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Could David Hume Have Known about Buddhism? Charles Francois Dolu, the Royal College of La Flèche, and the Global Jesuit Intellectual Network

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Abstract: Philosophers and Buddhist scholars have noted the affinities between David Hume's empiricism and the Buddhist philosophical tradition. I show that it was possible for Hume to have had contact with Buddhist philosophical views. The link to Buddhism comes through the Jesuit scholars at the Royal College of La Flèche. Charles Francois Dolu was a Jesuit missionary who lived at the Royal College from 1723–1740, overlapping with Hume's stay. He had extensive knowledge both of other religions and cultures and of scientific ideas. Dolu had had first-hand experience with Theravada Buddhism as part of the second French embassy to Siam in 1687–1688. In 1727, Dolu also had talked with Ippolito Desideri, a Jesuit missionary who visited Tibet and made an extensive study of Tibetan Buddhism from 1716–1721. It is at least possible that Hume heard about Buddhist ideas through Dolu.

1. Introduction

Both philosophers and Buddhist scholars have long noted the affinities between David Hume's empiricism and the Buddhist philosophical tradition.[1] The conventional wisdom, however, has been that these affinities must either be the

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result of an independent convergence or of a general "oriental" influence on eighteenth-century philosophy and letters. This is because very little was known about Buddhism in the Europe of the 1730s, when Hume was writing *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Buddhism had died out in India, Japan was closed to the West, and European scholars in the Chinese court focused on the elite Confucian and Taoist traditions.[2]

I will show that, in spite of this, it was possible for Hume to have had contact with Buddhist philosophical views. The link to Buddhism comes through the Jesuit scholars at the Royal College of La Flèche. Hume lived in La Flèche from 1735–1737 and wrote the *Treatise* there. In particular, Charles Francois Dolu was a Jesuit missionary who lived at the Royal College in La Flèche from 1723–1740, overlapping with Hume's stay. He was a sophisticated and well-traveled man, who had extensive knowledge both of other religions and cultures and of scientific ideas. Dolu had had first-hand experience with Theravada Buddhism as part of the second French embassy to Siam in 1687–1688. Buddhism was the official religion of Siam and members of the embassy interacted extensively with the "talapoins"—the European name for Siamese Buddhists. In 1727, just eight years before Hume's visit, Dolu also had talked with Ippolito Desideri, a Jesuit missionary who visited Tibet and made an extensive study of Tibetan Buddhism from 1716–1721. Desideri studied the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* of Tsongkhapa, one of the central figures of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. Desideri's unpublished book describing Tibet was one of the most extensive and accurate accounts of Buddhist philosophy until the twentieth century.

Dolu and Desideri were part of a network of philosophically, culturally, and scientifically knowledgeable Jesuits, with connections to both La Flèche and Asia. They included Jean Venance Bouchet, the notable Hindu scholar, Jean Richaud and Jean Fontaney, distinguished astronomers who made discoveries in India and China, and Joachim Bouvet who was a mathematical advisor to the Chinese Emperor and corresponded with Leibniz. There is increasing recognition of the mutual influence between European and Asian intellectual traditions in the early modern period.[3] The story of Hume and the Jesuits suggests that there could have been contact between Buddhist ideas and one of the founding fathers of the European Enlightenment.

The story is also interesting as a case study in the complexities of determining philosophical influence. Within the history of philosophy influence is often seen as a matter of explicit argumentation and persuasion between philosophers with different positions. We can outline, say, Descartes' views on identity and compare them point for point with Hume's (or, for that matter, Parfit's or Tsongkhapa's). The picture is of a sort of grand philosophical colloquium conducted in the Elysian fields among the dead giants of the past. From a purely philosophical point of view such exercises can be very informative and illuminating.

From a psychological, historical and causal point of view, however, influence may be rather different. We know that psychologically, people can be influenced by ideas, even if they themselves forget the source of those ideas. In fact, this "source amnesia" is the rule rather than the exception. Information about sources is actually encoded in a different kind of memory, "autobiographical" or "episodic" memory, while ideas or facts themselves are stored in more robust "semantic memory."[4] We know that listeners can be influenced by ideas even when they are not advocated by the people who present them.[5] Psychologically, arguing against a position, as well as arguing for it, can lead your interlocutor to encode and remember that position. And, psychologically and historically, even great philosophers are not only influenced by other great philosophers (especially before they are great themselves!). They may pick up ideas from much more obscure figures who happen to be the people they find congenial or talk with on a regular basis—the equivalent of the guy in the next office.

From this psychological perspective, the relevant causal constraints of time, place and proximity become much more relevant. From a philosophical point of view we can talk about what Tsongkhapa or Parfit's views could mean for Hume. But from a psychological and historical perspective, Parfit's ideas could not have influenced Hume's. It might seem that the same is true for Tsongkhapa—that the actual circumstances of time and place would have made such contact impossible. What I will show in this paper is that, in fact, the opportunity for this sort of psychological and historical influence was actually present through the intermediary of the Jesuits at La Flèche.

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jesuits raise these issues about the causal mechanisms of influence in a particularly fascinating way.[6] On the one hand, the "official" philosophical views advocated and argued for by the Jesuits were relatively conservative and narrow and reflected the constraints of the Church. On the other hand, Jesuit travelers and missionaries characteristically explored and recorded the ideas of the other cultures they encountered, even as they argued against them. The Jesuits also had a particularly strong general intellectual and scientific tradition. And they were famous or infamous for their ability to juggle apparently contradictory views, the "Jesuitical" stereotype. So the Jesuits, in particular, could have been causal agents for the transmission of ideas they did not actually advocate, and even actively deplored.

2. David Hume and the Jesuit College at La Flèche

It is always frustrating that so few people save great men's letters before they become great. But the lack of information about Hume's early life is particularly problematic. Hume's magnum opus, *The Treatise of Human Nature*, was written when he was an unknown in his early twenties, and yet it contains almost all

his original philosophical discoveries—his later work was largely elaborations or reworkings of the ideas in the *Treatise*. We know something about the influences on those ideas but much is still obscure.[7] In an early letter, Hume himself cites Malebranche, Descartes, Berkeley and Bayle as prerequisites for understanding the *Treatise*, but he also makes it clear that he has taken the general skeptical view much further than they have.[8]

However, we do know that from 1735–1737, at the time he wrote the *Treatise*, Hume lived at La Flèche, a short walk away from The Royal College, established by Henri IV. It was the second most important Jesuit college in France, exceeded only by Louis Le Grand in Paris. It had an extensive library, with 40,000 volumes. Descartes was an alumnus.[9]

There are only four letters from Hume's three years in France and only one from La Flèche, plus a slightly later letter referring to his time there.[10] Hume always described his time at La Flèche with great fondness. His brief autobiography talks about "The three years I passed very agreeably in France," and says, "I there laid down the Plan of Life which I have steadily and successfully pursued."[11] After he came back, he wrote about his "perfect tranquility in France."[12] In his one letter from La Flèche, written just after he arrived, he says he is engaged in constant study, and extols the virtues of a good library—the La Flèche college library was exceptional—compared to University courses and professors. And for reaping all the advantages of both travel and study, he says, "There is no place more proper than La Flèche. . . . The People are extremely civil and sociable and besides the good company in the Town, there is a college of a hundred Jesuits, which is esteemed the most magnificent both for buildings and gardens of any of that Order in France or even in Europe."[13]

In 1762 Hume wrote a reply to George Campbell, a distinguished Scots academic who had attacked Hume's argument against miracles on religious grounds. He describes how his argument originally occurred to him "as I was walking in the cloisters of the Jesuit college of La Flèche, a town in which I passed two years of my youth, and engaged in a conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and learning, who was relating to me and urging some nonsensical miracle performed in their convent when I was tempted to dispute against him: and as my head was full of the topics of my Treatise of Human Nature, which I was at that time composing, this argument immediately occurred to me." He didn't convince the Jesuit who was "very much graveled" at first, but at last observed that Hume couldn't be right because in that case you would have to reject the Gospels as well as the specific miracle in question. "Which observation," Hume says dryly, "I thought it proper to treat as sufficient answer." He goes on to note the irony of the fact that such a skeptical argument was "the product of a convent of Jesuits." [14]

Though this letter might seem dismissive of the Jesuits, it is worth noting that it is addressed to Campbell, a Protestant writer making very similar arguments.

Hume is making a sly rhetorical point by comparing the learned Jesuit's defense of Catholic miracles, which Campbell would have vigorously rejected, to the equally learned Campbell's own arguments. In the eighteenth century, defending nonsensical miracles was not just a Jesuit practice, nor was it a sign of intellectual backwardness.

Hume was gregarious all his life—he loved talking about ideas, and participated vigorously in intellectual clubs and societies.[15] The Jesuits also had a long tradition of intellectual discussion. It seems likely that during the time he wrote the *Treatise*, Hume was talking with the Jesuits at the Royal College. Although they were officially conservative, advocating and defending the Church positions, recent work emphasizes the extent to which the Jesuits in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century participated in scientific and intellectual developments, particularly in a global context.[16] In particular, in early eighteenth-century Europe, the Jesuit community knew more about Asian religious and philosophical ideas than anyone else.

3. Charles Francois Dolu

Who did Hume talk to? Who might be candidates for the Jesuit "of some parts and learning"? The triennial Jesuit catalogs listed all the members of all the Jesuit colleges, including their birthplaces and dates and brief details of their expertise and history. There were 34 official Jesuit fathers at La Flèche in 1734 and 40 in 1737. There were also students and "coadjutors"—assistants performing menial labor (57 in 1734 and 52 in 1737) making up the "hundred Jesuits" Hume described.[17] A number of these fathers were "of some parts and learning" and had connections to Asia.

Robert Besnard was rector in 1734. Born in 1660, Besnard had been associated with the supporters of Malebranche, a strong influence on Hume, who had been active at La Flèche in the first part of the eighteenth century.[18] Yves-Marie André was Malebranche's biographer, correspondent and most fervent disciple and taught philosophy at La Flèche from 1706–1709. André was persecuted by the authorities and his followers at La Flèche recanted by the 1720's though, like him, they remained in the order.[19] André reported to his own pupil, Le Quens, that Besnard was a good philosopher who had similar ideas but that, unlike André himself, he had avoided conflict with the authorities—"bon homme quoique habile."[20]

There were also eight ex-missionaries at La Flèche in Hume's time. Michel Pernet had been trained as a missionary to China and had visited Batavia, now Jakarta, before being turned back to Europe by the Dutch.[21] The 1737 rector, Jean Phillipe Bunou, had published treatises on barometric pressure and on geography and taught in Quebec.[22] Gabriel Baudon, who was at La Flèche in 1734 and 1737, corresponded extensively with other Jesuits in both the Indies and China. In

1741 his student Père Roy brought two Chinese converts, Fathers Liou and Tsao, to La Flèche.[23] (Baudon is also interesting as the likely source for "the nonsensical miracle" that Hume described. Both the Jansenists in La Flèche (dismissively)[24] and the Jesuits (approvingly)[25] report that Baudon became a cult among the locals, particularly women, who claimed that he had performed miracles.)

However, the most interesting of the Jesuit fathers in Hume's time, and the one with the closest connections to Buddhism, was Charles Francois Dolu. Dolu was born in 1655 in Paris. He was the son of Jean-Jacques Dolu, who had been the intendant of New France, had traveled to Québec, and was part of the (relatively) culturally tolerant and curious circle surrounding Champlain.[26] Charles Francois entered the Jesuit order in 1674 and took his vows as a spiritual coadjutor in 1687,[27] just before he joined the French embassy to King Nair in Siam. He was one of fourteen Jesuits who went to Siam. In 1688, after a revolution that deposed Nair and led to the expulsion of the Europeans, he fled Siam for Pondicherry in India where he was a missionary until around 1710.[28] In India, he figured in the Malabar Rites Controversy—a debate over whether indigenous religious practices could be incorporated into Christian missionary rites.[29] In 1713 he accompanied the Duchess of Alba to Spain. In 1723 he retired to La Flèche where he stayed until his death, at 85, in 1740.[30]

The 1687 Siamese embassy was a follow-up to an initial 1685 embassy. Both voyages were documented by several of the participants, particularly Guy Tachard, the Jesuit leader.[31] The second voyage was recorded by Tachard, by Ceberet, the trade envoy, and most significantly by Simon De La Loubere, the diplomatic envoy.[32] La Loubere composed a detailed, accurate and widely-read description of Siam, which included a section on the Siamese religion—a form of Theravada Buddhism.[33] The motivations for the embassies were complex, including diplomatic, political, military and trade ambitions on both sides. The Jesuits in the embassies, however, were primarily involved in evangelization and astronomy.

As part of the embassy, Dolu had first-hand experience with Buddhist practice. The Jesuits interacted extensively with the "talapoins"—the European term for the Siamese Theravada Buddhist monks. In fact, three of the Jesuits, including Jean Venance Bouchet, lived in the Buddhist monastery, and followed its rules, in order to learn the official language of the court. The monastery was close to the official house of the remaining Jesuits, and the fathers living with the monks visited the others every day.[34] It is likely that their reports contributed to La Loubere's account of Siamese religion—La Loubere was only in Siam for three months and during that time was ill and heavily engaged in diplomatic negotiations.[35] Indeed, La Loubere himself says that the second volume of his book, which contains descriptions of Siamese religion, linguistics, mathematics, natural history, and astronomy, and includes translations from Pali, the language of Theravada Buddhist texts, was written by other unspecified authors.[36]

Dolu also seems to have had the typically Jesuit combination of evangelical fervor and ethnographic openness. Dolu fled Siam to Pondicherry after the revolution with Bouchet, the missionary who had lived in the Siamese monastery, and they worked closely together. Once in India, Bouchet became an observer and recorder of Hindu religion and culture, as well as the superior of the mission. Like other Jesuits in India, he adopted many Hindu ascetic practices including vegetarianism and Hindu dress.[37]

Dolu was deeply committed to evangelizing the Indies. In 1700 he wrote a letter from Pondicherry celebrating Jesuit conversions which appeared in the *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*,[38] a collection of Jesuit travel writings. But he had also felt the conflict between evangelization and a sensitivity to the native religious traditions. Dolu, in concert with Bouchet, organized ceremonies for Christian converts, such as parades, funerals and weddings that were heavily influenced by Hindu practice and tradition. In the Malabar rites controversy, which was initiated by the more conservative Capuchins, Rome investigated and condemned the practices. However, the Papal reaction was somewhat ambiguous and the practices continued—indeed, the Jesuits argued that conversion would be impossible without them.[39]

Dolu also had scientific interests. Dolu was eighty when Hume arrived at La Flèche. He had been shaped during a period in the mid to late seventeenth century, when the Jesuits were close to the forefront of intellectual and scientific progress.[40] The Jesuit members of the two Siamese embassies were closely tied to the Royal Academy of Science in Paris. King Nair, like the Kang Xi Emperor, had specifically requested European mathematical and astronomical advice. Two of the members of the 1685 Siamese embassy, Jean Fontaney and Joachim Bouvet, went on to China where they became distinguished mathematicians and astronomers and scientific advisors to the Emperor. (Fontaney also later was a rector of La Flèche and Bouvet had been educated there.)[41] Fontaney and Dolu corresponded, and in 1703 Dolu sent a pound of quinine to Fontaney to treat the ailing emperor.[42]

According to the *Mercure de France*, which excitedly chronicled the second embassy, the fourteen Jesuits of the 1687 expedition were selected from over 150 candidates,[43] and they were explicitly chosen for their scientific talent. They were named as official Mathematicians to the King. They brought a 12-foot and 6-foot telescope to the Siamese palace, observed a lunar eclipse, and planned to build an observatory.[44] Their astronomical observations were coordinated with the Academy.[45] La Loubere's book includes an analysis by Cassini, the Royal Astronomer, of Siamese astronomical observations that the Jesuits had collected[46] and Cassini also coordinated the observations.[47] Thomas Gouye published the Jesuits' reports to the Academy in 1692. Gouye includes general reports of the Jesuits' findings and specific scientific reports by several of the members of the embassy, especially Jean Richaud.

In Siam, Richaud calculated the longitude of major cities, observed the satellites of Jupiter and the comet of 1689, and measured deviations of the compass. He also consulted closely with King Nair's astrologer and provided an account of the Siamese calendar and system of astronomical calculation, presumably the source of the analysis in La Loubere's book.[48] Along with Dolu and Bouchet he escaped from Siam (with the telescopes) and went to Pondicherry where the three lived and worked closely together. He continued extensive observations, corresponded with Cassini, and discovered that Alpha Centauri was a binary star—the first recorded telescopic astronomical observation in India and the fourth recorded observation of a binary star anywhere (Fontaney had made the third observation in China.)[49]

So Dolu, at the least, worked closely with Jesuits with strong scientific interests. There is also a separate indication of Dolu's own interest in natural philosophy. In 1701 the *Memoires pour l'histoire et beaux arts*, printed by the Academy of Science, reviewed C. Biron's *Curiosites de la nature et de 1'art*. Biron's report of natural curiosities from India included a square stone from Calcutta with medicinal uses: "The traveller obtained this square stone through the liberality of P. Dolu, Jesuit of Pondicherry. 'There was never,' he says, 'a more polite and generous man, nor one more learned about the natural world.'"[50]

Finally, there are a few hints about Dolu's broader personality and interests. The memoirist Mathieu Marais recorded in his letters that Dolu was the source of a satirical broadside or "calotte" that appeared in Chartres in 1731.[51] He wrote music, including several canticles that were published in 1731 alongside those of the better-known mystical Jesuit writer Jean-Joseph Surin.[52] In around 1715 Dolu was part of the circle of the Academie de Lyons—a cultivated group of intellectuals centered around Bottu de Saint Fonds. Interestingly, during the same period Robert Challes, the ferociously anti-Jesuit and anti-religious writer, was part of the same circle. Claude Brosset, who knew both men, describes Dolu in a letter to Saint Fonds, which also discusses Challes, by saying "his conversation, as you know, is full of utility and charm."[53]

There is a particularly telling brief personal description of Dolu from 1715. Saint-Fonds reports that, as an amusement, he had invited Dolu to lunch with Challes, who had also traveled in Siam and India. Rather than the expected tempest, however, "I found myself in the midst of the gentlest breezes. Challes though a complete original and the wiliest of humans, is nonetheless an honest man, and as for P. Dolu, the name of the missionary, under a wild beard, he is a Jesuit per omnes casus, that is to say, polite and politic and he understands raillery better than a man of the world."[54]

In sum, Dolu was intelligent, knowledgeable, and gregarious. He had traveled extraordinarily widely and experienced a variety of what, for Hume, would have been exotic cultures and religions. He was interested in and knowledgeable about science, mathematics, and astronomy. He was also apparently urbane, tolerant

and, perhaps most important of all for Hume, witty. These are all characteristics that would surely have appealed to Hume. It is difficult not to believe that they would have enjoyed each other's conversation during Hume's crucial two years at La Flèche.

There are a number of interesting lines of research that could be pursued about the possible influence of Dolu and the other Jesuits on Hume. For example, Wootton[55] has actually argued for Challes as an influence on Hume's argument about miracles, but acknowledges that Challes' clandestine manuscript was unpublished during Hume's life—Dolu could have been a conduit for Challes' ideas although he would certainly not have endorsed them. Similarly, there was a very strong influence from Malebranche at La Flèche, and that could also have provided an additional link between Hume and Malebranche's ideas.

For our present purposes, however, the most striking fact about Dolu was that he was knowledgeable about other religions and cultures, Buddhism, in particular. Moreover, Dolu had another source of knowledge about Buddhism beyond his Siamese experiences and his conversations with Bouchet. That source was Ippolito Desideri.

4. Ippolito Desideri and Tibetan Buddhism

Ippolito Desideri was known in his lifetime by a single letter he wrote in 1716, early in his visit to Tibet. The letter was published in 1722 in *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses* and was reprinted often in the eighteenth century.[56] But the manuscript of his account of Tibet and related letters and depositions were only published in the twentieth century. These papers were collected by Luciano Petech in 1952 in a magisterial Italian critical edition of missionary documents.[57] There was also an abridged and edited version of the manuscript published in 1904,[58] an even more heavily edited English translation in 1932,[59] as well as a 1938 English translation of other letters and documents,[60] both since occasionally reprinted. A 1987 biography describes an additional manuscript found in the archives,[61] and many of Desideri's Tibetan manuscripts have also been published in Italian.[62] More recently there have been a number of articles about Desideri, a complete bibliography and a book.[63]

Desideri came from a prosperous family in Pistoia. He joined the Jesuit order and, for somewhat mysterious reasons, conceived a grand mission—to convert Tibet to Catholicism. As soon as he was ordained, he set out from Rome for India. In 1714 he left for Tibet from Delhi and nine months later arrived in Leh, now in Northern India, making his way by foot over the Himalayas. (He vividly describes crossing mountain abysses over a single vine rope bridge.) After another grueling eight-month-journey he reached Lhasa in 1716.

When he arrived at Lhasa, the Khan and the Dalai Lama welcomed him enthusiastically. The welcome did not diminish when he announced that he was a lama

himself and intended to convert them all to Catholicism. Instead, in a typically Buddhist response, they suggested that, in that case, it would be a good idea if he learned Tibetan and studied the Tibetan religion. If he could actually explain why his religion was superior, they would convert.

Desideri accepted the challenge. He took six months to learn Tibetan. Then he spent the next five years in the monasteries and universities of Tibetan Buddhism. These monasteries were among the largest academic institutions in the world at the time. Over 20,000 monks lived and studied there.[64] Like the medieval universities of Europe they combined theology with logic, epistemology, and metaphysics. The monks valued argument and Desideri noted that they had mastered all the rhetorical techniques of the most brilliant Europeans (see also Goss).[65] There was a twelve-year-long set curriculum and Desideri tried to pursue it. He studied the Kanghur—the canonical collection of Tibetan Buddhist texts—and the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* of Tsongkhapa, the summa of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. He reports that he translated the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* into Latin, though the translation is lost. He also composed a series of Christian apologetics, arguing specifically against fundamental Buddhist tenets, in Tibetan verse.

Shortly after Desideri arrived in Lhasa, several Capuchin monks also arrived, following up an earlier unsuccessful attempt to found a Capuchin mission. The Capuchins claimed priority and Desideri was ordered back. Desideri left Lhasa as ordered but only returned home to Italy in 1727. On the way, he spent time in various missions in India, including a year working in the Jesuit mission at Pondicherry, where Jean Venance Bouchet was still the superior. When he returned to Rome, he devoted himself to convoluted legal battles with the Capuchins, and to the preparation of a book about his experiences in Tibet. In November of 1732, after eleven years, the Vatican declared that Tibet would officially be the turf of the Capuchins, not the Jesuits. Desideri could never go back. He died four months later.

Desideri traveled through France in 1727, on his way from India to Rome. In fact, by the time he got to France, he was something of a celebrity. In Paris, he was invited to Versailles and Fontainebleau, was the guest of the King's confessor and met the Royal children and the King himself. The manuscript of his book available in English only includes a passing reference to La Flèche. But a somewhat different Italian manuscript, as transcribed and printed in Petech's book, contains the following passage. "On the 31st (August) around noon I arrived at our Royal College at La Flèche. There I received the particular attention of the rector, the procurator, Père Tolu and several other of the reverend fathers. On the 4th I left La Flèche."[66] Examination of the original manuscript shows that Desideri actually wrote "Dolu" – the "T" in the Petech version is a mistranscription.[67] So Desideri spent five days in La Flèche. He came there after five days at the Jesuit college at Rennes, a nearby college that had close ties to La Flèche, and he visited three other French Jesuit colleges on his route home.

Dolu and Desideri had much in common. Both had worked in Pondicherry, and both knew Jean Venance Bouchet there. They had both been deeply and passionately committed to evangelization. But both men also had experienced the tension between the typically Jesuit interest in indigenous religions and the demands of orthodoxy, and both had struggled with the Capuchins. It is not surprising that Desideri specifically picks out Dolu by name among the fathers at La Flèche, and suggests that Dolu paid him particular attention.

5. Desideri's Manuscript

Desideri's manuscript describes Tibetan Buddhism in great and accurate detail. An entire book, twenty-two chapters long, is titled "Of the false and peculiar religion observed in Tibet."[68] There are several extant versions of the manuscript.[69] One was discovered by Carlo Puini in a private Italian collection in 1875, and published in Italian in 1904. It is now in the library of Florence. It is possible that this manuscript was sent by Desideri to his brother in Pistoia.[70] The other manuscripts are in the Jesuit archives in Rome.

The Florentine manuscript is the earliest. It is addressed to an unidentified superior at the French Jesuit mission in Pondicherry. Desideri had promised to send his colleague an account of Tibet, he says. And accordingly, he has written a description of his travels during the eight-month-long sea voyage home (typically, he returned from India to France by way of America, stopping off at Martinique). Jean Venance Bouchet, Dolu's colleague, was the mission superior at the time and may have been the intended recipient. The Florentine manuscript itself is not in Desideri's writing—it had been copied from the original by several different hands. According to Petech, the Florentine manuscript is typical of the travel accounts that regularly circulated among the Jesuits. Some, though by no means all of these reports, were eventually published in places like the *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*, like Desideri's earlier letter. In general the Jesuit institutions were ambivalent about publication and there was strict censorship, but they encouraged communication within the widespread Jesuit community.

The other manuscripts are revisions and partial revisions of the Florentine manuscript and two final fair copies of the revised version. The final versions are dated June 1728—six months after Desideri got back to Rome and five years before he died. The final versions seem intended for publication and we don't know why they were never published. The religious content of the book may have meant that it was unable to get past the Jesuit censors. Interestingly, one of the final manuscripts is missing the section on the Tibetan religion, which is in the earlier versions. It is also possible that this section was circulated separately.[71]

In the introduction to the second version of the book, rather than specifically addressing his superior in India, Desideri says he is writing because, "[w]hen I

returned through France and Italy to Tuscany and Rome, I was strongly urged by many men of letters, by gentleman and by important personages to write down in proper order all I had told them at different times."[72] And he goes on specifically to mention that an account of the religion of Tibet "founded on the Pythagorean system and so entirely different from any other deserves to be known in order to be contested."[73] This not only shows that Desideri discussed the contents of his book with the French Jesuits but also suggests that the revised version was intended for them.

In the manuscript Desideri explains karma, reincarnation, and meditative practice. He describes the Buddha, down to the earrings, lotus flower and serene expression, and tells the classic story of his life. Moreover, as we will see, Desideri outlines some of the philosophical foundations of Tibetan Buddhism, in what is essentially a paraphrase of sections of the *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. The only thing missing is the word Buddha—Desideri calls him Sciacchia Thubba, The Great Legislator of the Tibetans. Desideri recognized that the Tibetan religion had originated in India, but in the manuscript he does not connect it to the religion that had been dismissively described by the Jesuits in China or to Siamese or Ceylonese religions. Of course, "Buddhism" itself is a much later term, not used in the tradition itself.

6. Hume, Dolu and Desideri

In general Hume, in his published writing, and in contrast to Locke, for example, is more interested in conceptual arguments than empirical ethnographic detail. There are few details about specific religions in any of his writing, even in the *Natural History of Religion*. However, there is some evidence in both the *Natural History* and the *Enquiry into Human Understanding* that Hume had at least heard about both the Siamese and Hindu cultures. In the *Natural History*, Hume begins by stating, in very general terms, "Some nations have been discovered, who entertained no sentiments of Religion, if travelers and historians may be credited."[74] Later, he refers to the "excessive penances of the Brachmans and the Talapoins"[75]—grouping together the Indian Hindu and Siamese Buddhist practices. Similarly, in "Of miracles," Hume refers to the beliefs of "Ancient Rome, Turkey, Siam and China" (EHU 8.12; SBN 86) and he uses the example of an "Indian prince" who hears incredulously about ice for the first time (EHU 8.1, SBN 80).[76] Locke earlier used exactly the same example but attributed it to the King of Siam in discussion with a Dutch ambassador.[77] Hume rather mysteriously transposes the anecdote to India.

All this suggests that, by the 1750's, Hume both knew about and associated and even confused the Indian and Siamese cultures and religions. Of course, this knowledge could have come from the published sources in Locke and other writers, as described below. But it is at least noteworthy that Dolu had had extensive

first-hand experience of both the Brahmins of India and the Talapoins of Siam and would have discussed them at the same time.

There is also reason to believe that Hume knew something about the second embassy to Siam much earlier, possibly even before he reached La Flèche, and almost surely before the *Treatise* appeared. La Loubere's book was translated into English in 1693 and continued to be highly respected and widely quoted throughout the eighteenth century. He was particularly widely cited in philosophical discussions of atheism, most notably by Locke and Bayle, who were both influences on Hume. Locke describes not only La Loubere but all the other accounts of the Siamese embassies in his annotated list of travel books.[78] He also explicitly, and centrally, refers to La Loubere's account of Siamese religion in his discussion of whether God is the result of an innate idea. "These [earlier examples of atheism] are instances of nations where uncultivated nature has been left to itself, without the help of letters and discipline, and the improvements of arts and sciences. But there are others to be found who have enjoyed these in a very great measure, who yet, for want of a due application of their thoughts this way, want the idea and knowledge of God. It will, I doubt not, be a surprise to others, as it was to me, to find the Siamites of this number. But for this, let them consult the King of France's late envoy thither, who gives no better account of the Chinese themselves."[79]

Bayle includes an entire article on Sommona-Codom (the Siamese term for Buddha) in the Dictionary, quoting both La Loubere and Tachard extensively,[80] as well as referring to them in another article.[81] The Sommona-Codom entry is largely devoted to an argument that virtuous conduct need not require a belief in the existence of God. We know that Hume was very interested in atheism and in his early memoranda there is the following entry, implicitly contradicting Locke. " 'Tis a stronger objection to the argument against atheism drawn from the universal consent of mankind to find barbarous and ignorant nations Atheists than learned and polite ones. Baile."[82] We do not know the exact date of these memoranda, of course, but they are before 1740, and as noted earlier, Hume explicitly cites Bayle as an influence on the *Treatise*.

It seems entirely possible, even likely, that the young Hume would have seized the chance to talk to someone who had actually been a member of the embassy La Loubere, Locke and Bayle had described, and who had experienced the surprising features of Siamite religion first-hand. In fact, by 1735 the octogenarian Dolu was the last surviving member of the Siamese embassies. It also seems likely that Dolu, who was happy to exchange stories of India with the ferociously anti-Jesuit Challes, would have wanted to talk to an intelligent, knowledgeable, and curious, albeit Protestant, young man like Hume. Joachim Bouvet, another Siamese emissary and member of Dolu's Jesuit cohort, corresponded extensively about Chinese Confucian religious texts with the Protestant Leibniz.[83]

La Loubere described the atheism of the Siamese Buddhists—hence the interest in them as the exemplar of a "polite" atheist nation. However, he did not discuss the more philosophical parts of Buddhism, such as the denial of the self. Dolu, however, should have known about these aspects of Buddhist thought as well, from his own experience, from discussion with Bouchet, who had lived and studied with the monks and was interested in other religions, and most saliently, from his relatively recent discussion with Desideri. If Hume had begun talking to Dolu to find out more about Siamite atheism, he might also have learned about doctrines like "emptiness" and "no self."

It is even conceivable that a copy of Desideri's manuscript, or sections of it, could have made its way to La Flèche. (We know that Hume learned Italian before he went to France.)[84] We know that at least one version of the book, the version now in Florence, went out to the copyists and the world. And since Desideri wrote the first version on board the ship from India, and, according to a local diarist, had it with him in Tuscany,[85] he must also have had it with him when he visited La Flèche. Such a manuscript could have been quickly copied. In fact, La Flèche even had its own private printing press.[86] Alternatively, he might have sent a copy of the revised version, which was explicitly addressed to the learned gentlemen he had met in France and Tuscany, back when he got to Rome. In spite of Jesuit control of publication, such accounts circulated widely within the Jesuit community itself.

It is more likely, though, that Hume would have heard about Desideri's discoveries through conversation. Dolu had definitely spoken with Desideri. Moreover, according to the catalogs, eleven other fathers at La Flèche in Hume's time had also been there during Desideri's visit, including Robert Besnard, the Malebranchiste philosopher, and Michel Pernet, the missionary who went to Jakarta. It seems plausible that the Jesuits, especially Dolu, would have discussed Desideri's discoveries about Buddhist ideas with a visitor like Hume, who was interested in similar ideas. This is all the more likely since there would have been no question of endorsing these ideas; the Jesuits would clearly have shared Desideri's view that they were deeply wrong. But the Jesuits had a long tradition of clearly describing ideas that they simultaneously condemned (this had been the Jesuit response to Copernicanism).[87] Moreover, the Jesuits, unlike other orders, made a policy of seriously studying the cultures they were trying to convert.[88]

7. Philosophical Convergences between Hume and Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism

It is interesting in itself that Hume potentially had access to both Tibetan and Theravada Buddhist ideas at La Flèche. At the very least, it provides yet another example of just how much global intellectual contact was possible in the early

modern period. The question of how this might have interacted with Hume's philosophical work is, of course, much more difficult to determine, and impossible to settle for sure. Hume, in general, emphasizes the originality of his ideas and makes little reference to influences of any kind. He was clearly influenced by a general European skeptical tradition that had many features in common with Buddhism. And Hume would have been no more likely to endorse the Tibetan or Siamese religion as a whole than the Jesuits themselves. The "Pythagorean" idea of reincarnation, and the mythological and tantric ideas which Desideri discusses at length, would certainly have seemed as absurd to Hume as the Jesuit miracle.

Indeed, even if Hume was influenced by ideas that came from Buddhism through discussions with Dolu, he probably would not have tracked or remembered exactly which foreign culture, India, China or Siam, was the original source of these ideas, or perhaps even that they had come from that source at all. (Such philosophical source amnesia is not unknown, after all, even among contemporary philosophers and concerning the influence of their immediate colleagues!)

Nevertheless, Buddhist ideas might have had an influence. In particular, the very fact of sophisticated and virtuous atheist civilizations, like Tibet and Siam, already interested Locke and Bayle and would have interested Hume as well. But more philosophical aspects of Buddhism would also have been relevant.

The Buddhist tradition is long, varied and complex. Central parts of the tradition such as the doctrines of karma and reincarnation are obviously alien to Humean thinking. Hume's philosophical ideas are also complex and are clearly derived from other early modern European philosophical traditions. Still, the philosophical core of Buddhism is a kind of metaphysical skepticism and empiricism that would have resonated with Hume's developing ideas—the "topics of the Treatise" with which his "head was full" at the time he talked to the learned Jesuit. The Buddhist tradition rejects the quest for a metaphysical foundation of experience—an uncreated being or first cause outside of experience itself.

Three forms of this skeptical rejection are particularly relevant for early modern philosophy and for Hume. First, Buddhism rejects the idea of a metaphysically foundational God, though there may be particular gods. This is why writers like Desideri and La Loubere identified it as atheistic. Second, it rejects the idea that there is an independent substance that is the metaphysical foundation for our experience of the external world—the doctrine of "sunyata" or "emptiness." Finally, and most radically, the tradition rejects the Cartesian idea that there is even a foundational self that is the locus of experience—the doctrine of "anatman" or "no-self."

Although expressed in different forms, these arguments—particularly the arguments against the self—are a crucial feature of both the Theravada and the Tibetan tradition. One of the central Pali Theravada texts is the *Milindapanha*—a dialogue between the sage Nagasena and King Milinda of Greece. Nagasena denies

that he exists, and when this view is challenged by Milinda, Nagasena draws a famous analogy to the King's chariot. The chariot is not to be identified with any of its individual parts (the reins, wheels, etc.), but it is not something different from its parts, either. "Chariot" is simply a conventional designation for the combined chariot parts. Similarly, "Nagasena" is nothing but a conventional designation, a name, for Nagasena's physical and psychological parts—his body, perceptions, emotions, and so on. There is no Nagasena beyond them.[89] Bouchet would have been likely to come across this text as part of his training in the Siamese monastery. It seems plausible that Dolu would also have known about it.

In Tibetan Buddhism, and in Tsongkhapa, in particular, these ideas are much more explicit and much more clearly philosophical.[90] Nagasena's argument against personal identity is the focus of many chapters of extended and elaborated discussion in Tsongkhapa. (For a clear and extended philosophical treatment of Tsongkhapa, see Jinpa.[91] Jinpa argues for an affinity between Tsongkhapa's view of the self and the skeptical but non-reductionist views of Derek Parfitt. For similar explication of the arguments against the self in Theravada Buddhism, again with comparisons to Hume and William James, see Collins.)[92]

Within the general Buddhist tradition, Tsongkhapa argues for a particularly Humean "middle way" position. He argues that there is no foundational, ontological self, but that nevertheless the self-concept is psychologically real. "Thus there are two senses to the term 'self' a self conceived in terms of an intrinsic nature that exists by means of intrinsic being, and a self in the sense of the object of our simple natural thought 'I am.' Of these two the first is the object of negation by reasoning, while the second is not negated."[93] Tsongkhapa's "middle way" is reminiscent of the "turn" at the end of Book 1 of the *Treatise* where Hume claims that the skeptical arguments of the first part of the book need not undermine the pragmatics of everyday life (T 1.4.7; SBN 263–74).

Desideri studied Tsongkhapa extensively and in his writings he captures the skeptical Buddhist empiricism that goes beyond even Cartesian skepticism. Desideri recognizes that "the Legislator," as he calls Buddha, is not a god, and certainly not God. The Tibetans are self-declared atheists: "They not only do not recognize, but they absolutely deny the existence of a Creator of the Universe or a Supreme Lord of all things. In this they may be termed atheists."[94] And yet their introspective practices lead to high moral and spiritual accomplishments: "The rules and directions imposed on the will not only prescribe hatred of vice and battling against passions, but what is more remarkable, lead man towards sublime and heroic perfection."[95]

Desideri also describes the philosophical foundations of Buddhism, the doctrines of "emptiness" and "no-self." Desideri, of course, as a devoted Jesuit, completely rejects the false and peculiar religion. Nevertheless, his commitment to genuinely understanding it is apparent. He describes his successive efforts to

understand the central philosophical doctrine of "emptiness" (sunyata). Even the help of the most learned of the lamas leaves him in the dark, but "I continued my task until the dark clouds were pierced by a faint ray of light. This raised my hope of finally emerging into the bright sunshine: I read and reread and studied until, thanks to God, I not only understood but completely mastered (all glory being to God) all the subtle, sophisticated and abstruse matter which was so necessary and important for me to know."[96]

In a succeeding chapter, titled: "Exposition and explanation of another principal and great error of the Tibetans' religion: their denial that there exists any uncaused being in itself, and that any primary cause of all things exists,"[97] Desideri reports the outcome of his efforts and goes on to describe the specific Tibetan philosophical doctrines of "sunyata" and the denial of self. According to Thupten Jinpa, Desideri's manuscripts in Tibetan show an even more extensive understanding of Tibetan Buddhist philosophical doctrines.[98]

Desideri clearly knew and understood the philosophical doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism. He discussed them with Dolu and other fathers at La Flèche who also knew the Cartesian and Malebranchiste philosophical traditions, even if they officially rejected them. Dolu independently knew at least something about the Theravada doctrines. In turn these fathers seem likely to have talked to Hume.

It's impossible to know how this might have affected Hume's philosophy, but the argument against personal identity is a particularly plausible candidate for potential influence. Hume's argument in the *Treatise*, like Nagasena's "chariot" argument, points to the fact that there is no evidence for a self beyond a collection of particular psychological parts. "There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our self . . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist . . . I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (T 1.6.4, 1–4; SBN 251–53).[99]

The argument is rather isolated within Hume's own philosophical system. He did not include it in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, his later streamlined presentation of the ideas in Book 1 of the *Treatise*. In addition, it is the kind of argument that doesn't require extensive background to understand: simply reading Nagasena's speech, or for that matter, Hume's passage, is enough to make its force clear. It is just the sort of argument that might be transmitted through conversation, and also the sort of argument that might stimulate a line of thought

even if the source of that thought was not entirely retained. Hume's thinking about personal identity was certainly influenced by European philosophers like Locke and Malebranche among others. But Hume's argument is also clearly a fairly radical departure from what had gone before and it is characteristic of philosophical influence that many converging sources may result in a philosophically original idea. Moreover, the broader tenor of Buddhist empiricism and atheism would also, at the very least, have resonated with Hume's ideas.

8. Conclusion

More generally, whether or not Hume's philosophical doctrines were specifically influenced by Buddhism, it is interesting to see how much opportunity there was for this kind of global intellectual contact, even in the early eighteenth century. At least, we have to give up the apparently obvious assumption that Hume could not have known about Buddhism in the 1730s. The connection between Confucianism and Leibniz has long been recognized[100]—it is interesting to see a potentially similar connection between Buddhism and Hume. Moreover, in both cases the connection came through the Jesuits. In fact, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the same relatively close-knit network of Jesuits had access to philosophical ideas from the Hindu, Confucian, and Buddhist traditions, and also knew about contemporary European philosophical ideas. Bouchet and Dolu linked Siam and India, Fontaney and Bouvet linked Siam and China, and Desideri linked Tibet to both Bouchet and Dolu—and Dolu, Bouvet, Fontaney, and Desideri all spent time at La Flèche. In 1735 Hume, apparently rusticating in the peace of a small town in France, was only one remove from the ideas of philosophers thousands of miles and a cultural gulf away in Siam and Tibet.

The story is also interesting in that it suggests how complex and even paradoxical the transmission of ideas may be, especially in a global context. It would be interestingly ironic if the fervently religious Jesuit missionaries actually provided some of the material for the great skeptic's thought, even if neither the Jesuits, nor the Buddhists, nor even Hume himself recognized that that was what had happened.

At the same time, the story of Desideri, La Flèche, Dolu, and Hume is also a salutary one. It is easy to think of the Enlightenment and its values as a particular invention of a particular historical period in modern Europe. The fact that some of the central ideas in that tradition had been independently formulated in very different places and times suggests a broader view. Moreover, it is striking and encouraging that people as ideologically and culturally disparate as a Tibetan lama, a fervent Italian priest, a Siamese monk, an urbane French Jesuit and a skeptical Scots Presbyterian could nevertheless succeed in understanding and communicating philosophical ideas. The Tibetans, the Siamese, the Jesuits, and David Hume

may have bridged the geographical, religious, cultural, and linguistic abysses that separated them, even if only by a single slender vine rope.

NOTES

1 See, for example, Stephen Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1994); T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), 26–27; Nolan Pliny Jacobson, "The Possibility of Oriental Influence in Hume's Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 19.1 (1969): 17–37; James Giles, "The No-Self Theory: Hume, Buddhism, and Personal Identity," *Philosophy East and West* 43.2 (1993): 175–200.

2 Batchelor, *Awakening of the West*, 170–76.

3 See, for example, David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

4 See, for instance, M. K. Johnson, S. Hashtroudi and D. S. Lindsay, "Source Monitoring," *Psychological Bulletin* 114.1 (1993): 638–77.

5 See, for example, R. E. Petty and J. T. Cacioppo, *Communication and Persuasion: Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986).

6 For background on the French Jesuits, see Francois de Dainville, *L'education des Jesuites: toXV1e–XVIIIe siecles* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1978); Henri Fouqueray, *Histoire de la compagnie de Jesus en France* (Paris: Picard, 1910–25); A. Lynn Martin, *The Jesuit Mind: the Mentality of an Elite in Early Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

7 M. A. Stewart, "Hume's Intellectual Development, 1711–1752," in *Impressions of Hume*, ed. Michael A. Stewart Frasca-Spada and P. J. E. Kail (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

8 Ernest Mossner and Raymond Klibansky, eds.,*New Letters of David Hume* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1954), 1–2.

9 Ernest Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980), 100–105.

10 Mossner, *Life of David Hume*, 626–27; Ernest Mossner, "Hume at la Flèche, 1735: An Unpublished Letter," *University of Texas Studies in English* 37 (1958): 30–33; *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Grieg (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), 19–23, 361.

11 Grieg, *Letters of David Hume*, 611.

12 Mossner and Klibansky, *New Letters of David Hume*, 1–2.

13 Mossner, "Hume at la Flèche, 1735," 30–33.

14 Grieg, *Letters of David Hume*, 361.

15 Mossner, *Life of David Hume*, 280–81.

16 See, for example, *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, ed. Mordechai Feingold (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); *The Jesuits: Culture, Sciences and the Arts 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Louis Caruna, "The Jesuits and the Quiet Side of the Scientific Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

17 Inventory of the Old Society, Provincia Francia, Book 19, 40–44, Book 20, 39–45, ARSI.

18 Camille de Rochemonteix, *Un Collège de Jésuites aux XVIIIe et XVIIIe siècles: le collège Henri IV de La Flèche*, 4 vols. (Le Mans: Leguicheux, 1889), 4:214.

19 Ibid., 81–106.

20 A. Charma and G. Mancel, *Le Père Andrè: documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire philosophique* (Paris: Hachette, 1856), 383, 432.

21 Joseph Dehergne, *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine de 1552 à 1800* (Paris: Letouzy & Ane, 1973), 210.

22 Rochemonteix, *Un Collège de Jésuites*, 4:119.

23 Henri Bernard-Maitre, "Le Père Nicolas-Marie Roy, S.J.," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 29 (1953): 249–51.

24 Francois Uzureau, "Le Jansénisme A La Flèche," *Les Annales fléchoises et la Vallée du Loir* 13 (1912): 139–40.

25 Bernard-Maitre, "Le Père Nicolas-Marie Roy, S.J.," 249–51.

26 See, for example, David Hackett Fisher, *Champlain's Dream* (New York: Simon and Schuster. 2009).

27 Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliotheque de la compagnie de Jesus* (Paris: Picard, 1890–1900), 123.

28 Michael Smithies, *Mission Made Impossible: The Second French Embassy to Siam 1687* (Bangkok, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2002). This volume is an annotated translation of the accounts of Tachard and Ceberet.

29 D. Ferroli, *Jesuits in Malabar* (Banglaore, India: National Press, 1951); Joseph Bertrand, *La Mission du Maduré: d'Après des Documents Inédits*, vol. 4 (Paris: Poussielgue-Rusand, 1854); Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor: Or Mogul India 1653–1708*, vol. 4, trans. William Lyons (London: J. Murray, 1907). All three of these volumes record similar events involving Dolu though with a marked partisan slant—Ferroli and Bertrand are pro-Jesuit while Manucci is anti-Jesuit.

30 Sommervogel, *Bibliotheque*, 123. Sommervogel lists Dolu's birth as 1651 and his ordination as 1674 but these dates do not match the dates in the catalogs, which seem more plausible.

31 Guy Tachard, *Voyage de Siam des pères jésuites envoyés pour le Roi aux Indes et à la Chine* (Paris: Seneuze et Horthemels, 1686), trans. anon, *1688 Voyage to Siam* (repr., Bangkok,Thailand: White Orchid, 1981); Guy Tachard, *Second voyage du Père Tachard et*

des jésuites envoyés pour le Roi au royaume de Chine (Paris: Seneuze et Horthemels, 1689), trans. Michael Smithies in *Mission Made Impossible*.

32 Smithies, *Mission Made Impossible*.

33 Simon De La Loubere, *Du royaume de Siam* (Paris, 1691), trans. anon, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* (London, 1693; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

34 Smithies, *Mission Made Impossible*, 42–45.

35 Ibid., 56.

36 La Loubere, *Kingdom of Siam*, Introduction to vol. 2.

37 Francis X. Clooney, *Fr. Bouchet's India: An 18th c. Jesuit's Encounter with Hinduism* (Chennai: Satya Nilayam, 2005).

38 *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*, vol. 10 (Toulouse: Sens, 1810), 45.

39 Ferolli, *Jesuits in Malabar*; Clooney, *Fr. Bouchet's India*; Bertrand, *La mission du Maduré*.

40 Feingold, *Jesuit Science*.

41 Rochemonteix, *Une College Des Jesuites*, 214, 281.

42 *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses*, vol. 17 (Toulouse: Sens, 1810), 246.

43 *Mercure de France*, 1687, 333.

44 Smithies, *Mission Made Impossible*, 45.

45 Thomas Gouye, *Observations physiques et mathematiques, pour servir a l'histoire naturelle & à la perfection de l'astronomie & de la geographie: envoyées des Indes et de la Chine à l'Académie Royale des Sciences à Paris, par les Peres Jesuites, avec les reflections de Mrs de l'Academie, & les notes du P. Goüye, de la Compagnie de Jesus* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie Royale, 1692); Florence Hsia, "Jesuits, Jupiter's Satellites, and the Academie Royale des Sciences," in The Jesuits: Culture, Sciences and the Arts, ed. John W. O'Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

46 La Loubere, *Kingdom of Siam*, 186–99.

47 Gouye, *Observations physiques*.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.; Rao Kameswara, A. Vagiswari and Louis Christina, "Father J. Richaud and Early Telescope Observations in India," *Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of India* 12.1 (1984): 81–85.

50 "Le voyageur tient cette pierre quarree du liberalite du P. Dolu, Jesuite de Pondicheri, 'Il ne fut jamais', dit-il 'homme plus poli, plus genereux, ni plus scavant dans la connasance des choses naturelles." *Memoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux arts* January (1701): 856.

51 *Lettres de Mathieu Marais*, vol. 4 (Paris: Universite de Saint Etienne), 58, 65.

52 Robert Myle, *De la symbolique de l'eau dans l'œuvre du Père Surin* (Louvain: Universite de Louvain, 1979), 49.

53 Robert Challes, *Memoires, correspondances complete*, ed. Frederic Deloffre and Jacques Popin (Geneva: Droz, 1996), 631–35.

54 "[J]e me suis trouvé au milieu des plus doux zéphirs. Challes, quoique franc original et le plus ratier de tous les humains, ne laisse pas d'être honnête homme; et, pour le P. Dolu, c'est le nom du missionnaire, sous une barbe sauvage, il est jésuite per omnes casus, c'est-à-dire poli et politique, et il entend raillerie mieux qu'homme du monde." William Poidebard, *Correspondance littéraire et anecdotique entre Monsieur de Saint Fonds et le Président Dugas Membres de l'Académie de Lyon, 1711–1739* (Lyon: Pacquet, 1901), 21.

55 David Wootton, "Hume's 'Of miracles': Probability and Irreligion," in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Michael A. Stewart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 211–15.

56 *Letttres edifiantes et curieuses*, vol. 15 (Paris: Nicholas Le Clerc, 1722), 183–209. Reprinted in Abbé Prevost, *Histoire general des voyage* (Paris, 1749), 455–60, and in Astley, *New General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 4 (London, 1747), 655–58.

57 Luciano Petech, *I Missionari Italiani Nel Tibet Et Nepal* (Rome: Libreria della Stato, 1952).

58 Carlo Puini, *Il Tibet (geografia, religioni, costumi) Secondo la Relazione di Viaggio del P. Ippolito Desideri 1715–21* (Rome: Societa Geografica Italiana, 1904).

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60 Henry Hosten, "A Missionary in Tibet: Letters and Other Papers of Father Ippolito Desideri, S.J. (1713–21)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1938): 567–767.

61 Augusto Luca, *Nel Tibet Ignoto: Lo Straordinario Viaggio di Ippolito Desideri* (Bologna: EMI, 1987).

62 Ippolito Desideri, *Opere Tibetane di Ippolito Desideri S. J.*, Introduction, Tibetan text, and translation from Tibetan to Italian by Giuseppe Toscano, S. J. (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989).

63 Enzo Gualtiero Bargiacchi, *Ippolito Desideri S.J.: Opere e Bibliografi* (Rome: Instititutum Historicum S. I., 2007). Trent Pomplum, *Jesuit on the Roof of the World: Ippolito Desideri's Mission to Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

64 Batchelor, *Awakening of the West*, 187.

65 Robert E. Goss, "The First Meeting of Catholic Scholasticism with dGe lugs pa Scholasticism," in *Scholaticism, Cross-Cultural and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. José Cabezon (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 65–91.

66 Petech, *I Missionari*, vol. 7, 94. "A 31 del medesimo mese doppo il mezzo de giorno arrivai al nostro Real Collegio della citta della Flèche, Quivi speciali ricevei i favori dal R.P. Rettore, dal R.P . Procurator, dal R. P. Tolu e da qualche altro di quei RR PP. A 4 di Septembre partij dalla Flèche."

67 "A' 31 del medesimo mese doppo il mezzogiorno arrivai al nostro real Collegio della città della Fleche. Quivi speciali ricevei i favori dal R. P. Rettore, dal R. P. Procuratore, dal R. P. Dolù e da qualche altro di quei RR. PP. A' 4 di settembre partij dalla Fleche, e in quella sera medesima arrivai alla città di Mans ." Manuscript F, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Fondo Rossi-Cassigoli, ms. 270. I am extremely grateful to Enzo Bargiacchi for pointing this out and providing me with a copy of the manuscript page.

68 Fillipi, *Account of Tibet*, 201–306.

69 Petech, *I Missionari*, vol. 5, xxviii–xxxiii.

70 Enzo G. Bargicachi, *Ippolito Desideri S. J. alla Scoperto del Tibet e del Buddhismo* (Rome: Edizione Brigata del Lioncino, 2006), 96–97.

71 Petech, *I Missionari*, vol. 5, xxviii–xxxiii.

72 Fillipi, *Account of Tibet*, 49.

73 Ibid., 49.

74 David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion*, ed. Tom Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33.

75 Ibid., 82.

76 David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom Beauchamp, David Fate Norton, and Michael A. Stewart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), abbreviated "EHU" and cited by section and paragraph, followed by page numbers in *Enquiries concerning the Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), abbreviated "SBN."

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81 Ibid., 104.

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84 Grieg, *Letters*, 12–18.

85 Bargicachi, *Ippolito Desideri, S. J. alla Scoperto*, 96–97.

86 Rochemonteix, *Une College Des Jesuites*.

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97 I am indebted to Michael Sweet for the full translation of this chapter, part of his forthcoming unabridged English translation of Desideri's manuscript.

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100 Gottfried Leibniz, *Writings on China*, trans. and ed. Daniel Cook and Henry Rosemont, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).