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John Ogilby's *Atlas Chinensis*: Anglo-Dutch Exchange and the (Re)Printing of China

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"They are Novices, and ignorant in Affairs, and obstinate in refusing to accommodate themselves to the Customs of the Country."

-English translation of a Portuguese priest witness to a Dutch ambassadorial attempt in China

From the second edition of John Ogilby's compilation of European encounters in China, the epigraph is an excerpt of Father Balion's letter to his fellow Portuguese priest Father Adams. The statement encapsulates the Catholic priest's judgment of why the second Dutch embassy failed in China. By calling the Dutch "novices" and "ignorant," Balion highlights his expertise on Chinese conventions even as he withholds any approval of those customs. Contrary to Dutch insufficiencies, the "accommodation" Father Balion makes to the "customs of the country" is as an insider. And yet to accommodate Chinese mores and rituals is quite different from full assimilation into the host country, delineating the agent's astute performance of custom from his heartfelt acceptance of them. The statement is a miniscule yet revealing testament to the nuances essential to successfully navigating cross cultural exchanges in the period. Scholarship recovering early modern global encounters reveals the seventeenth century as a time of transnational cultural exchange and economic interdependency between various state systems. But as the epigraph shows, global encounters are not only transnational and multi-directional, they are also the product of various levels of linguistic and cultural translation. That they are mediated by translation, however, hardly diminishes the emphatic and seemingly urgent investments of the many agents participating in such encounters. This project is about agents who represented and mediated European interests in China, drawing particular attention to how global encounters were compiled, translated, and disseminated through print circulation in Western Europe.

I argue that John Ogilby's *Atlas Chinensis*, an English translation of Dutch accounts about China compiled by the printer Olfert Dapper in 1670

as *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf der Nederlandsch Oost-Indische Maatschappye, op de kust en in het keizzerrijk van Taising of Sina*, reveals the investments of multiple agents of seventeenth century travel and trade: travelers, ambassadors, witnesses, state representatives and, perhaps less obviously, book producers. While providing a structure to organize the amalgamation of stories, engravings, inventory lists, maps, personal letters, company reports, and ethnographic observations about China, *Atlas Chinensis* also offers a way to trace Anglo-Dutch relations in the latter part of the seventeenth century as these relations emerge through the traffic between dominant print houses in London and in Amsterdam. What emerges is a process of dilation and compaction that manages to convey the scale of the Dutch experience in China: the book simultaneously provides detailed dilation of specific rituals and expectations unique to Chinese commercial opportunities while compacting a vast array of representations of China cobbled from various European outlets. A comprehensive account of this process is beyond the scope of a single study, but a close analysis of the third Dutch embassy in China—the topical occasion of Dapper’s 1670 compilation— provides a useful glimpse of the means and the motives for the repeated interpellation of China for European consumption. Occupying a central place within *Atlas Chinensis*’s expansive treatment, accounts of the embassy condense two years’ worth of effort in which the Dutch train travelled from the marginal provinces to the imperial palace in Peking and back, attempted commerce in coastal regions and in cities, prepared and conferred gifts including horses and oxen, banqueted, practiced ceremonial rituals, and waited for a private conference with the Emperor that was never granted. Despite the frustrations plaguing Dutch efforts in China, the embassy’s topical significance for Dapper’s compilation emerges as crucial to understanding the role of print beyond the actual encounter. Book producers and translators like Dapper and Ogilby expand the audience of cross-cultural contact and thus serve as mediators, indeed enablers, of global interactions. So while the Dutch embassy described in *Atlas Chinensis* reveals a historically specific encounter via political maneuverings and trade negotiations, detailing interactions between the Dutch and the Chinese, it is the book’s compilation, translation, and dissemination that present, for its various European audiences, broader conditions for European engagement in Asia. The English translation of the third Dutch

embassy in China enacts the inclinations of an emergent print medium that was, from its inception as a product for mass consumption, transnational in orientation and mercantile in function.

The London publication of *Atlas Chinensis* in 1671 is one of many instances documenting Europe's fascination with China in the early modern period, though it was a fascination experienced by the English vicariously and unrequitedly. The rather inauspicious opening of the volume highlights the key complaints of European interaction with the Chinese:

Many years are past since several Europeans, especially the English, Spaniards, Portuguese and Hollanders, have with indefatigable Endeavors persevered towards the acquiring a free and unmolested Trade in China. Yet though they have variously attempted what might seem probably to this Effect, their whole Undertakings have proved little better than a Labor in vain; for the Chinese priding in the substance of their own Product, and too strictly observing an Ancient law, prohibiting the Admission of any Strangers into their Country, excepting such only as bringing Tributes from the adjacent Borders, paid Homage to their Emperor, as Supreme Lord of the World, or else Foreign Ambassadors abhorred, all Correspondency abroad.¹

This passage blames the obstacles of contact to a strict Chinese foreign policy, a policy subjected to cultural antiquity and disdainful of foreigners except when they “pay homage.” But the underlying complaint is not simply the frustration with wasted resources—money, time, and lives—that yield no concrete gain. The tension, rather, is between decades of frustration pitted against the potential for endless riches. “Free and unmolested trade” would render China, as well as most of South Asia, open for business. Ambassadorial attempts by the Dutch seek to establish commercial storehouses and a small military garrison in coastal provinces such as Canton and Hockfieu, modeled after the Dutch stronghold in Batavia. But such hope gives way to the reality of a deeply subordinate position as “strangers” (a term often used by the Chinese to describe Europeans) who must take the year-long round trip to the royal palace in Peking from the coast in order to offer tributary gifts to the “Supreme Lord of the World” and to perform the extensive bureaucratic gestures essential to ingratiating themselves to the various government representatives along

the way. Although *Atlas Chinensis* is filled with materials that describe Chinese social and religious customs, chart geographical descriptions of the land and provinces, and record local attitudes about everything from children to fashion, these materials are ancillary to the larger venture of Euro-Sino trade relations. It is within this context of eagerness and frustration that the last and most ambitious Dutch embassy was launched in 1666.

Andrew Hadfield formulates European approaches to the Far East as one in which “trade and profit were the principal goals, not colonization and conquest.”² The emphasis on trade is especially notable in the book industry, often cited as the rationale for translations of travel narratives for an English audience, or in the words of the translator of Alvarez Semedo’s *The History of the Great and Renowned Monarchy of China* (1655): “to satisfy the curious and advance the Trade of Great Britain.”³ Ogilby’s translation is part of a tradition of equating China with material gain rather than a location for missionary outreach as per the Jesuits who retained a place in court as theologians and academics. Adele Lee argues:

English translators interpreted China as, and reduced it to, a storehouse of material goods. It is also highly indicative of how the English nation was increasingly defining itself in this period as a nation of merchants, that is, as a producer and consumer of goods. In contrast to the theologically and academically laden underpinnings of the Jesuits’ encounter with the Chinese, England’s attitude toward the same is, therefore, fundamentally shaped by economic interests.⁴

A formidable cultural and commercial power in East Asia, China could deliver the region to any number of European nations competing with each other across the globe. Yet Chinese trade remained elusive, and so was perceived as the ultimate Golden Fleece. Robert Markley notes in his assessment of “mercantile capitalism in the period,” China presented a fantasy of abundance that erased the difficulties inherent in investments that have yet to yield any tangible profit:

The Far East thus serves as a fantasy of space for mercantile capitalism because it allows for the rigorous externalization of costs: profits can be tallied (or future profits imagined) without calculating (to take only two examples) either the value of lost lives, ships, and cargoes, or the value in devastated local ecologies, of the

deforestation necessary to build ships for the British navy and East India Company fleets.⁵

And so *Atlas Chinensis* participates in a larger fantasy of commercial promise of the Far East, one that the English sought to advantage but could only access vicariously through the Dutch who, in 1666, were in the best position to breach the isolationism of Chinese foreign policy.⁶

One of the most prominent European powers in Southeast Asia in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company considered an exclusive trade agreement with China necessary and, with the right diplomatic exertions, inevitable. Despite the commercial potential, justification for the expensive venture emphasizes the “long desired Free trade” in the context of “long” deliberations. The Lord General of Batavia, in consultation with the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagni of the Netherlands (also known as the VOC or Dutch East India Company), came to this conclusion:

Yet after long referrings, debates, and serious considerations, it was last again concluded, on the twenty eighth of May, Anno 1666, by the Lord General and Council of India, to send a Magnificent Embassy, with rich Presents to the Tartars Court, to the great Emperor of China and East Tartary, that if possible, they might at last attain to their so long desired Free trade through the whole realm of China.⁷

Deeply familiar with the previous two embassies and thus aware of the limited success of even the most extensive efforts, the General of Batavia John Maatzuiker presents himself as a counterpart to the Emperor of China, since only those of royal blood would be seen as appropriate recipients of the imperial court’s direct correspondences. While the VOC’s previous two embassies were far from profitable, the General of Batavia sought a reversal of previously bad investments; that is, by investing even more. The written correspondence between Ambassador Pietre Van Hoorn and Constantine Nobel, whose experience in the previous embassies made him the main arbitrator of trade in this one, reveals the importance of spectacle: “Nothing more concerned him, than the promoting and making the Embassy more Honorable, that it might be performed with all fitting Splendor and Magnificence, of which there were fair appearances. But because nothing could be assured from the Chinese looks, therefore time must produce it.”⁸ The hesitation that emerges from the lack of assurance

“from the Chinese looks” gives way to the eagerness of performing and promoting the “fair appearances” of the Dutch. Trade through awe: a massive investment in creating magnificence.

There are indications that Ambassador Van Hoorn was not the most suitable leader for this venture. Indeed, his unsuitability offers a glimpse at the difficulties of global trade in the seventeenth century. Upon arrival at the coastal city of Hokfieu, Van Hoorn barely sidesteps hostilities that would end the embassy even before commencing the requisite trip to the imperial court in Peking. The Ambassador eagerly vocalizes his desire for commencing profitable exchanges between his men and the local merchants. However, no such agreement can occur without first embarking on the year long journey to pay tribute to the Emperor. John E. Willis, Jr. explains that

All rulers who wished to communicate formally with the imperial court had to acknowledge that they were subordinate to the Son of Heaven, dependent on his appointment or confirmation as a successor, received at the imperial capital as tributaries, their ambassadors as *pei chen*, ministers of ministers.⁹

Van Hoorn’s journey, therefore, can only occur when representatives of the coastal province in which he is docked and the central advisors of the Emperor in Peking approve Dutch travel. This approval hinges on the gifts that the Ambassador brings as tribute to the court. Therefore, important figures in this coastal region of Fokien, Vice Roy Singlamong and General Lipovy, must inventory and inspect all merchandise so as to obtain permission to travel. Anthony Cutler highlights gift exchange in his study of early modern state negotiations. He argues, “Gifts have been consigned by historians to that special oubliette where they keep the evidence they consider unhelpful to the understanding of political and economic events.”¹⁰ Cutler’s attentiveness to the social and political significance of gifts is especially relevant in not only representing political and economic intentions, but also in discerning the conditions for any European interactions with seventeenth century China. Ambassador Van Hoorn’s mishandling of this bureaucratic necessity is most evident in his inability to provide a definitive differentiation between “presents” and “goods for sale”; instead, he mixes them together and claims to the officials “That the goods which were to be sold, lay upon the presents”¹¹ erroneously thinking the symbols of both might occupy the same space. The importance of

sifting through what is for sale and what are gifts—so important to the Chinese and so little attended to by Van Hoorn—indicates the risks of being ignorant of Chinese protocol.¹²

Emphasizing the importance of the presentation of gifts, the first engraving accompanying the English translation conveys a visual and textual explanation of the diplomatic rituals needed to facilitate a more favorable consideration of the embassy. The illustration manages the scale of the encounter on two fronts: first, by providing a compacted representation of the hierarchically organized, symbolically relevant, ethnographically suggestive depiction of the Vice Roy Singlamong's court and two, by dilating the itemized specifics of gift inventory and presentation. The folio size engraving, like all the illustrations of the embassy, uses the same plates of Dapper's compilation shipped from Amsterdam to Ogilby's London print shop. Set inside the Vice Roy's court (Figure 1), the illustration records the presentation of goods to Vice Roy Singlamong so he can send the report to Peking and therefore obtain approval for travel. In the foreground is the shadowed movement of people carrying the merchandise to be meticulously inventoried. The engraving is accompanied by the following account:



Figure 1¹³

The chests and packs with the presents being opened, the goods were taken out in several parcels, brought and laid before their

Highnesses [the Vice King and General] to see them; seeming to be well pleased with them, especially some curious lanthorns and celestial and terrestrial spheres and globes: having satisfied their longings, and pleased their curiosity with viewing and reviewing, they commanded them to be laid up handsomely, and in good order again.¹⁴

Identifying which gifts generated the most attention, among the many under consideration, contributes to an understanding of what “well pleas[es] the Chinese.” Beyond confirming the widely reported lavishness of Chinese palaces, the illustration and accompanying text indicate the appropriate movement and placement within those spaces. Depicting the interior of the palace participates in the larger imperatives of travel writing of the age: offer access to royal spaces, convey opulent wealth, and mark the details that indicate social hierarchy. The seating arrangement highlights the mirroring images of Dutch emissaries to the left and Chinese royalty to the right. This mirroring characterizes almost all the depictions of Dutch-Sino encounter in the *Atlas*. However, this is its most formal and equal articulation. A less egalitarian representation of the encounter can be found in the central figures beyond the vista of seated witnesses. Ambassador Van Hoorn and his 13 year old son Joan present gifts to Vice King Singlamong who stands on a large platform (Figure 2). Not only is Singlamong elevated, the body stances of the men are stark. Van Hoorn looks up while in the midst of a curtsy, his unseen arm presumably touching his breast or reaching forward, both signs of deference. By contrast, Singlamong’s arm rests on his hip, his bent leg and lifted heel,



Figure 2: close up of figure 1

his leaning against the back wall of the royal stage, all culminate to depict a figure that is best described as casual. The detail of the engraving is remarkable in showing how the urgency of the embassy's success depends upon the cooperation and goodwill of a seemingly indifferent bureaucrat.

When the trip to the imperial palace in Peking is approved, the journey is carefully documented in a mix of detailed accounts of challenges and of broader depictions of China's landscapes and waterways. The long trip generated visual accounts of a vast, natural countryside and highly developed cityscapes of numerous Chinese provinces, while also producing cartographic engravings for future travel through those states. But once closer to Peking, the illustrations shift focus to emphasize people rather than landscapes (Figure 3).



Figure 3: engraving after page 318

The gloss of this engraving indicates that the meeting is located half an hour outside of Peking, when the Dutch party is welcomed by an official of the “board of ceremonies.” This master of ceremonies instructs the Dutch of appropriate protocol in the imperial palace. Even more so than in the provincial port of Hockfieu, access to centralized power is mediated by ritualistic exchange and the highly controlled movement of goods and people. The Dutch form a formal procession as they approach Peking's formidable wall and narrow entrance, watched by well-armed Lipu guards.

After completing months of arduous travel, Van Hoorn is immediately required to relinquish the keys to the chests of gifts so that appropriate officials could “inspect” the offerings and decide if they are worthy of the Emperor’s attention. With little respite after the long trip, the Dutch are expected to have gifts to the Emperor— including oxen and horses— ready for presentation to the Emperor within one day.

Once within the walls of Peking, the Dutch emissaries are led to a palace courtyard to inventory the offerings (Figure 4). At the center of the illustration, a commander of the court is showing the “Hollanders particulars of presents.” The courtyard is a formidable structure and sets the stage for social, diplomatic, and commercial interactions. The royal palace “is likewise surrounded with three high stone walls, between the two first and the outward wall are the emperor’s guard and eunuchs; and the grand Mandarins or Councillors come thither to negotiate their affairs.”¹⁵ This scene is one of multiple and highly ritualized ceremonies of reverence to follow while in Peking. The gloss indicates that by the door stand “the table where said presents are orderly distributed.” The levels of mediation



Figure 4: engraving after page 322

in the courtyard indicate a meticulous order of custom that the Dutch must acknowledge, and that the English translator carefully reiterates. While the details of the description have an ethnographic function of documenting

the social mores of Peking, the emphasis on the traffic of goods and gifts provides crucial information about Chinese rituals and attempts to manage the scale of global exchange through the dilation of trade details. Foregrounded are the physical materials of a commercial negotiation—disseminated, translated, and valued for its repeatability for future European readers potentially expected to engage in such rituals.

Arguably the most important ritual to be mastered should Dutch diplomatic exertions be successful, imperial banquets occupy much of the embassy's account. *Atlas Chinensis* itemizes three formal feasts in the royal capital of Peking in July 1667 (Figure 5). The placement of tables are

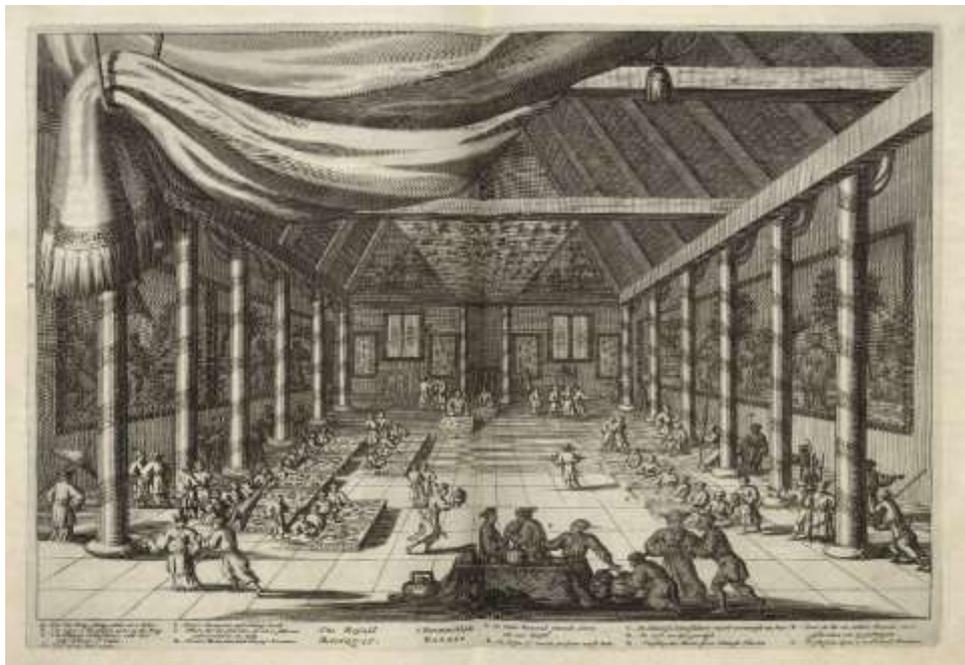


Figure 5: illustration after page 334

according to rank, with indication that the Dutch do not hold a privileged position in this hierarchical setting. Presentation before the Emperor or the Emperor's seal required participants of the banquet (Chinese nobles as well as foreign visitors) to “kowtow.” The account of this procedure is elaborately described as follows:

Voice bidding them ‘*Ascend*’; having passed on about fifteen paces they heard the same voice crying ‘*Kneel*’; and afterwards again, ‘*Bow your heads three times together, which done you may rise*’, soon

after it said, *'Kneel down again, and once more bow your Head three times'*; so they were to bow eighteen times and kneel six; all which being passed over, they cried, *'Stand up, and go to your Lodgings'* which accordingly they did.¹⁶

The curtness of the demands prove peculiar for the Europeans, little apprehending the perceived honor there is in being allowed to bow before the Emperor's seal. The orders come by a disembodied voice, devoid of the niceties expected of a diplomatic exchange. The lack of equality between state officials is deeply felt by the Dutch embassy. When not occupying a subjugated position in court interactions such as banqueting, Van Hoorn and his embassy are reduced to waiting in suspense for another urgent, unexpected beckoning. As elaborated in the premise to the embassy:

yet whatever Ambassadors they be, though the Negotiation be ever so serious, and of greatest import, nay, though they come loaden with Treasure, to be pour'd into the Emperors Exchequer, and be ancient Friends and Allies, yet they are entertained like Spies and Enemies, not suffered in their Journeys to see the Countries but hood winked, have no more Prospect than the Road they treat upon; and in like manner are as close Prisoners, locked up on their inns, and Places of purpose for such Reception; and when come to Court, not only secured but never permitted to Public Audience, or to see the Emperor, but manage all their Business by the Mandarins, or Officers of State.¹⁷

Anxiously anticipating the Emperor's response to gifts, Van Hoorn hopes for a private conference with anyone above the Mandarin messengers and the guarding Tatars. The party left Foochow in 1668 with a sealed imperial edict addressed to the Governor General at Batavia and instructions not to be opened by Van Hoorn. In the edict was not only a rejection of the conditions of trade proposed by the Dutch, but also a reversal of any previous trade arrangements thus effectively ending all hope of Dutch commerce in China.

Why would a Dutch diplomatic trip—a failed one— be of any interest to an English audience? Part of the answer to this question involves the role of print in representing and mediating global encounters in the seventeenth century. *Atlas Chinensis*— as an English translation of the work of the prolific bookmaker Dapper—depicts an immense and complex series of cultural mores within a portable scale, collating and systemizing

expectations, behaviors, and rituals that are just as important to navigating China as the physical geography made accessible by cartographers. As Richard Barbour rhetorically formulates regarding English traders, “Must each new voyage err perpetually, or might a working knowledge of the East, transferrable to unseasoned mariners and factors, accumulate in London? How might such transfer be optimized?”¹⁸ The book marks a transnational European effort of establishing free trade with China, uniquely dependent upon the book industry to assess and amend gestures of accommodation. S.H. Lim expands on the importance of print material in assessing trade strategies:

It appears it is not always assumed that obtaining firsthand knowledge of foreign lands, peoples, and cultures through actual voyaging to foreign shores is necessarily superior to learning or reading about distant places made available in published books. Literal voyaging across the seas may be not only exceedingly difficult but also error prone, leading to cultural engagement with the question of whether it may make more sense first to get acquainted with distant lands via the printed text before deciding to submit to the rigors of ocean travel.¹⁹

The importance of getting “acquainted” with distant places is especially important when engaging with complex political rituals and ingrained cultural traditions of a well-established civilization. The delineation of the natural world through cartographic representation is indeed a crucial aspect of globalization, but the illustrations of how to behave and what to expect in the unfamiliar spaces in which Europeans find themselves in China are similarly useful to navigating global engagements. This is especially true of the highly ritualized procedures of the Chinese imperial court which Europeans must accommodate (to recall Father Balion’s terms), or risk apathy and even dismissal. The information generated by the translation from the Dutch source to the English printing house therefore reveals an important contribution of book makers as agents of early modern globalization. A first-hand account can record movements and engagements across the globe, but a translation initiates trajectories and deploys knowledge beyond those published in the original.

Granted royal favor by Charles II as “His majesties cosmographer, geographic printer, and master of the revels in the Kingdom of Ireland,” John Ogilby is an English publisher set to capitalize on his audience’s

appetite for accounts of foreign lands.²⁰ Ogilby specialized in translating the travels of other Europeans, creating a series of atlases featuring foreign lands beyond Europe's borders.²¹ His London printing house frequently compiled pirated information from other book makers, often wholly recreating English versions of books emerging from prolific publishers located in the Netherlands.²² Because of the frequency, range, and beauty of the volumes emerging under Ogilby's purview, Harriet Crawley applauds the publisher as "the greatest and most modern publisher in Europe."²³ Despite the high quality and relative popularity of Ogilby's atlases, they have often been passed over by scholarly analysis.²⁴ Instead, the attention given to Ogilby's legacy focuses mainly on his publication of original maps of English cities, towns, and travel routes. Indeed, Katherine Van Eerde's monograph on Ogilby's opus categorically dismisses some of the most compelling aspects of the atlases as trifle: "Such items as reprinted letters, suggested treaties and lists of gifts exchanged between the two parties could hardly have been significant to many English readers and might have been placed in an appendix, if they were included simply to swell the size of the volume."²⁵ Rather than simply swelling the size of the volume, details of foreign exchange offer a glimpse of the global networks mobilizing economic, political, and cultural encounters and anticipate European interest and interaction in China. Ogilby's careful reiteration of trade attempts is just as crucial as cartographic reproduction in successfully navigating a foreign land. Furthermore, and despite the failure of the Dutch embassy, *Atlas Chinensis* emerges as a valuable English resource for conceiving of the extent and the nature of commercial trade in Asia. The engravings and descriptions, far from simply recording global encounters, shape the initial conception and manipulation of a strict tributary system shaping all inter-state contact —trade or otherwise—in the region.

To this end, *Atlas Chinensis* represents and mediates the difference between "Trade" and "Tributes" played out through Van Hoorn's interactions with the Chinese.²⁶ Joseph Escherick notes of the rituals of the Chinese court:

[they] were designed to establish a clear hierarchical relationship between the Chinese emperor as Son of Heaven and the rulers of subordinate neighboring states. In this respect, foreign relations were no different from any other Chinese social relations, where

hierarchies of age, gender, social position, and official rank were understood as the natural order of things.²⁷

As Emperor of China, the “Supreme Leader” expects gifts from representatives of subordinate nation states in Asia. Developing the relevance of this system for trade, David Kang argues that “the emphasis on status and hierarchy pervaded not just states’ relations to China but extended to all foreign relations of the time. The tribute system was the region-wide political framework that allowed for diplomacy, travel, and official and private trade between all the states in the region.”²⁸ Episodes of the embassy’s frustrated approach to seeking “unmolested Trade” prove the incompatibility of Dutch ambitions for unrestricted commerce on the one hand, and an inter-Asian tributary system on the other. But in pointing out the incompatibility of these paradigms, *Atlas Chinensis* documents the rituals that comprise the complex commercial and political negotiations expected when paying tribute to the Emperor in Peking. Indeed, careful attention to the movement of gifts and the adherence to rituals are relevant to future mediations between European commercial aspirations and Chinese tributary demands. Historians have noted the subordinate position held by Europeans when embarking on religious missions or commercial exploits in China. I want, instead, to point out that the subordination experienced by the Dutch in the Chinese court, as compiled and translated by book producers, has a function beyond pointing out that subordination. Reiterating complaints about the supplication expected of Europeans in Asia is not the primary function of the book’s production and translation. Instead, subordination is presented as the tactical position Europeans must negotiate within the logic of an inter-Asian tributary system. Therefore, Ogilby’s detailed translation of Dutch-Sino encounters has less to do with the fate and treatment of the embassy and more to do with iterating the rituals, behaviors, and negotiations essential to navigating a Chinese tributary system. *Atlas Chinensis* is evidence of the role of the book in arbitrating the fundamental irreconcilability between trade and tribute. Through dilation of specific court rituals experienced by the Dutch and by compacting amalgamated knowledge cobbled from various European accounts of China, the book producer not only represents, but also shapes, global commerce. While granting that the book hinges on “the ways in which the descriptions of Chinese practices were shaped by assumptions based on European experience”²⁹ and therefore no

way guarantees success in the region, the record, by virtue of its movement across Europe's borders and its effect on different agents interested in success in China, engages a cross-cultural and transnational collaboration that transcends the hostilities between two competing nations.

The English were fully aware of the global dominance of the Netherlands at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of particular note was Dutch economic power, especially the trading company's, VOC's, success in East Asia.³⁰ Arthur Weststeign's analysis of Dutch expansion emphasizes the extent of the republic's worldwide triumphs: "Dutch vessels dominated global trade, while soldiers and settlers of the East and West India Companies occupied extensive territories from Java to the Cape of Good Hope and from Recife to the estuary of the Hudson."³¹ Outlining the Dutch VOC commercial dominance, Claudia Schnurmann remarks:

Like the Portuguese before them, the Dutch could get a foot in the door only by remaining to live in, and trade from, permitted restricted places [T]he limited Dutch success nevertheless bestowed prestige on the VOC and evoked envy, especially in England, where less successful rivals in London nicknamed the Dutch 'the Chinese of Europe' because of their trade with the Far East.³²

Schnurmann highlights the disparagement of the Dutch in English culture, a disdain that involves envy as well as resentment. The contentious relations between the Dutch and English in Asia were made notoriously evident by the Amboyna Massacre in March 1623, wherein Dutch officials executed English and Japanese factions in Amboyna. Although *Atlas Chinensis* was published in London almost 50 years later, the impact of the Amboyna Massacre continued to inform Anglo-Dutch relations.³³ As Karen Chancey argues, "the occurrence played an important role in English politics under the early Stuarts, and influenced English/Dutch relations for a century."³⁴ Within a century of heated tensions in Asia between two competing naval powers vying for leverage in the spice trade, it is possible to see the book not as an intersection of interests but as an English cautionary projection of Dutch failure.³⁵ Adele Lee emphasizes the antagonism provoked by the book industry, examining English shortcomings in the face of Dutch ambitions: "In forcing the English to rely on the accounts of the despised [Dutch], China, then, served as a pointed reminder to the English of just how much they lagged behind rival

Europeans in terms of overseas achievement.”³⁶ But in *Atlas Chinensis*, the embassy’s representation of a failed Dutch embassy underplays past confrontations and topical tensions. Rather than emphasizing England’s lack of influence on the global stage, the atlas presents a narrative of Euro-Asian geopolitics that aligns English interest with Dutch experience and so anticipates Dutch failure as a precursor to English success.

While political and mercantile hostility fuels the Anglo-Dutch trade wars of the seventeenth century, *Atlas Chinensis* codifies an interchangeability that effaces a history of mutual aggression between the European global traders. Despite the critical field’s emphasis on China as the grounds for European rivalry and antagonism, the textual and visual materials about China flowed across competing nation states, particularly between print houses in Amsterdam and in London, with little resistance. Accounting for the traffic of materials historians note “an excellent internal distribution system centered on Amsterdam...which meant that merchants and travellers, products and ideas, from across the continent and around the globe could enter the Dutch Republic and contribute, in various ways, to the business of books.”³⁷ The book is thus evidence of the way print media has the potential to mediate—or at least present the overlapping of shared commercial interests— between competing European states. Printed materials contribute to the commercial agenda underwriting global exchange, revealing how discord does not constitute or characterize all of the traffic between England and the Low Countries. Marjorie Rubright’s discussion of “Dutchness” in England reveals that at least in patterns of commercial interaction, association and kinship, rather than difference and conflict, are more productive models for understanding Anglo-Dutch relations.³⁸ Although textual and visual accounts of the Van Hoorn embassy are Dutch narratives, these transnationally consumed printed materials—such as the traffic of information from Dapper’s printing house to Ogilby’s—downplays Anglo-Dutch differences in order to emphasize the intersection of these countries’ interests in China. Antagonism against the Dutch was an inevitable offshoot of global competition. But at the time of the book’s publication, it was possible to see the Dutch not exclusively as a hostile rival, but also as an advantageous source for navigating global commerce.

In his comprehensive study of print production’s role in shaping early modern exoticism, Benjamin Schmidt traces the emergence of a less

provincial, more broadly European perspective, a “new way to see, read, consume, and comprehend the non-European world. It marked a significant shift from earlier modes of description, characterized by intense contestation—national, confessional, colonial, imperial—to modes that allowed a generically ‘European’ consumer to enjoy a generically ‘exotic’ world.”³⁹ I track a very early and foundational iteration of this in *Atlas Chinensis*. The translation from Dutch to English marks a burgeoning sense of affiliation across competing interests—an affiliation motivated by the promise of trade in China and the need to comprehend a tributary system to be navigated before ambitious, and as yet unrequited, commercial advances can even begin.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Schmidt contextualizes the upsurge of printed material from Amsterdam within a larger geo political struggle that contributed to the shift of focus from participant in world affairs to producer of written accounts of world affairs. He states,

the [Dutch] Republic was becoming less and less engaged in conquering the world as it became more and more vested in describing it... [T]he Dutch could afford to step aside and operate the concession stand, as it were, of European expansion, offering images of the world to those fast entering the competition.⁴¹

Building on Schmidt’s analysis of the innovation and profusion of Dutch printed material for European consumption, I argue that Dapper’s compilation provides an auspicious function at the time of Ogilby’s translation and dissemination in 1671. No longer seen by the English as competitors for East Asian strongholds, no longer a rival in the race to colonize Americas, the Dutch emerge as representational surrogates for European agents of trade in China. As representational surrogates, Dutch trade embassies (even failed ones) function to provide a global advantage for English readers.

The proficiency of traffic between print houses, furthermore, speaks to the implicit benefit of itemizing the immediate experiences of one group in order to create a body of knowledge shared across a diverse audience. *Atlas Chinensis* confirms the advantageous position of the Dutch as a legitimate source of knowledge based on previous, first-hand interactions; but the translation also projects a potential advantage for the English as a well-positioned naval power eager to maximize Asian encounters. Representing credibility on one hand and potential on the other, the book

enacts the cooperation between otherwise competing European powers. The documentation of China, in which Dutch attempts are presented for the consumption of an English reader, dangles the immense wealth and unimaginable promise of commercial opportunities in Asia. And it does this precisely by making that immensity navigatable, by dilating the rituals essential to success, and by compacting the amalgamation of knowledge within a manageable volume. Beyond bringing back foreign customs for local consumption, Ogilby's translation contributes to the development of a globally inclined commercial model in which the English are better able, due to Dutch accounts of trade aspirations in China, to cultivate an understanding of, and potentially participate in, global encounters in the seventeenth century.⁴²

The book industry in Europe thrived in its ability to capture the intertwined nature of mercantile ventures, military tensions, and political accommodations experienced in various locales beyond the reader's reach. The traffic between Dutch-English printing houses, and their effects on the formation of alliances both material and ideological, is a fruitful object for the study of the history of print and its role in the realization of mercantile interests and global tactics in that distant region.⁴³ Ogilby's translation marks the process of lingering representation beyond the global encounter—a process that manages the scale of Chinese trade rituals within a tributary system and so serves a particular function in the repeated interpellation of China for European consumption. The interpellation of China to pique and to satisfy English interests, and therefore its representational value at points when geopolitics and textual, visual depictions intersect, hinges not on the participants of the global encounter but on those who produce the encounter for consumption, dissemination and, in the case of China, assessment of approaches to possible commercial strategies. For the interest of economic success in China, Anglo-Dutch hostilities seem less important than English knowledge generated by Dutch firsthand, detailed accounts. The surrogate function of the Dutch construction of Chinese customs and rituals fashions an English anticipation of the shape and the scale of future global engagements. The China of European publications too often represents frustration for those hoping to profit. But to the degree that ventures to China withhold economic gratification, the representation of these ventures console with the ocular proof of prosperity and the aid of detailed

instruction. The careful detailing of the tributary system and the inventory of exchanges, along with illustrations to meticulously depict the spatial orientation and cultural expectations of trade rituals, is enabled by the print networks of the period. In the process, the imperatives of a shared commercial goal efface national differences in order to deliver access to what is out of reach. To refer back to the epigraph is to recognize that as risky and unlikely an Anglo-Chinese trade alliance would seem in the middle of the seventeenth century, the close account offered by *Atlas Chinensis* warrants that should the opportunity ever arise the English would not be accused, as Balion derides of the Dutch, of being “ignorant of affairs.”

ENDNOTES

¹Title page: *Being a Second Part of a Relation of Remarkable Passages in two Embassies from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Vice-Roy Singlamong and General Taising Lipovi and to Konchi, Emperor of China and East Tartary...Englished and Adorned with above a hundred several sculptures, by John Ogilby, Esq. Master of his Majesty's Revels in the Kingdom of Ireland.* London, Printed by Tho. Johnson for the Author, and are to be had at his House in White Fryers. 1671. I regularize spelling and punctuation of quotations from *Atlas Chinensis*.

² Andrew Hadfield, Ed. *Amazons, Savages, and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 189.

³ This phrase is taken from the title page of Alvarez Semedo's account: *The history of that great and renowned monarchy of China*. London, E. Tyler for John Crook and to be sold at his Shop at the Sign of the Ship in S. Paul's Churchyard, 1655. After the title and author summary, the title page continues with a justification for the translation into English: "Now put into English by a Person of quality, and illustrated with several Mapps and Figures, to satisfy the curious and advance the Trade of Great Britain."

⁴ Adele Lee traces the contested nature of English accounts of China, analyzing English travel writers' suspicions about Jesuit experiences in China, in "Counterfeiting Mandarins': Early Modern English Marginality/ia in Western Encounters with China," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 15 (2010-11): 1-32, 13. <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/15-2/leemand2.htm>

⁵ Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English imagination 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4.

⁶ For more information on the internal politics of China at the time, particularly in the transition from the Ming dynasty to the Qing in 1644, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume III: A Century of Advance, Book 4*, Eds. Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993). For a cross cultural analysis of the fall of the Ming dynasty, see Jack Goldston, "East and West in the Seventeenth Century: Political Crises in Stuart England, Ottoman Turkey, and Ming China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30.1 (1988): 103-142 and Edwin J. Van Kley, "News from China; Seventeenth-Century European Notices of the Manchu Conquest," *The Journal of Modern History* 45.4 (1973): 561-582. For Dutch assistance in Ch'ing conflict against Cheng dy, see John Willis Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1662-1681* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

⁷ *Atlas Chinensis*, 203.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁹ Willis Jr. concludes, regarding this strict protocol that the Dutch were subjected to, that in the seventeenth century "Foreign relations were more exhaustively bureaucratized—trade only in connection with embassies, strict rules on the frequency of

embassies, the size of their suites, the presents they were to bring, and those they would receive.” John E. Willis Jr., Ed. *China and Maritime Europe: 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy and Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7.

¹⁰ Anthony Culter, “Significant Gifts: Patterns of Exchange in Late Antique, Byzantine and Early Modern Europe,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 (2008): 79-101, 81.

¹¹ The account of Van Hoorn’s statement continue: “but he would give order to Novel to fetch them up, that they might be seen, and if they were damnified [destroyed], they should immediately be shown to his highness, which said his highness was well satisfied, saying, that he would then write concerning it to the Court at Peking. The Ambassador also desired his highness’s advice, because he knew not the customs and fashions of the country” (214).

¹² Once on shore, the ambassador makes a jarring error of asking the General to inspect the presents himself, which was seen by the general as an insult to person and to protocol.

¹³ All of the engravings were originally created by an artist employed by Van Hoorn’s embassy, printed in Amsterdam by Olfert Dapper. While pirated illustrations were often copied in London by one of the artists working for a publishing enterprise (like John Ogilby’s), *Atlas Chinensis* engravings of the embassy were from the same plates used in Dapper’s compilation.

¹⁴ *Atlas Chinensis*, 232.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 479.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 325.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ Richmond Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East 1576-1626* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP: 2003), 104.

¹⁹ S. H. Lim, “Introduction”, *The* in Debra Johanyak and S.H. Lim (eds.) *English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2010), 7.

²⁰ Ogilby is part of the prolific travel book industry in London, most notably represented by Richard Hakluyt’s *The Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589–1600) and Samuel Purchas’s *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625). In terms of representations of China, Richard Hakluyt’s expanded edition of *Principle Navigations* in 1599 includes “An Excellent Treatise of the Kingdome of China, and of the Estate and Government Thereof: Printed in Latine at Macao a Citie of the Portugals in China 1590.” Purchas’s *Hakluytus Posthumus* greatly extends the entries on Euro-Asian encounters by including English maritime adventures and travel narratives set in Asia, as well as translated foreign accounts of the East.

²¹ For a general assessment of Ogilby's publishing ventures, see chapter five of Katherine S. van Eerde, *Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (London: Chatham, 1976). A royalist of Irish descent, Ogilby opens his world atlases with the following self-description as "His majesties cosmographer." Rightfully, as he was famed to be the most comprehensive cosmographer in England at the time, creating extensive maps and accounts of travels for the reading public.

²² Ogilby wrongfully attributes authorship to Arnoldus Montanus, stating in the title page that the materials are "Collected out of their Severl Writings and Journals by Arnoldus Montanus. While Montanus is the source of Ogilby's *Atlas Japannensis*, he is not the source of the Dutch embassy to China found in *Atlas Chinensis*. Rather, it is Olfert Dapper's 1670 *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf der Nederlandsch Oost-Indische Maatschappye, op de kust en in het keizzerrijk van Taising of Sina* compilation that is the source of Ogilby's materials on China. Dapper was a very active figure in Dutch publication in the 17th century, and is the source of other Ogilby translations on Asia, Africa, and America. Adam Jones attempts to show the methods of compilation, synthesis, and translation in this important Dutch printer's books in "Decompiling Dapper: A Preliminary Search for Evidence," *History in Africa* 17 (1990): 171-209. For more information on the Dutch book industry, see Kees Boterbloem, "The Genesis of Jan Struys's *Perillous Voyages* and the Business of the Book Trade in the Dutch Republic," *Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America* 102.1 (2008): 5-28.

²³ Harriet Crawley continues: "The texts were filled with elaborate illustrations, copperplate engravings based on travellers' sketches. At the time, illustrated books were a great rarity, but Ogilby maintained that seeing was believing. In an age before television, photograph, radio or national newspapers, he provided a key source of knowledge" (98). "John Ogilby, China publisher," *Arts of Asia* 12 (1982): 96-99, 96.

²⁴ For a general assessment of Ogilby's publishing ventures, see chapter five of Katherine S. van Eerde, *Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*. In chronological order, the atlases published by Ogilby are: *Embassy to China* (1669), *Africa* (1670), *Atlas Japannensis* (1670), *America* (1671), *Atlas Chinensis* (1671), *Asia* (1673), *Embassy to China 2nd Edition* (1673). The specifics of Ogilby's subscription arrangements for the atlases are discussed in Sarah Clapp, "The Subscription Enterprises of John Ogilby and Richard Blome," *Modern Philology* 30.4 (1933): 365-379.

²⁵ Katherine S. van Eerde, *Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (London: Chatham, 1976), 117.

²⁶ For trade history and role of tributary system in China, see David C. Kang, *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) and Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Arbitrage, China, and World Trade in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38.4 (1995): 429-448. To historicize the tributary system in seventeenth century China, see J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Têng, "On The Ch'ing Tributary System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 6.2 (1941): 135-246.

²⁷ Joseph Escherick, "China and the World: From Tribute to Treatises in Popular Nationalism" in Brantly Womack (ed.) *China's Rise: In Historical Perspective* (UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 19-38, 20.

²⁸ Kang, 71.

²⁹Gerritsen, A and McDowall, S. “Material Culture and the Other: European Encounters with Chinese Porcelain, ca. 1650-1800” *Journal of World History* (2012): 87-113, 100.

³⁰As Jane Hwang Degenhardt notes, “the Dutch took over the Eastern monopoly [of trade] from the Portuguese and with it the import of porcelain to Europe.” Jane Hwang Degenhardt, “Cracking the Mysteries of “China”: China(ware) in the Early Modern Imagination” *Studies in Philology* 110 (2013): 132-167, 147. She locates her study “when Chinese commodities were just beginning to enter English domestic spaces through Mediterranean trade and European re-export” (133).

³¹Arthur Weststeijn, “Republican empire: colonialism, commerce and corruption in the Dutch Golden Age.” *Renaissance Studies* 26.4 (2012): 491-509, 492.

³² Claudia Schnurmann, “The VOC, the WIC, and Dutch seventeenth-century globalization” in Daniel Carey (ed) *Asian Travel in the Renaissance* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 149-168, 158-9.

³³ See Vincent C. Loth, “Armed Incidents and Unpaid Bills: Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Banda Islands in the Seventeenth Century”, *Modern Asian Studies* 29 (1995): 705-740. Anti-Dutch sentiment was readily apparent throughout the seventeenth century in England, as captured by Dryden’s play *Amboyna* (1673). See Robert Markley’s *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Karen Chancey, “The Amboyna Massacre in English Politics, 1624-1632” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30.4 (1998): 583-598. For analysis of Dryden’s dramatic depiction of the event, see Candy B. K Schille, “With Honour Quit the Fort’: Ambivalent Colonialism in Dryden’s *Amboyna*.” *Early Modern Literary Studies* 12.1 (May, 2006) 4.1-30 <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/12-1/schiambo.htm>

³⁴Chancey, 584.

³⁵ For a comprehensive account of Dutch-Asian relations, see Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620–1740* (Copenhagen, 1958. Reprint, The Hague and Copenhagen, 1981). See also F. S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline*, trans. Peter Daniels (Zutphen: Walburg Press, 2003) and Jonathan Israel’s *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). For particular focus on the complexities of Dutch-Asian commerce, VOC trade policies, and overall Dutch maritime dominance in the Pacific, see John Willis Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1662-1681*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974) and Ryuto Shimada, *The Intra-Asian Trade in Japanese Copper by the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, Martinus Nijoff Publishers and VSP, 2006).

³⁶ Lee, 10.

³⁷ Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe’s Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: U of Penn Press, 2015), 46.

³⁸ In *Doppelganger Dilemmas: Anglo-Dutch Relations in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), Marjorie Rubright accounts for a range of texts that negotiate the resemblances between England and the Low Countries.

³⁹ Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, 9.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Schmidt recognizes the Netherlands as a provider of printed knowledge about non-European parts of the globe: “The Dutch, more generally, produced the leading accounts of Asia, Africa, and America, and made them widely available in English, French, and Latin.” Benjamin Schmidt, “Mapping an Exotic World: The Global Project of Dutch Geography, circa 1700”, in Felicity Nussbaum (ed) *The Global Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 21-37, 22-3.

⁴¹ Schmidt, “Mapping an Exotic World,” 23, 26.

⁴² For a comprehensive account of Euro-Asian encounters in the seventeenth century, see Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley. *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume III: A Century of Advance Book I*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993). To contextualize the impact of Euro-Asian encounters in the establishment of global commerce and cultural exchange, see Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Vol. 2, Mainland Mirrors: Europe, Japan, China, South Asia, and the Islands: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1540-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 1993), and *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief*, Ed. Anthony Reid (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁴³ For a more thorough discussion of the diplomatic negotiations occurring at the end of the 17th century between England, France and the Netherlands, see Clyde Leclare Grose, “The Anglo-Dutch Alliance of 1678,” *The English Historical Review* 39 (1924): 526-551.