', organized by article, presumed to be by L. de Bréquigny (1714–95).

<sup>14</sup> BL ms Add. 6210, f. 144: 'letter of Dr Letherland, relative to a passage in d'Herbelot', 1758.

<sup>15</sup> See Laurens, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme*, 79–86 (Visdelou), 87–90 (Schultens and Reiske). C. de Visdelou, and A. Galland, *Supplément à la Bibliothèque orientale de M. d'Herbelot*, forming vol. 4 of the Hague edition, and also printed as a folio (1780). Galland's part had previously appeared as *Les Paroles remarquables, les bons mots, et les Maximes des Orientaux* (Paris, 1694, and reprints; see note 53). Two manuscript copies of Visdelou's text survive, Mazarine ms 3786 and BN ms n. a. fr. 2800.

first edition, it was—to adopt a phrase used on the title page of the popularizing version—both ‘reduced and augmented’.

Above all, the reception of d’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque orientale* should not be thought of as a continuous line of descent connecting him with Gibbon. In fact, some commentators have been led into confusion by the hundred-year gap between the book’s appearance (in 1697) and its apparent heyday (c.1780–1810), and the corresponding chasm between d’Herbelot’s supposed intentions and the ways his text was used by later readers. For instance, while Ahmad Gunny has insisted that the work really ‘belongs’ to the Enlightenment, Henry Laurens has emphasized that the book must be considered a product of the Catholic erudition of the *grand siècle*.<sup>16</sup> Now, while this recognition problem is itself of historiographical interest, there are ways of avoiding such a polarization. Any theory of reception must surely allow that readers appropriate the text they are reading and turn it to their own ends.<sup>17</sup> It is not necessary to infer from the fact that d’Herbelot’s work bore ‘enlightened’ fruit that he was somehow a *philosophe* in disguise. (The same argument was made in the previous chapter on François Bernier.) Many of the works of scholarship gleefully plundered by a Gibbon or a Voltaire were actually produced by the most orthodox ecclesiastical *érudits*. Diderot cribbed Dom Montfaucon; the Deists made use of Denis Petau, SJ; Gibbon relied on the Jansenist church historian Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont: it seems to be a general feature of *philosophe* reading, at least in history and theology, that they appropriated and gave new sense to materials furnished in the previous century by writers with quite other intentions.<sup>18</sup> So we should not assume that when it first appeared the *Bibliothèque orientale* had the impact that its later incarnations had for Beckford’s generation. Likewise, there should be nothing confusing about asserting that d’Herbelot’s work was turned to ‘philosophic’ ends by later readers, while in life he had been associated with the learned Benedictines of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

There are, in fact, reasons for thinking that when the book first struggled into print it was met with muted incomprehension. For

<sup>16</sup> Laurens, *Aux sources de l’orientalisme*, 14; Gunny, *Images of Islam*, 46.

<sup>17</sup> See M. de Certeau, ‘Lire: un braconnage’, in *L’Invention du quotidien*, vol. 1: *Arts de faire*, new edn (Paris, 1990), 239–55.

<sup>18</sup> B. Neveu, *Erudition et religion aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1994), 79, 176–7; see also A. C. Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650–1729*, vol. 1: *The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, 1990); C. M. Northeast, *The Parisian Jesuits and the Enlightenment, 1700–1762*, SVEC, 288 (Oxford, 1991).

example, one contemporary wrote to a friend that 'd'Herbelot's Oriental Dictionary does little honour to its author, who has not lived up to the public's long wait. This book is so denounced here (in Paris) that it is being given away; people are offering copies for a hundred sous [i.e. five *livres*] or six francs [six *livres*], but still can't sell them' ('le Dictionnaire oriental de d'Herbelot fait peu d'honneur à l'auteur, qui a trompé l'attente du public. Ce livre est ici si décrié qu'on se le jette à la tête, on l'offre à cent sous ou six francs, et on n'en vend point').<sup>19</sup> This evaluation offers a striking contrast with the evaluation made by Charles Perrault in his *éloge* for d'Herbelot, included in his collection of the 'illustrious men' of the age of Louis XIV: 'To the ordinary man of letters, this book is a kind of new world: new histories, new politics, new manners, new poetry; in a word, a new heaven, a new earth' ('à l'égard du commun des gens de Lettres, ce livre est une espece de nouveau Monde; nouvelles Histoires, nouvelle Politique, nouvelles Mœurs, nouvelle Poësie; en un mot, un nouveau Ciel, une nouvelle Terre').<sup>20</sup> This sharp discrepancy in two near contemporary images of d'Herbelot's work—in public rhetoric, a success of world-changing proportions; in private correspondence, undermined by its weaknesses—opens up a space for further investigation, and invites us to travel, rather than 'forward' to its later fortunes, 'back' towards the making of the *Bibliothèque orientale*.

In particular, this approach has the advantage of allowing us to engage with another interpretation of d'Herbelot, one put forward by Edward Said in *Orientalism*. Said's portrayal of d'Herbelot's book can be simplified by identifying two strands of argument. On one level, Said argues that the *Bibliothèque orientale* forces the reader to approach the Orient through the filtering 'grids and codes' imposed by the Orientalist, so that 'truth . . . becomes a function of learned judgement, not of the material itself, which in time seems to owe even its existence to the Orientalist'. As Said himself admits, this should not surprise us—after all, the philosophy and sociology of science have made such a position familiar enough. On a different level, Said argues that d'Herbelot did

<sup>19</sup> M. Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland: sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1964), 87 n. 39, citing a letter of the abbé Longuerue to J. A. Turretini, 30 Aug. 1697. Léonard also records that it did not sell well (passage cited below, at note 83).

<sup>20</sup> C. Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle avec leurs portraits au naturel*, 2 vols (Paris, 1696–1700), vol. 2, 71–2. The phrase 'a new heaven [and] a new earth' alludes to apocalyptic biblical passages (Isaiah 65: 17 and 66: 22; 2 Peter 3: 13; Rev. 21: 1) and implies early modern topoi of discovery and instauration.

not intend to 'revise the commonly received ideas about the Orient': the work therefore 'confirms' readers' prejudices, setting forth the Orient for the European reader to behold: it creates 'the Orient' as an enclosed 'stage on which the whole East is confined'. This sense of confinement, or mastery, suggests that the *Bibliothèque orientale* allowed European readers to discover their 'capacities for encompassing and Orientalizing the Orient'—by means of the Orientalist's expertise. In Said's view, d'Herbelot's book expresses the *efficacy* of the discipline of Orientalism, 'the triumphant technique for taking the immense fecundity of the Orient and making it systematically, even alphabetically, knowable by Western laymen'. The fact that the work is organized as a series of articles arranged *alphabetically* is, for Said, important: 'what may have been a loose collection of randomly acquired facts . . . were transformed into a rational Oriental panorama, from A to Z.' As an example, Said takes the article on Muhammad, and argues that the very fact that the information is presented in article form serves to delimit the image of the Prophet, reducing it almost to a generic type, by a process of 'discursive confinement'. Moreover, Said's emphasis on the alphabetical ordering ('what the printed page delivers is an ordered, disciplined judgment of the material') presupposes a conception of the *Bibliothèque orientale* as a stable typographic unit.<sup>21</sup>

As his use of terms like 'disciplinary order' and 'discursive confinement' reveals, the interpretation Said offers of d'Herbelot, like much of *Orientalism*, is inspired by Foucault, especially the Foucault of the period 1970–5 (from *L'Ordre du discours* to *Surveiller et punir*). It seems fair to suggest that Said's view of the *Bibliothèque orientale* can be encapsulated in the Foucauldian emblem of the 'Panopticon'. Although he does not explicitly invoke Bentham's famous prison design in reference to d'Herbelot, Said does use the metaphor when discussing Sylvestre de Sacy (who was roughly the Panopticon's contemporary).<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the picture Said paints of the *Bibliothèque orientale* is of a well-tempered instrument of the Western will to represent the East (which is, in his overall argument, intimately bound up with power relations). Not only does this model assume that a book like d'Herbelot's effortlessly imposes its meaning upon a body of docile readers, it also implies that all agency is gathered in the hands of European scholars in their metropolitan

<sup>21</sup> E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth, 1995 [1978]), 63–7.

<sup>22</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 127.

institutions. Such a portrayal of d'Herbelot's book can be challenged. In keeping with the argument made throughout this book, the aim of this chapter is to show that d'Herbelot's work was produced through a network of interactions (in this case linking Paris to Istanbul); to emphasize that the agency involved in its production was shared between people throughout that network; and to emphasize the haphazard, contingent nature of its production. Moreover, we should not overestimate the 'efficacy' of d'Herbelot's book. What emerges from a closer look at how the book is put together—particularly at those key features in Said's model, alphabetical ordering and the typographic stability that underwrites it—is that the *Bibliothèque orientale* was by no means a trouble-free instrument of Western knowledge or a rational panorama. Partly because of d'Herbelot's decisions, partly because of the accidents of its production, the *Bibliothèque orientale* was, in Gibbon's image, a dish that sought to 'gratify every taste' and yet remained indigestible.<sup>23</sup>

### BUILDING THE *BIBLIOTHEQUE*

The first edition of 1697 was a large folio volume of over a thousand pages. Even by seventeenth-century standards, the title page made rather impressive claims. The long list of topics covered was clearly supposed to suggest an encyclopedic classificatory scheme:

BIBLIOTHEQUE / ORIENTALE, / OU / DICTIONNAIRE / UNIVERSEL, /  
CONTENANT GENERALEMENT / Tout ce qui regarde la connoissance des Peuples /  
de l'Orient. / LEURS HISTOIRES ET TRADITIONS / VERITABLES OU FABULEUSES.  
/ LEURS RELIGIONS, SECTES ET POLITIQUE. / Leurs Gouvernement, Loix, Coûtumes,  
Mœurs, Guerres, & les Révolutions de leurs Empires; / LEURS SCIENCES  
ET LEURS ARTS, / Leur Théologie, Mythologie, Magie, Physique, Morale,  
Médecine, Mathématiques, / Histoire naturelle, Chronologie, Géographie, Ob-  
servations Astronomiques, / Grammaire, & Rhétorique. / LES VIES ET ACTIONS  
REMARQUABLES DE TOUS LEURS SAINTS, / Docteurs, Philosophes, Historiens,  
Poètes, Capitaines, & de tous ceux qui sont rendus illustres / parmi eux, par  
leur Vertu, ou par leur Savoir. / DES JUGEMENTS CRITIQUES, ET DES EXTRAITS  
DE TOUS LEURS OUVRAGES. / De leurs Traitez, Traductions, Commentaires,  
Abregez, Recüeil de Fables, de Sentences, de Maximes, de Proverbes, / de  
Contes, de bons Mots, & de tous leurs livres écrits en Arabe, en Persan, ou en

<sup>23</sup> To be fair to Said, his account of the *Bibliothèque orientale* is concerned largely with the text's rhetoric; this chapter is concerned more with the material conditions of the book's production (precisely what its rhetoric of scholarly authority has to suppress).



Turc, sur toutes sortes de / Sciences, d'Arts, & de Professions. / Par Monsieur D'HERBELOT. / A PARIS, / Par la Compagnie des LIBRAIRES. / M. DC. XCVII. / AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

The preliminaries followed the conventions for scholarly works set by earlier generations. The volume opened with a short dedication to Louis XIV written by d'Herbelot's brother, Edme. There followed the lengthy preface by Antoine Galland, followed by three Latin elegies. Two were by other dictionary-makers well placed in the French scholarly establishment: the Jesuit Jean Commire (1625–1702), and François-Séraphin Régnier-Desmarais (1632–1713), perpetual secretary of the Académie française and, like d'Herbelot, sometime member of the Accademia della Crusca. The third was by d'Herbelot's brother. Before the main text came a list of 'authorities';<sup>24</sup> then followed the 8,204 articles of the main text, printed in double columns, followed by an index and errata list.

Many of the articles of the *Bibliothèque orientale* are quite short, giving a brief entry for a place, an author, or a text. Some examples:

CAFI Fi Hessab, Livre d'Arithmetique, composé par Schamvil Ben Iahia Al Magrebi, & un autre du même nom, & sur la même matiere de Fakhreddin Abubecre al Carkhi surnommé Al Hasseb, l'Arithmeticien, qui a été Vizir de Bahaeddulah Sultan de la dynastie des Buides. [232]

MARG Dabek, Ville de Syrie où Soliman fils d'Abdelmelek vint camper pour s'opposer à l'armée des Grecs. [556]

[CAFI Fi Hessab, book on arithmetic, composed by Schamvil Ben Iahia al-Magrebi, and another book of the same name on the same subject by Fakhreddin Abubecre al-Carkhi, known as al-Hasseb, the Arithmetician, who was once Vizir of Bahaeddulah Sultan of the Buides dynasty.

MARG Dabek, town in Syria where Soliman son of Abdelmelek made his camp in order to fight the Greek army.]

There are longer entries for more prominent historical figures and for topics that seem to deserve more lengthy discussion. These are often of a theological nature. Clearly, the content of the eight thousand articles

<sup>24</sup> The dedication occupies the first unmarked signature; Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface à la Bibliothèque Orientale', sigs. a 1<sup>r</sup>–u 2<sup>r</sup>; L. Cousin, 'Eloge de Monsieur Dherbelot, fait par Monsieur Cousin, President à la Cour des Monnoyes', sig. u 2<sup>r</sup>–unmarked sig. 1<sup>r</sup>. On Regnier and Commire see *DLF-17*; translations of the poems are given in Laurens.

could be analysed at great length; Henry Laurens, Dominique Torabi, Ahmad Gunny, and Dominique Carnoy have done so by selecting certain themes, like d'Herbelot's treatment of Islam, or of Persia.<sup>25</sup> Here, however, rather than trying to assess d'Herbelot's handling of one particular theme, the aim will be to examine how d'Herbelot made use of his sources; how the book was shaped by the conventions of the erudite genre; and how the attempt to order the text alphabetically created problems.

The dedication of the *Bibliothèque* offers a starting point. Since d'Herbelot had not lived to see the work appear, the dedication to Louis XIV was written by d'Herbelot's brother Edme, who claimed that in so doing he was following the wishes of his late brother. What is striking is the degree to which the book is presented as the product of a single site of activity, in this case the Bibliothèque du roi. He writes that d'Herbelot had worked for several years with 'une application incroyable', reading 'an innumerable number of manuscripts in oriental languages, of which the most curious and rare were drawn from your (the Royal) library' ('un nombre innombrable de Manuscrits en Langues Orientales, dont les plus curieux & les plus rares ont été tirez de vôtre Bibliothèque'). The only reward that d'Herbelot sought was 'the satisfaction of publishing something which might please your majesty, and be worthy of being offered to you' ('la satisfaction de mettre au jour quelque chose qui pût plaire à VOTRE MAJESTÉ, & qui méritât de lui être offert').<sup>26</sup> Dedications to high-ranking patrons often made the patron the true 'author' of the work, partly because without the patron's 'protection' the book might never have been written, and partly because the patron's name lends prestige and authority to the text.<sup>27</sup> However, as with any library or museum, the manuscripts available to d'Herbelot in Paris were assembled by a long process of collecting, requiring networks of agents spread across many

<sup>25</sup> Laurens, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme*, 37–47, 63–78; D. Torabi, 'La Perse de Barthélemy d'Herbelot', *Luqmān* [Tehran], 8 (1992), 43–58; A. Gunny, *Images of Islam in Eighteenth-Century Writings* (London, 1996), 45–54; D. Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam dans la France du XVIIe siècle: la ville des tentations* (Paris, 1998), 300–10; J. Gaulmier, 'A la découverte du Proche-Orient: Barthélemy d'Herbelot et sa *Bibliothèque orientale*', *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg*, 48 (1969), 1–6.

<sup>26</sup> Dedicatory epistle 'Au Roy', in d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale* (1697), unmarked sig. r–v.

<sup>27</sup> R. Chartier, 'Patronage et dédicace', in his *Culture écrite et société: l'ordre des livres (XIVe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1996), 81–106, here 95–6.

locations and several generations. Moreover, d'Herbelot was making use of a collection brought to Paris very recently by those agents sent out by Colbert such as Galland and Vansleb (discussed in the Introduction).<sup>28</sup>

The best example of how d'Herbelot's work was the product of collecting networks is provided by his most important source. At the same time, this example also sheds light on a key theme in Said's portrayal of d'Herbelot, the question of alphabetical order. The source was a text by one of the most prominent Ottoman scholars of the seventeenth century, who produced encyclopedic works of cosmography, geography, and universal history: Kātib Chelebi.<sup>29</sup> As well as being a 'polyhistor' of Islamic learning, Kātib Chelebi was one of several Ottoman scholars interested in the new European science: he made several translations, including one of Mercator's *Atlas Minor*, with the help of Europeans who had converted to Islam.<sup>30</sup> As Galland noted in his preface to the *Bibliothèque orientale*, d'Herbelot's book owed an enormous amount to Kātib Chelebi's bibliographic encyclopedia, the *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn* (*The Uncovering of Ideas: On the Titles of Books and the Names of the Sciences*), which listed over fourteen thousand works in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, arranged in alphabetical order of

<sup>28</sup> As was made plain in Galland's preface to the *Bibliothèque*, one of d'Herbelot's most important resources was the collection of Oriental manuscripts given to him by Ferdinando II. This in itself had been assembled a century earlier by the Vecchiotti brothers, who toured the Levant buying manuscripts (see above, Chapter 1, note 20).

<sup>29</sup> Mustafa ibn 'Abd Allah, known by the titles Hajji Khalifa (or Khalifa) and Kātib Chelebi (AH 1017–67/AD 1609–57). Most of what we know of him comes from his autobiographic conclusion to *The Balance of Truth* [*Mizan al-haqq*], trans. G. L. Lewis (London, 1957), 7–14, 135–56. See O. Ş. Gökyay, 'Kātib Çelebi', in *EI-2*, vol. 4, 760–2 (cf. *EI-1*, vol. 2.1, 204–6, under 'Hadjdji Khalifa'); also E. Birnbaum, 'The questing mind: Kātib Chelebi, 1609–1657: a chapter in Ottoman intellectual history', in E. Robbins and S. Sandahl, eds, *Corolla Torontonensis: Studies in Honour of Ronald Morton Smith* (Toronto, 1994), 133–58.

<sup>30</sup> On Ottoman translations of European geography, see A. Adnan-Adivar, *La Science chez les Turcs ottomans* (Paris, 1939), 102–20; E. Ihsanoğlu, ed., *Transfer of Modern Science and Technology to the Muslim World* (Istanbul, 1992), esp. 31–6, 67–120, 371–83; H. Wurm, *Der osmanische Historiker Hüseyin b. Ğä'fer, genannt Hezärfenn, und die Istanbuler Gesellschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1971), esp. 67–70. On links between Ottoman and European geography in the sixteenth century, see J. Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (London, 1997), 87–118. See also F. Günergun, 'Ottoman encounters with European science: sixteenth- and seventeenth-century translations into Turkish', in P. Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia, eds, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2007), 192–211.

title.<sup>31</sup> (Although other European scholars began to produce manuscript translations of this text shortly after d'Herbelot's time, it was not published or translated until the nineteenth century.)<sup>32</sup> What Galland knew at first hand—although this he does not mention in the preface—is that d'Herbelot came across the *Kashf al-zunūn* only because of the collecting missions to the Levant that Galland himself had been part of. In his preface, Galland tells us that d'Herbelot had access to two manuscripts of the *Kashf al-zunūn* in Paris. Both had been sent back from Istanbul by French ambassadors who had employed Galland as a collector.<sup>33</sup> He writes that d'Herbelot found the *Kashf al-zunūn* 'so much to his taste, that at considerable expense he had a copy made of the example in the Bibliothèque du Roi, and he used it so he could translate and add to his work all that he deemed worthy of the curiosity of the public' ('si fort à son goût, qu'il fist une dépense considerable pour une copie qu'il en fit tirer sur l'exemplaire de la Bibliothèque du Roy, & il s'en est servi pour en traduire & ajouter à son Ouvrage, tout ce qu'il jugea digne de la curiosité du public').<sup>34</sup> Galland's words underline that d'Herbelot was not merely transcribing Kātib Chelebi's text, but selecting from it according to criteria that Galland calls, here as elsewhere, 'la curiosité du public'.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> On this text, see E. Birnbaum, 'Kātib Chelebi (1609–57) and alphabetization: a methodological investigation of the autographs of his *Kashf al-Zunūn* and *Sullam al-Wusūl*', in F. Déroche and F. Richard, eds, *Scribes et manuscrits du Moyen-Orient* (Paris, 1997), 235–63. On its importance as a source for d'Herbelot, see Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. i 2<sup>v</sup>–o 1<sup>r</sup>; Laurens, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme*, 50; Abdel-Halim, *Galland*, 76–7, 162–5. The *DBF* (s.v. Herbelot) states that the *Bibliothèque orientale* is nothing but a translation of this work ('c'est une traduction de l'œuvre de Hadji-Khalifa, compilation dépourvue de tout esprit critique'), which is misleading. Cf. the entry 'Caschf Al Dhonún ân assami al cotub u al ônun', *Bibliothèque orientale*, 261.

<sup>32</sup> After d'Herbelot's death, a translation was made by F. Pétis de La Croix  *fils*, but this was never published (BN ms arabe 4462–64, dated 1699–1705). For the Arabic text with Latin translation, see Kātib Chelebi, *Lexicon bibliographicum et encyclopedicum*, ed. G. Fluegel, 8 vols (Leipzig and London, 1835–58), and the review in the *Journal asiatique*, 5th series, 14 (1859), 240–58. There is a modern Arabic edition: *Kesf-el-zunun*, ed. Ş. Yaltekaya and K. R. Bilge, 3 vols (Istanbul, 1941–5; facs. reprint Tehran, 1967).

<sup>33</sup> Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. o 1<sup>r</sup>. One copy had been sent by the marquis de Nointel to the Bibliothèque du roi in the 1670s, the other sent by Guilleragues to the Colbertine in 1682; see Omont, *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1902), 199–221; Abdel-Halim, *Galland*, 29–50, 66–80.

<sup>34</sup> Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. o 1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Galland uses the same expression in the 'Avertissement' to *Les Paroles remarquables* (Paris, 1999), 18.

In fact, Galland may have been the first Western European to become aware of the *Kashf al-zunūn* and to realize its importance. How he first discovered it is not certain, but it seems likely that he was introduced to it by a scholar in Istanbul called Hezarfenn.<sup>36</sup> Galland's excitement at his discovery of the *Kashf al-zunūn* is revealed in his correspondence. He immediately realized the importance of the discovery, since it represented a vast increase in the number of Oriental works known to Europeans, especially in Persian and Turkish. He wrote to his antiquarian friend Jacob Spon that the list contained some thirty thousand titles—twice the actual amount—which would make up more than forty thousand volumes, and that he had made a translation of a small selection of titles (some sixteen hundred), mainly concerning history, to send back to Colbert with the full Arabic manuscript. Galland emphasizes that Istanbul is the best place to collect 'a great mass of all these history books in very little time' ('un grand amas de tous ces livres d'histoire en fort peu de temps'), adding that the *Kashf al-zunūn* was a 'unique means for enriching the royal library with a more or less complete corpus of Mahometan history' ('il est certain que je donne l'unique moien pour enrichir en moins de rien la Bibliotheque du Roy d'un corps complet de l'histoire mahométane').<sup>37</sup>

As this indicates, one of the reasons Galland was so excited by the *Kashf al-zunūn* was that it could be used to facilitate the collection of Oriental books. In a note prefacing his initial, select translation, Galland makes this explicit: to avoid the collection of books that are 'only good to look at', Kātib Chelebi's bibliography will help the minister to be 'well informed as to the number and quality of these manuscripts', and to decide more easily what to ask his agents to look for ('il [Colbert] pust estre bien informé du nombre et de la qualité de ces manuscrits et prescrire ensuite plus facilement ce que l'on en devoit choisir ou laisser').

<sup>36</sup> This is argued in Wurm, *Der osmanische Historiker*, 86. Oddly, when Galland encountered the work in Istanbul in 1682, it seems that it was new to him, which suggests that he had not known that Nointel had already sent one copy back to Paris.

<sup>37</sup> Galland to Spon, Istanbul, Oct. 1682, in Omont, *Missions*, 218–19. Much of this is repeated in his letter to Edward Bernard, dated Istanbul 15 Apr. 1683: Bod. ms Smith 72, ff. 37–40. Galland's translations: BN ms fr. 6131, 'Catalogue des histoires en arabe, en persan, et en turc tiré de la bibliothèque orientale de Mustaphe Hadji Kalfa'; a copy at fr. 14892; Galland's preface is printed in Omont, *Missions*, 216–18. Another copy with a different preface is at fr. 6130. Galland also translated titles on the arts and sciences (BN ms latin 11408).

He depicts the Ottoman capital as a paradise for the manuscript-hunter. Books from all over the empire could be found there more easily than anywhere else ('la facilité de les trouver est plus grande que dans aucun autre lieu'). Indeed, he thinks he could collect more in one year in Istanbul than in 'ten or twenty' years elsewhere. Galland describes how he could persuade the Turkish booksellers to hunt down titles he was looking for, using their own supply networks. He boasts that by this method, in less than a month, he was able to find 'four or five' copies of the fifteenth-century Persian historian Mirkhond, a text esteemed for its rarity in Europe.<sup>38</sup>

This, then, was the immediate context for Galland's 'discovery' of Kātib Chelebi's bibliography. D'Herbelot only came across the text that became the most important source for the *Bibliothèque orientale* because of the collecting networks sponsored by Colbert, designed to bring books from the Levant to Paris. The same goes for the scores of other Oriental manuscripts in Paris libraries that d'Herbelot used, including the collection given to him by Ferdinando II. These networks owed their success not only to patronage from the 'centre', but also to the people they encountered at the 'periphery': indeed the very notion of 'centre and periphery' seems inadequate, given that the Ottoman metropolis was the centre for book-trading networks stretching across the whole Ottoman empire, and given that Istanbul intellectuals like Kātib Chelebi, and his student Hezarfenn, used travellers from Europe to learn about and translate European scientific texts. At first glance, d'Herbelot's book might appear to be the product of a relatively localized 'site'—his personal library, and the major Paris libraries. But to produce such a work in Paris was only possible because of the networks that fed those libraries—and it was only recently that the Paris oriental collections had become large enough to make such a work possible. Like the baroque museum catalogues that were its contemporaries (and to an extent its models), the *Bibliothèque orientale* was bound to de-emphasize its dependence on those supply networks, in order to glorify both its author and his patrons.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Omont, *Missions*, 216–18.

<sup>39</sup> B. Latour, 'Ces réseaux que la raison ignore: laboratoires, bibliothèques, collections', in M. Baratin and C. Jacob, eds, *Le Pouvoir des bibliothèques: la mémoire des livres en Occident* (Paris, 1996), 23–46; for museums and patrons, see P. Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, 1994), 36–47, 380–92.

## GENERIC CONTEXTS: INSTRUMENTS OF ERUDITION

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, when d'Herbelot returned from Florence to Paris, he associated himself with the critical-historical scholars based at the Maurist (Benedictine) abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, on the left bank in Paris. Galland was a similar kind of scholar, and frequented the same group; he spent more time discussing Greek epigraphs with Pierre-Daniel Huet or Roman coins with Jean Foy-Vaillant than he did translating Scheherazade's tales.<sup>40</sup> In keeping with these interests, the *Bibliothèque orientale* was designed as an instrument for the writing of history. By looking at the scholarly practices of the erudite community, we can understand a little better why the *Bibliothèque orientale* took the form it did.

The seventeenth century saw the rise of a new vogue for erudition in France. Although the most prominent exponents of this were the Maurists, the concern for critical, source-based historical research was by no means limited to these Benedictines. The erudite (or *docte*) approach was often defined in contrast to rhetorical (or *éloquent*) narrative history. The bulk of what the *Bibliothèque orientale* supplies is erudite material: series of facts designed to supplement the reading of other texts. Antiquarians, rather than producing through-written, synthetic narratives of ancient history, concentrated on amassing data that could be used in commentaries on the already-existing narratives of the ancient historians. This is why they produced dictionaries, thesauri, annals, chronologies, and genealogies—reference manuals to be read side by side with the ancient texts.<sup>41</sup> Although, in another sense, d'Herbelot's book is not strictly antiquarian—using only textual sources, he does not examine the 'material culture' of the Orient—nevertheless it was

<sup>40</sup> Although studies of Galland continue to focus on the *Mille et une nuits*, Abdel-Halim does bring out his antiquarian interests: see his *Galland*, 51–65, 337–92, and his 'Correspondance d'Antoine Galland: édition critique et commentée' (Université de Paris, thèse complémentaire, 1964); see also M. Veillon, 'Antoine Galland, ou la vie d'un antiquaire dans la "République médallique"', in *Trésors Monétaires*, supp. 2: *Médailles et antiques*, 1 (1989), 31–48.

<sup>41</sup> A. Momigliano, 'Ancient history and the antiquarian', in his *Studies in Historiography* (London, 1966), 1–39; first published in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 13 (1950), 285–315. For *docte* vs. *éloquent*, see O. Ranum, *Artisans of Glory: Writers and Historical Thought in Seventeenth-Century France* (Chapel Hill, 1980).

written in the *docte* rather than the *éloquent* mode. Just as antiquarian manuals helped scholars to read Livy or Tacitus, the *Bibliothèque orientale* invited its readers to use it as a supplement to other historical texts—for example, those histories of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane compiled at about the same time by the Pétis de La Croix, and later to be used by Voltaire and Gibbon.<sup>42</sup>

One characteristic of the erudite mode of history was the collection and definition of a body of trustworthy documents, which created a place for probable histories. The seventeenth-century library was conceived of as a collection that had to be assembled and arranged, something well captured by the French verb *dresser*, meaning both to collect and to organize, as in the title of Gabriel Naudé's *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* of 1627.<sup>43</sup> Galland himself says as much in a text on numismatics: before one could begin analysis, one needed to amass a large enough corpus of medals and coins—and for this purpose, catalogues and inventories of various cabinets were an essential tool, allowing the constitution of a virtual *médailleur*. But in order to carry out the work of comparison, further tools were required, instruments to navigate across the sea of data. As Galland goes on to say, 'it is not enough to clear a patch of ground: one must try to make the most of all the advantages that one can get out of it' ('ce n'est pas assez de défricher une terre: il faut tascher de profiter de tous les avantages que l'on en peut tirer').<sup>44</sup> To this end, Galland himself produced a 'Dictionnaire historique et numismatique' based on the cabinet of Nicolas-Joseph Foucault (one of his patrons), although this remained unpublished.

An array of antiquarian data was often described in the erudite community as a 'corps d'histoire': a 'body of history', or a 'historical corpus'. For example, a numismatic club hosted by the duc d'Aumont gave itself the task of collecting a complete series of medals of Roman

<sup>42</sup> F. Pétis de La Croix (*père*), *Histoire du grand Genghizcan premier empereur des Mogols et Tartares* (Paris, 1710); F. (*fils*) and A.-L.-M. Pétis de La Croix, *Histoire de Timur-Bec, connu sous le nom du grand Tamerlan, écrite en persan par Charif Al Din Ali* [Sharaf al-Din Yazdi Ali], 4 vols (Paris, 1722). On the use of such texts by Montesquieu and Voltaire, see R. Minuti, *Oriente barbarico e storiografia settecentesca: rappresentazioni della storia dei Tartari nella cultura francese del XVIII secolo* (Venice, 1994).

<sup>43</sup> G. Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (f. p. 1627); facs. of 2nd edn of 1644, with intro. by C. Jolly (Paris, 1990). See the remarks in M. de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'histoire* (Paris, 1975), 84–9.

<sup>44</sup> Abdel-Halim, *Galland*, 346–8.



emperors, in order to 'dresser . . . un corps d'histoire romaine'.<sup>45</sup> Galland uses the same expression in a preamble he wrote for his first selected translation of the *Kashf al-zunūn*: 'just reading these titles is agreeable, and may suffice to give the best idea we have ever had of the *corps de l'histoire* of a sect which has continued to exist for so long' ('la lecture seule de ces titres est agréable, et elle peut suffire pour donner la plus belle idée que l'on ait jamais eue du corps de l'histoire d'une secte qui subsiste depuis si longtemps').<sup>46</sup> As we saw earlier, in the letter to Spon, he had spoken of 'un corps assez complet de l'histoire mahométane' in reference to Kātib Chelebi's text. The 'corps de l'histoire' was, it seems, a body of factual data, within which narratives could be traced. The reference works written by *érudits* like Galland were, to extend the metaphor, instruments for anatomizing the 'body of history'. It is in keeping with this ideal of the establishment of sources that d'Herbelot restricted the *Bibliothèque orientale*'s source-base to manuscripts in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. This decision—justified by the idea that each 'nation' knew its own history best—would seem odd were it not for the erudite model of history.<sup>47</sup> D'Herbelot makes reference to his documents, frequently citing the number of the manuscript in the Bibliothèque du roi, a collection he had himself catalogued. Although these citations are not set off from the main text typographically, they function as d'Herbelot's footnotes. Many, although by no means all, of the articles in the *Bibliothèque orientale* end with a citation to a manuscript in the royal collection. These notes, Galland explains in his preface, d'Herbelot had included 'so that those who might need, or be curious to read [his sources], might have recourse to them' ('afin que ceux qui auront besoin, ou la curiosité de les lire, puissent y avoir recours'). A typical example:

CAFI Fi mavareth al Ommati, Livre touchant les successions maternelles, par Isaak Ben Josef al maaredhi al Zarcali al Sarefi al Iemeni: Ce livre qui a été abrégé par Magdi, se trouve dans la Bibliothéque du Roy, n°. 710.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> K. Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1987), 151, citing E. Spanheim, *Relation de la Cour de France en 1690*, ed. E. Bourgeois (Paris, 1900), 263.

<sup>46</sup> BN ms fr. 6130, cited in Abdel-Halim, *Galland*, 163–4. My emphasis.

<sup>47</sup> Galland wrote ('Discours pour servir de preface', sig. a 1<sup>v</sup>) that d'Herbelot learned Arabic, Turkish and Persian because 'les Auteurs Arabes parlant mieux des affaires de leur Nation, que les Persans, & les Turcs; & ceux-ci des leurs propres, avec plus de connoissance que les Arabes, il n'y avoit pas d'autres voyes par où il pût arriver plus sùrement à la verité de leur Histoire.'

<sup>48</sup> *Bibliothèque orientale*, 232.

[CAFI Fi mavareth al Ommati, Book concerning maternal succession, by Isaac ben Josef al-Maaredhi al-Zarcali al-Sarefi al-Iemeni. This book, which was abridged by Magdi, can be found in the *Bibliothèque du roi*, n<sup>o</sup>. 710.]

D'Herbelot's adherence to Arabic, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts was precisely what irritated Claude de Visdelou, who felt the need to counter the perception of China that these sources conveyed. He expressed this by saying that d'Herbelot 'always speaks the truth, even when reporting the lies of others' ('dit toujours vray, lors meme quil rapporte les mensonges dautruy').<sup>49</sup> However, the appeal to the authentic source was the favoured means of claiming credibility for the discourse that the scholar produced. This, we should note, seems at odds with Said's view that in the *Bibliothèque orientale* the Orient was 'circumscribed by a series of attitudes and judgments that sent the Western mind, not first to Oriental sources for correction and verification, but rather to other Orientalist works'.<sup>50</sup>

Further features of d'Herbelot's working practices are equally typical of the erudite style. Take for example the fact that d'Herbelot, while reading the vast number of Oriental manuscripts making up his 'corps d'histoire', began to compose first of all a *dictionary* of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. Like his contemporary and acquaintance Du Cange (famed for his *Glossary* of late Latin), d'Herbelot filled a huge chest with scraps of paper, each bearing one entry.<sup>51</sup> The dictionary was the first part of a family of projected reference tools. Galland describes how d'Herbelot then produced a kind of commonplace book: after compiling the dictionary, d'Herbelot made 'prodigious collections' of notes on the history, geography, theology, sciences, and arts of 'all the nations of the Levant'. It then took him a long time to decide how to structure the work, and after much hesitation, he divided his work in two parts, one of which became the *Bibliothèque orientale*, the other a 'Florilège ou Anthologie', which is now lost, although it is sometimes cited in the *Bibliothèque orientale*.<sup>52</sup> Galland did manage to publish an

<sup>49</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 2800: Visdelou, *Supplément*, 'Avis au lecteur'.

<sup>50</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 67. Admittedly, Said's point here is more applicable to the later edition of d'Herbelot which he uses.

<sup>51</sup> See F. Richard, 'Le dictionnaire de d'Herbelot', in F. Hitzel, ed., *Istanbul et les langues orientales* (Paris, 1997), 79–88. For Du Cange's use of slips, see *DLF-17*, art. 'Dictionnaire'; on Du Cange, see J. Considine, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage* (Cambridge, 2008), 250–87.

<sup>52</sup> Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. a 1<sup>v</sup>: 'Ensuite [after the Dictionary], il fit des collections prodigieuses qu'il traduisit en François, des Histoires tant fabuleuses

Oriental commonplace book of his own, the collection of maxims and adages entitled *Les Paroles remarquables, les bons mots, et les maximes des Orientaux*, first published in 1694. Perhaps because of the fashion for 'maxims' literature in France at the time—and perhaps because it was shorter—this enjoyed considerably more success than d'Herbelot's book, going through five editions by 1730 (including an English translation) before eventually reappearing as part of the *Supplément* to the *Bibliothèque orientale* in 1780.<sup>53</sup>

This much d'Herbelot held in common with the rest of the erudite community. However, the attempt to secure authenticity had particular repercussions because of the marginal position of Oriental scholarship within the Republic of Letters as a whole. According to the *éloges*, d'Herbelot's original plan, supported by Colbert, had been to print the book in Arabic at the Imprimerie royale. This would, in effect, have made d'Herbelot's book more or less an abridged edition of Kātīb Chelebi's *Kashf al-zunūn*.<sup>54</sup> But this initial design failed. Once again the *éloge* conventions dictate that the reasons for the difficulty are brushed over. As we have seen in the case of Thévenot, the ambition to print exotic languages in their original characters was frustrated by the lack of the necessary type and of workers with the relevant skills in Paris. (This is why, in Cousin's account of d'Herbelot's project, new characters were to be designed and cast.) This would presumably have been expensive, and the death of Colbert in 1683 probably put an end to the scheme. The story does suggest, however, that d'Herbelot's aim, in keeping with the erudite tradition, was to *defer* translation, to facilitate future

que veritables, & de ces dernieres, tant anciennes que modernes de toutes les Nations du Levant, de la Geographie de leurs Pays, de leur Theologie, & des Sciences & des Arts ausquels elles se sont appliquées. Après avoir assemblé de si riches materiaux, il fut long-temps a determiner quelle forme il leur donneroit. Enfin, après avoir long-temps balancé, il les separa en deux corps, à sçavoir en celui-ci, auquel il a donné le titre de Bibliotheque Orientale, & son intention estoit de faire paroistre l'autre sous celui de Florilege, ou d'Anthologie.'

<sup>53</sup> Galland, *Les Paroles remarquables* (Paris, 1694); reprinted (The Hague, 1694), (Lyons, 1695); under title *Orientaliana* (Paris, 1708; and Amsterdam, 1730); trans. English (London, 1695), German (Leipzig, 1787); included in the *Supplément* volume to d'Herbelot (The Hague, 1779); modern edition with preface by Abdelwahab Meddeb (Paris, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> 'Eloge de Monsieur Dherbelot, fait par Monsieur [Louis] Cousin', in *Bibliothèque orientale* (Paris, 1697), sig. u 2<sup>v</sup>–3<sup>r</sup>. Cousin writes: 'D'abord il la composa en Arabe, & Monsieur Colbert avoit resolu qu'elle fût imprimée au Louvre, & qu'on fondit pour cet effet des caracteres en cette Langue. Mais cette resolution n'ayant pas été exécutée, M. Dherbelot mit en François le même ouvrage.' I have found no other evidence of Colbert's support for this scheme.

interpretation—even at the risk of losing large numbers of readers, and even if, in the end, such a goal was impossible to attain.

The reference books of the seventeenth century were the result of scholarly practices that already had a long history.<sup>55</sup> Within the broader context of humanist reading-instruments, two genres—both identified in the title of the book—are particularly important for understanding the *Bibliothèque orientale*: the 'bibliothèque' and the 'dictionnaire universel'. Both of these genres were growing in popularity at the end of the seventeenth century. *Bibliothèque* was a title used for what we would call bibliographies and library catalogues, but also for compilations and anthologies. In his dictionary, Furetière defined the term (after the first literal senses of 'library' and 'bookshelf') thus: 'A *Library* is also a Collection or Compilation of several works of the same nature, or of Authors who have compiled all that can be said on a given subject' ('*Bibliothèque* est aussi un Recueil, une Compilation de plusieurs ouvrages de même nature, ou d'Auteurs qui ont compilé tout ce qui peut se dire sur un même sujet'). Usually a *bibliothèque* was qualified by some defining factor, such as a particular nation, to canonize a vernacular literature. The usefulness of such books was explained by Gabriel Naudé, in his *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*:

Ils nous sauvent en premier lieu la peine de rechercher une infinité de livres grandement rares et curieux; secondement parce qu'ils font place à beaucoup d'autres. . . tiercement parce qu'ils nous ramassent en un volume et commodément ce qu'il nous faudrait chercher avec beaucoup de peine en plusieurs lieux; et finalement pour ce qu'ils tirent apres eux une grande espargne, estant certain qu'il ne faut pas tant de testons pour les acheter, qu'il faudrait d'escus si on voulait avoir separement tous ceux qu'ils contiennent.<sup>56</sup>

[They save us, in the first place, the trouble of searching for an infinity of extremely rare and curious books; secondly, because they make space for many others. . . thirdly, because they conveniently bring together in one volume what it would take a lot of searching in many places to find; and finally, because they can save us money, since one would need fewer *testons* to buy them as *écus* if one wanted to buy separately all that they contain.]

<sup>55</sup> See A. Blair, 'Reading strategies for coping with information overload, ca. 1550–1700', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64 (2003), 11–28; and Blair, 'Note taking as an art of transmission', *Critical Inquiry*, 31 (2004), 85–107.

<sup>56</sup> Furetière and Naudé cited in Chartier, 'Bibliothèques sans murs', in *Culture écrite et société*, 107–31, here 110; Naudé, *Advis*, 57. A *teston* was an obsolete ten *sous* piece, so the ratio in Naudé's metaphor is one to six (an *écu* normally being worth three *livres*).

As Naudé makes clear, a *bibliothèque* performs for the collector a *gainful reduction*: rare and 'curious' books scattered across the libraries of the world could be brought before the reader's eyes without the need for a costly expedition, saving space on the library shelves as well as money. Similarly, as Galland put it, 'since all the Oriental books, because of their excessive number, cannot be found in one place' ('comme tous les Livres Orientaux, à cause de leur nombre excessif, ne peuvent pas se rencontrer dans un même endroit'), the *Bibliothèque orientale* allows the reader to 'acquire effortlessly, without leaving home, what one would otherwise have to go and find by travelling in the Orient' ('acquérir sans peine & sans sortir de chez soy, ce que l'on devoit aller chercher chez eux un voyageant').<sup>57</sup> In other words, such reference tools restructure information so that what is lost in particularity, locality, and material copiousness is gained in compatibility, standardization, and comparability. Contemporary scholars were familiar with this as the tension between 'the exhaustive and the essential', or between the desire to have all knowledge assembled in a universal library and the desire to distil this down to its essence in a *bibliothèque choisie*.<sup>58</sup> As Galland put it, 'there could be no better title' for d'Herbelot's work than *Bibliothèque orientale*, 'because it *takes the place of* all the Oriental books written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish that [d'Herbelot] had read, in order to form an *abregé* of the whole history of the Levant'.<sup>59</sup>

In theory at least, the *bibliothèque* was a genre that presented the reader with an ideal collection, a utopian 'library without walls'. D'Herbelot's contribution to the genre, though, was more utopian, since it represented an ideal library of an unfamiliar literary tradition. Just as for the early humanists who strove to recover the lost books of the Ancients, the scholars attempting to replicate the 'library of the Orient' within the European Republic of Letters needed a list of which texts ought to exist, in an abstract sense (regardless of whether actual copies, let alone translations, were available), so that they could know what manuscripts to look for. Not all of the works d'Herbelot mentions are given call

<sup>57</sup> Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. i 2<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> Latour and Hermant, 'Ces réseaux', 26; Chartier, 'Bibliothèques sans murs', 113. See also H. Zedelmaier, *Bibliotheca universalis und Bibliotheca selecta: das Problem der Ordnung des gelehrten Wissens in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> My emphasis. Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. a 1<sup>v</sup>: 'il ne pouvoit pas lui donner un titre plus convenable . . . puis qu'il tient lieu de tous les Livres Orientaux écrits en Arabe, en Persan, & en Turc qu'il a lûs, pour former un Abbregé de toute l'Histoire du Levant.'

marks for the *Bibliothèque du Roy* or the 'Bibliothèque du Grand Duc', because he is reporting the existence of texts in turn reported by Kâtib Chelebi. Of course, though, for the readers unequipped with Arabic, Persian, or Turkish, it made little difference whether the works listed were available in local libraries or not.

By the later seventeenth century, the *bibliothèque* genre had been joined by other reading aids, like the new learned journals and dictionaries.<sup>60</sup> The new dictionaries of the 1690s—exemplified by Furetière and Bayle, both published by the Leers firm in Holland<sup>61</sup>—were an expansion of what had previously been a strictly scholarly genre to a slightly broader, more 'polite', public. This gave the more traditional scholars cause to complain: Gilles Ménage is supposed to have quipped that 'dictionaries and lotteries, which we see multiplying from one day to another, are a sure sign of the ignorance and poverty of this age' ('les Dictionnaires, & les Lotteries qu'on voit multiplier de jour en jour sont pour le siècle une marque sûre d'ignorance & de gueuserie').<sup>62</sup> Edward Bernard, the Oxford mathematician, remarked that Furetière's dictionary was more worthy of the dancing academy than the university.<sup>63</sup> Similar horror was expressed by traditional scholars towards the new journals, like Bayle's *Nouvelles de la République des lettres*.<sup>64</sup> Such anecdotal evidence suggests that the newer dictionaries represented a different constituency of readers than that of the staunchly erudite—something which has not always been pointed out. As we shall see, and for reasons beyond d'Herbelot's control, the *Bibliothèque orientale* can be located somewhere in between the more traditional scholarly instruments and these newer reference works.

<sup>60</sup> See Considine, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe*; P. Rétat, 'L'âge des dictionnaires', in R. Chartier and H.-J. Martin, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1990), vol. 2, 232–41; J. I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford, 2001), 134–7.

<sup>61</sup> A. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel contenant generalement tous les mots françois tant vieux que moderne, & les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts*, preface by P. Bayle, 3 vols (The Hague and Rotterdam, 1690); P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 4 vols (Rotterdam, 1697). On Leers see below, note 84.

<sup>62</sup> A. Galland, et al., eds, *Menagiana: ou les Bons mots et remarques critiques, historiques, morales et d'érudition, de Monsieur Menage, recueillies par ses amis*, 3rd edn, 4 vols (Paris, 1715), vol. 1, 137.

<sup>63</sup> Bod. ms Smith 47, p. 60, Bernard to T. Smith, 1 Feb. 1689: 'I have seen y<sup>c</sup> Dictionaire Univselle of Furetiere but find nothing in it to commend him or y<sup>c</sup> Society of Good Spirits: it is meant, & fit for such as had rather be in an Academy & Dancing house y<sup>n</sup> an university & study of y<sup>c</sup> lett. & Arts.'

<sup>64</sup> A. Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995), 54–5, citing P.-D. Huet.

Alphabetical order, usually within subject divisions, had been a feature of the *bibliothèque* genre since at least the middle of the sixteenth century, when Conrad Gesner's genre-defining *Bibliotheca Universalis* (1545) first appeared. It was also familiar to Ottoman scholars. Crucially for d'Herbelot, Kātib Chelebi's *Kashf al-zunūn* was also organized in this way.<sup>65</sup> We might speculate that even if d'Herbelot had simply translated Kātib Chelebi, the resulting book would probably have been received in Europe as a product of the humanist *bibliothèque* genre going back to Gesner. By presenting his articles in the same manner as Kātib Chelebi's text, as a single alphabetic series, d'Herbelot produced a book which resembled that other popular genre of the day, the dictionary. More specifically, d'Herbelot's book was given a subtitle—*dictionnaire universel*, the same title as that used by Furetière—which had specific resonances at the time. Given the prominence of Furetière's dictionary, and its attendant controversies, d'Herbelot's contemporaries would have recognized the term *dictionnaire universel* as denoting a dictionary of things rather than words, or what we today would call an encyclopedic dictionary, or just an encyclopedia.<sup>66</sup>

One result of the late seventeenth-century vogue for dictionaries was that the traditional conceptual ordering of the encyclopedia, in which the branches of knowledge were arranged according to a logical system, was gradually replaced by alphabetical order, as used in the famous encyclopedias of the eighteenth century. The use of alphabetical order not only avoided any metaphysical claims for the structure of the work; it also invited the readers to lose themselves in—perhaps even to aestheticize—the baffling 'non-order'. As Neil Kenny has pointed out, the change in arrangement probably reflected a changing sense of how such books should be used: whereas the 'significant order' of the Renaissance encyclopedia encouraged the reader to work through the whole organon, alphabetic ordering encouraged ad hoc consultation.<sup>67</sup> Although alphabetical order had been used in language dictionaries, indexes and bibliographies from the sixteenth century, what was new in

<sup>65</sup> Birnbaum, 'Kātib Chelebi and alphabetization'. On earlier bibliographic practices in the Islamic world, see H. Touati, *L'armoire à sagesse: bibliothèques et collections en Islam* (Paris, 2003), 291–317.

<sup>66</sup> J.-C. Darmon, 'Furetière et l'universel', *Stanford French Review*, 14 (1990), 15–46. One contemporary refers to d'Herbelot's book as the 'Moreri Oriental': Louis Picques to Job Ludolf, 7 June 1695, in L. Du Four de Longuerue, *Dissertationes*, ed. J. D. Winckler (Leipzig, 1750), 314.

<sup>67</sup> N. Kenny, *The Palace of Secrets: Béroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge* (Oxford, 1991), 12–54, esp. 33–4 and 40.

the later seventeenth was the trend to cast more general reference works into dictionary form, although the move from 'significant ordering' to the arbitrary non-logic of alphabetical order was never fully completed (witness the *Encyclopédie méthodique* in the late eighteenth century, which regrouped materials from Diderot's alphabetic *Encyclopédie* along subject lines). However, at the time d'Herbelot's book appeared, the use of alphabetic order for anything other than language dictionaries was still sufficiently novel, at least for non-scholarly readers, for it to require comment and justification.<sup>68</sup>

### ALPHABETIC DISORDER

The instruments produced by humanist scholars as reading aids did not always work smoothly: the trouble with the dictionary format was the problem of continuity between the alphabetically ordered articles. Pierre Bayle, in the article 'Mahomet' in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, drew attention to this:

Je ne puis pas finir sans remarquer un petit défaut d'exactitude dans la Bibliothèque Orientale de Mr. Herbelot. Il dit dans l'Article d'Aischah que cette veuve de Mahomet *entreprit de condamner elle-même le Khalife Othman d'impiété*: mais dans un autre endroit (note 279: *Dans l'article Othman, pag. 696.*) il raconte qu'ayant été consultée par la faction qui portoit des plaintes contre ce Khalife, elle répondit qu'on devoit le recevoir à pénitence, & qu'elle le *soutint depuis à Ali*. Je n'objecte point cela comme une contradiction, mais comme un Récit incomplet par tout. Il faut croire 1, que cette femme jugea la cause d'Othman, & qu'elle le condamna d'impiété. 2, Qu'elle prononça qu'il faloit se contenter de sa pénitence. Mr. Herbelot devoit joindre ces deux faits dans l'Article d'Aischah, & dans l'Article d'Othman, & non pas les desunir dans l'un & dans l'autre . . .

[I can not finish without pointing out a small inaccuracy in the Bibliothèque Orientale of M. d'Herbelot. He says, in the article 'Aischah', that this widow of Muhammad tried to convict the Caliph Uthman of impiety herself; but in another place (in the article 'Othman', page 696) he says that having been consulted by the faction which was complaining against this Caliph, she replied that he should be allowed to repent, and she supported him afterwards with [the Caliph] Ali. I do not object to this as a contradiction, but as a narrative

<sup>68</sup> On this question for the later period see R. R. Yeo, *Encyclopaedic Visions: Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge, 2001).



that is incomplete. It forces us to believe 1) that this woman judged the case of Uthman and condemned him for impiety; 2) that she declared that his penitence should be accepted. Mr d'Herbelot should have connected these two facts in the article 'Aischah', and in the article 'Othman', and not left them disconnected in both.]

The problem Bayle identifies is that of the 'récit incomplet', the disjointed narrative, caused by the use of discrete articles on these figures from the early history of Islam. As he concludes: 'this advice is important for all authors of dictionaries, and it is very difficult not to make this mistake. I am sure I have done the same thing more than once myself' ('cet Avis est important à tous les Auteurs de Dictionnaire, & il leur est très mal aisé de ne tomber pas dans cette faute. Je crains bien qu'elle ne me soit échappée plus d'une fois').<sup>69</sup>

Bayle's complaint brings us back to Gibbon's, that he 'could never digest' the *Bibliothèque orientale*. The 'unreadability' was the result of the conflict between the ordering system and the desire for narrative. Once the 'corps d'histoire' had been established, it should have been possible to trace narratives through it. The reader of the *Bibliothèque orientale* was expected to want to chase the lines of dynasties of Oriental kings through the book. Galland describes this in painstaking detail:

Si l'on objecte que les noms des Princes étant mêlez comme ils le sont, chacun suivant l'ordre des lettres par lesquelles ils commencent, la confusion y est entiere. . . il est aisé de répondre que M. Dherbelot a prévû cette objection, & qu'il y a remedié. Car en parlant de chaque Prince, il a observé quel estoit son predecesseur, & celui qu'il a eu pour successeur. Ainsi, ceux qui voudront lire de suite, l'Histoire de telle Dynastie que ce soit, n'auront point de peine à le faire, en remontant jusques à son fondateur, & en continuant ensuite de Prince en Prince. . . De plus, comme en faisant mention du commencement de chaque Dynastie, il a eu soin de donner une liste de tous les Princes dont elles sont composées, c'est un autre moyen qu'il a fourni pour en suivre la durée, en ayant recours à la lettre de l'Alphabet sous laquelle le nom de chacun d'eux est rangé.<sup>70</sup>

[If the objection is raised that arranging the names of Princes by the order of their initial letter creates great confusion. . . it is easy to reply that M. d'Herbelot has foreseen this objection, and remedied it. For, in speaking of each Prince, he mentions his predecessor and successor. Thus, those who wish to read

<sup>69</sup> P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 3rd edn (Amsterdam, 1720), vol. 3, 1866–7, art. 'Mahomet', note PP.

<sup>70</sup> Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface', sig. a 2<sup>r</sup>.

sequentially, and follow the history of a given dynasty, can do so easily, by going back up to the founder, and then continuing from prince to prince . . . Moreover, by mentioning the beginning of each Dynasty, d'Herbelot took care to mention all the Princes that made it up, which is another way of allowing the length of the dynasty to be followed, by moving to the letter of the alphabet under which each name is placed.]

First of all, it is interesting that the use of alphabetic order had to be explained in such a step-by-step manner to readers at this date. Clearly, moreover, Galland is concerned about the reader wanting to read sequentially ('lire de suite'). This emphasis on history as a succession of crowned heads was perfectly familiar to those who shared Galland's numismatic interests—and at the time, coin collecting was the height of fashion at court, with figures like Madame (the Princess Palatine) and le Père de La Chaize (the king's confessor), not to mention the king, boasting serious collections.<sup>71</sup> However, as is made obvious in both Galland's preface and the first reviews of the *Bibliothèque orientale*, this desire to read sequentially came into conflict with the alphabetic order. Indeed, in reviews of the *Bibliothèque orientale*, the alphabetic structure attracted comment for this very reason. The official court review, the *Mercure Galant*, presented it almost as an intellectual game or puzzle, using language clearly borrowed directly from Galland's preface.<sup>72</sup> Clearly, the readers were expected to use the book as a guide to Islamic history, and to want to trace the sequence of the caliphates, which could be done only by jumping to and fro across the alphabetic order.

However, the order in d'Herbelot's book was constantly breaking down. Admittedly, standards of alphabetization were not high at the

<sup>71</sup> A. Schnapper, *Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol 1: *Le Géant, la licorne, la tulipe: histoire et histoire naturelle* (Paris, 1988), esp. ch. 3. Madame's collecting interest led her to patronize the antiquarians Paul Lucas and Charles-César Baudelot de Dairval.

<sup>72</sup> 'Ce qu'il y a de particulier dans ce Livre, qui est un vray Dictionnaire où toutes les matieres sont rangées par ordre Alphabetique, c'est qu'on y peut voir l'Histoire de chaque Dynastie suivie sans interruption, si on veut profiter du soin que l'Auteur a pris de nommer le Prédecesseur & le Successeur de chacun des Princes dont il décrit les actions. Ainsi en cherchant de Prédecesseur en Prédecesseur selon l'ordre Alphabetique, on remonte jusqu'à la source de la Dynastie, & en cherchant de Successeur en Successeur selon le même ordre Alphabetique, on descend jusques au temps où cette Dynastie a finy. D'ailleurs, au commencement de chaque Dynastie, Mr d'Herbelot nomme tous les Princes dont elle a esté composée, ce qui est encore un moyen facile de lire leur Histoire tout de suite, en cherchant leurs noms selon l'ordre Alphabetique où ils sont rangez', *Mercure Galant*, May 1697, 130–9, here 136–8. See also *Histoire des Ouvrages des Sçavans*, July 1697, 468–73 at 470; and *Journal des Sçavans*, 29 Apr. 1697, 159–61.

time: as with many of its contemporary dictionaries, the articles in the *Bibliothèque orientale* are often in the 'wrong' order within each letter. But even the overall series was disrupted by d'Herbelot's working methods. In the first edition, the main text runs from A to Z, missing out K, and is then followed by a 'supplement' in which entries are grouped under the 'letters' DH, KE, KH, KI and TH.<sup>73</sup> This seems explicable only as a leftover from the earlier arrangement of entries in the Arabic alphabet. As a result, one of the most important sections of the work—the long list, taken from Kātib Chelebi, of titles beginning with the word *kitab* (book)—was relegated to this 'supplement' (under KE, pages 962–81). Problems with the alphabetic order in the *Bibliothèque orientale* were among the things that the revised editions of the late eighteenth century set out to correct.

However, perhaps the most important aspect of how d'Herbelot's book is organized has yet to be mentioned. Regardless of alphabetic order, what determines the success of a reference work is the choice of article headings. (This, after all, is what creates the effect of a text like Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*.) In d'Herbelot's book, articles are arranged under headwords that are 'Oriental' terms rather than their 'Western' equivalents. For many of d'Herbelot's entries (names of people and places) this makes sense, since only a small handful of his list would have had recognized European spellings. But this is not just the inevitable question of how to romanize Arabic, Turkish, and Persian proper nouns. D'Herbelot's list of headwords presents a deeper challenge to the Western reader, because the use of 'Oriental' terms goes beyond proper nouns. It therefore acts, arguably, as a refusal to classify by European categories. For example, rather than having an article on 'Arabic philosophy' (the sort of heading we find, for example, in the *Encyclopédie* or in modern reference works), d'Herbelot has articles headed 'Elm' (*'ilm*) and 'Filsafat' (*falsafa*).<sup>74</sup> To find what Islam teaches about Jesus, the reader needs to look under 'Issa ebn Miriam'.

<sup>73</sup> The main text runs pp. 1–940; then comes a 'Supplement: les lettres ou portions des lettres qui suivent, lesquelles ne doivent faire qu'un corps avec tout l'Ouvrage, seront mises au rang qu'elles doivent tenir', 941–1032. There are no DH- words under D and no K- words at all in the main series.

<sup>74</sup> On *'ilm*, see F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1970). Diderot wrote articles for his *Encyclopédie* with headings like 'Arabes: Etat de la Philosophie chez les anciens Arabes' (*Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 1, 566); 'Sarrasins ou Arabes, philosophie des' (vol. 14, 663); 'Chaldéens (Philosophie des)' (vol. 3, 20); 'Orientale, Philosophie' (vol. 11, 642); and 'Perses, Philosophie des' (vol. 12, 420).

Likewise to read about China, the relevant heading is 'Sin'; for Mecca, it is 'Omm Alcora' (*Umm al-Qura*, 'the Mother of Cities'). The entry 'Cabil' (*Qābīl*) reveals what Islam teaches about Cain; 'Cadha & Cadr' refers to what d'Herbelot calls 'le Decret Divin et la Predestination' (*qadā* and *qadar*); the article 'Engil' deals with Muslim attitudes to the gospels (*al-Injīl*). The title 'Esmā Allah' concerns the ninety-nine names of God; the Muslim concept of faith or the spiritual sphere is described in the article 'Din'.<sup>75</sup> As a scholarly convention within European Orientalism, the use of untranslated terms seems familiar today, and can certainly be found in the nineteenth century. Still, no European work on Islamic culture before d'Herbelot had attempted to apply this principle so thoroughly. D'Herbelot's decision to organize his material in this way—which almost negates the decision to put the articles in alphabetical order—is almost certainly to be understood in the light of his debt to Kātib Chelebi, and his reading of other Arabic, Turkish, and Persian source texts. It can also be understood as reflecting the conventions of the *érudits*, in attempting to remain close to the sources. To a certain extent, the entry-headings in the *Bibliothèque orientale* give place to the concepts and categories of Islamic culture. But at the same time, they function as a badge of specialist expertise, a rhetoric of 'authenticity'; they create a distance between the European reader and the material, forcing the reader to trust the mediation of the Orientalist scholar.

What allows the non-specialist reader to access the book is the presence of 'finding devices' like the cross-references between articles and the index at the back. Galland explained in his preface how this shifted the terms of the main text into those of European conventions ('nos Auteurs'):

On trouvera dans la Table qui est à la fin, les noms propres, & les noms des lieux Orientaux, tels qu'on les prononce ordinairement, ou qu'on les trouve dans nos Auteurs, avec le chiffre des pages où il en est parlé, pour la commodité de ceux qui seront curieux d'apprendre ce qui est dit dans la Bibliothèque Orientale.<sup>76</sup>

[In the table at the end of the book will be found the Oriental proper nouns and place-names, as they are pronounced ordinarily (in French) and as we find them (spelled) in our authors, with the number of the page where they are

<sup>75</sup> For more examples see Carnoy, *Représentations de l'Islam*, 306–7.

<sup>76</sup> Galland, 'Discours', sig. o 2<sup>v</sup>. The 'Table des noms propres et des matières' takes up pp. 1033–59 in the 1697 edition.

discussed, for the convenience of those who should be curious to learn what is said (about them) in the *Bibliothèque Orientale*.]

It was only in the index that the Western reader found subjects arranged according to a recognizable schema. Using the index, the reader could look up, say, 'Alep' (Aleppo) and find a reference to the article 'Halab'. Under 'Quietisme' the reference led to the long article 'Eschk Allah, L'Amour de Dieu'. The effect of this, we might suppose, is that the disorienting (or 'exotic') effects of the use of untranslated headings could have been alleviated by presenting the reader with a series of recognizable entries. The index was crucial in enabling the book to function as an instrument—but only within the limits set by its own capricious selection of headings.<sup>77</sup>

What Gibbon calls the indigestibility of the *Bibliothèque orientale* was not simply a symptom of its being organized alphabetically. Not only were those readers desiring a sequential narrative frustrated by the alphabetic order; even those who were happy to consult the book occasionally would have struggled to find what they were looking for because of the non-translation of the headings. The finding devices, especially the index, therefore take on an extraordinary burden. We can take this further. *If* the main text of the *Bibliothèque orientale* had been organized like its index, as a series of subject headings recognizable to the European reader, then we might agree with Said's point that the alphabetic ordering acts as a kind of 'discursive confinement', or that the book is a panoptic instrument. But it is not. Because the main text (outweighing the index by fifteen to one in bulk) is organized by untranslated terms and proper nouns, the book resists the reader's attempt to control the information presented. Added to this the fact that the index itself is more a word-labyrinth than a transparent or efficient finding device, it becomes very difficult to believe in a panoptic portrayal of the *Bibliothèque orientale*. It seems fairer to suggest that the information in the book is always one step beyond the reader, always likely to escape.

<sup>77</sup> Later readers were aware of the importance of finding aids. The late eighteenth-century editions not only improved the alphabetical ordering of the main text but also improved the index. The German translator announced the intention to add a new index, but in the end this did not appear: *Orientalische Bibliothek*, vol. 1, 5 ('das Real-Register, das in der ersten Ausgabe nur sehr kurz, und in der Quartausgabe schon um ein Ausehnliches vermehrt war, in dieser teutschen Ausgabe noch um ein gutes Theil erweitert worden, da durch dasselbe der recht nuzbare Gebrauch des ganzen Werks gar sehr vermehrt wird').

## GETTING INTO PRINT

D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* is a bifurcated text, one that guides the reader back and forth across the division between its two uneven halves, the main text and the index. We can compare it to its contemporary, Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*: as Bayle made clear in the preface to the first edition, the crucial innovation in his book was the textual split between the main text and the footnotes.<sup>78</sup> The use of the page layout in Bayle's *Dictionnaire* is one of the best examples of how a new way of reading is made possible by a feat of typography. Differing from Bayle's book—which had no index—the *Bibliothèque orientale* relies on the bifurcation between the main text and the index rather than a horizontal bifurcation across the page. The functioning of the 'finding devices' was very important to a cumbersome reference work like the *Bibliothèque orientale*; and as we have seen, the finding devices relied upon typographical accuracy. And yet the book was far from typographically sound. This sentiment that d'Herbelot's book was somehow let down by its printing was voiced in the eighteenth century—for example, one of d'Herbelot's friends, the abbé Renaudot, wrote that 'the *Bibliothèque Orientale* is stocked with a vast erudition, although by the negligence of the printers the work was not given the perfection that the author could have given it, expert as he was in reading the best books of the Arabs, Turks, and Persians' ('la Bibliothéque Orientale est remplie d'une vaste érudition, quoyque par la negligence de ceux qui eurent soin de l'impression, cet ouvrage n'ait pas toute la perfection que l'Auteur auroit pu luy donner, consommé comme il estoit dans la lecture des meilleurs livres Arabes, Turcs, & Persans').<sup>79</sup> To understand a little more about why d'Herbelot's book appeared with these flaws we need briefly to trace its publishing history (where the contrast with Bayle's case become greater). In so doing it becomes apparent that there can be no strict division between questions of the organization of knowledge, and questions of the book-as-object.

<sup>78</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Rotterdam, 1697), vol. 1, 'Preface', sigs. a–c (sep. pag. 1–12).

<sup>79</sup> E. Renaudot, *Anciennes relations des Indes et de la Chine, de deux Voyageurs Mahometans, qui y allerent dans le neuvième siecle; traduites d'arabe avec Des Remarques sur les principaux endroits de ces Relations* (Paris, 1718), xxiv.

It took a long time for d'Herbelot's work to go through the press. The *privilege* for the *Bibliothèque orientale* was granted to d'Herbelot in 1690. He ceded this *privilege* to the *libraire* Claude Barbin, who undertook to produce the work. According to an announcement in the *Journal des Sçavans* for August 1694, the printers had got as far as the letter 'N'. Despite an announcement the following year that the book was finished, the printing was not actually complete until February 1697.<sup>80</sup> In the meantime d'Herbelot had died (December 1695), and the Barbin firm had run into financial difficulties.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps because of these economic problems (themselves related to the generally depressed climate of the Nine Years' War), Barbin's name did not appear on the title page when the book appeared. Instead the book was credited to 'La Compagnie des Libraires'. Setting up a 'compagnie' was already the standard practice by which printers united in a collective for the purpose of producing a book which would not have been viable for one firm alone.<sup>82</sup>

The fact that the book took seven years to appear in print might just be put down to the length of the text, the obscurity of its subject matter, and the death of its author. However, further sources reveal that the *Bibliothèque orientale* very nearly failed to get into print at all. Here, once again, the notes of le Père Léonard prove to be one of our most useful sources. In his file on d'Herbelot he gave the following explanation for the book's failings:

Sur la fin de sa vie, [d'Herbelot] s'estoit fort négligé et ne songeoit qu'à se diuertir. C'est pourquoy sa Bibliotheque Orientale est pleine de fautes, morceaux de Religion, par cy par là sans suite, des renvoys qu'on ne trouve point, ce qui fait qu'elle ne se vand pas. Il ne se soucie de finir son ouvrage que pour satisfaire aux conventions faites avec Barbin, libraire, et non pas pour le perfectionner. Il prit sur la fin M. Gallant pour l'aider. C'estoit M. [Daniel] de Larroque qui l'avoit incité à le donner au public. . . Barbin, libraire du palais, qui imprimeroit sa *Bibliothèque orientale*, ayant discontinué parce qu'il ne

<sup>80</sup> The *privilege* is in *Bibliothèque orientale* (1697), unmarked sig. (verso of dedication), giving 'Achevé d'imprimer pour la premiere fois 8 fév 1697'; *Histoire des Ouvrages des Sçavans*, Nov. 1695, 138.

<sup>81</sup> R. Chartier and H.-J. Martin, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1990), vol. 2, 340.

<sup>82</sup> On 'compagnies' see the brief mention in Chartier and Martin, *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2, 30; the printers listed on the verso of the title page are: Jean Guignard, Claude Barbin, Pierre Aubouyn, Pierre Emery, Charles Clousier, Guillaume Cavellier, Henry Charpentier, Michel David, Jean Villette, Charles Osmond, Pierre Herissant, and Pierre de Bats.

fournissoit pas l'argent comme dans le temps, M. Leers, libraire de Rotterdam, estant à Paris en 1694, l'a fait continuer à ses frais et a payé M. Herbelot.<sup>83</sup>

[Towards the end of his life, d'Herbelot became negligent, and cared only for pleasure. Which is why his *Bibliothèque orientale* is full of errors, bits of religion dotted here and there randomly, with references that can not be found: which was why it did not sell. He only bothered to finish the work to satisfy his agreement with the bookseller Barbin, and not to bring it to completion. In the end he hired Galland to help him. It was [Daniel] de Larroque who persuaded him to give it to the public. . . Barbin, a bookseller from the Palais Royal, who printed the *Bibliothèque orientale*, had discontinued it, because he stopped funding it, and in time M. Leers, a Rotterdam bookseller, who was in Paris in 1694, funded the continuation of the book and paid M. d'Herbelot.]

This tells us many new things. First there is the overall argument that it was d'Herbelot's moral lassitude and life of dissipation that led to the weaknesses in his book—the fact that it was organized 'par cy par là sans suite', and that the finding devices did not work, sending the reader on wild goose chases with 'des renvois qu'on ne trouve point'; and then that these problems with the text put scholars off buying the book. None of this was mentioned in the *éloge* tradition. But there are also further revelations. The reference to 'M. Leers, libraire de Rotterdam' is to Reinier Leers, head of one of the most powerful printing concerns in Europe, who was at this point in the process of publishing Bayle's dictionary, and who, with his brother, had already produced Furetière's.<sup>84</sup> He had also published some works of Daniel de Larroque (the friend of d'Herbelot mentioned), which might explain the link with d'Herbelot. The fact that the *Bibliothèque orientale* was financed by the same house that produced the dictionaries of Furetière and Bayle is perhaps not too surprising, given the general dominance of Dutch printing firms at the time, and the fact that Leers was a major Dutch house with a strong line in erudite books. Unfortunately, we do not know what the extent of Leers's involvement was in the production of d'Herbelot's book. If nothing else, the story shows just how close the *Bibliothèque orientale* came to not being published at all. It also shows,

<sup>83</sup> Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 57, citing the file at BN ms fr. 22582, 187–91, here 187 ('Barbin') and 190 ('Sur la fin'). I have restored the spelling of the original.

<sup>84</sup> On Reinier Leers, see Chartier and Martin, *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2, 412–13; and O. S. Lankhorst, *Reinier Leers (1654–1714): uitgever en boekverkoper te Rotterdam* (Amsterdam, 1983). In the 'Preface' to his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Bayle says he will avoid repeating material forthcoming in d'Herbelot's work ('Preface', 2).



once again, how much the contingent and fortuitous elements that went into the making of the book were hidden and obscured by the rhetoric of the dedication and the *éloge* tradition.

The dark hints from le Père Léonard's notes about the problems that occurred in the attempt to get d'Herbelot's book printed can be juxtaposed with evidence from the letters between Leibniz and one of his contacts in Sweden, the scholar Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld.<sup>85</sup> Sparwenfeld had been commissioned to write a history of Scandinavian languages, and his dogged researches into early Gothic had led him down through the Levant, along the Barbary coast, and up to Spain. Back in Sweden, he corresponded with Leibniz on matters linguistic, and exchanged scholarly news. At one point, expressing his doubts about the reliability of certain French scholars, including Thévenot and the Jesuit Pierre Besnier, he went on:

Ces éclaircissement[s] me sont arrivé de temps en temps malgré moy, ils se sont offert sans le chercher. [I] m'arriva de meme avec M<sup>r</sup> d'Herbelot qui est mort, qui nous a voulu deguiser d'où il avoit tiré l'essentiel de sa *bibliothèque orientale*, qui s'acheve d'imprimer. [M]alheureusement pour nous deux, l'auteur arabe en plus de 20 volumes, je dis le bibliothécaire meme en arabes MS me tomba en main à Tunis, j'en donnay avis à l'Abbé de Dangeau, Ma lettre fu lue au plain congres, et cella me couta son amitié, et son livre courut risque de n'estre plus achevé chez Barbin.<sup>86</sup>

[These insights [about Thévenot and Besnier] came to me piecemeal and by accident, without me looking for them. I had the same experience with Mr d'Herbelot, who has just died, who wanted to disguise the source from which he drew most of his *Bibliothèque orientale*, which is now printed. Unfortunately for both of us, the Arabic source (in 20 vols), I mean the Librarian himself, in Arabic MSS, fell into my hands in Tunis, and I told the abbé Dangeau about it. My letter was read out in a full session, and this cost me his friendship, and his work was almost discontinued chez Barbin.]

The point of Sparwenfeld's story is not merely that the *Bibliothèque orientale* was in large part drawn from an Arabic source (which, as we have seen, is true) but that d'Herbelot had wanted to keep his source

<sup>85</sup> On Sparwenfeld (1655–1727), see U. Birgegård, *Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld and the Lexicon Slavonicum: His Contribution to Seventeenth-Century Slavonic Lexicography* (Uppsala, 1985); U. Birgegård, 'A passion for books: Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld and his Slavonic collection', in S. Hedberg and L. Elmevik, eds, *Serving the Scholarly Community: Essays . . . Presented to Thomas Tottie* (Uppsala, 1995), 289–302.

<sup>86</sup> Sparwenfeld to Leibniz, Stockholm, 11 (21?) Nov. 1696, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/13, 338–44, here 339.

secret. It seems that this was a serious accusation in the Republic of Letters. Sparwenfeld had, by chance, come across what he thought was d'Herbelot's source in Tunis; when he writes that his letter was read out in an assembly, this may mean the Académie française, of which Dangeau was a member.<sup>87</sup> No other evidence can confirm or contradict Sparwenfeld's story, which clearly makes the claim that one of the reasons why the Barbin firm pulled out of the project to print the *Bibliothèque orientale* was that d'Herbelot's work had been discredited by Sparwenfeld's accusation that it was somehow plagiarized.

Leibniz, however, seems to have been less interested in d'Herbelot's alleged subterfuge than in the name of the Arabic source.<sup>88</sup> Sparwenfeld replied, emphasizing the fact that in Africa and the Levant the bibliographic genre (in alphabetic order) was common:

Vous me demandez le nom de l'auteur Arabe le quel Mr Herbelot doit avoir suivi dans sa *bibl. orientale*, qui ne se vend pas encore comme je crois. *Resp.* il y en a en Affrique et au Levant plusieurs auteurs qui ont traité la matiere en bibliothequaire *ordine alphabetico* des auteurs en denombant les matieres sur lesquelles ils ont travaillé, et meme jusque à 20 ou 30 volumes, entre autre (je ne me souvint pas bien des autres, et je ne retrouve pas ces Cahiais là) il y a un qui s'appelle Ibn Kallikahn. [C]eux qui me sont connus et dont j'en ay quelques uns, qui pouvo[en]t estre du nombre de ceux qui meritent estre traduit, sont ceux cy (en attendant une plus exacte connoissance par Herbelot) . . .

[You ask the name of the Arabic author which d'Herbelot followed for his *Bibliothèque orientale*, which is still not on sale. Reply: in Africa and the Levant there are several authors who have compiled bibliographies in alphabetical order by author, listing the subjects on which they wrote, which are sometimes 20 or 30 volumes long; among others (I do not remember the others, and I can not find my notes) there is one called Ibn Kallikahn. Those which I know, and which I have [copies of], which could be among those which deserve to be translated, are the following (whilst we wait for a more exact list from d'Herbelot) . . .]

He then produces a long list of fifteen books (naming works by Al-Hatib, Ibn-Asakir, Ibn al-Atir, Al-Tabari, Ibn Kaldun, and others),

<sup>87</sup> On Louis de Courcillon, abbé de Dangeau (1643–1723), brother of the court diarist marquis, see *DLF-17, DBF*. I have been unable to find Sparwenfeld's letter to Dangeau.

<sup>88</sup> Leibniz to Sparwenfeld, Hanover, 8 Feb. 1697, in *A*, 1/13, 541: 'Je suis bien aise d'apprendre d'où feu M. d'Herbelot aura puisé sa Bibliothèque orientale. Cependant il sera toujours bon que nous l'ayions; traduite, ou faite n'importe[.] Je vous supplie de me marquer un jour le nom meme de l'auteur Arabe.'

mainly histories.<sup>89</sup> However, none of these is the *Kashf al-zunūn* of Kātib Chelebi. In the absence of the letter Sparwenfeld sent to Dangeau, it is not clear which text he had claimed d'Herbelot was passing off as his own. Regardless of the fact that it seems likely that he named the wrong source, it is suggestive that Sparwenfeld chose to portray d'Herbelot as acting in an underhand manner—and breaching scholarly etiquette—by trying to pass off an 'Oriental' *bibliothèque* as his own work. Of course, when the book finally appeared, there was no attempt to deny the use of Kātib Chelebi's text, although the acknowledgement was hidden deep within Galland's long preface rather than trumpeted on the title page or in the dedication to the king. On the basis of the available evidence, and bearing in mind that he died before his book appeared, it is impossible to judge whether d'Herbelot ever intended to deceive his readers. Nevertheless, assuming Sparwenfeld did indeed make such accusations (regardless of whether they were true), the suspicion of scholarly dishonesty might well have contributed to the book's publishing troubles and its mixed reception.

The fact that the *Bibliothèque orientale* only found its way into print with a certain amount of luck reminds us of the similar problems faced by Melchisédech Thévenot (discussed in Chapter 2). Little had changed between the 1660s and the 1690s to alter the practical problems facing Oriental scholars in Paris. Colbert's efforts to improve the situation by restoring Arabic printing at the Imprimerie royale had run aground, and both Thévenot's version of Abulfeda and what could have been d'Herbelot's of Kātib Chelebi fell foul of this lack of patronage. In both cases the moral of the story could be that Oriental studies was marginal to the intellectual scene. However, printing problems were shared by other groups, even those often thought to be 'central'—as Adrian Johns has demonstrated with reference to the English natural-philosophical community in the same period.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the case of d'Herbelot shows that printing problems are not merely *printing* problems. Not only does the making of the book-as-object have an intimate relationship with the way the book functions for its readers (for example, the disarray

<sup>89</sup> Sparwenfeld to Leibniz, Stockholm, 13 Mar. 1697, in *A*, 1/13, 637–43, here 638–9. Sparwenfeld's sources are identified in the editors' notes. D'Herbelot, in his list of authorities (*Bibliothèque orientale*, unmarked sig., 'Auteurs orientaux'), did acknowledge using Ibn Khallikan ('Ebn Khalekan') and Ibn al-Atir ('Ebn AlAthir'), as well as Kātib Chelebi (using his other name, 'Hagi Khalfa').

<sup>90</sup> A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998).

of the index making the *Bibliothèque* less accessible).<sup>91</sup> At the same time, it is not possible to separate d'Herbelot's typographic troubles from questions of scholarly community. In le Père Léonard's evidence, the argument is made from d'Herbelot's personal moral state to the shortcomings of the work and its reception; in Sparwenfeld's story, a causal chain is built linking a dispute over scholarly plagiarism to printing-house problems. In both, it proves difficult to dissociate book production from questions of the scholar's persona and the stability of the scholarly collective.<sup>92</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to highlight the material conditions of the production of d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale*, which was made possible by the system for collecting Oriental manuscripts of which Galland was a part. In the dedication to Louis XIV the book presents itself as a product of the Bibliothèque du roi: like the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, described in the next chapter, it claims to be a product of royal patronage—not least because Oriental scholars needed to invoke royal protection in order to legitimate their work. However, to look into the making of the *Bibliothèque orientale* is to uncover the networks of communication that linked the Paris libraries with their collecting agents in the Levant. The collection of manuscripts in the East relied on the cooperation and local knowledge of the Istanbul book merchants and scholars such as Hezarfenn. It was through this interaction with the Turkish scholarly world that Galland came across Kātib Chelebi's *Kashf al-zunūn*, the text upon which d'Herbelot based his book. In addition to the interactions that furnished d'Herbelot with his sources, we need to emphasize the importance of Kātib Chelebi's own scholarship in shaping d'Herbelot's book. In choosing to organize his book alphabetically, d'Herbelot was not only following the humanist genres of the *bibliothèque* and the *dictionnaire universel* but also directly adopting the method of his most important source. Rather than presenting the reader with information organized according to a

<sup>91</sup> This point, dissolving the division between ideal and material conceptions of the book, is one that historians of the book have long been making. See D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, 1999 [f. p. 1986]).

<sup>92</sup> On civility and the scholarly world more generally, see Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*.

familiar series of categories, the main text of the *Bibliothèque orientale* used headwords that left the original terms romanized but not translated. It was only through the index that the Western reader could navigate the *Bibliothèque orientale* according to familiar terms; but the index failed to function as an efficient finding-device. So the *Bibliothèque orientale* was a hybrid text, born of complex and fortuitous mediations that linked the researches of Kātib Chelebi (working in Istanbul in the 1630s) and d'Herbelot (working in Rome, Florence and Paris between the 1650s and 1690s).

If we were to choose an emblem of how the book functions, it would not be the Panopticon (as implied by Said's reading) but something resembling the labyrinthine libraries imagined by Borges. If the *Bibliothèque orientale* was a scientific instrument, it was one that did not work very well. It was unable to impose meaning on the reader; it was instead a place of possibility, a place for readers to lose themselves.

## 5

### Printing Confucius in Paris

At the beginning of September 1687, James II made a trip to Oxford. The purpose of the visit was to assert the king's authority in an escalating disagreement with the fellows of Magdalen College over the appointment of their new president. The affair of the recalcitrant fellows having occupied most of the Saturday and Sunday, the University sought to mollify the king by inviting him on the Monday to a 'dinner' in the Bodleian library, 'prepared to the utmost of their skill & cost'.<sup>1</sup> The king and his entourage arrived at about half past ten—having come from a long morning touching for the King's Evil in Christ Church Cathedral—and were shown up to Duke Humfrey's library, where a banquet was set out on a large table at the southern tip of the Selden End. The king did not invite the dons to join him ('none did eat but he'). He did, however, engage in a conversation with the head librarian, who at the time happened to be Thomas Hyde, a well-known Oriental scholar, later professor in both Arabic and Hebrew.<sup>2</sup> In Anthony à Wood's version of events the king and the scholar held the following conversation:

[The king asked,] 'Well, Dr Hyde, was the Chinese here?'. To which he answered, 'Yes, if it may please Your Majesty, and I learned many things of him'. Then said His Majesty, 'He was a little blinking fellow, was he not?' To which he answered, 'Yes', and added that all the Chinese Tartars, and all that part of the world was narrow-eyed. Then the king said that 'he had his picture in the life hanging in his room next to the bedchamber'. Then His Majesty told Dr. Hyde of a book of Confucius translated from China language by the Jesuits (four in number) and asked whether it was in the library. To which Dr Hyde answered that it was; and that 'it treated of philosophy, but not so as that of

<sup>1</sup> Edward Bernard to Thomas Smith, 4 Sept. 1687, Bod. ms Smith 47, pp. 46–7. Bernard writes 'Monday about 9 the King touched againe . . . & will heale againe before he leaves Oxford.' The king arrived in Oxford on Saturday, 3 Sept. 1687.

<sup>2</sup> On Hyde, see G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1996), 248–50, 295–8.

European philosophy'. Whereupon his Majesty asked whether 'the Chinese had any divinity?' To which Dr Hyde answered 'Yes, but 'twas idolatry, they being all heathens, but yet that they have in their idol-temples statues representing the Trinity, and other pictures, which shew that antient Christianity had been amongst them'. To which he assented by a nod. After that, his majestie left off asking any more questions.<sup>3</sup>

It seems that the Catholic king was haunted by an encounter with a young Chinese Jesuit novice, Michael Shen Fuzong, who had visited England earlier in the year.<sup>4</sup> The portrait that James mentions was by Godfrey Kneller, and became known as *The Chinese Convert*.<sup>5</sup> Shen had come to Europe with the Flemish Jesuit Philippe Couplet, who had been sent back as a 'procurator' to muster support for the Chinese mission and to supervise the publication of various Jesuit texts, including the translations from Confucius—the book James mentions—which appeared in 1687, under the title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis Latinè exposita* ('Confucius, Philosopher of the Chinese; or, the Chinese Science set out in Latin').<sup>6</sup> The presence of a real Chinese convert in Europe was rare (though not unprecedented), and it certainly lent Couplet's tour of the Catholic courts of Europe the desired *éclat*. After visiting James II's court in London (having already met the Pope, Queen Christina of Sweden, Louis XIV, and Victor Amadeus II of Savoy) Shen Fuzong had visited Oxford, where he had helped Hyde to catalogue the Chinese manuscripts in the Bodleian.

Wood's account of the conversation is useful, because it brings into play some of the issues surrounding the appearance of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. James asks whether the Bodleian had a copy, perhaps to test whether Oxford was abreast with the latest scholarship from Catholic Europe, and finds that it did, barely three months after it came off the press.<sup>7</sup> Hyde replies that 'it treated of philosophy, but not so as that of

<sup>3</sup> A. à Wood, *The Life and Times*, ed. A. Clark (Oxford, 1894), vol. 3, 226–39. Although Bernard's letter to Smith does not refer to the conversation with Hyde, Bernard closes the letter by asking Smith to buy him 'Confusii Sinica fol° about 14 or 15 s[hillings]' (Bod. ms Smith 47, p. 47).

<sup>4</sup> T. N. Foss, 'The European sojourn of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fu-Tsong (1683–1692)', in J. Heyndrickx, ed., *Philippe Couplet, S. J. (1623–1693): The Man Who Brought China to Europe* (Nettetal, 1990), 121–42. Couplet had left China with two novices, but the name of the second, who turned back at Batavia, is not known.

<sup>5</sup> The painting is now in the Royal Collection at Kensington Palace.

<sup>6</sup> P. Intorcetta, C. Herdrich, F. Rougemont, and P. Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis Latinè exposita* (Paris, 1687), henceforth *CSP* in these notes.

<sup>7</sup> The date for 'achevé d'imprimer pour la première fois' in *CSP* is 28 May 1687.

European philosophy', but the king jumps to the top of the disciplinary hierarchy by asking whether 'the Chinese had any divinity'. James must have known that he was steering the conversation into difficult waters. One of the most bitter controversies in the Catholic Church of the day was the long-standing debate about the Jesuit mission in China, a debate that was about to reach new levels of ferocity (partly in response to the very book James mentions). This controversy had begun earlier in the century with the question of whether the Jesuits were right to allow their Chinese converts to continue certain ritual practices, but soon grew to encompass related issues—how to translate Christian terms into Chinese, for instance—until it became an argument about an even more difficult problem, the interpretation of Chinese culture and its place in world history.<sup>8</sup> With Hyde's response ('Yes, but 'twas all idolatry, they being all heathens') we are already close to the heart of the debate—these were the very questions that occupied committees of censors in Rome and Paris, revolving around the Jesuits' interpretation of Chinese religious thought: had the ancient Chinese known of God, and if so, was this 'the God of the philosophers', or the God of Abraham, Isaac and Joseph? Did the Confucian texts reveal remnants of an ancient theology? Were Confucian concepts compatible with Christian ones? Hyde's telescopically condensed analysis of religion in China (present idolatry, despite some Christianity in the past) reveals a cautious reading of the available sources, and one that was common among Protestants. His caution, and the tension underlying his conversation with the Catholic king, exemplifies the problem of confessional difference within the Republic of Letters: the unresolved dissonance between the respect for a supposedly international ethic of scholarship and the suspicion that scholars of other religious persuasions might not have lived up to that ethic.<sup>9</sup>

Given the public nature of the occasion, and the intensifying political feeling surrounding James's policy toward Oxford, it is no surprise that every gesture of the king was observed and interpreted: this, after all, might explain why we have such a detailed account from Wood. As on

<sup>8</sup> See V. Pinot, *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France (1640–1740)* (Paris, 1932); G. Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from its Beginnings to Modern Times* (Chicago, 1985); D. E. Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (Nettetal, 1994); J. S. Cummins, *A Question of Rites: Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China* (Aldershot, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> L. Daston, 'The ideal and the reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment', *Science in Context*, 4 (1991), 367–86, here 374.



so many other occasions, the king seems to have misjudged the timing of his gesture. At the very moment when all eyes were upon him, anxious about rumours that he was to introduce Jesuit colleges into Oxford, James insisted on discussing the latest high-profile publication of the Society of Jesus. It was not James II's interest in things Chinese that was per se provocative—after all, as Voltaire later quipped, 'if he had been a Mahometan, or of the religion of Confucius, the English would never have troubled his reign' ('s'il eût été mahometan, ou de la religion de Confucius, les Anglais n'eussent jamais troublé son règne')—but rather the fact that he brandished the Jesuit book as a Catholic monarch with a Jesuit confessor visiting a hostile Protestant university.<sup>10</sup>

The conversation between James II and Thomas Hyde introduces many of the themes that will run through this chapter. First of all, it reminds us that the appearance of this book was newsworthy. European scholars had been able to read *about* 'the philosopher of the Chinese' since the Jesuit reports earlier in the century, but this was the first time that a substantial body of Chinese philosophical texts had been presented to European readers. The book therefore aroused a great deal of interest among the learned. It was given a much longer review in the *Journal des Sçavans* than another book of that year, Isaac Newton's *Philosophiae naturalis Principia mathematica* ('Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy').<sup>11</sup> But the arrival of the Jesuits' Confucius was inevitably greeted with some controversy, since by 1687 the laudatory image of China which the Jesuit accounts conveyed was already the subject of intense scrutiny and debate, both within and without the Catholic fold. Perhaps of most concern, their reports of the Chinese annals posed a challenge to biblical chronology.<sup>12</sup> Those who distrusted the Jesuits, such as the Port-Royal Jansenists in France, tended to treat what the Jesuits wrote about China with suspicion, and to assume that

<sup>10</sup> Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ch. 15, in *Œuvres historiques*, ed. R. Pomeau (Paris, 1957), 760.

<sup>11</sup> In the *Journal des Sçavans*, Newton's *Principia* received one page (2 Aug. 1688, 128, Amsterdam edn), while *CSP* received seven, probably written by Louis Cousin (5 Jan. 1688, 5–12), followed later by Bernier's 'Introduction à la lecture de Confucius' (7 June 1688, 15–22, Paris edn), discussed below. Other reviews of *CSP* include: *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (Aug. 1687), 910; *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, 7 (Dec. 1687), 387–455; *Acta Eruditorum* (May 1688), 254–65; *Philosophical Transactions*, 189 (Sept.–Oct. 1687), 376–8; *Histoire des Ouvrages des Sçavans*, 1 (Sept. 1687), 65–79 (which notes that the book was available from Reinier Leers in Rotterdam).

<sup>12</sup> E. J. Van Kley, 'Europe's "discovery" of China and the writing of world history', *American Historical Review*, 76 (1971), 358–85.

the Chinese annals were mere fable.<sup>13</sup> The scholarly readers of Europe were therefore inevitably predisposed to treat with some scepticism the reliability of the translations, the interpretative introduction, and the chronological appendices presented in *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*.

Of all the texts studied in this book, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* has attracted the most scholarship. Historians of sinology have unearthed both the complex evolution of the translation and the long chain of communication that brought it from China to Europe.<sup>14</sup> The aim of this chapter, however, is to situate the appearance of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* within its Parisian context, and to view the publication of the book from the point of view of the Parisian scholarly community. As in previous chapters, the questions that concern us here are those of patronage and publication, the support for, and the practical limits to, Oriental research. In a sense, then, the point is to take seriously a rhetorical question posed by the Hungarian Jesuit György Pray in 1789: 'Quid regi Galliarum cum Confucio?' ('What has the French King to do with Confucius?').<sup>15</sup> In keeping with the approach used in previous chapters, we should not assume that the site of the book's production was an indifferent matter, nor that the Jesuits' translations of Confucius would have found their way into print without difficulty. It may be true to say, as one scholar has done, that the book 'would have been published in Europe eventually, regardless of Louis XIV's patronage', but to do so is to ignore firstly the lessons of historical bibliography (there are always contingencies involved in the making of any book); and secondly the particular situation in late seventeenth-century France, a

<sup>13</sup> See for example Pascal, *Pensées*, Lafuma 822; and J. Lesaulnier, ed., *Port-Royal insolite: édition critique du Recueil de choses diverses* (Paris, 1992), 567.

<sup>14</sup> Pinot, *La Chine*, 151–8; D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart, 1985), 247–99; K. Lundback, 'The image of Neo-Confucianism in CSP', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44 (1983), 19–30, reprinted in J. Ching and W. G. Oxtoby, eds, *Discovering China: European Interpretations in the Enlightenment* (Rochester, NY, 1992), 27–38; L. M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham, NC, 1997), 77–133; N. Golvers, 'The development of the CSP reconsidered in the light of new material', in R. Malek, ed., *Western Learning and Christianity in China: The Contribution and Impact of Johann Adam Schall von Bell, SJ (1592–1666)*, 2 vols (Nettetal, 1998), vol. 2, 1141–64; N. Standaert, 'The Jesuits did *not* manufacture "Confucianism" [review of Jensen]', *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine*, 16 (1999), 115–32.

<sup>15</sup> G. Pray, *Historia controversiarum de Ritibus Sinicis ab earum origine ad finem compendio deducta* (Budapest, 1789), xxiii: 'Rursus inquirere debuissis, quo modo Jesuitæ edendo Confucium, regem Galliæ deceperint? quid, quæso, regi Galliarum cum Confucio?' This alludes to Tertullian's 'quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis?' ('what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?').

period of severe economic problems for printers, in which expensive erudite works almost always needed subsidies of some kind.<sup>16</sup> In order to reconstruct the local context for the book's production, this chapter will focus on the visits to Paris of Philippe Couplet, the Flemish Jesuit who supervised the book's production, and will uncover the role in the publishing of the book played by Paris-based scholars, including Melchisédech Thévenot.<sup>17</sup>

*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* certainly marked a watershed in the history of European knowledge of, and access to, the Chinese philosophical tradition. The text was produced by at least seventeen Jesuit missionaries, with the help of untold Chinese interlocutors, across almost a century. It gave Latin translations of three of the 'Four Books' (*Sishu*) that the Jesuits had identified as the core of the Confucian canon: the *Great Learning* (the *Daxue*), the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*), and the *Analects* (*Lunyu*).<sup>18</sup> The translations published were compiled from a number of drafts, evolved by different Jesuits at different times, so that the style of translation varied considerably, from would-be 'literal' versions to paraphrases. In some sections, the main text (in Roman type) was interrupted with commentary in italics. Originally, the plan had been to include the original Chinese texts with the translations, but this aim had to be abandoned because of the practical difficulties involved in printing the Chinese—although in some passages a remnant of this intention survived, in the form of superscript numerals that would have guided the reader from each Latin word to the corresponding Chinese character. As well as the translations themselves—and the first representation of Confucius in Western art, in the frontispiece<sup>19</sup>—the

<sup>16</sup> D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, 1999 [f.p. 1986]), 4, 15; Mungello, *Curious Land*, 287; H.-J. Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1598–1701)*, 2 vols (Geneva, 1969); R. Chartier and H.-J. Martin, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1989–91), vol. 2, 219–30, 331–44. On the financial crisis, see Martin, 'L'édition parisienne au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: quelques aspects économiques', *Annales: E. S. C.*, 7 (1952), 303–18, reprinted in his *Le Livre français sous l'Ancien Régime* (Nantes, 1987), 43–54.

<sup>17</sup> On Couplet in general see Heyndrickx, *Philippe Couplet*; see also N. Golvers, *Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (1623–1688) and the Chinese Heaven: The Composition of the Astronomical Corpus, Its Diffusion and Reception in the European Republic of Letters* (Leuven, 2003), 189–215, esp. 203–6 for Couplet's contact with Thévenot.

<sup>18</sup> The Jesuits give these titles in CSP as 'Tá-hiò, Magnæ Scientiæ' (1–39), 'Chum-yum, Medium perfectum' (40–108), and 'Lun-Yu, Ratiocinantium Sermones' (sep. pag., in 2 parts, 1–21, 1–159). The fourth book, the *Mengzi* or *Mencius*, was left out.

<sup>19</sup> The engraving, from the workshop of Jean-Baptiste Nolin, is discussed in Mungello, *Curious Land*, 271–7.

volume included two texts by Philippe Couplet which were perhaps of equal importance for the book's European audience, given the ongoing debates: a hundred-page introduction (or 'Proemial Declaration') giving an overview of Chinese cultural and philosophical history, and a chronological table of Chinese history.<sup>20</sup> Couplet's framing of the Confucian canon was a synthesis of the Jesuit vision of Chinese philosophy, in which the supposed compatibilities between Chinese and Christian concepts justified the accommodation strategies of the missionaries.<sup>21</sup>

The book was presented as a product of the cooperation between the French king, the Society of Jesus, and the Bibliothèque du roi. The title page carried the words: '*Jussu LUDOVICI MAGNI Eximio Missionum Orientalium & Litterariae Reipublicae bono e Bibliotheca Regia in lucem prodit*' ('Brought to light out of the Bibliothèque du roi, by the authority of LOUIS THE GREAT, for the good of the Oriental mission and the Republic of Letters'). In the tense atmosphere of the mid-1680s, the relationship between Louis XIV and the Jesuits was a matter of political importance across Europe, and the immediate Protestant reactions to *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* reveal the degree to which an alliance of the Jesuits with the French king in 1687 was perceived within that context. To do justice to these reactions would require a chapter in itself, but a few brief examples can be given here.<sup>22</sup> With the increasing persecution of the Huguenots in France, culminating in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the Protestant political imagination was able to take up the traditional 'black legend' that surrounded the Jesuits, and construct a narrative in which the king's confessor, Father La Chaize, was responsible for the persecutions. The accession to the British throne of a Catholic king, in James II (r. 1685–8), added to the sense of tension across Europe as a whole. It was easy for Protestant satirists to milk the situation: one pamphlet staged a three-way dialogue between Fathers La Chaize, Tachard, and Peters, cast respectively as grey eminences to the monarchs of France, Siam, and England.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the

<sup>20</sup> 'Operis origo et scopus nec-non Sinensium librorum, interpretum, sectarum, et philosophiæ, quam natutalem [i.e. naturalem] vocant, Proëmialis Declaratio', *CSP*, ix–cxiv; 'Tabula Chronologica Monarchiæ Sinicæ juxta cyclos annorum LX. . . . Nunc primum in lucem prodit è Bibliotheca Regia', sep. pag.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Mungello sees *CSP* as the 'culmination' of Matteo Ricci's accommodation strategy (*Curious Land*, 247–99).

<sup>22</sup> Mungello, *Curious Land*, 287–97, discusses some of the responses to *CSP*.

<sup>23</sup> [Anon.], *Le Jésuite démasqué: Ou Entretien entre le tres-saint Pere la Chaise, Confesseur de sa Majesté Tres-Chrétienne, Le tres chaste Pere Peters, Confesseur de sa Majesté Britannique,*

royal propaganda produced in France cultivated the image of Louis as a crusader against heresy, placing renewed emphasis on his titles *le Roi très-chrétien* and *fiils aîné de l'Église*.<sup>24</sup> So the fact that Couplet, in dedicating *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* to the king, drew parallels between Confucian teachings and Louis's extirpation of heresy in France, was bound to annoy Protestant readers of the book.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, one Lutheran reader in Germany could not refrain himself from scribbling in his copy, at the foot of the dedication where Couplet had signed off 'devotissimus atque addictissimus', the words 'adulator mendacissimus'.<sup>26</sup> Even two decades later, as the controversy surrounding the Jesuits in China escalated, the book remained notoriously contentious. For example, Jean Aymon, the Protestant pastor who infiltrated the Bibliothèque du roi in 1706 and stole the documents that were used in the controversial *Perpetuité de la Foi* project (supposedly proving that Eastern Christians believed in transubstantiation), also stole the manuscript of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, with the aim of discrediting the book by showing that it grossly distorted the manuscript text.<sup>27</sup>

These brief examples illustrate the degree to which *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was by no means received 'neutrally' as a work of disinterested scholarship. Rather, it was born into a world which immediately seized upon it as a theologico-political artefact. It was not in itself a surprise that Louis XIV should support the Society of Jesus; however,

*et le tres pieux Pere Tachart, Ambassadeur de sa Majesté Siammoise. Dans lequel on decouvre Les principaux moyens dont ces Reverends Peres pretendent se servir pour la Conversion des Heretiques d'Angleterre, et des Idolatres de Siam . . .* (n. p., 1688). Cf. English trans. 1689.

<sup>24</sup> P. Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1992), 102–5.

<sup>25</sup> CSP, sig. A ij r–B ij v. See for example sig. B i v: 'Hinc ejusdem ea vox, hodieque inter Sinas celebratissima: *Cum hu y tuon, Oppugna heretica dogmata*. Quamam igitur afferret homini pietatis amantissimo lætitiã, siquidem ad hæc felicissima legis gratiæ tempora pertingere potuisset, tua ille Rex tutandæ & amplificandæ Religionis, extirpandæ hærescos, pietatis propagandæ cura?'

<sup>26</sup> Gerhard Wolter Molanus (a friend of Leibniz's), cited in Mungello, *Curious Land*, 249, from a copy in the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Hanover.

<sup>27</sup> The evidence of this comes from notes added to the manuscript, BN ms latin 6277 (2 vols). See Pinot, *La Chine*, 152–8; cf. A.-G. Camus, *Mémoire sur la Collection des grands et petits voyages* [des de Bry] *et sur la collection des voyages de Melchisédech Thévenot* (Paris, 1802), 329; Mungello, *Curious Land*, 292–6. In BN ms n. a. fr. 1216, f. 238r, a list of items stolen by Aymon mentions 'deux petits porte-feuilles couverts de tafetas bleu de la Chine, le 1er contient deux cahiers, Entretiens familiers de Confucius. Le 2e six cahiers, Arithmetique chinoise; et un cahier séparé d'un porte feuille de Geographie chinoise'. On Aymon's theft, see A. Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995), 174–83. On the idea that CSP misrepresented its own manuscript, see A. Brou, 'Les jésuites sinologues de Pékin et leurs éditeurs de Paris', *Revue d'histoire des missions*, 11 (1934), 551–66.

the close identification of the Jesuits' Confucius with the king of France mattered a great deal to contemporaries in the age of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. For most readers around the European Republic of Letters, the theological implications of the Jesuit portrayal of China were probably paramount; at the same time, those writing in the name of humanist scholarship and natural philosophy needed to carefully distance themselves from matters of faith.<sup>28</sup> The fundamental question of trust—could the Jesuit account of China be trusted?—was one that resonated throughout the 'documentary culture' of the period. At the same time, as with other branches of scholarly 'critique' in the period, Oriental erudition was deeply implicated with contemporary religious ideology.

### FATHER COUPLET'S TOUR

Although the immediate context for the printing of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was Couplet's tour of Europe, much work had already been done before Couplet arrived. In the 1670s, an earlier *procurator*, Prospero Intorcetta, had been preparing for the translation to be printed in Amsterdam at the famous Blaeu house.<sup>29</sup> As a Jesuit in Rome in the 1670s, Intorcetta enjoyed the support of the ageing Athanasius Kircher, who took overall charge of the project to print the book. Accordingly, the prospective printer became Jansen (also in Amsterdam), who dealt with Kircher's own books. Kircher, from his museum in Rome, corresponded with his confrère in Antwerp, the Bollandist Daniel Papebroch, who could act as his spokesman with the Dutch printers. However, by the time Kircher died in November 1680, little progress had been made, and the project to print the Confucius translations then fell into the hands of the next *procurator* for the Chinese mission, Couplet.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, for example, the reviewer concluded, 'Twill be needless to advertise, that this Account places the beginning of the Chinese Empire long before the *Deluge*, according to the Holy Scriptures; wherefore if this be to be wholly rejected, as fabulous; or if not, how it is to be reconciled with the sacred Chronology, belongs more properly to the Disquisition of the Divines': *Philosophical Transactions*, 189 (Sept.–Oct. 1687), 378.

<sup>29</sup> Golvers, 'The development', 1160, 1144.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 1145–50, brings out the involvement of Kircher and the Bollandists. On Kircher and his printers, see John E. Fletcher, 'Athanasius Kircher and the distribution of his books', *The Library*, 23 (1968), 108–17, and O. Hein, *Die Drucker und Verleger der Werke des Polyhistor Athanasius Kircher S.J.* (Cologne, 1993).

Couplet had left China in 1681 and had arrived in his native province of Flanders, accompanied by Michael Shen Fuzong, in October of 1683. They toured the Spanish Netherlands until the summer of 1684, and then travelled to France. Their visit to Versailles in September 1684 was a triumph: the king was fascinated by Shen Fuzong, and paid him the honour of inviting him to eat at his table, and having the fountains in the garden turned on. After a month in Paris, Couplet and Shen moved on to Rome, where they were to stay for the next twelve months. It so happened that in October and November of the same year (1684), an embassy from Siam visited Versailles, which fuelled further enthusiasm for things Oriental among the courtiers.<sup>31</sup> It also inspired a return embassy, which provided an occasion for the expedition of six French Jesuits as *mathématiciens du roi*, who were to make astronomical observations on the voyage to China before joining the French Jesuits in Beijing. A second Siamese embassy arrived in Paris in August 1686, followed by another return French mission.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that the publication of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* came hard on the heels of this new burst of travel between France and the Far East, not to mention the attendant vogue for *chinoiserie* at court, may have affected Couplet's decision to return to Paris to have it printed. Of course, Couplet could not have known about the Siamese embassies in advance; but he certainly seems to have profited from this sudden new interest in the East at the court. The whole point of Couplet's European tour as *procurator* for the Jesuit mission in China was to raise awareness of the successes of the mission, with a view to raising funds and support. This had never been more necessary, given the escalating polemic against Jesuit missionary methods. Constantly under attack from all sides—from the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome (and its agents, the Vicars Apostolic); from the secular hierarchy

<sup>31</sup> Foss, 'The European sojourn'; on Siam, see D. Van der Cruysse, *Louis XIV et le Siam* (Paris, 1991) and R. Vongsuravatana, *Un jésuite [G. Tachard] à la Cour de Siam* (Paris, 1992).

<sup>32</sup> On the six Jesuit 'mathématiciens du roi' (Fontaney, Gerbillon, Visdelou, Le Comte, Bouvet, Tachard), see Pinot, *La Chine*, 15–70; C. Jami, 'From Louis XIV's court to Kangxi's court: an institutional analysis of the French Jesuit mission to China (1688–1722)', in K. Hashimoto, *et al.*, eds, *East Asian Science: Tradition and Beyond* (Osaka, 1995), 493–9; F. C. Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China* (Chicago, forthcoming); I. Landry-Deron, 'Les mathématiciens envoyés en Chine par Louis XIV en 1685', *Archives of the History of the Exact Sciences*, 55 (2001), 423–63. For *chinoiserie* at court see H. Belevitch-Stankevitch, *Le Goût chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV* (Geneva, 1970 [f. p. 1910]).

run by the Archbishop of Goa, loyal to the Portuguese crown; from the Dominicans and Franciscans; and from the Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris, to name only their enemies within the Catholic fold—the Jesuits needed to legitimate their enterprise. By presenting a real Chinese convert to be lionized at the Catholic courts of Europe, the Jesuits could hope that in exchange for satisfying the courts' demand for magnificence and curiosities, they might receive protection (funding and legitimation) from the princes they visited.<sup>33</sup>

Their first visit to Paris lasted only a month. We need to ask why Couplet came back to Paris for the second time in 1686 (his own home province was Flanders, after all). There was an increasing desire on the part of the Jesuits in Beijing to establish stronger links with their confrères in France, because the French Jesuits tended to have a good training in astronomy, and would therefore be able to work as astronomers in the Chinese court. This was why the six Jesuits sent out from Paris in 1685 were given the new title of *mathématicien du roi*, because it was not supposed to be possible to send Jesuits to China without going through the patronage of Lisbon and Goa. It was only because the six Jesuits were sent in their capacity as 'royal mathematicians' that they could go at all—travelling with Alexandre de Chaumont, the French ambassador to Siam, on a vessel of the Compagnie des Indes orientales, the *Oyseau*. So, by the time *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was printed, a new partnership was already in place between the Jesuits of Paris and the Académie des sciences. In Versailles and Paris, then, the period 1684–7 was a high point both in the level of publicity for the Chinese mission, but also in the degree of cooperation between the Jesuits of Paris and other institutions in the Paris intellectual world. All of this, we might speculate, might make it less surprising that Couplet should come back to Paris for his second visit. However, the details of that second visit will be important for understanding the conditions that produced the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*.

The site for the publication of the Jesuits' Confucius was the Bibliothèque du roi in Paris. At this time the library was under the effective supervision of Melchisédech Thévenot. Thévenot even claimed

<sup>33</sup> La Chaize, in a letter to F. Verbiest of 15 Jan. 1688, connects Couplet's visit with the expedition of the Jesuit astronomers: 'Mais [Couplet] aura toujours la consolation d'avoir esté, sinon la cause, du moins l'ocasion, de tout ce qui s'est fait icy et de ce qui s'y fera dans la suite pour secourir vos missions', Bibliothèque de l'Observatoire, B. 4. 11, bundle 'La Chaise' (another copy at Vanves, Archives historiques de la Compagnie de Jésus, ms A 2596). Verbiest died before this letter reached Beijing.



(somewhat disingenuously, as we shall see) that he was personally responsible for bringing Couplet and Shen Fuzong back to Paris to work on the production of the book:

On n'avoit pas encore vû en Europe les Ouvrages de ces Chinois qui cultivent les Arts & les Sciences il y a près de quatre mille ans, avec cette sage veuë de rapporter toutes leurs études à des choses utiles à la société civile, à la perfection des Arts, & à régler les devoirs respectifs entre les hommes, sans s'amuser à ces disputations inutiles qui ont tant fait perdre de temps dans les Ecoles de l'Europe. La proposition que je fis, de faire venir de Rome un Chinois avec le P. Couplet Jesuite qui avoit rapporté plusieurs volumes des meilleurs livres de cette Nation, fut agréée par S. M. & ces livres sont presentement dans sa Bibliotheque. L'on imprima à mes dépens les Ouvrages de Confucius les plus estimez chez les Chinois.<sup>34</sup>

[In Europe, we had still not seen the works of those Chinese, who cultivated the Arts & Sciences almost four thousand years ago, with the wise aim of making all their studies relate to things useful to civil society, to the perfection of the Arts, and to determine the duties due between men, without amusing themselves with the useless disputations which have cost so much wasted time in the schools of Europe. The proposition which I made, to have a Chinese man brought from Rome with the Jesuit Fr Couplet, who had brought back several volumes of the best books of this Nation, was accepted by the king, and these books are now in the Bibliothèque du roi. At my expense, the most esteemed works of Confucius were printed.]

It is worth noting that the same rhetoric used by Thévenot in other places to describe the collection of the useful arts and the need to reform the learning of the schools is applied to his interest in Chinese learning (see Chapter 2). At this stage, and before a more complex account of his role in the story can emerge, we need to return to Thévenot.

#### THEVENOT, THE BIBLIOTHEQUE DU ROI, AND THE JESUITS' CONFUCIUS

After his return from the Netherlands (where he failed to get his *Abulfeda* printed), Thévenot disappeared from the Paris scene, spending most of

<sup>34</sup> [A. Galland, ed.,] *Bibliotheca Thevenotiana sive Catalogus impressorum et manusciporum librorum bibliothecae viri clarissimi D. Melchisedecis Thevenot* (Paris, 1694), unmarked sig., 3v.

the years 1671–84 in rural retirement at Issy. His isolation from the Paris learned world, though, was not complete: he was asked, along with Claude Hardy, to catalogue the library of Chancellor Séguier when the latter died in 1672.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, he spent most of his time at his Issy home until the death of Colbert in 1683. Thévenot's fortunes then changed, as the marquis de Louvois succeeded to the position of *surintendant des bâtiments du roi*.<sup>36</sup> The following year, 1684, was a year of four librarians at the Bibliothèque du roi. With the death of Carcavi, who had been Colbert's client, as the library's *garde*, Louvois appointed his youngest son, the abbé de Louvois (Camille Le Tellier). Since Camille was only 9 years old, though, the overall control of the library was in the hands of his uncle, Charles-Maurice Le Tellier, Archbishop of Reims, while the library's day-to-day administration was consigned to the 'commis à la garde'.<sup>37</sup> The first holder of this post, the abbé Gallois, was quickly replaced, and the second, the abbé Varès, quickly died. After the death of Varès, both Thévenot and the abbé Eusèbe Renaudot campaigned at court to obtain the library post, and Thévenot was appointed in December 1684.<sup>38</sup> Thévenot's return to the Paris learned world was made complete a month later by his appointment to the Académie des sciences, a vacancy having emerged with the death of Samuel Du Clos.<sup>39</sup> News of the two appointments spread. Leibniz wrote to congratulate his old friend, suggesting that Thévenot was finally getting his due: 'it seems to me that it was time to repair the fault that had been done before' ('Il

<sup>35</sup> BN ms latin 11877–8; the printed catalogue did not appear until 1686: see below, note 89. For Thévenot's involvement see V. Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, ed. G. Berquet and J.-P. Collinet (Saint-Etienne, 1981), 157; and Bod. ms Smith 8, pp. 3–4: Thévenot to Edward Bernard, Paris 18 [? Feb./June] 1673.

<sup>36</sup> On the patronage 'reshuffle' that took place after 1683, see Burke, *Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 91–7; for the sciences in particular, see A. Stroup, *A Company of Scientists: Botany, Patronage and Community at the Seventeenth-Century Parisian Royal Academy of Sciences* (Berkeley, 1990), 51–6; and D. J. Sturdy, *Science and Social Status: The Members of the Académie des Sciences, 1666–1750* (Woodbridge, 1995), 214–20.

<sup>37</sup> C. Jolly, ed., *Histoire des bibliothèques françaises*, vol. 2: *Les Bibliothèques sous l'Ancien Régime, 1530–1789* (Paris, 1988), 225.

<sup>38</sup> See Bossuet, *Correspondance*, ed. C. Urbain and E. Levesque, 15 vols (Paris, 1909–25), vol. 3, 16 n. 3, 24–5 n. 6: the *charge* was worth 3,000 livres a year plus free lodgings. Renaudot was the preferred candidate of both Claude Fleury and Charles-Maurice Le Tellier (21 n. 14); what seems to have counted against him was that the court thought he was 'jansénisant'.

<sup>39</sup> AAS, Registres des Procès-Verbaux, vol. 11, f. 115r. Thévenot was presented 10 Jan. 1685 by Henri de Bessé de La Chapelle-Milon [known as M. de La Chapelle], Louvois' spokesman in the Academy.

me semble qu'il estoit temps de reparer la faute qu'on auoit faite autresfois').<sup>40</sup>

In the six and a half years that followed, Thévenot worked at the Bibliothèque du roi as both librarian and academician—since the Académie des sciences still held its meetings within the library, it was easy for him to play an active role in it.<sup>41</sup> For the first time since the mid-1660s, he was now back at the centre of Paris intellectual life, and able to make use of his network of correspondence to greater effect, since his new position brought new influence. For example, he tried to find some way of bringing Leibniz back to Paris—especially once he had heard that Leibniz had taken on the project to write a history of the House of Brunswick, since the necessary research trips would provide a good excuse to come to France.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, he wrote to the Maurist *érudit*, Mabillon—then on his scholarly travels in Italy—asking him to get in touch with Marcello Malpighi in order to establish better links between the Bolognese anatomist and the Académie des sciences.<sup>43</sup> He was also, of course, in a better position to continue his existing projects, collecting travel documents with a view to publication in future volumes of the *Relations*, and acting as a general information source on matters geographical. When the abbé de Choisy was preparing for his voyage to Siam in 1685—on the *Oyseau*, along with the French ambassador and the six Jesuit astronomers—he consulted Thévenot first, and received from him vast questionnaires about the countries he was to visit.<sup>44</sup> It is within the context of his work at the library that we can place Thévenot's involvement in the publishing of Confucius.

<sup>40</sup> Leibniz to M. Thévenot, undated (early 1685): *A*, 1/4, 490–1. David Sturdy has recently echoed Leibniz's assessment, arguing that this may have been an attempt by Louvois to make up for what Colbert had never done: Sturdy, *Science and Social Status*, 216.

<sup>41</sup> G. Meynell, 'The Académie des sciences at the rue Vivienne, 1666–1699', *Archives internationales d'histoire des sciences*, 44 (1994), 22–37, is the fullest account of the Académie's location. To judge from the frequency of his appearance in the AAS procès-verbaux, Thévenot was an active participant.

<sup>42</sup> Thévenot and Mabillon wanted Leibniz to come to Paris: see *A*, 1/4, 640 (Brousseau to Leibniz, 11 June 1687). When Leibniz was planning his trip to Italy to collect materials, Thévenot offered to ask Cardinal d'Estrées in Rome (an old friend) to help (*A*, 1/5, 420). Once the Nine Years' War had started, Leibniz could not come to France (*A*, 1/5, 680–1).

<sup>43</sup> Thévenot to Mabillon, 10 Apr. 1686: BN ms fr. 19658, f. 37r–38v.

<sup>44</sup> F.-T. de Choisy, *Journal du Voyage de Siam*, ed. D. Van der Cruyse (Paris, 1995), 383: 'J'ai eu des conférences avec M. Thévenot. . . et pourvu que je satisfasse à mon retour à la dixième partie des questions qu'il me fait, je n'aurai pas perdu mon temps.'

As we saw in Chapter 2, Thévenot had long been a supporter of the Jesuits' writings on China. As part of his programme of publication for the *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, he had got hold of numerous texts relating to China, some originating from the Dutch East Indies Company—such as Nieuhof's account of the company's visit to Beijing, which had been sent to him by Isaac Vossius—and others from the Jesuits, like the extracts from Michael Boym's *Flora sinensis* and Martini's *Novus atlas sinensis*.<sup>45</sup> Above all, in the fourth part of his series (1672), Thévenot had pioneered the European publication of Confucius by reprinting Intorcetta's *Sinarum scientia politico-moralis*, a 'translation' of the *Zhongyong* (or Doctrine of the Mean, the second book of the Confucian canon), which had already been printed in Canton in 1667 and in Goa in 1669.<sup>46</sup> In the end, as we have already seen, Intorcetta's mission to Rome failed to further the publication project, so it was Thévenot's decision to take up his text that gave European readers their first access to 'la Science des Chinois'. What brought the text into Thévenot's hands was his friendship with the Florentine virtuoso Lorenzo Magalotti, who had already sent other travel texts to Thévenot.<sup>47</sup> The Tuscan court had been visited by the Jesuit Johann Grueber in 1665, and this allowed Magalotti to send (by way of Prince Leopold's travelling librarian, the abbé Lorenzo Panciatichi) the texts that appeared in the fourth part of Thévenot's collection: an account of an interview with Grueber, and the Intorcetta book.<sup>48</sup> Thévenot had then sent his version of the Intorcetta text

<sup>45</sup> M. Boym, 'Briefve [sic] relation de la Chine', and 'Flora sinensis', in Thévenot, *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, part 2 (Paris, 1664), sep. pag.; J. Nieuhof, 'Voyage des Ambassadeurs de la Compagnie hollandoise des Indes orientales, envoyés l'an 1656 en la Chine', and M. Martini, 'Description géographique de l'Empire de la Chine', both in part 3 (Paris, 1666), sep. pag.

<sup>46</sup> P. Intorcetta, *Sinarum scientia politico-moralis, sive Scientiae Sinicae liber inter Confucii libros secundus*, in part 4 of Thévenot's *Relations de divers voyages curieux* (Paris, 1672). Thévenot included the Latin text and Intorcetta's *Vita Confucius* (14–18), then added French translations: 'La vie de Confucius' (19–23), and 'Version de quelques endroits du second livre Confucius [sic]' (23–4). Cf. H. Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica: Dictionnaire bibliographique des ouvrages relatifs à l'Empire chinois*, 3 vols (Paris, 1878–95), vol. 2, 1387–8. On the relation of Intorcetta's text to that of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, see Mungello, *Curious Land*, 249–53. Thévenot's edition of Intorcetta was the first time that any Confucian text had been printed in Europe (Golvers, 'The development', 1147).

<sup>47</sup> Conrart, *Lettres à Lorenzo Magalotti*, 110, 121, 127, 132, 141.

<sup>48</sup> J. Grueber and A. d'Orville, 'Voyage à la Chine des PP. I. Grueber et d'Orville', in Thévenot, *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, part 4 (Paris, 1672), sep. pag.; English translation in *China and France, or Two Treatises* (London, 1676). Magalotti republished

out to his contacts, including Edward Bernard, Thomas Hyde, and Robert Boyle.

Having already proven his interest in the Jesuits' presentation of Confucius, it is perhaps not surprising that in the summer of 1685, now installed at the royal library, Thévenot began trying to woo Couplet back from Rome to Paris. An insight into these negotiations is provided by the letters sent by the abbé Claude Bernou to the abbé Renaudot.<sup>49</sup> Eusèbe Renaudot—grandson of Théophraste Renaudot, the founder of the French *Gazette*, and son of the prominent physician Eusèbe—had been brought up among the scholars at court and had extremely good connections; he had been a member of Bossuet's 'petit concile', and was among Colbert's *érudits*. However, he had the reputation of being a Jansenist sympathizer, and there were rumours that this had counted against him in his bid for the library.<sup>50</sup> Although he and Thévenot had previously been friends, the library affair marked a souring in their relationship. While Thévenot's friends praised him, quite conventionally, for not having made any effort to obtain the library post, Renaudot complained about Thévenot's secret intrigues.<sup>51</sup> The abbé Claude Bernou, the older of the two men, was in Rome from May 1683 to June 1686, employed in the retinue of Cardinal d'Estrées, who was Louis XIV's special envoy to the pope. Bernou and Renaudot, already friends, shared an interest in geography and science, and were both partners in the ill-fated expedition of Robert

an Italian version later as: *Notizie varie dell'imperio della China e di qualche altro paese adiacente, con la vita de Confucio* (Florence, 1697). A modern Italian edition exists: *Relazione della Cina*, trans. T. Poggi Salani (Milan, 1974). On Grueber and d'Orville, see C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603–1721* (The Hague, 1924), 164–204.

<sup>49</sup> These letters are in BN ms n. a. fr. 7497 (formerly catalogued as Renaudot 42); a nineteenth-century copy, by P. Margry, is also at n. a. fr. 9335.

<sup>50</sup> On Renaudot, see *ABF, DLF-17*; A. Villien, *L'abbé Eusèbe Renaudot: essai sur sa vie et sur son œuvre liturgique* (Paris, 1904); his later diplomatic career is dealt with in P. Burger, 'Spymaster to Louis XIV: a study of the papers of the abbé Eusèbe Renaudot', in E. Cruickshanks, ed., *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689–1759* (Edinburgh, 1982), 111–37; and Burger, 'L'abbé Renaudot en Italie (1700–1701)', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 22 (1990), 243–53. For Renaudot as 'jansénisant', see above, note 38.

<sup>51</sup> Christophe Brousseau told Leibniz that Thévenot 'n'a pas fait la moindre démarche pour l'obtenir' (15 Dec. 1684, in Leibniz, *A*, 1/4, 487). Compare La Bruyère, *Les Caractères*, 'De la cour', section 42. Bernou mentions Renaudot's complaints in BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 193v (Bernou to Renaudot, 27 Jan. 1685).

Cavelier de La Salle to found a Mississippi colony.<sup>52</sup> Both men were known in Parisian scholarly circles, and were acquainted with d'Herbelot, Bernier, and the Pétis de La Croix. Since Renaudot was still editor of the Paris *Gazette*, the presence of Bernou in Rome was an opportunity to exchange news, but the letters Bernou sent were also filled with gossip, advice, and consolation on Renaudot's failure to win the library post.

Renaudot now found Thévenot's somewhat erratic behaviour at the library an offence to the scholarly ethic of exchange. At the same time, Renaudot was irritated by Thévenot's championing of the geography of Abulfeda (the utility of which Renaudot very much doubted), and by what he saw as Thévenot's credulous repetition of the Jesuits' overly positive opinion on the reliability of the Chinese annals. No doubt already predisposed to be sceptical of the Jesuits, Renaudot now found himself with new motivations to be critical of Thévenot's sinophilia. As he wrote to another friend (Nicolas Toinard), he and Thévenot had fierce arguments about the value of Chinese civilization:

Vous scauez qu'il est[,] aussi bien que Mr Vossius son amy, admirateur perpetuel des Chinois. Nous auons eu sur cela des gueres plus que ciuiles, lorsque ie luy ay dit que ie les croyois dures facteurs de Cabinets de Vernis, et de Porcelaine, *praetereaue nihil*.<sup>53</sup>

[You know that he is, along with Mr Vossius his friend, a perpetual admirer of the Chinese. We have had more than civil wars on that, when I said to him that I thought they were good merchants of varnished cabinets and of porcelaine, and apart from that, nothing.]

Renaudot seems to have decided to gain revenge on Thévenot by publishing geographical works that would discredit him. In particular, he hinted that he would be able to publish an Arabic account of China which would temper the enthusiasm of the more ardent sinophiles. It

<sup>52</sup> On Bernou's American interests, see J. Delanglez, *Louis Jolliet: vie et voyages (1645–1700)* (Montreal, 1950), 155–67; and M. Pelletier, 'Les globes de Louis XIV: les sources françaises de l'œuvre de Coronelli', *Imago Mundi*, 34 (1982), 72–89.

<sup>53</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 563, f. 122v, Eusèbe Renaudot to Nicolas Toinard, 2 May [1685?]. Earlier in this letter, Renaudot writes of Thévenot: 'il ueut tout scauoir, et le tout pour ne rien dire de ce quil scait, enigmatiser sur ce qu'il ne scait pas', and added that Couplet did not want Thévenot to publish his document on Chinese chronology because it was 'pleine de fautes'.

would be some years, however, before this project came to fruition.<sup>54</sup> Bernou was more cautious in his assessment. He agreed that Isaac Vossius was a careless scholar, who had shown himself prone to ridiculous exaggerations in his article on the size of ancient Rome, and that the sinophilia of Vossius and Thévenot was probably excessive; at the same time he argued that the Chinese annals were probably 'just as true as [those of] the Greeks and Romans' ('aussi veridiques que les grecques et les romaines').<sup>55</sup> At the same time he advised Renaudot to maintain civil relations with Thévenot, since the latter was an old friend of Cardinal d'Estrées.

Bernou met Philippe Couplet at the Roman residence of Cardinal d'Estrées in early March 1685, and the two men saw each other frequently throughout the rest of the summer.<sup>56</sup> Couplet, as part of his role as the China mission's *procurator*, had a number of Jesuit texts to publish, and one of these—a description of China by Gabriel Magalhães—he gave to Bernou to translate.<sup>57</sup> Thévenot meanwhile was writing to Couplet, urging him to send him Chinese texts both for the library and for his *Relations*. At this stage Thévenot was mainly interested in a fragment on Chinese chronology, a document Renaudot also wanted to consult, but which Thévenot refused to share.<sup>58</sup> Bernou responded by admitting that he had always found Thévenot difficult, and besides he had heard from the Pétis de La Croix (father and son) that Thévenot's work on Abulfeda was far from exact; he meanwhile urged Renaudot to send a copy of his translation of the Arabic travelogue, so that Couplet could provide comments and notes on what the text said about China.<sup>59</sup> In late June, for the first time, Bernou mentioned

<sup>54</sup> See below, Epilogue. This project is first mentioned as early as Jan. 1685 (BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 192r, Bernou to Renaudot, 20 Jan. 1685). Bernou writes: 'uous prenez le bon parti de uous uanger a force de faire suer les imprimeurs'; and encourages Renaudot to publish 'ces uoyages [qui] n'ont pas été écrits en langue Cretiene'.

<sup>55</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 243v (Bernou to Renaudot, 7 Aug. 1685); Bernou expands on this in a later letter (f. 249r, 28 Aug. 1685).

<sup>56</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 205v (Bernou to Renaudot, 10 Mar. 1685).

<sup>57</sup> G. de Magalhães's *Nouvelle Relation de la Chine*, trans. C. Bernou (Paris, 1688); Bernou dedicated this (his only published work) to Cardinal d'Estrées.

<sup>58</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 205v and f 218r. This fragment, 'Synopsis Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae', appeared in the posthumous 1696 edition of Thevenot's *Relations*.

<sup>59</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 218, Bernou to Renaudot, 8 May 1685; f. 232v (26 June 1685), Renaudot did send extracts, and Couplet sent comments (f. 239r–40v, 24 July 1685).

that Couplet was also sending Thévenot the philosophical works of Confucius, translated into Latin:

le bon pere est si peu ialoux des siens [travaux] qu'il est resolu d'enuoyer a Mr T. le reste de sa Cronique ou Cronologie que ie l'exhorte d'acheuer avec plusieurs prolegomenes pour éclaircir la même matiere[,] item toutes les oeuvres philosophiques de Confutius traduites en latin.<sup>60</sup>

[the good father is so generous with his work that he has decided to send to Mr. T. the rest of his chronicle or chronology, which I urged him to finish with several prefaces (to make the material clearer), the same for all the philosophical works of Confucius translated into Latin.]

This is the earliest evidence for Couplet's decision to send the Confucius manuscript to Paris. On 3 July 1685, Bernou repeated that Couplet 'is going to send Mr Thevenot lots of things from China, like the philosophical works of Confucius, to be printed in France' ('enuoyera a Mr Theuenot beaucoup de choses de la Chine, comme les œuures philosophiques de Confutius pour être imprimées en France').<sup>61</sup> Couplet seems to have been somewhat hesitant to consign the precious manuscripts to the post, and was only willing to send the Confucius if it was guaranteed to be printed. Bernou, eager to claim credit for the deal himself, urged Couplet to agree to send a total of sixty-three volumes to Paris ('pour l'interest du Roy et du public'), and added that 'Mr T[hevenot] still knows nothing of this negotiation and would perhaps try to make it resound to his honour' ('Mr T[hevenot] ne sait encore rien de cette negotiation et uoudra peutêtre s'en faire honneur').<sup>62</sup> By early August 1685 the manuscripts had been sent, including multiple volumes of Chinese documents on history, agriculture, medicine, and

<sup>60</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 232v–233r, Bernou to Renaudot, 26 June 1685.

<sup>61</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 226v, 3 July 1685. Bernou clearly thought that the chronology at least was going to be published in Thévenot's *Relations*, and noted that Thévenot 'se fait ainsi autheur a peu de frais en atrapant deça dela les ourages d'autruy' (f. 234r, 10 July 1685).

<sup>62</sup> BN ms n. a. fr. 7497, f. 237–8, 17 July 1685. Bernou writes, 'ie me suis chargé de parler a ce pere touchant Confutius et ce qui manque de sa cronologie. Il m'a promis d'enuoyer Confutius a condition de le faire imprimer.' Thévenot, we learn, had asked Louvois to ask La Tuillière, director of the Académie des Arts in Rome, to put pressure on Couplet. Bernou claimed the credit for himself, though ('Le pere Couplet a ma sollicitation a enuoyé a Mr de Louuoy pour les faire imprimer les œuures philosophiques de Confutius', 7 Aug. 1685, f. 243v). By September, Bernou said Couplet had sent 140 books, including a dictionary of 60,000 characters, to Thévenot (11 Sept. 1685, f. 254v).



language. Rumours began to circulate among the learned that Couplet was sending materials to Thévenot in Paris. For example, in August 1685, Henri Justel, Thévenot's old Huguenot friend, now living in exile in England, told Thomas Smith that 'Fr Couplet has sent some very good things regarding China to Thevenot, garde of the Bibliothèque du roi' ('le Pere Couplet Jesuite a enuoyé de tres belles choses qui regardent la Chine a Monsieur Theuenot garde de la bibliotheque du Roy').<sup>63</sup> In October, it was rumoured in Rome that Couplet was planning to go back to Paris to work at the Bibliothèque du roi, either to work on the translations, or to see them through the press.<sup>64</sup> In December, one of the Maurists then in Rome reported that Couplet had left because, things not going his way with the Propaganda Fide, he had decided to make 'an honourable retreat'.<sup>65</sup> That the situation in Rome was not favourable to the Jesuits at this time was also explained by Father La Chaize in a letter to Beijing: 'the good Fr Couplet . . . arrived in Rome at a very unfavourable time' ('Le bon P. Couplet . . . est arrivé à Rome dans un temps bien peu favorable').<sup>66</sup> Perhaps the two factors worked together: the relative hostility of the atmosphere in Rome, and the promise of a publishing opportunity in Paris.

<sup>63</sup> Bod. ms Smith 46, p. 408, Justel to Smith, 16 Aug. 1685; see also pp. 455–6, Justel to Smith (undated), relating that Couplet had sent Thévenot the whole of Confucius with a Latin paraphrase.

<sup>64</sup> Jean Durand to Charles Bulteau, Rome 15 Oct. 1685, in J. Mabillon and B. de Montfaucon, *Correspondance inédite de Mabillon et de Montfaucon avec l'Italie*, ed. P. Valéry, 3 vols. (Paris, 1846), vol. 1, 147: 'Le P. Couplet . . . qui attendait ici la fin du procès pour retourner en la Chine, doit, à ce qu'on m'a dit, aller en France pour travailler à la bibliothèque du Roi à traduire des livres chinois en langue latine.' Note also the letter of Schelstrate to Christian Menzel, 20 Oct. 1685: 'At Pater Coupletus misit Lutetiam Parisiorum ad Clarissimum Dominum Tavenot, bibliothecae regiae custodem, omnia opera eiusdem Confusii, latinitate donata, quae modo sub proelo sudant', in *La Correspondance d'Emmanuel Schelstrate, préfet de la Bibliothèque vaticane (1683–1692)*, ed. L. Ceyssens (Brussels and Rome, 1949), 183; cf. 229, Schelstrate to Ludolf, Dec. 1686: 'Audio eumdem P. Coupletum post suum ex Urbe discessum Lutetiam petiisse, ibidemque iussu regis omnes Confusii libros in latinum transtulisse qui una cum historia sinensi eodem auctore conscripto, brevi typis edentur.'

<sup>65</sup> *Correspondance inédite de Mabillon et de Montfaucon*, vol. 1, 178: Dom Claude Estiennot to Charles Bulteau, Rome 4 Dec. 1685: 'Le P. Couplet, missionnaire de la Chine, va en France. Je crois que les décisions de la Propaganda Fide, qui n'ont pas été fort favorables à la Compagnie et à ses missionnaires dans la Chine, lui ont fait penser à cette honnête retraite.' On 11 Oct. 1685, the Propaganda Fide had issued another directive against the Jesuits' missionary methods, after which Couplet asked permission to return to Paris: Foss, 'The European sojourn', 134.

<sup>66</sup> '[Couplet] est arrivé a Rome dans un temps bien [inserted above line: peu] favorable', La Chaize to Verbiest, 15 Jan. 1688 (cited above, note 33).

For whatever combination of motives, Couplet left Rome in December 1685 for his northward journey, and after several weeks' stay in Florence, arrived in Paris by late March 1686.<sup>67</sup> This time he stayed for a year and three quarters, until December 1687 (after the appearance of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* in May 1687). By the summer of 1686, work on the book was going ahead at the Bibliothèque du roi. We learn from the archives of the library that two scribes spent nineteen days copying Couplet's texts at the end of June; at the end of July a new package of manuscripts arrived in the post from Rome; in September, two dozen portfolios were bought to hold the Chinese books that Couplet had deposited. The largest outlay was a payment to Couplet himself, of two hundred *livres*, 'for the copies that he had made in Rome of the ten books of Confucius and others' ('pour les copies qu'il a fait faire à Rome des ecrits des dix livres de Confucius et autres').<sup>68</sup> Other traces of Couplet's activity come from the accounts of the Bâtiments du roi, the department that dealt with the Académie des sciences and the Bibliothèque. At this time there were regular payments to Thévenot to cover his expenses as the library's manager. In addition to these normal outgoings, though, we read of extra payments for Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong. The *trésor royal* paid a pension for Couplet and 'Sr Michel, Chinois' of 400 *livres*; in addition, Thévenot had to be reimbursed for 950 *livres* for related expenses.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, Couplet did extremely well out of the *trésor royal* during his stay, receiving no less than five thousand *livres* in 'gratifications' for the books he was preparing and the work he had done at the Bibliothèque du roi.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Louvois to La Chapelle, 1 Apr. 1686: 'Je v[ou]s enuoye une lettre du S<sup>r</sup> Theuenot concernant le Pere Couplet jesuite arriué depuis peu de Rome . . . et vous prie trouver ensuite de ma part le pere de la Chaise p[ou]r luy dire q[ue] le Roy me commande de l'advertir que Sa Ma<sup>te</sup> sera très agreable quil fasse en sorte que le dit Pere Couplet puisse aller loger a la bibliotheque pour y travailler a la version de quelque livres [chinois, inserted] qui y sont', SHAT, A1 764, f. 3; cf. A. Mallon, 'Science and government in France, 1661–1699' (Queen's University, Belfast, Ph.D. thesis, 1983), 358.

<sup>68</sup> BN ms Archives de l'Ancien Régime 1 (register of expenses of the Bibliothèque du roi, 23 Apr. 1684 to 31 Dec. 1689), ff. 71v, 73v, 74r. The total outlay on Couplet was 269 *livres*, 5 *sous*.

<sup>69</sup> J.-J. Guiffrey, ed., *Comptes des Bâtiments du roi sous le règne de Louis XIV*, 5 vols (Paris, 1881–1901), vol. 2, cols 1084 and 1140 ('la depense qu'il [Thévenot] a cy-devant faite pour eux par ordre de S[a] M[ajesté]').

<sup>70</sup> Guiffrey, *Comptes*, vol. 2, cols 1087 and 1141 (Mar. 1687, 2,000 *livres* 'en consideration des divers ouvrages qu'il compose, de la traduction de l'Histoire chinoise qu'il donne au public'); then 1097 and 1141 (25 Nov./7 Dec. 1687, 3,000 *livres* 'par gratification, en consideration du travail qu'il a fait a la bibliothèque de S. M.').

These sources confirm that Couplet's work editing the *Confucius* was intimately connected with the Bibliothèque du roi, and allow us to picture him travelling back and forth between the Jesuits' *maison professe* in the Marais and the rue Vivienne. Some further glimpses of Couplet's day-to-day life in Paris are provided by the letters that he sent to a certain doctor of theology named Louis Picques.<sup>71</sup> Picques is barely remembered today, but was known in his day among scholars for his interest in Oriental languages. He kept up correspondence with many *savants* around Europe, including Vansleb, Ludolf, Renaudot, Huet, Thévenot, Galland, William Wake (later Archbishop of Canterbury), Montfaucon, and Sparwenfeld. Gilles Ménage is supposed to have said that 'to be his friend, you had to know Coptic, Egyptian or Samaritan, or at least speak Arabic' ('pour estre son amy, il falloit sçavoir le copte, l'égyptien ou le samaritain, ou du moins parler arabe').<sup>72</sup> Although his main interests were in the Ethiopic and Coptic Christian Churches, he was also interested in China, and was in contact with the Berlin-based botanist and sinologist Christian Menzel.<sup>73</sup> His friendship with Couplet had already been established by the time of the first surviving letter (of May 1686). Couplet, as a Flemish Jesuit, was acting as a link between Picques and the head of the Bollandists (in Antwerp), Daniel Papebroch. It was hoped that Picques's erudition in the history of the Oriental churches might be of interest to the editors of the *Acta Sanctorum*. For his part, Picques linked Couplet with Menzel in Berlin. Through Picques, the Jesuit sent Menzel a copy of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* as soon as it was off the press, along with a Chinese vocabulary and even a Chinese writing brush.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, through Picques's connection, Couplet sent some maps of China to Job Ludolf

<sup>71</sup> AN, M 856, dossier 1, items 1–32 and 69: 33 letters from Couplet to Picques, dated between 9 May 1686 and 19 Dec. 1687 (many of them undated).

<sup>72</sup> On Picques, see F. Richard, 'Un érudit à la recherche de textes religieux venus d'Orient, le docteur Louis Picques (1637–1699)', in E. Bury and B. Meunier, eds, *Les Pères de l'Eglise au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993), 253–77. The Ménage quip is recorded by le P. Léonard, cited in B. Neveu, *Erudition et religion aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1994), 40.

<sup>73</sup> On Menzel (or Mentzel, 1622–1701) see Mungello, *Curious Land*, 236–44. He published *Sylogge minutiarum lexicæ latino-sinico-characteristici* (Berlin, 1685) and *Kurtze chinesische Chronologia oder Zeit-Register aller chinesischen Käyser* (Berlin, 1696). I have not seen the letters from Couplet to Menzel in Glasgow University Library, ms Hunter 299 (U.6.17).

<sup>74</sup> The 'pinceaux chinois pour M. Menzel' is mentioned in AN, M 856, dossier 1, item 4, letter dated 30 June 1687; Couplet had run out of his own brushes by this time and had got one from another Jesuit (item 9).

in Frankfurt.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, we learn, Couplet was spending time with then prominent Jesuit writers, including Ménestrier and Hardouin; and from time to time he mentions meeting the king's confessor, Père La Chaize.<sup>76</sup> Later in his stay, Couplet tried to put Picques's name forward for advancement by means of this channel to royal patronage, using the argument that Picques's services to Papebroch—and 'pour la gloire de Dieu et de ses saints'—merited some reward.<sup>77</sup> Even after *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* had been printed, Couplet made Picques wait for his copy until after he had been to Versailles to present a copy to the king.<sup>78</sup>

Couplet's letters to Picques also provide a sense of the relationship the Jesuit had with Thévenot once they were working together in Paris. He says nothing about how the working arrangements were decided upon. In fact, by the time the letters were written (in 1687), Couplet can only complain: it seems that Thévenot was not being the most cooperative of librarians. Couplet wanted to send Menzel some Chinese books, but lamented that 'being in the royal library under the care of M. Th., they may as well be in the Vatican Library' ('estant en la bibliot. Royal sou la conduite de M. Th. [ils] sont comme s'ils estoient en la bibliotheque Vaticane').<sup>79</sup> (Even a Jesuit could joke about the proverbial impenetrability of the papal library.) In particular there seems to have been a disagreement about a certain 'grammaire tartare' and a 'livre arabe'. Thévenot had promised to pass on some source materials that might have aided Couplet in the writing of his introduction to the Confucius book: namely manuscripts including a guide to the 'Tartar' language (presumably Manchu), and a certain Arabic travel account that mentioned China (whether this was the same text that Renaudot was working on is not clear). Couplet occasionally expresses his frustration with Thévenot: on one occasion he told Picques, 'as for the grammar, you will have it after Mr Thevenot (who is the master of it, and takes all the copies for himself) does me the favour of giving me

<sup>75</sup> AN, M 856, dossier 1, item 5 (10 July 1687).

<sup>76</sup> Couplet writes that he has told Hardouin about Picques's communications with Papebroch (item 4, 30 June 1687).

<sup>77</sup> Item 27 (no date); item 6 (11 Aug. 1687). Although it is not clear what was proposed for Picques, nor what the outcome of the negotiations were, Picques went on to be head of the Bibliothèque Mazarine (1688–95).

<sup>78</sup> Item 3, 27 Apr. 1687: 'quand au Confuis il faudrà attendre apres l'auoir présenté premierement a Sa Maiestè treschrestienne'; Couplet presented the book to the king at Versailles on the 21 June 1687 (item 15).

<sup>79</sup> Item 11, 26 June 1687.

some copies, as he promised, and God alone knows when that will be' ('quant a la grammaire vous l'aurè apres que Ms<sup>r</sup> Theuenot qui en est le mestre et prend tous les exemplaires pour soÿ me fera la faueur de m'en donner quelques exemplaires comme il m'at promis et quand serà cela Dieu seul le peut scauoir').<sup>80</sup> A few weeks later he added, 'as for the Arabic book, I can't find a way to get it from the very irritating Mr Thevenot. I think Monsr will get a more skilful and satisfying response on this . . . from Mr Renaudot, whom I intend to visit' ('touchant le liure arabe, je ne trouue pas le moyen de l'auoir de ce tres facheux S<sup>r</sup> Theuenot. je crois que Mons<sup>r</sup> aura plus d'adresse et de satisfaction sur cela [. . .] de Monsr Raynodot qui je pretend d'aller voir').<sup>81</sup>

As well as spending time with Renaudot, we find that Couplet met François Bernier, who was as excited as any by the arrival of the Confucian classics. Bernier had written to the Jesuit to express his admiration for the book, and the two met for a meal at the Bibliothèque du roi.<sup>82</sup> Bernier was so impressed with Confucius that he decided to start a translation from the Jesuits' Latin into French, so that he could present the text to the salon of Mme de La Sablière. Unfortunately, he died before he could complete these translations, and only the introductory notes he made were published.<sup>83</sup> Other Paris *savants* were equally drawn to this new addition to the philosophical library: within a year, Louis Cousin and Simon Foucher had both produced books of moral maxims culled from *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. This was only the beginning of the book's reception among the philosophers of Europe.<sup>84</sup>

There remains one other angle from which to approach the production of Couplet's book in Paris: its printing history. *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was printed by Daniel Horthemels, a Flemish convert to

<sup>80</sup> Item 3, 27 Apr. 1687.

<sup>81</sup> Item 26, 10 June 1687.

<sup>82</sup> Item 25, 14 June [1687]; item 30 (undated), added in margin: 'Je fis lundi dernier avec Mr Bernier disner a la bibliotheque du Roy et dict a Dieu a M. Theuenot.'

<sup>83</sup> Arsenal mss 2331 and 2689. Printed as 'Introduction à la lecture de Confucius', in *Journal des Sçavans*, June 1688, 15–22 (Paris edn), as part of 'Extrait de diverses pièces envoyées pour êtreines par Mr. Bernier à Mme de La Sablière'; this had already appeared as a pamphlet: *Copie des étreines envoyées à Madame de la Sablière par M. Bernier* (Montpellier, 1688). See Pinot, *La Chine*, 376–90.

<sup>84</sup> [Attrib. L. Cousin or J. de La Brune]: *La Morale de Confucius, philosophe de la Chine* (Amsterdam, 1688); S. Foucher [attrib.], *Lettre sur la morale de Confucius, philosophe de la Chine* (Amsterdam and Paris, 1688), the Paris version of which was also printed by Horthemels.

Catholicism only recently received into the *communauté des libraires* (1686).<sup>85</sup> It seems plausible to explain the choice of printer in the light of the relationship Horthemels seems to have had with the Bibliothèque du roi under Thévenot.<sup>86</sup> The archives of the library record that in February of 1685, for example, Horthemels was paid for two vellum skins ‘that he had provided to make two marine charts to be sent to Siam’ (‘qu’il a fourni pour faire deux cartes marines pour enuoyer a Siam’).<sup>87</sup> We know that Thévenot provided sea charts for the first French embassy to Siam, leaving at this time, and it seems likely that these are the same ones.<sup>88</sup> We find further evidence of Thévenot working with Horthemels in 1686, when the latter printed the catalogue of Chancellor Séguier’s library that Thévenot had helped to compile.<sup>89</sup> In the light of this relationship, it seems unsurprising that Horthemels was involved in printing the accounts of Siam written by Guy Tachard and the chevalier de Chaumont, both texts that resulted from the 1685 voyage of the *Oyseau*.<sup>90</sup>

This evidence of a working relationship between Horthemels and the royal library under Thévenot needs to be placed alongside the ‘Extrait du Privilège du Roy’ printed on the last page of *Confucius Sinarum*

<sup>85</sup> After his death in 1691, Horthemels’s firm did not survive long, going bankrupt in 1692: Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société*, 726; Chartier and Martin, *Histoire de l’édition française*, vol. 2, 340; P. Renouard, *Répertoire des imprimeurs parisiens: libraires et fondeurs de caractères en exercice à Paris au XVIIe siècle* (Nogent-le-Roi, 1995); J.-D. Mellot and E. Queval, *Répertoire d’imprimeurs/libraires (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles): état en 1995 (4000 notices)* (Paris, 1997). Horthemels’s best-known production is Adrien Baillet’s *Vie de Monsieur Des-Cartes*, 2 vols (Paris, 1691).

<sup>86</sup> Noël Golvers has speculated that the reason Couplet chose to publish his book with Horthemels, and not any other Paris printer, was the convenient proximity between Horthemels’s shop and the Jesuit college of Louis le Grand (Golvers, ‘The development of the CSP’, 1160). However, the rue Saint-Jacques had innumerable printers’ and engravers’ workshops, so Horthemels’s location can therefore not be a reason for the choice.

<sup>87</sup> BN ms Archives de l’Ancien Régime 1, ff. 22v.

<sup>88</sup> Choisy, *Journal du Voyage de Siam*, 57: ‘M. Thévenot a donné de belles cartes marines aux jésuites: il les a fait copier sur celles qui sont dans la Bibliothèque du Roi.’

<sup>89</sup> [M. Thévenot, and C. Hardy, eds.] *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de defunt Monseigneur le Chancelier Seguier* (Paris, 1686). Two editions appeared that year, one chez F. Le Cointe, one chez Horthemels.

<sup>90</sup> G. Tachard, *Voyage de Siam des Pères Jésuites, envoyez par le Roy aux Indes et à la Chine, avec leurs observations astronomiques, et leurs remarques de physique, de géographie, d’hydrographie, et d’histoire* (Paris, 1686); *Second voyage du Pere Tachard et des jesuites envoyez par le Roy au royaume de Siam, contenant diverses remarques d’histoire, de physique, de géographie, & d’astronomie* (Paris, 1689); A. de Chaumont, *Relation de l’ambassade de . . . à la cour du roi de Siam: avec ce qui s’est passé de plus remarquable durant son voyage* (Paris, 1686).

*Philosophus*.<sup>91</sup> What has rarely been remarked is that this was identical with the *privilege* printed in the second part of Thévenot's *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, first published in 1664.<sup>92</sup> The details are the same: in both cases there is an extract of the *lettres patentes* dated 18 February 1663, signed by 'Justel', granted to Girard Garnier (Thévenot's uncle), for a *Recueil de diverses Relations de Voyages curieux, qui n'ont point esté publiées*. The details are important: the collection is to appear in one or several volumes, and the ten years' duration of the *privilege* is to begin from the date when each volume came off the press ('à compter du jour que chaque volume sera acheué d'imprimer pour la premiere fois'). The only difference between the two is that in Couplet's book there is a line added, explaining that 'the said Mr Garnier ceded his privilege rights for Confucius alone to Daniel Horthemels, marchand-libraire in Paris, to enjoy those rights according to the agreement made between them' ('Ledit sieur Garnier a cedé son droit de Privilege pour le *Confucius* seulement, à Daniel Horthemels Marchand Libraire à Paris, pour en jouir suivant l'accord fait entre eux'), and the date given for the completion of the first impression ('achevé d'imprimer pour la premiere fois') is 28 May 1687.

What this means is that *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was printed on the twenty-four-year-old *privilege* given for Thévenot's collection of voyages. As was noted in Chapter 2, Thévenot was using, under the name of his uncle Girard Garnier, a 'package' *privilege*, a practice that was relatively common for open-ended series like the *Relations*.<sup>93</sup> Thévenot had already used an older privilege before, when he published the 1681 octavo volume which effectively formed a fifth part of the

<sup>91</sup> The 'Extrait du privilege' is the last page. It does not apply merely to the *Tabula chronologica* section of the book, as Golvers implies ('The development of the CSP', 1163).

<sup>92</sup> Thévenot, *Relations*, part 2 (Paris, 1664), sig.  $\theta$  iij<sup>r</sup>. The date given for the registration of the *privilege* with the Communauté des Imprimeurs et Libraires is 23 Apr. 1663. The fact that the CSP appeared on Thévenot's *privilege* is noted by J. Lenox, 'Description of the collection of the Voyages of Thévenot', *Contributions to a Catalogue of the Lenox Library*, 3 (New York, 1879), 19.

<sup>93</sup> See above, Chapter 2, note 84. Normally, a 'package *privilege*' would have required the entire contents of the collection to be listed in the original *lettres patentes*. The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* pushes this practice to the limit of legality, since we know that Thévenot could not have proposed to translate these texts as early as 1663, when the *privilege* was granted.

*Relations*.<sup>94</sup> It seems clear that he was doing the same thing again with *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*.

Why did the Jesuits' translation of Confucius appear under the *privilège* for Thévenot's travel collection? Unfortunately, owing to the lack of further evidence, we can only answer this question with tentative suggestions. The most obvious reason might be the fact that Intorcetta's translation of the *Doctrine of the Mean* had already been published by Thévenot. The question remains, though, why Couplet did not simply apply for a *privilège* of his own for the book. The use of Thévenot's licence does not necessarily prove that Couplet had any trouble with the censors (on the contrary, Couplet's manuscript was approved by a royal censor):<sup>95</sup> what it does suggest, however, is that this was the path of least resistance. We know that Couplet was eager to get back to Lisbon (to reach China) and therefore wanted to work quickly. To get through the legal formalities in this way, by passing off the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* as a part of Thévenot's series, was probably the easier, cheaper, and faster route.

## CONCLUSION

Thévenot's return to the heart of Paris intellectual life was to come to an end in 1691, when a sudden reverse of his fortunes forced him out of his posts. The *charge* being in the hands of Charles-Maurice Le Tellier, there was always the possibility that Thévenot might lose the position through the usual vicissitudes of the patronage system. There were various dark rumours about who had been to blame; some said that the under-librarian Nicolas Clément was behind the intrigue, although le Père Léonard explained that Thévenot had spent too much time pursuing his own projects: 'But since he (Thévenot) was very negligent, and thought only about his studies, and not even of his affairs, the same

<sup>94</sup> M. Thévenot, *Recueil de voyages de Mr. Thevenot: Dedié au Roy* (Paris, 1681; reprinted 1682). The *privilège* cited was that cited in Parts 3 and 4 of the *Relations* (dated 8 June 1662).

<sup>95</sup> The approbation is signed by Louis Cousin and dated 20 Apr. 1687. BN ms latin 6277, vol. 1, p. 371: 'J'ay Lu vn livre qui a pour titre Confucius sive Scientiæ Sinicæ libri tres . . . j'ay rien trouué qui en puisse empêcher l'impression . . .' This does not appear anywhere in the printed book.



Archbishop got him removed from the post around the year 1691–2, with some violence or threat' ('Mais comme il [Thévenot] estoit fort négligent et qu'il ne songeoit qu'à son estude, et pas mesme à ses affaires, le mesme archevesque l'en fit sortir vers l'an 1691–2 environ, avec quelque violence et menace').<sup>96</sup> After his fall from grace, Thévenot retired to Issy, where he died the following year.

What this chapter has sought to do is to bring out the connections between a story of the Jesuits' production of knowledge about China—a story now well researched by historians of sinology—and the Paris intellectual scene that we have been criss-crossing in the previous chapters of this book. Details that seem insignificant when placed within the context of one narrative can become more important within another. The fact that *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was edited at the Bibliothèque du roi, printed in the rue Saint-Jacques, and dedicated to Louis XIV was important to contemporary readers (as illustrated by the examples of Leibniz's friend Molanus and of James II). If we want to understand the local context for the production of the Jesuits' *Confucius*, we should be interested in the conjunction of interests and circumstances that led to Philippe Couplet's returning to Paris to have it printed there. Thévenot's role as a mediator, as the head of the Bibliothèque du roi, then becomes important. As with so many other aspects of Thévenot's career, his role in the introduction of Confucius to Europe has escaped the view of historians, because the kind of activity he engaged in is rarely given centre stage. It remains the case, however, that the first time any translation of a Confucian text was printed in Europe it was as part of Thévenot's collection of *Relations de divers voyages curieux* (in 1672); and the first large corpus of Confucian texts to appear in Europe—the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*—was also, from a strictly legal viewpoint, a part of Thévenot's series (because it was printed under the same *privilege*). Although he may sometimes have been less of a help than a hindrance to Couplet, Thévenot was clearly involved to a considerable degree, not only in his capacity as manager of the royal library, but also (it seems) providing the connection with

<sup>96</sup> Léonard cited in Neveu, *Erudition et religion*, 55. Christophe Brousseau told Leibniz that 'Mr Thevenot dont la disgrâce est venue par les intrigues du Sr Clement son soubibliothécaire qui a tellement gagné l'esprit de Monsr de Rheims qu'il l'a obligé de congédier le dit Sr Thevenot, et de donner sa place à luy Clement' (25 Apr. 1692; *A*, 1/8, 224). In spring 1692 other Paris scholars told Leibniz about Thévenot's dismissal: Germain Brice (*A*, 1/7, 658); Nicolas Toinard (*A*, 1/7, 592); and Daniel Larroque (*A*, 1/7, 650).

the printer Horthemels. More specifically, it was his correspondence network—his links with Florence and Rome—that first brought the Intorcetta text to Paris. The Bibliothèque du roi in this period represents the scene of ‘science’—or perhaps better, of curiosity, collecting, and correspondence. By seeing the Jesuits’ *Confucius* from the viewpoint of the Bibliothèque du roi, we can better appreciate both the complex interactions that led to its production, and the intellectual milieu for which it was written, and within which it was first read. Issues of trust and reliability were central in the controversial reception of the Jesuits’ work, and such issues were intimately connected with conceptions of civility and openness in scholarly practice.

Finally, it is worth comparing the success of the *Confucius* with the failure of Thévenot’s *Abulfeda* project. In some ways the two projects were similar: both were initially conceived as editions to be printed in the original languages, and in both cases the dream of using exotic typefaces did not materialize. If we ask why it was that the *Confucius* project was more successful, the obvious answer must be the involvement of the Society of Jesus. Not only did the Jesuits have access to a far higher level of linguistic skill and hermeneutic engagement with the Confucian texts than Thévenot did with *Abulfeda*; perhaps just as importantly, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was the result of many more collaborators than Thévenot could muster, since the Jesuit Order was an organization capable of utilizing a much larger network of actors, and of tapping richer veins of patronage, than Thévenot ever could.

## Epilogue

La bibliothèque du roi est pleine de manuscrits arabes, dont la traduction nous vaudroit une infinité de connoissances curieuses. Il en est de même de la langue chinoise. Quel vaste matiere de découvertes pour nos littérateurs!

[The royal library is full of Arabic manuscripts, the translation of which would gain us an infinity of curious findings. The same goes for Chinese. What a vast source of discoveries for our scholars!]

—D'Alembert, in *Encyclopédie*, article 'Erudition' (1755).

At the end of the seventeenth century, the period we normally associate with the 'Scientific Revolution' and the 'early Enlightenment' (or the 'Crise de la conscience européenne'), the grounds of knowledge and belief were frequently called into question. It is striking that many of the epistemological texts of the period illustrate this scepticism with scenes of cultural encounter. 'What do we know?' and 'how do we know?' were questions that seemed to conjure up exotic fables. John Locke, in his *Essay concerning human understanding*, told the story of the king of Siam who refused to believe a Dutch traveller who insisted that sometimes, in the country he came from, it became so cold that the rivers froze over. Earlier, Robert Boyle used an account of some Jesuits who presented the emperor of China with a clock, and then had trouble convincing the emperor that the machine was not animated.<sup>1</sup> In both cases, a question of exotic knowledge—how to assess reports or objects that come from afar—is used as a parable to stand for

<sup>1</sup> J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), 656–7 (book 4, ch. 15, section 5); see S. Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994), 229, 243–58. Boyle, *Hydrostatical Discourse*; cited in S. Shapin and S. Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, 1985), 216.

the problem of how any knowledge can be established. A generation later, Montesquieu was to extend this rhetorical technique to new and more elaborate lengths in the *Lettres persanes* (1721). Exotic knowledge functioned for thinkers of the period as an emblem of the problem of knowledge-making in general.<sup>2</sup> Usually, historians' attention has been on the second term in this analogy. This book, instead, has focused on the first. How could late seventeenth-century Europeans establish reliable knowledge about distant cultures and places? How could the reader, based in a library or 'cabinet', and connected to the rest of the world only by a network of correspondence, be sure of any of the tales that travellers brought back from the Indies? How could European readers improve their patchy knowledge of the geography of Asia? How could they gain access to the technical, scientific, medical, and religious learning contained in Oriental libraries? Members of the European learned community answered these questions with the tools they knew best: the working methods typical of the Republic of Letters. They examined library catalogues, deciphered documents, compiled common-place books, hired copyists, wrote to colleagues, and tried to evaluate witnesses. Baroque Orientalist knowledge was part of the scholarly fabric of the Republic of Letters, among 'virtuosi' and *curieux*, as well as antiquarian *érudits*, and was made, and quarrelled over, in familiar ways.

To illustrate the uses and the disadvantages of baroque Orientalism, and to bring the book to a close, we can follow a strand in the letters of Leibniz. Even he—with his excellent web of contacts, and the keys to the ducal library in Wolfenbüttel—sometimes had trouble chasing up footnotes. In the midst of his ecumenical correspondence with Bossuet, he took the opportunity of writing to Paul Pellisson-Fontanier about a research query he had received from a contact in Berlin.

On m'a fait une question que personne pourra mieux résoudre, que M. Thevenot . . . Voicy ce que c'est: le pere Kircher dans sa *China illustrata* a publié un ancien monument Chinois trouvé dans la Chine et en langue et caracteres du pays. Quelques scrupuleux l'ont revoqué en doute, cependant le R. P. Couplet se rapporte au jugement de Mons. Thevenot, qui en a trouvé quelque mention dans un Manuscrit Arabe. Là dessus Mons. Andreas Mullerus, qui est l'homme de l'Europe qui sçait le plus de la langue Chinoise,

<sup>2</sup> On the role of 'strange facts' in the epistemology of the scientific revolution, see L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1998), 215–53.

desireroit fort de pouvoir obtenir l'extrait de ce Manuscrit, par la faveur de M. Thévenot, qui n'est pas moins illustre par ses manieres obligeantes, que par l'etendue immense de son erudition.<sup>3</sup>

[I have been asked a question which no-one could better solve than M. Thévenot. . . Here it is: Fr Kircher, in his *China illustrata*, published an ancient Chinese monument found in China, written in the language and characters of the country. Some sceptics have cast doubt on it, but Fr Couplet refers to the judgement of M. Thévenot, who found some mention of it in some Arabic manuscript. On this, M. Andreas Mullerus, the man in Europe who knows the Chinese language best, would very much like to be able to get an extract from this manuscript, by the favour of M. Thévenot, who is no less illustrious for his obliging manners than for the immense range of his erudition.]

Andreas Müller was a Berlin-based scholar engaged in the ongoing controversy over the history of Christianity in China.<sup>4</sup> The discovery in 1625 of the 'Nestorian stone' in western China—a monument bearing an inscription which seemed to prove that there had been Christians in China long before the Franciscan missions of the Middle Ages—caused great excitement in Europe, and gave the Jesuits the hope that the antiquity of Christianity in China might make their apostolic work easier. The exposition and interpretation of this monument was intensely controversial, because enemies of the Jesuits, inside and outside the Catholic Church, suspected that the stone may have been a forgery. To address this debate was one of the central purposes of Kircher's book *China monumentis . . . illustrata* (1667).<sup>5</sup> Scholars like Leibniz

<sup>3</sup> Leibniz, *A*, 1/8, 180–1 (Leibniz to Pellison, 28 Oct. 1692).

<sup>4</sup> On Müller, see D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart, 1985), 208–46.

<sup>5</sup> A. Kircher, *China monumentis qua Sacris qua Profanis, Nec non variis Naturæ & Artis Spectaculis, Aliarumque rerum memorabilium Argumentis Illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667); French trans. by F. S. d'Alquié: *La Chine . . . Illustrée de plusieurs Monuments tant sacrés que profanes* (Amsterdam, 1670). See B. Szczesniak, 'Athanasius Kircher's *China Illustrata*', *Osiris*, 10 (1952), 385–411; Mungello, *Curious Land*, 134–73; T. J. Billings, 'Chinese fish in Jesuit nets: Athanasius Kircher and the translation of the Nestorian tablet', *Representations*, 87 (2004), 1–42; and F. C. Hsia, 'Athanasius Kircher's *China Illustrata* (1667): An *apologia pro vita sua*', in P. Findlen, ed., *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything* (New York, 2004), 383–404. The authenticity of the monument was discussed by C. de Visdelou (one of the six Jesuit mathematicians) in his *Supplément à d'Herbelot's Bibliothèque orientale* (1780); and well into the nineteenth century: see E. E. Salisbury, 'On the genuineness of the so-called Nestorian Monument of Singan-Fu', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 3 (1853), 399–419. See also ODCC, art. 'Sigan-Fu stone', and F. V. Holm, *The Nestorian Monument* (Chicago, 1909).

were well aware of the potential importance of the Nestorian stone as a piece of 'hard evidence' that might have profound implications for understanding the past (and the future) of the Christian religion. However, from the libraries of Europe there was no way of knowing whether the monument was authentic, or what it really said: all the European reader could do was piece together the evidence supplied by the Jesuits, and weigh it carefully.<sup>6</sup> Given this background, it is easy to see why it was so exciting to Leibniz to hear that an Arabic travelogue mentioning the Nestorian monument in China had been found, since this would offer independent verification of the Jesuits' claims.

Leibniz had been aware of this question for at least five years before his letter to Pellisson. Daniel Papebroch, the head of the Jesuit congregation known as Bollandists, was in correspondence with Leibniz by 1687. As we have seen, he had been involved in the project to edit Confucius since the 1670s, and was therefore abreast of Philippe Couplet's movements. In a letter of January 1687, he told Leibniz about the progress of the book in Paris, about Couplet's plans to produce a key to Chinese characters, and also about the six Jesuit mathematicians sent out to China. In a postscript he added that Thévenot had written to him, saying that he had come across evidence in an Arabic manuscript of the preaching of Christianity in China sometime after the year 1000.<sup>7</sup> In his reply, after enthusing about the putative *Clavis Sinica*, Leibniz acknowledges the news about Thévenot, and adds simply that he was still hoping for the latter's edition of Abulfeda to appear.<sup>8</sup> Over the ensuing months, Leibniz and Papebroch continued to exchange letters discussing matters Chinese. Papebroch, however, did not expect much from Thévenot.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On antiquarianism and its relation to church history (and theology) in this period, see above, Introduction; Kircher's book on China is discussed in this context in A. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (London, 1997), 150–4.

<sup>7</sup> Papebroch to Leibniz, 26 Jan. 1687 (*A*, 1/4, 613): 'Dominus Thevenot Bibliothecarius Regius Parisijs mihi scripsit [scripsit?] se invenisse Arabico in MS. documenta fidei apud Sinas post annum M. prædicatæ: eaque daturum prælo. De Antiquiori etiam prædicatione multa habet Kircherus in sua *China illustrata*, quam vobis notam arbitror ubi etiam invenientur varia Latino-sinica qualia optas. Libri autem Kircheriani possunt Amstelodamo haberi.'

<sup>8</sup> Leibniz to Papebroch, Feb. 1687 (*A*, 1/4, 622): 'Cum Celeberrimo Thevenotio magnæ doctrinæ et humanitatis viro aliquod mihi quoque olim intercessit per literas commercium, diu est quod nobis Abulfedæ Geographi Arabis præstantissimi spem fecit. Egoque olim ad Carvacium Bibliothecarium Regium misi Schickardianum Abulfedæ exemplar, quod spero nunc ad Thevenotium pervenisse.'

<sup>9</sup> Papebroch to Leibniz, 1 Apr. 1687 (*A*, 1/4, 630–1, here 631): 'Clariss. Thevenotius multa promittit: sed qui virum se nosse putant, parum expectant à semper cunctabundo

Meanwhile, the year after the appearance of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, the Jesuits of Paris had published Couplet's account of the life of Candida Xu, a high-born Chinese woman who had converted to Christianity. The text was written in a *galant* style as a defence of the Jesuit mission for the edification of high-born French women. When discussing the Nestorian Monument, Couplet noted:

Mr l'Abbé Renaudot, & Mr Thevenot Garde de la Bibliotheque du Roy, ont trouvé dans les Manuscrits Orientaux, & dans quelques Livres Arabes des preuves de cette entrée de Prelats & de Prestres dans la Chine: ce qui détruit la fausse presumption de ceux, qui avoient osé dire que cette pierre étoit une invention des Jesuites, pour donner du credit à la Religion Chretienne dans la Chine.<sup>10</sup>

[M. l'abbé Renaudot & M. Thévenot (*garde* of the Bibliothèque du roi), found in the oriental manuscripts, and in some Arabic books, the proof that these prelates and priests did reach China: which destroys the false presumption of those who dared to say that this stone was just invented by the Jesuits, to give credit to the Christian Religion in China.]

This was the first mention in print of the mysterious Arabic travel text that Leibniz was pursuing when he wrote to Pellison in 1692. Pellison wrote back to tell Leibniz that his request had come too late—within the last few days Thévenot had died:

Vous voyez par là Monsieur, qu'il n'y a plus rien à faire avec luy pour le Manuscrit Arrabe, mais si ce Manuscrit est dans la Bibliotheque du Roy ou si vous en sçavez d'autres circonstances dont vous puissiez m'instruire il ne sera peut estre pas impossible de satisfaire votre curiosité, et celle de Mons. Mullerus . . .<sup>11</sup>

[You see then, Monsieur, that there is nothing more that can be done with him for the Arabic manuscript, but if this manuscript is in the Bibliothèque du roi or if you know anything else about it which you can tell me, it might not be impossible to satisfy your curiosity and that of Mr Mullerus . . .]

Leibniz, expressing his sorrow at the loss of Thévenot, hoped that Thévenot's papers would be conserved, and that he had been able to make arrangements for this in his will before he died. As for the Arabic

alioqui apto multa præstare.' Further discussion of Chinese matters followed (*A*, 1/4, 645–7, and 653–6).

<sup>10</sup> P. Couplet, *Histoire d'une Dame chrétienne de la Chine*, trans. P.-J. d'Orléans (Paris, 1688), 94.

<sup>11</sup> *A*, 1/8, 182–3 (Pellisson to Leibniz, 15 Nov. 1692).

manuscript, he gave Pellisson the references to places where Couplet had mentioned it, and suggested that since Thévenot was dead the person to ask might be the abbé Renaudot.

This line of enquiry was checked in 1693, when Pellisson also died. Leibniz turned to another Paris informant, Daniel Larroque, who was friendly with the Oriental scholars in Paris, and asked him to ask Renaudot to help.<sup>12</sup> Larroque deflected the enquiry towards a new lead, Barthélemy d'Herbelot:

Pour ce qui regarde l'auteur Persan ou Arabe cité par le P. Couplet sur la foy de Mrs Thevenot et Renaudot, je peux vous en rendre bon Compte puisque Mr d'Herbelot le plus savant homme de l'Europe dans les langues du Levant m'a compté luy même il n'y a pas 15. jours la chose comme elle est. L'Abbé Renaudot qu'on tient je ne say pourquoy versé dans ce genre de Science qu'il possède tres médiocrement ne la savoit que de Mr D'Herbelot, qui estant à Florence pres de feu Mr le Grand Duc traduit à sa prière l'auteur en question, lequel avoit écrit en caractères arabes quoy que sa langue fût presque toute Tartare son voiage de Samarcande à la Chine par la grande Tartarie. C'est dans cette relation que ce Mahometan parle du monument cité . . . Il est fâcheux que Mr d'Herbelot n'ait point reservé de copie de sa traduction et qu'il ait laissé son Ms. à Florence et qui sans doute est gardé dans la bibliothèque avec l'original.<sup>13</sup>

[As for what regards the Persian or Arabic author cited by Fr Couplet, on the word of Mssrs Thévenot and Renaudot, I can give you a good account, since M. d'Herbelot, the most learned man in Europe in the languages of the Levant, told me the truth of the matter himself, not two weeks ago. The abbé Renaudot, who is held, for some unknown reason, to be learned in this Science, which in fact he possesses only moderately, only knows of this from M. d'Herbelot, who, being in Florence at the court, translated at the Grand Duke's request the author in question, who had described, in Arabic characters, even though his language was almost all Tartar, his voyage from Samarkand to China, by way of greater Tartary. It is in this relation that this Mahometan speaks of the monument . . . It is irritating that Mr d'Herbelot did not keep a copy of his translation, and that he left his manuscript in Florence, and that it is probably still kept in the library (there) with the original.]

Leibniz accordingly turned his gaze toward Tuscany. Even before replying to Larroque, he had written post haste to Magliabecchi, the Medici librarian, asking him to look for the travelogue that d'Herbelot had translated and left behind. This was a request Leibniz had to repeat

<sup>12</sup> Leibniz to Larroque, late Sept. 1693, in *A*, 1/9, 574.

<sup>13</sup> Larroque to Leibniz, 14 Nov. 1693, in *A*, 1/9, 614–15.



many times—five years passed before Magliabecchi responded to the query.<sup>14</sup> All he could say was that if the translation was in Florence it must be buried in some grand ducal cabinet somewhere, because he could find no trace or record of its whereabouts.<sup>15</sup> In the meantime d'Herbelot himself had also died.

Even with so many of his informants dying off, Leibniz did not give up the chase. He went public with the query, mentioning the problem in the preface to his compilation of Jesuit letters, the *Novissima Sinica*.<sup>16</sup> Presumably he hoped this might incite his readers to push the matter further. He also expanded the network of enquiry, and involved new contacts in the search, including Sparwenfeld, the Swedish scholar we encountered in Chapter 4. He explained the story so far, up to the dead end he had reached: 'Magliabecchi is one of my friends, but he is a bit peculiar, and I suspect he probably preferred to say that this translation does not exist than to admit that he did not know about it' ('[Magliabecchi] est d'ailleurs de mes amis, mais il est un peu singulier, et je crois qu'il a mieux aimé de dire que cette traduction n'y est plus, que d'avouer que la chose ne luy est pas connue').<sup>17</sup> Sparwenfeld agreed that Magliabecchi was a bizarre man, and suggested that Leibniz write to another Swedish scholar, Magnus Gabriel Block, who was at the Tuscan court at the time, to ask him to search in the Florence library.<sup>18</sup> Leibniz did indeed ask Block to look, in the summer of 1698, but the Swede could not find either the Arabic travelogue or d'Herbelot's lost translation.

In the end, Leibniz was not able to satisfy his curiosity on this point. He was still writing to friends about it in 1707.<sup>19</sup> As we saw in Chapter 5,

<sup>14</sup> Leibniz to Magliabecchi, 29 Dec. 1693 (*A*, 1/9, 711); 22 Apr. 1694 (*A*, 1/10, 360); 23 Dec. 1695 (*A*, 1/12, 239); late 1697 (*A*, 1/14, 523, 799) and 1698 (*A*, 1/15, 203).

<sup>15</sup> Magliabecchi to Leibniz, Feb. 1698: 'Quella traduzione del Sig. D'Erbelot, sarà serrata in qualche Stipo di S. A. S, ed esso medesimo facilmente non si ricorderà dove sia', *A*, 1/15, 304.

<sup>16</sup> Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica* (Hanover, 1698); Leibniz, *Discours sur la théologie naturelle des Chinois*, ed. and trans. C. Frémont (Paris, 1987), 57–72, here 71; and 'La préface des *Novissima Sinica*', tr. P. Bornet, *Monumenta Serica*, 15 (1956), 328–43, here 342; English translations include *The Preface to Leibniz' Novissima Sinica*, tr. and ed. D. F. Lach (Honolulu, 1957), and *Writings on China*, tr. and ed. D. J. Cook and H. Rosemont, Jr (Chicago and La Salle, 1994). The literature on Leibniz's interest in China is large, but on this text, see P. Riley, 'Leibniz's political and moral philosophy in the *Novissima Sinica*, 1699–1999', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), 217–39.

<sup>17</sup> Leibniz to Sparwenfeld, 8 Feb. 1697, *A*, 1/13, 541.

<sup>18</sup> Sparwenfeld to Leibniz, 13 Mar. 1697: *A*, 1/13, 637–43, here 640 ('il est aussi de mes amis, il le cherchera infalliblement, pourveu qu'il ne soit pas perdu').

<sup>19</sup> Leibniz to Ancillon, 5 Dec. 1707, cited in Preface to C. Ancillon, *Mémoires concernant les vies et les ouvrages de plusieurs modernes célèbres dans la république des lettres*

however, the idea that an Arabic travel text, discovered in a Paris library, would cast light on the history of Christianity in China was not so much Thévenot's, as that of the abbé Eusèbe Renaudot. Renaudot had mentioned this idea in 1685 in his letters to the abbé Bernou, who had been able to get Philippe Couplet to comment on a segment of the text. For reasons which remain obscure, it took Renaudot over thirty years to finish editing these Arabic travels to China. It was only in 1718, three years after Leibniz was dead, that Renaudot published his translation (which was from a manuscript in the Colbertine library), along with a lengthy introduction and notes, to which he joined five appendices which made up the largest part of the book. Throughout the scholarly apparatus, Renaudot made critical swipes at almost all his predecessors.<sup>20</sup> In the essay 'sur les Sciences des Chinois', he demolished the sinophilia of Isaac Vossius, which he saw as encouraging libertines to question the authority of Holy Writ.<sup>21</sup> In the 'Eclaircissement touchant la Predication de la Religion Chrestienne à la Chine', he recounted the history of the controversy over the Nestorian stone, from its discovery, through the writings of Kircher, the challenges by Georg Horn, to the defence by Andreas Müller. Renaudot, who had made himself an expert in the history of the Nestorian Church, allowed that the stone itself was genuine, but he ridiculed Kircher for misunderstanding the inscription's Syriac. As for the Arabic manuscript of the Bibliothèque du roi—which was a different text—he was sure that Thévenot had been mistaken: 'what he [Couplet] says next about the Arabic manuscript which is not, and has never been, in the Bibliothèque du roi, he reported on the

(Amsterdam, 1709), xxix–xxx: 'Pour ce qui est de Mr. d'Herbelot, feu Mr. Thevenot, le Bibliothecaire du Roi, m'apprit que cet habile Orientaliste étant à Florence, y avoit traduit pour le Grand Duc, je ne sai si de l'Arabe ou du Persan, la Relation d'un ancien voyage dans la grande Tartarie, qui paroissoit prouver qu'il y avoit eû autrefois des Chrétiens à la Chine. J'en ai écrit à Monsieur Magliabecchi, mais il ne m'a point pû donner satisfaction là dessus. Cependant l'original même de cette Relation meriteroit d'être considéré.'

<sup>20</sup> E. Renaudot, *Anciennes relations des Indes et de la Chine, de deux Voyageurs Mahometans, qui y allerent dans le neuvième siecle; traduites d'arabe avec Des Remarques sur les principaux endroits de ces Relations* (Paris, 1718); the main text (1–124) contained the translations from Sulaiman al-Tajir (Sulaiman the Merchant) and Hasan ibn Yazid Abu Zaid al-Sirafi; Renaudot included a long preface (iii–xxxix), a commentary on the texts (125–75), and the five appendices (175–397).

<sup>21</sup> The 'Eclaircissements sur les sciences des Chinois' (340–97) was separately published in English translation as *A Dissertation on the Chinese Learning* (London, 1733). Renaudot was targeting Vossius's remarks in *Variarum Observationum Liber* (London, 1685), 69–85 ('De artibus et scientiis Sinarum').

testimony of the late M. Thévenot, who thought he had found it, but was mistaken' ('ce qu'il [Couplet] a dit ensuite du Manuscrit Arabe qui n'est point, & n'a jamais esté dans la Bibliotheque du Roy, il l'a dit sur le tesmoignage de feu M. Thevenot, qui crut l'avoir deviné & qui se trompa').<sup>22</sup>

In this, Renaudot echoes sentiments voiced by Sparwenfeld earlier, in his response to Leibniz. Sparwenfeld mentioned that he had encountered Couplet and his companion Shen Fuzong in Madrid, and that they had promised him a treatise on Chinese affairs. The scholarly world was still waiting, he said, for the Chinese dictionary that Couplet had brought to Europe, which should have been printed in Chinese characters. Perhaps unaware that he was attacking one of Leibniz's friends, he traced the problems back to Thévenot:

il faloit que tout y fut, tout autrement que le bon Thevenot fit imprimer Confycius si nonchalamment. Je me veu du mal d'avoir eu trop de bonne foy et conivence avec ce viellard, qui d'ailleurs n'estoit pas mal noté, mais ceux qui le connoissent mieux n'en sont pas mieux satisfaits que moy. Il rammasoit tout ce qu'il pouvoit, et le remettoit puis dans un coin du tiroire ou armoire à moisir, envieux que le monde sceut quelque chose dont il n'eut pu donner des raisons. Herbelot avoit la meme maladie d'envier et je vois qu'il est difficile de taxer une nat[ion] entiere de tell et tel vice, *in omnibus labimur omnes*, mais pourtant un peu moins ceux *quos ex meliore lato fiunt situs*. *Nil est asperius humili cum surgit in altum*. *Der apfelfalt nicht weit vom baum*.<sup>23</sup>

[everything was supposed to be there, and quite differently from the nonchalant way that good old Thévenot had Confucius printed. I've caused myself trouble by having too much good faith and connivance with that old man, who was by the way well-regarded, but those who know him best were no better satisfied with him than me. He hoarded everything he could, and filed it in the corner of a drawer or an armoire to go mouldy, envious that the world might know something that he could not explain. Herbelot had the same jealous madness, and I know it is difficult to charge an entire nation with this or that vice, *in omnibus labimur omnes*, but still a little less those *quos ex meliore lato fiunt situs*. *Nil est asperius humili cum surgit in altum*. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.]

As we found in Chapter 4, Sparwenfeld had a penchant for making criticisms of this kind. In his off-the-record commentary, what had

<sup>22</sup> Renaudot, *Anciennes relations*, 228–71, here 250.

<sup>23</sup> Sparwenfeld to Leibniz, 11 Jan. 1698: *A*, 1/15, 183–192, here 189; the editors identify the quotation 'Nil est . . .' as Claudian, 'In Eutropium', 1, 181.

been an inquiry about the facts of medieval China, and by implication about the use of documents and monuments in the search after truth, becomes a matter of scholarly ethics. Remarks of this kind remind us of the limitations to the ideal of international cooperation in the Republic of Letters. And yet it was precisely that sense of community that Leibniz was relying upon in order to use his correspondence network as a research tool.

Leibniz's doomed attempt to hunt the Arabic account of the Nestorian stone through the libraries of Europe can be taken as representative of problems that were typical of the 'documentary culture' of his day. Few scholars reflected more on the relationship between libraries and epistemology than Leibniz, and he must have been only too aware of the pitfalls of trying to produce knowledge in this way. His dogged (almost Panglossian) perseverance in hunting down an unknown manuscript in an unknown language, using only a fragile alliance of *gens de lettres*, recalls the experiences of Thévenot, of d'Herbelot, and of Bernier. Like Thévenot's project to edit and translate Abulfeda, Leibniz's investigation casts light on the processes of knowledge-production, precisely because it was an experiment that failed. Orientalist studies in this period faced many obstacles, and failed enquiries reveal just how much good fortune and hard work was required for any project to be completed. The information network of the Republic of Letters was fragile, and it was only when it functioned well that knowledge could be established at all. What Leibniz's paper-chase reveals—as it fortuitously knits together some of the narratives that this book has followed—is the emergence of a certain field of research, made possible by collection networks and sustained by the correspondence of the learned: a field in which Arabic manuscripts and Chinese monuments—although in this case both absent objects of scholarly desire—could be placed side by side, and in which *curieux* (like Thévenot) and *érudits* (like d'Herbelot) were of equal importance, despite their different ways of working. This was a field of study—or a mobile corpus of texts—with its own complex geography, reliant on long-range networks stretching from Europe to Istanbul or to Beijing, and at least in part made possible by the interactions between European travellers and their diverse Asian interlocutors—like Danishmend Khan in the case of François Bernier, or Hanna, Hezarfenn, and Kātib Chelebi for Galland and d'Herbelot. This field was part of the intellectual life of the Republic of Letters, and it was to furnish the Oriental materials that were to be used by the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment. It was a field that could not come into

existence until the Oriental manuscripts that had been accumulating in the collections of European princes began to be used by scholars; and it would last only until the specialized Orientalism of the later eighteenth century, itself made possible by increasing colonialism, set in. Nevertheless, for a certain period, the interplay of curiosity and erudition constituted the dominant mode by which European readers made, and made use of, their knowledge of the Orient.

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# Index

A page number followed by n refers to a footnote on that page

- Abū 'l-Fidā' (Abulfeda) 108; geography, interest in 107–10; authority of 110–1; Thévenot project 107–28, 216, 221–2, 233, 237, 243; extract in Thévenot's *Relations* 102–3
- Abyssinia, *see* Ethiopia
- Académie française 19, 53, 60
- Académie des inscriptions 36, 75–6, 98n, 171; *see also* 'petite académie'
- Académie Royale des Sciences (Paris) 18, 20, 39, 52–3, 57–61, 83, 88–9, 215, 217–8, 225
- Accademia del Cimento 67, 71, 75, 98
- Accademia della Crusca 69–71, 176
- accommodation (missions) 207, 211
- air pump 82, 91
- Aisha, wife of Muhammad 191
- alchemy 61, 142
- Alembert, Jean Le Rond d' 234
- Aleppo (Halab) 2n, 27–8, 156, 196
- Alexander VII, pope 44, 73–4, 86
- '*Alf layla wa-layla*, *see* *Thousand and One Nights*
- Algiers 28, 30
- Aliamri, Sergio (Sarkis al-Gamri) 23
- Allacci, Leone 44, 73–4
- Alliot, Pierre 91n
- alphabetic order 169–70, 174–5, 178–9, 190–6, 201
- Amsterdam 117–8, 127, 213
- anatomy 53, 151–2, 218
- Angers, academy of 145n, 162
- Anquetil-Duperron, Abraham-Hyacinthe 133
- Antwerp 213, 226
- Apollonius of Perga 35, 71, 74, 110
- Arabian Nights*, *see* *Thousand and One Nights*
- Arabic, teaching of 23, 31; Collège royal chair 2, 23, 25–6, 78, 114–5; interpreters 23–5; and Greek texts 35, 110; printing 23, 44, 109, 116–7, 120–2, 186, 202; and alphabetic order 194; bibliographies 200–1
- Argenson, René-Louis de Voyer de Paulmy, marquis d' 169
- Aristotle 96, 100n, 140, 148
- Arnauld, Antoine, *Perpetuité de la Foi*, 33–4
- Arpajon, Louis d' 145, 160n
- arts (mechanical) 35, 82–3, 91–7, 158–9, 216
- artisans 35, 82, 94, 96
- Arvieux, Laurent d' 12n, 113
- 'Asiatic mode of production' 133–4; *see also* Oriental despotism
- Assembly of the Clergy (France) 117
- astrology 60–1, 140–2, 166; in Mughal empire 150–4
- Atkinson, Geoffroy 9n, 10
- atomism 135
- Aulus Gellius 14
- Aumont, Louis-Marie de Rochebaron, duc d' 183
- Aureng-Zebe* (Dryden) 164
- Aurangzeb 131, 136, 151
- automata 35
- Auvergne, Pierre d', royal professor of Arabic, 78
- Auzout, Adrien 91n, 96
- Aymon, Jean 212
- Bacon, Francis 58, 87, 91, 93; *New Atlantis*, 58; history of trades 93
- Baghdad 2n, 28, 156
- Bailly, Jean-Sylvain 166
- 'baldachin', 2n
- Baluze, Etienne 22
- Barberini, Francesco 44, 72
- Barberini, Maffeo, *see* Urban VIII
- Barbin, Claude 162–3, 198–201
- Barrow, Isaac 110
- Basra 156
- al-Battānī 111

- Baudelot de Dairval,  
Charles-César 98n, 193n
- Baudier, Michel 146
- Bayle, Pierre 4, 10, 27n, 189; and  
Bernier 142–4; on  
d'Herbelot, 191–2;  
*Dictionnaire* 170, 197, 199
- Bayly, C. A. 12n, 151, 167
- Beckford, William 83; *Vathek* and  
d'Herbelot 170–2
- Beijing 214–5, 219, 224, 243
- Bengal 161
- Bernard, Edward 104–5, 109–10,  
117, 124–5, 180n, 189, 205n,  
206n, 217n, 220
- Bernier, François 131–167 *passim*; 14,  
85, 95, 116n, 168, 221; and  
Gassendi 135, 145; on  
Confucius 208n, 228, 243; and  
Thévenot 155–6; 'letter to  
Colbert' 133–4; 'letter to  
Chapelain', 136–9
- Bernini, Gianlorenzo 72–3
- Bernou, Claude, 220–3, 241
- Besnier, Pierre 200
- Beuningen, Coenraad van 91n, 111,  
113
- bible 31–3, 55–6, 61, 77; *see also*  
polyglot bibles
- biblical history 6–7, 59, 146, 208
- Bibliothèque du roi 21–2, 30, 36, 53,  
77, 99, 113n; d'Herbelot  
and 177, 179, 184–5, 203, 233;  
Thévenot at 215–8, 226; Couplet  
and 226–32
- Bignon, Jean-Paul, abbé 36, 75, 79, 93
- Bigot, Emeric 103n
- Blaeu, printing house 213
- Block, Magnus Gabriel 240
- Bochart, Samuel 32, 45, 56
- Boileau Despréaux, Nicolas 143,  
162–3
- Bollandists 33, 213, 226, 237; *see also*  
Papebroch
- Bonaparte, Napoleon, expedition to  
Egypt 8–9
- Borch, Ole (Borrichius) 90n, 91
- Borel, Pierre 91n
- Borelli, Giovanni Alfonso 71, 74n, 98,  
110
- Borges, Jorge Luis 204
- Bosquet, François, bishop of  
Montpellier 29
- Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne, bishop of  
Condom, later bishop of  
Meaux 6, 17, 22, 33n, 55n, 59,  
77, 79, 93n, 217n, 220, 235; 'petit  
concile' of, 77, 220
- Boulliau, Ismael 146
- Bourdelot, Pierre Michon, abbé 90n
- Bourzeis, Amable de, abbé 19, 22,  
52–61, 62, 64, 68, 76, 78, 118
- Boyle, Robert 14, 15, 82, 104–5, 220,  
234
- Boym, Michael 219
- Braem, Corfitz 91
- brahmins 136, 152, 155
- Bréquigny, Louis de 171
- Brèves, François Savary de 23, 116–7,  
122
- Brosseau, Christophe 218n, 220n,  
232n
- Brosses, Charles de 83
- Brown, Harcourt 57n
- buddhism 154
- Budé, Guillaume 17
- Bulteau, Charles 224n
- Burke, Peter 148
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord 170
- Byzantine du Louvre* 15, 124
- 'cabinets' 45, 83, 88, 90, 98–9
- 'Cabinet du Roi' series 21
- Cairo 29, 146n
- Calcutta 165–6
- Capuchins 24
- Carcavi, Pierre de 22, 115–16, 118,  
120–1, 123–5, 217, 237
- Cardano, Girolamo 154, 167
- Caron, François, 103; and Bernier 161
- Cassagnes, Jacques, abbé 19
- Cassini, Giovanni Domenico  
(Cassini-I) 14–15, 72–3
- Castell, Edmund 25, 29
- Catholic reform 17, 33, 147–9
- Caton de Court, Charles 77n
- Chapelain, Jean 15; letters 37–8; and  
d'Herbelot 49–51, 63–8; and  
Bernier 131, 136–9, 155–65;  
and Thévenot 85, 88n, 91, 100;  
and Abulfeda 109–23; and  
Colbert 19; on patronage 73–4;  
*La Pucelle* 156
- Chapelle, Claude Emmanuel Luillier,  
known as 135n, 141, 145

- 'Chapelle, M. de la', *see* La Chapelle  
 Chardin, Jean 85, 132, 156, 165  
 Charpentier, François 19, 41, 51,  
   62–4  
 Charron, Pierre 146  
 Chaumont, Alexandre 215, 229  
 Chigi, Fabio, *see* Alexander VII  
 China 11, 39, 101, 154, 156, 205–33  
   *passim*; Muslim sources on 185,  
   195, 235–43; attitudes to 207–8;  
   annals 208–9, 213n, 221–2; *see*  
   also Sigan-Fu stone; Sinology;  
   Sinophilia  
 Chinese rites controversy 171, 207,  
   212  
*chinoiserie* 11, 214  
 Choisy, François-Timoléon, abbé  
   de 218, 229n  
 Cholets, college (Paris) 166  
 Christina, Queen of Sweden 45, 206  
 civility 43, 69, 75, 87, 159, 233  
 Clarke, Samuel, orientalist 109, 116,  
   124–5  
 Clément, Nicolas, librarian 77n, 231  
 Clerselier, Claude 91n  
 Colbert, Jean-Baptiste, 16, 18–30, 33,  
   35–8, 40–3, 46, 48–9, 51–61,  
   64, 74–7, 80, 88, 91, 102, 104,  
   115, 118–124, 128, 131, 133–4,  
   161–2, 178–81, 186, 202,  
   217–8, 220, 241  
 Colbertine library 179n, 241  
 Collège de France, *see* Collège royal  
 Collège royal (royal professors) 2, 17,  
   20, 23–8, 39, 43n, 46n, 76, 78,  
   112, 114–5, 140  
 Colomès, Paul 32  
 colonialism 8–9, 12–3, 101–2, 161,  
   221  
 commerce 94, 100, 102, 161  
 Commire, Jean 176  
 Compagnie des Indes orientales 102,  
   215; Bernier and 161  
 Condé, family 22  
 Confucius 210  
*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*  
   (1687) 40, 154, 203, 205–33  
   *passim*  
 Conrart, Valentin 65n, 98, 103n,  
   122n, 217n, 219n  
 Constantinople *see* Istanbul  
 Copernicanism 140  
 Cordemoy, Géraud de 91n  
 correspondence 14–5, 37–8, 98–9,  
   103–4, 113, 164, 233, 235  
 corsairs 30  
 Cosmas Indicopleustes 102–3  
 Cotelier, Jean-Baptiste 56, 62, 78  
 Couplet, Philippe 206, 210–16,  
   220–32, 235–39, 241–2  
 Cousin, Louis 42, 65, 186; and  
   CSP, 208n, 231n; on  
   Confucius, 228  
 crusades 27  
 Cureau de La Chambre, Marin 156,  
   160  
 curiosity 35–6, 40, 82–3, 91–2, 107,  
   129–30, 233, 244  
 Danishmend Khan, and  
   Bernier, 151–3, 243  
 Dangeau, Louis de Courcillon,  
   abbé 200–2  
 Danzig *see* Gdansk  
 Dati, Carlo 14, 53  
 Dauphin (son of Louis XIV), education  
   of, 17, 77  
 Delhi 137–8, 149–151  
 Della Valle, Pietro 31, 102  
 Descartes, René 144, 151–2  
 Deslyons, Jean 57  
 despotism *see* Oriental despotism  
 deutas 154  
 D'Herbelot, *see* Herbelot  
 Diderot, Denis 9, 172, 191, 194n  
 Diophantus of Alexandria 35  
 diplomats 23, 24, 26, 28, 34, 51,  
   85–6, 113, 125, 145, 179, 214–5,  
   218, 220n, 229  
 Dodds, Muriel 10  
 dragomans 24  
 Druzes 34  
 Dryden, John, tragedy *Aureng-Zebe*  
   (1676) 164  
 Du Cange, Charles du Fresne, sieur 15,  
   56, 78, 185  
 Du Clos, Samuel 217  
 Du Four de Longuerue, *see* Longuerue  
 Du Hamel, Jean-Baptiste, 105n;  
   history of the Académie des  
   sciences, 54, 57, 89  
 Du Perron, Jacques Davy, cardinal 23  
 Dupuy brothers 109, 145  
 Dutch *see* United Provinces

- eastern rite Christians 32, 34; *see also* Maronites
- Ecchellensis, Abraham (Ibrahim al-Haqilani) 23–4, 71, 85–6, 103, 110
- ‘échelles du Levant’ 24
- eclipses 97, 137–9
- Ecole spéciale des langues orientales vivantes (Paris), 25
- Edict of Nantes, revocation of (1685) 211
- education of the prince 17
- Egypt 7–9, 13, 29–30, 72, 146; pyramids 102; Nile 161
- éloges 36–7
- encyclopedism 41, 82, 93, 108, 175, 178, 190
- Enfants de langue*, *see* Jeunes de langue
- Enlightenment 5–6, 10, 83, 142–3, 172
- Enlightenment, early 10
- Engels, Friedrich 133, 164
- Epicureanism 88, 145n, 156
- Erasmus, Desiderius 17
- Erpenius (van Erpe), Thomas 109
- Escorial library 36
- Espagnet, Etienne d’ 91n
- Estiennot, Claude 224n
- Estrées, Jean d’ 28
- Estrées, César d’, cardinal 218, 220, 222
- Ethiopia 29–30, 146–7
- Ethiopic 29, 31, 226
- eucharist 33–4, 144n, 212
- experiential knowledge 83, 96
- experiment 18, 53, 91, 94, 96–9, 119
- fakirs 154, 167
- Faret, Nicolas 87
- Fénelon, François de Salignac de La Mothe 17, 162n
- Ferrand, Louis 26–7, 123
- Fermat, Samuel 91n
- Fléchier, Esprit 77n
- Fleury, Claude 77n, 130, 217
- Florence 14, 240–1; d’Herbelot in 42, 47–51, 62–75 *passim*; Thévenot and 98, 103, 122; Couplet in 225
- Fludd, Robert 154
- Fogel, Martin 91n
- Fontenelle, Bernard Le Bovier de 52–5, 89, 126n
- Foucault, Michel 174
- Foucault, Nicolas-Joseph, intendant of Normandy, and Galland 183
- Foucher, Simon 228
- Fouquet, Nicolas 18, 45–6, 71–2, 75, 114, library 20n
- Fourmont, Etienne 36, 171
- Foy-Vaillant, Jean 30, 35, 182
- François I (king of France) 17, 26, 117n
- Frankfurt book fair 124
- Frénicle de Bessy, Bernard 91
- Fréret, Nicolas 36
- Furetière, Antoine 187, 189–90, 199
- Gaffarel, Jacques 146
- galanterie* 159n, 162–4 *see also* civility
- Galland, Antoine 4, 34, 76; translates *Thousand and One Nights*, 1–2, 4, 29, 162n; collecting missions, 35–6; Collège royal chair, 2; journal, 1–3; scholarship, 182–3; and Thévenot, 84, 99–100, 125–6; on Bernier 143n; and d’Herbelot, 78, 169; edits *Bibliothèque orientale*, 169, 198–9; preface to 176, 178–9, 185, 192–3; and *Kashf al-zunun* (Katib Chelebi), 179–81, 188, 202–3; *Paroles remarquables*, 171, 186
- Gallicanism 33, 55, 57–8, 61
- Gallois, abbé Jean 84, 217
- Garnier, Girard 89, 98, 104, 120, 122, 230
- Garnier, Marie 85n
- Garnier, Melchisédech 85n
- Gassendi, Pierre 15, works 124, 156; and Thévenot, 88–9; and Bernier, 135, 137–56, 164–5
- Gaulmin, Gilbert 21–2, 112–3, 146
- Gdansk 145
- Genoa 85–6
- Gesner, Conrad 190
- Gibbon, Edward 9, 10n, 169–70, 172, 175, 183, 192, 196
- Girardin, Pierre de, ambassador to Istanbul 125
- Goa 151, 215, 219
- Golius, Jacob 25, 103, 110–11, 113–14, 116, 123
- Gothic 200

- Graaf, Reinier de 91  
 Graindorge, André 90  
 'grande académie' 20, 41, 52–4, 58–9, 61, 64, 76  
 'gratifications aux gens de lettres' 19, 27n, 73–4, 77, 113, 115, 121, 225  
 Gravel, abbé, French Resident at Mainz, 124  
 Greaves, John 72, 102, 106, 109–12, 127  
 Gregory XIII, pope 24, 44  
 Grimaldi, cardinal 45, 72  
 Gronovius, Johann Friedrich 85n, 121  
 Grueber, Johann 219–20  
 Guastaferrri, Fabrizio 14  
 Guignes, Joseph de 36, 116, 169  
 Guilleragues, Gabriel-Joseph de Lavergne 179n  
 Guise, Henri, duc de 86  
 gunpowder 101
- Habert de Montmor, *see* Montmor  
 Hajji Khalifa, *see* Katib Chelebi  
 Hakluyt, Richard 81–2, 100–2  
 Halley, Edmund 110  
 Hanna 1–3, 243  
 Hardy, Claude 112, 217, 229n  
 Hardouin, Jean 227  
 Hartlib, Samuel 15  
 Harvey, William 152  
 Hazard, Paul 10  
 Hebrew 7, 31–2; study of 26, 56; Collège royal chair 26; protestant Academies 32; books 30, 98, 113n  
 Herbelot (de Molainville), Barthélemy d', 41–80 *passim*, 14, 239–40, 242; early career 43–6; in Florence, 42, 47–51, 62–75; and Maurists, 77–8; and Bourzeis group 55, 64; working methods 184–7, 194–6; *Bibliothèque orientale*, 168–204 *passim*; Said on 173–5, 185, 196; debt to Katib Chelebi 178–9, 181; printing of 197–203  
 Herbelot (de Molainville), Edme d', 47n, 65n, 176–7  
 Hero of Alexandria 35  
 Heinsius, Nicolas 38, 73  
 Hesenthaler, Magnus 123–5  
 Hezarfenn (Huseyn b. Ğa'fer) 180–1, 203, 243  
 Hinduism 135–6, 150–5, 165–7  
 Holbach, Baron d' 83  
 Holland *see* United Provinces  
 Holstenius, Lucas 44  
 Holy Land *see* Palestine  
*honnêteté* 50, 51, 87–8, 159 *see also* civility  
 Horace 142–3  
 Horn, Georg 241  
 Horthemels, Daniel, 228–30, 233  
 Hotman (de Fontaney), Vincent, 91n, 121  
 Howes, E. H. 171  
 Huet, Pierre-Daniel 17, 19n, 45, 55–56, 59, 62, 77n, 90, 101n, 112n, 182, 189n, 226  
 Huguenots *see* protestant  
 Hugo, Victor 3  
 Huygens, Christiaan 72–3, 96, 105; and Thévenot 87, 90–1, 103  
 Hyde, Thomas 104–5, 109, 112, 127, 205–8, 220
- Ibn Khallikan 201–2  
*de Imitatione Christi* 15  
 Imprimerie royale 15, 116, 120, 123–4, 128, 186, 202  
 indexes 190, 196–7, 203–4  
 India 9, 11–13, 85, 103n, 131–167 *passim*, 171  
 Innocent X, pope 86  
 interpreters 36, 39 *see also* dragomans, *jeunes de langues*, *secrétaire-interprète*  
 Intorcetta, Prospero 102–3, 105n, 213, 219, 231, 233  
 Isfahan 28  
 Isle, Arnould de l' 26  
 Issy, Thévenot's house at 50, 88–91, 98, 105, 116, 163, 217, 232  
 Istanbul 28, 30, 34, 179–81, 203–4, 243; latitude of 111; books in 181
- James II, king of England (and VII of Scotland) 205–8, 211, 232  
 jansenism 57, 208, 217n, 220; *see also* Port-Royal; Arnauld  
 Jansson van Waesberge, Jean 213  
 Japan 103



- al-Jazarī, Isma‘il ibn al-Razāz 35  
 Jesuits (Society of Jesus) 57, 141, 144, 172n, 205–6, 227; astronomy 215; colleges 24, 26; China mission 11, 95, 207–9, 214, 221, 236–7; and Confucius, 205–11; *see also* Bollandists; Byzantine du Louvre; Couplet; *mathématiciens du roi*  
 Jesus, Muslim views of 194  
*Jeunes de langues* 24–5  
 Johns, Adrian 39, 107, 127n, 202  
 Jones, Sir William 9  
 juggernaut 136  
 Justel, Henri, 92–3; on death of Colbert, 18; on the Bourzeis group, 56–7, 62, 78; attends Thévenot’s group, 91n; as royal censor, 104, 230; letters cited 18, 55, 62, 113, 224
- Kant, Immanuel 142  
 Kashmir 14, Jews in 161  
 Kātib Chelebi (Katip Çelebi) 40, 178–81, 184, 186, 189–90, 194–5, 202–4, 243  
 Kenny, Neil 82n, 129n, 190  
 Kircher, Athanasius 14, 33, 45, 146, 213, 235–7, 241  
 Kneller, Godfrey 206
- Labrousse, Elisabeth 141n, 142n, 143  
 La Bruyère, Jean de 67n, 130, 143n, 220n  
 Lach, Donald F. *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 11  
 La Chaize, François d’Aix de (confessor to Louis XIV from 1675), 193, 211, 215n, 224, 225n, 227  
 La Chambre, Marin Cureau de, *see* Cureau  
 La Chapelle (-Milon), Henri de Bessé de 217n, 225n  
 La Croix, ‘le sieur de’, secretary to Nointel 28n  
 La Croix, interpreter, *see* Pétis de La Croix, François, *père*  
 La Fontaine, Jean de 12, and Bernier, 162  
 La Mothe Le Vayer, François de 131, 145–7, 156, 160, 163  
 Lanson, Gustave 10
- La Palisse, French physician in India, 161  
 La Roque, Jean de 113n  
 Larroque, Daniel, 198–9; letters cited 84, 93, 126, 232, 239  
 Larroque, J.-P. Tamizey de, *see* Tamizey  
 La Sablière, Marguerite de 228  
 La Salle, Robert Cavalier de 220–1  
 La Tuillière (director of the Académie des arts in Rome) 223n  
 Launay, François de 55–6, 62  
 Launay, Gilles de 56n  
 Launoy, Jean de 56, 148  
 Le Capelain, Claude 55–6, 62  
 Le Clerc, Sébastien 21  
 Leers, Reinier 189, 199, 208  
 Leghorn *see* Livorno  
 Leiden 109, 111, 114, 117, 123–4  
 Le Jay, Guy-Michel 23, 116  
 Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 4, 15, 99, 123–6, 212n; and Ferrand 27, 123; and Hesenthaler 124; and Thévenot 91–3, 99, 128–9, 217–8; and d’Herbelot 200–2; letters cited 65–6, 125, 220, 232n; and Arabic account of China 235–43  
 Le Moyne Desessarts, N.-T. 170  
 Léonard de Sainte Catherine, le P. 26n, 43n, 79, 226n, 231, 232n  
 Leroux-Deshauterayes, M.-A. A. 171  
 Le Tellier, Camille, *see* Louvois, abbé  
 Le Tellier, Charles-Maurice 217, 231, 232n  
 Le Tellier, François-Michel, *see* Louvois, marquis de  
 Letherland, Joseph 171  
 letters *see* correspondence  
 ‘letters’, *lettres, litterae*, learning 15–6  
 ‘Levant’ 7  
*libertins érudits*, 59, 77, 143, 168; and Thévenot 88; and Bernier 143–147  
 libraries 21–2, 34–6, 183, 187–8 *see also* Bibliothèque du roi; Colbertine library; collecting  
 Lionne, Hugues de 86  
 Lisbon 215, 231  
 ‘Liselotte’, *see* Orléans, Elisabeth-Charlotte  
 Lister, Martin 89n, 98n, 99, 122

- Livorno (Tuscany) 47, 51, 65–6, 68, 72
- Livy, Titus, 183 lost books 35
- Locke, John 10, 81–3, 92, 138, 144, 234
- London 29, 127, 206
- Longuerue, Louis Du Four de, abbé 173n, 190n
- Longueville, duc de 140n
- longitude and latitude 108–12, 121, 126
- Louis IX *see* Saint Louis
- Louis XIV, 57; patronage 16–22, 27, 72–6; and d'Herbelot 76; dedications 101, 121, 176, 203, 206; meets Shen Fuzong 206, 214; and Jesuits 211–2; religious policy 212
- Louvois, François-Michel Le Tellier, marquis de 122, 126, 217, 218n, 223n, 225n
- Louvois, abbé (Camille Le Tellier) 217
- Lucas, Paul 193n
- Lucretius 155
- Ludolf, Job (Hiob) 29–30, 45, 105, 190, 224, 226
- Luillier, François 145–6
- Lyons 43, 141, 156
- Mabillon, Jean, 15, 77–8, 218, 224; *see also* Maurists
- 'Madame', *see* Orléans
- Madrid 242
- Magalotti, Lorenzo 65n, 68–71, 87, 90, 98, 103–4, 122, 217, 219
- Magliabecchi, Antonio 42n, 65–8, 239–41
- Mainz 27, 123–4
- Malebranche, Nicolas 4
- Malpighi, Marcello 218
- Manchu 227
- Maronite Christians 23, 114; college in Rome 24, 44, 85; scholars in Paris 23–4; *see also individual names*
- Marseilles, 45, 113, 156; chamber of commerce 24
- Marshall, Thomas 116, 124–5
- Martel, Thomas de 91n
- Martini, Martino 157, 163, 219
- Marucelli, Giovanni-Filippo, abbé 49–51, 63–5
- marvels 68, 94, 141
- Marx, Karl 132–3, 164
- mathematics 35, 53, 67, 109–10; Indian 166n
- mathématiciens du roi* 171, 214–5, 237
- Maunier, maronite, 1–2
- Maurists 33, 40, 78–80, 182; *see also* Mabillon
- Mazarin, Jules, cardinal 18, 86–7, 140–1, 161; library 227
- Mecca 195
- Medici, Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany 47, 65–7, 69–70, 79, 122
- Medici, Ferdinando II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, patron of d'Herbelot 41, 47–8, 61, 65–7, 72, 74, 79, 178, 181
- Medici, Ferdinando I, cardinal, later Grand Duke of Tuscany 44, 72
- Medici, Leopoldo, cardinal-prince 65–69, 71, 75, 98, 110
- medicine 94, 96, 101, 145, 148, 159; Arabic texts 26; Chinese texts 223
- Ménage, Gilles 19n, 70n, 79n, 226; *Menagiana* 79n, 89n, 189n
- Ménéstrier, Claude-François 227
- Meninski, Francis 25
- Menzel (Mentzel), Christian 224, 226–7
- Mercator, Gerard 178
- Méré, Antoine Gombaud, chevalier de 88
- Mersenne, Marin 15, 85–6, 109, 148
- Merveilles, François Boysson, seigneur de 160–1, 163
- Meysonnier, Lazare, of Lyons 141
- Middle East *see* Levant; Palestine; Egypt; Ottoman empire
- Mille et une nuits*, *see* *Thousand and One Nights*
- Mille et un jours* 29
- Mirkhond, Persian historian 181
- missions 148–9, 211, 236; *see also* Jesuits
- Missions Etrangères de Paris, Société des 215
- Mississippi 221
- Mitton, Damien 88
- Mocha 147n
- Moette, Thomas 106

- Molainville, *see* Herbelot  
 Molanus, Gerhard Wolter 212n, 232  
 Molière 12, 113n, 143n, 162  
 Molinos, Miguel de 154  
 Monceaux, André de 36n, 164  
 monsoon 161  
 Montaigne, Michel de 139, 146, 149–50, 155  
 Montausier, duc de 17  
 Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de  
   Secondat, baron 4, 6, 9, 39, 132–4, 139, 166, 183n, 235  
 Montfaucon, Bernard de 172, 224n, 226  
 Montmor, Henri-Louis Habert  
   de 88–91, 142, 145, 156, 160  
 Montpellier 145  
 Moreri, Louis 42, 58–9, 84, 170, 190  
 Morin, Jean-Baptiste 140–2, 145, 148, 154  
 Morland, Sir Samuel *see* speaking trumpet  
 Morocco 26, 28; library 35  
 Mortemart, Louis-Victor de  
   Rochechouart, duc de 28  
 Müller, Andreas 235–6, 238, 241  
 Murr, Sylvia 145
- Naples 86  
 natural history 83, 92–3, 97  
 Naudé, Gabriel 139n, 145, 183, 187–8  
 navigation 94  
 Neuré, Mathurin (Laurent Mesme), 148, 160  
 Nestorian monument, *see* Sigan-Fu stone  
 Netherlands, Spanish 56, 214  
 Netherlands *see* United Provinces  
 networks of communication 12, 20–1, 103–5, 107, 113, 161, 167, 175, 177–8, 181, 233, 243; *see also* correspondence  
 Newton, Isaac, 208  
 Nicole, Pierre 16–7, 33–4; *see also* Arnauld  
 Nieuhof, Johann 219  
 Noailles, Louis-Antoine de, cardinal, archbishop of Paris 1–2  
 Nointel, Charles-François Olier (marquis de) 28, 34, 98, 179n, 180n
- Nolin, Jean-Baptiste (engraver) 210n  
 Notre-Dame de Paris 1–3  
 numismatics 22, 30n, 182–3, 193
- observation 96–7, 111, 159,  
 Ogier, François 59–60  
 Oldenburg, Henry 14–5, 113, 124–5;  
   translates Bernier 164–5  
 Olearius, Adam 157–8, 163  
 ‘Orient’, definition 7  
 Orientalism, defined 8  
*Orientalism* (book), *see* Said  
 Oriental despotism 133–4  
 Orléans, Elisabeth-Charlotte d’,  
   Princess Palatine, known as  
   ‘Madame’, 193  
 Orléans, Etienne Hubert d’ 26  
*otium* 147  
 Ottoman empire 3–6, 8, 12, 13n,  
   23–4, 28, 34–5, 181;  
   science 178; *see also* Istanbul  
 Oxford 109–10, 124–5, James II  
   visit 205–8; Magdalen  
   College 205  
 Oxford, University Press 110, 127  
*Oyseau*, voyage of 215, 218, 229
- Palestine 117, 146n  
 Panciatici, Lorenzo, abbé 98n, 103, 219  
 Papebroch, Daniel, 213, 226–7, 237  
 ‘Paris Polyglot’ 23–5, 31–2, 77,  
   116–7; *see also* Le Jay  
 Paris, Faculty of Theology, 57, 60–1,  
   68, 143  
 Pascal, Blaise 16–7, 22, 85n, 87–8,  
   129, 145, 209  
 Patin, Guy 145  
 Pavillon, Marthe 87  
 Pavillon, Nicolas, bishop of Alet 87  
 Pecquet, Jean 152  
 Peiresc, Nicolas-Claude Fabri de 31n,  
   99n, 109, 146  
 Peking *see* Beijing  
 Pell, John 110  
 Pellison-Fontanier, Paul 77n, 92n,  
   235–9  
*Perpétuité de la Foi*, *see* Arnauld  
 Perrault, Charles, 53, 59–61, 162n;  
   life of d’Herbelot, 42–49, 65, 68,  
   173  
 Perriquet, Marie 85n, 129

- Persia 8, 11, 28, 85, 157–9, 177  
 Persian (Farsi), study of, 24–5, 28,  
 70–1, 112, 184; books 46n, 85n,  
 98, 113n, 180–1; Bernier  
 and 144, 151–2, 158  
 Pétais de La Croix, family 27–8  
 Pétais de La Croix, Alexandre  
 L. M. 29n, 183n  
 Pétais de La Croix, François, *père* 27,  
 49–50, 55–6, 62–4, 183n, 222  
 Pétais de La Croix, (Jean-) François,  
 *fils* 27–9, 34, 46, 78, 85, 115n,  
 130n, 179n, 183, 222  
 Petit, Pierre 91n, 141  
 ‘petite académie’ 19, 36, 51, 55, 58–9,  
 76  
 Picard, Jean, abbé 14  
 Picques, Louis 190n, 226–7  
 Pintard, René 145  
 Pitt, Moses 127, 165  
 Pliny, the elder 92–3  
 Pockocke, Edward 26–7, 56, 109, 117,  
 124–5  
 polyglot bibles 23–5, 29, 31–3, 77,  
 116–7; *see also* Walton; Le Jay;  
 Vitré  
 Pondichéry 171  
 Pontchartrain, Louis Phélypeaux de 34,  
 78  
 popular culture, 142, 147–9  
 porcelaine 221  
 Port-Royal 208; *see also* jansenists;  
 Arnauld, Nicole  
 Postel, Guillaume 108  
 Pray, György 209  
 printing 39, 93n, 101, 127, 197–9,  
 210, 228–9; *see also* Arabic  
*Propaganda fide*, congregation de 44,  
 166, 214, 224  
 protestants 25, 29, 32–4, 77, 117,  
 141, 143, 207–8, 211–2  
 protestant academies (France) 26,  
 31–2  
 psalms 61  
 Ptolemy 114  
 Purchas, Samuel 81, 101–2  
 questionnaires 94, 131, 218  
 Quietism, Bernier on 154, d’Herbelot  
 on 196; *see also* Molinos  
 race 135n  
 Racine, Jean 12, 162  
 Raguet, Gilles-Bernard 58  
 Ramusio, Giovanni Battista 100, 108,  
 110, 126  
 Rapin, René 87–8  
 Ravius, Christian 45, 110  
 Redi, Francesco 14, 67–8  
 Regnaud, Jesuit mathematician 14  
 Régnier-Desmarais,  
 François-Séraphin 176  
 Reims, Archbishop of, *see* Le Tellier,  
 Charles-Maurice  
 Reiske, Johann Jakob 171  
 Renaudot, Théophraste 220  
 Renaudot, Eusèbe, physician 220  
 Renaudot, Eusèbe, abbé 34n, 59, 220,  
 226–8, 238–9, 241–2; in  
 Bossuet’s ‘petit concile’ 77n; and  
 Maurists 78; and Bibliothèque du  
 roi 217; suspected of  
 jansenism 217; editor of  
*Gazette* 221; library of 79; letters  
 to Bernou 220–3; on  
 Sinophilia 221; on  
 d’Herbelot 197; on  
 Thévenot 98–9, 220–3; on  
 Abulfeda 108n, 126–7; on Arabic  
 type 117n; *Anciennes  
 relations* 241–2  
 Republic of Letters 4–6, 10, 16, 18,  
 73, 105, 107, 125, 207, 211, 243;  
 correspondence and 38  
 Retz, Jean-François-Paul de Gondi,  
 cardinal de 86n, 140n  
 Ricci, Matteo 211n  
 Ricci, Michelangelo 85, 98  
 rites controversy *see* Chinese rites  
 Roannez, Artus Gouffier, duc de 22  
 Roberval, Gilles Personne de 137–8,  
 141, 149  
 Roe, Thomas 102  
 Rohault, Jacques 91n  
 Rome 23–4, 29, 43–5, 56–7,  
 71–2, 85–6, 166, 214, 220–1,  
 224–5  
 Rotterdam 199, 208n  
 royal professors *see* Collège royal  
 Royal Society of London 14, 127,  
 164–5, 213

- Said, Edward W. 8, 12; *Orientalism*, 8;  
and Michel Foucault 174; on  
d'Herbelot 173–5, 178, 185,  
196, 204
- Saint-Évremond, Charles de Marguetel  
de Saint-Denis, seigneur de 143,  
162
- Saint-Germain-des-Prés, abbey 78, 172;  
*see also* Maurists
- Saint-Germain-en-Laye 77
- Saint Louis (Louis IX) 27
- Saint Paul 129
- Sainte-Beuve, Charles-Augustin 38
- Salmasius, *see* Saumaise
- salons 87–8, 90, 144, 159, 163–4,  
228; *see also* galanterie
- Salviati, Leonardo 70–1
- Samarkand 112, 239
- Samaritan Pentateuch 23, 31, 146n,
- Sanskrit 9, 152, 166
- 'sapere aude' 142–3
- Sarasin, Jean-François 140n
- Sarasvati, Kavindracarya, Sanskrit  
poet 152
- sati* 153, 155
- Saumaise, Claude 109, 146
- Savary de Brèves, *see* Brèves
- scepticism 88, 139, 143, 146–7, 149,  
155, 234
- Schelstrate, Emmanuel, Vatican  
librarian, 224n
- Schickard, Wilhelm 109, 123–4,  
237n
- Schomberg, Friedrich-Hermann 55
- Schultens, Hendrick Albert 171
- Schulz, J. C. F. 170
- science 14–15, 52–3, 111, 142, 148,  
178
- scientific revolution 5, 234
- scrofula 205
- seconds pendulum 14
- secrétaire-interprète (post of), 23,  
27–8, 46–7, 56, 128, 162,
- Séguier, Pierre, chancelier de France,  
protector of Académie  
française 20, 54, 160n;  
library 217, 229
- Sergio, *see* Aliamri
- Shah Jehan, Mughal Emperor 151
- Shahada* of Notre Dame 1–2
- Shen Fuzong, Michael 206, 214, 216,  
225, 242
- Shiraz 28
- Siam 211, 214–5, 218, 229, 234
- Sigan-Fu stone 236
- silk 101
- Sionite, Gabriel [Jibra'il as-Sahyuni] 23
- Simon, Richard 32, 34
- Sinai, mount, library of 30
- Sinology 209n
- Sinophilia 221–2, 241
- al-Sirafi, Hasan ibn Yazid Abu  
al-Zaid 241n
- Smith, Thomas 206n, 224
- Smyrna 24
- sociability *see* civility
- Southey, Robert 170
- Sparwenfeld, Johan Gabriel 200–3,  
226, 240, 242
- speaking trumpet 14, 90n
- Spinoza, Baruch 10, 31, 144n
- Spon, Jacob 180, 184
- Steno, Nicholas (Neils Stensen) 68,  
90n, 112, 122, 129
- sufism 154
- Surat (India) 147n, 156, 161
- Sylvestre de Sacy, Antoine-Isaac 174
- Syriac 23; Collège royal chair 78; *see  
also* polyglot bibles
- Soltan Hosein (shah of Persia) 28
- Swammerdam, Jan 67, 90–1, 100,  
102, 122
- Tachard, Guy 211, 214, 229
- al-Tajir, Sulaiman 241
- Tamizey de Larroque,  
Jean-Philippe 37–8, 49n, 50n,  
53n
- Tardy, Claude 91n
- Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste 85, 132, 134,  
146, 156, 162, 165n
- technology *see* arts
- Tertullian 209n
- Thailand *see* Siam
- Thévenot, [Nicolas-]  
Melchisédech 81–130 *passim*;  
family 84–5, 87n; in Rome 44,  
85–7; Genoa, 85; and Montmor  
group, 88–91; collection 98–9;  
'assembly', 89–99, 155–6; and  
Bernier, 160–1; and Colbert, 88,  
118–20; and Académie des  
sciences, 88–9, 217–8; and  
Abulfeda 107–28; knowledge of  
Arabic 112; head of bibliothèque  
du roi 210, 215–27, 229–33,

- 236–9; *Relations de divers voyages curieux*, 99–107
- Thévenot, Jean [de] 85–6, 134; and d'Herbelot 44, 49, 51; will of 43n, 46
- Thévenot, family 85n
- Thoinard or Thoynard, *see* Toinard
- Thou, Jacques-Auguste de 23
- Thousand and One Nights* Galland's translation 1, 2, 4, 29, 162n, 169
- Toinard, Nicolas 77, 81–2, 221, 232n
- Toulon 26, 145n
- travel writing 82–3, 132; methods 157–9
- Trigault, Nicolas 146
- Tunis 28, 200–1
- Turandot 29
- Turkish (language) 23–5, 28, 46, 113n, 178, 180, 184–5, 188–9
- Turkey *see* Ottoman empire
- Turretini, J. A. 173n
- Turgot, Anne-Robert-Jacques 83
- Tuscany, grand duchy of, *see* Medici; Florence; Livorno
- Ulugh Beg 111–2, 114, 127
- United Provinces (Netherlands) 73n, 82, 101–3, 111, 116–8, 120–4, 127, 132, 145, 157, 189, 216, 219; *see* also Amsterdam, Leiden, Rotterdam
- universal history 6–7, 58, 108, 178
- universal library 6, 188, 190
- Urban VIII, pope (Maffeo Barberini) 102
- 'Uthman ibn Affan, caliph 191–2
- utility 51, 82–3, 94, 100, 159
- Vaillant, *see* Foy-Vaillant
- Van Beuningen, *see* Beuningen
- Vansleb, Jean Michel, *see* Wansleben
- Varès, abbé 217
- Vatican library 44, 103–4, 227
- Vattier, Pierre 46, 112, 114–5
- Vecchietti, Giambattista and Gerolamo 48
- Vedas* 136
- Vernon, Francis 14–5, 26–7, 65n
- Versailles 21, 88, 214–5, 227
- Vico, Giambattista 6
- Victor Amadeus II of Savoy 206
- Vienna 123
- Vincennes 23
- Visdelou, Claude de 171, 185, 214, 236
- Vitré, Antoine 23, 116–7, 119–20, 122
- Viviani, Vincenzo 67, 74, 85, 98n, 110
- Voltaire 6, 9, 83, 166, 169–70, 172, 183, 194, 208
- Vossius, Isaac 45, 91n, 103, 109n, 111, 123, 219, 221–2, 241
- 'vulgar errors' 94, 142, 147–8, 167; *see* also popular culture
- Wallis, John 124–5, 127
- Walton, Brian 29
- Wake, William 226
- Wansleben, Johann Michael 29–30, 178, 226
- War of Devolution (1667–8) 56
- Wolfenbüttel 235
- Wood, Anthony à 205–6
- 'world-soul' 154
- Yoga 136, 154, 165, 167
- Zoroastrianism, books on 36