Article

Moral Education and Heaven–Human Relationship in Jesuit Translations of Chinese Poetry (17th–18th Centuries)

Xiaoshu Li and Yuan Tan *

School of Foreign Languages, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan 430074, China; d201881124@hust.edu.cn
* Correspondence: tanyuan@hust.edu.cn

Abstract: The 17th and 18th centuries were a period of extensive cultural interaction between China and the West, and also the beginning of Chinese poetry translation in the West. Jesuit missionaries were pioneers in introducing Chinese poetry to Europe. Influenced by the Confucian poetic thought of *Siwuxie* 思無邪 (no depraved thoughts) and Ricci's accommodation strategy, the Jesuits translated poems from the *Shangshu* 尚書, the *Shijing* 詩經, and the *Emperor Qianlong's Imperial Odes on Shengjing* 禦制盛京賦, as well as works by Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹, Du Fu 杜甫, Shao Yong 邵雍, and even the poems in the exhortations of the Ming and Qing dynasties into European languages. These poems predominantly dealt with themes of moral education, the image of virtuous monarchs, and the Chinese concept of the Heaven–human relationship. Through intentional omissions and rewriting, the Jesuits incorporated their religious and political views into the Chinese poetry. Their translated works not only enriched European knowledge of Chinese culture but also demonstrated the complexity of Chinese–Western cultural exchange.

Keywords: Jesuits; the translation of Chinese poetry; Chinese–Western cultural exchange

1. Introduction

In the 17th–18th centuries, Jesuit missionaries wrote and translated a substantial number of documents about China and sent them to Europe, which contributed significantly to Chinese–Western cultural exchange. Although the primary focus of the Jesuits was on Chinese geography, language, government, philosophy, history, and society (Mungello 1989, p. 14), Chinese classical poetry was also introduced to Europe through their translations, thus laying the foundation for the 19th-century European enthusiasm for translating Chinese poetry. Furthermore, the Jesuits' translation strategies deeply influenced the poetry translation methods of early European sinologists in the 19th century (Li and Yue 2020).

Recently, the Jesuits' translations of Confucian classics have been thoroughly studied (Meynard 2014; X. Zhang 2016), and the research on translations of the *Shijing* 詩經 (the *Book of Poetry*), one of the Confucian classics, has been fruitful. Through detailed textual analysis, Du Xinxin demonstrated how Jesuit Joseph-Marie de Prémare (马若瑟, 1666–1735) connected the content of the *Shijing* with the *Bible*, using sinology studies to propagate Christian ideas (Du 2012). Jiang Xiangyan also believes that Prémare depicted China "with a genuine religious culture that is in little conflict with Christianity through their Christianized translations" (Jiang 2015, p. 85). Based on the translations of the *Shijing* by Prémare, Joachim Bouvet (白晋, 1656–1730), and Pierre-Martial Cibot (韩国英, 1727–1780), Qian Linsen similarly pointed out that Jesuit translations of the *Shijing* were not purely for literary purposes but were aimed at missionary work, seeking the commonalities between Chinese culture and Christian doctrines (Qian 2015). Previous research interests have largely focused on individual translations, with the studies on Prémare's translations of the *Shijing* being the most fruitful. Although the *Shijing* occupied a significant position among the Chinese poems translated by Jesuits, it was not the only work of Chinese classical poetry translated into European languages in the 17th–18th centuries. A systematic

Citation: Li, Xiaoshu, and Yuan Tan. 2024. Moral Education and Heaven–Human Relationship in Jesuit Translations of Chinese Poetry (17th–18th Centuries). *Religions* 15: 798. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15070798

Academic Editor: Thierry Meynard

Received: 31 May 2024
Revised: 26 June 2024
Accepted: 27 June 2024
Published: 29 June 2024

Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

thematic analysis of the translations from this period will reveal how the Jesuits' theological and political ideas and their accommodation strategy influenced their translation of Chinese poetry in the 17th–18th centuries, clarifying their role in spreading classical Chinese poetry in Europe and enhancing cultural exchange between Qing China and Europe.

Therefore, this study first reviews early Western sinological literature to outline the Jesuits' introductions and translations of Chinese poetry in the 17th–18th centuries. Through this review, it is found that the themes of these poems predominantly involve moral education, the image of virtuous monarchs, and the Heaven–human relationship. Why did the Jesuits favor such poems? How did they present the features of Chinese poetry? Using historical research and contextual analysis, this article will examine the motivations behind the Jesuits' selection of specific poems, summarize their translation strategies, and explore the factors that shaped these strategies.

2. Overview of Jesuits' Introduction and Translation of Chinese Poetry in the 17th–18th Centuries

The Jesuits' introduction of Chinese poetry to the West underwent a long process. Initially, they simply introduced Chinese poetry in their sinological works. From the mid-17th century, they either translated fragments of poetry while translating Chinese classics or quoted Chinese poetry as evidence when presenting Chinese history. It was not until the 18th century that they began systematically translating and studying Chinese poetry. This section traces the Jesuits' journey from merely introducing Chinese poetry to systematically translating it, and attempts to summarize the themes presented in their translated poems.

The transmission of Chinese poetry to Europe benefited from the Jesuits' study and translation of Confucian classics, especially the *Four Books* (四書). Early in the Jesuit mission to China, Matteo Ricci (利玛窦, 1552–1610) recognized the great influence of Confucianism on Chinese society. To reduce the resistance to missionary work and facilitate the conversion of the Chinese to Christianity, Ricci accommodated Western learning to the Chinese cultural scene, seeking acceptance from the Chinese literati through the Confucian–Christian synthesis (Mungello 1989, p. 15). Following Ricci's accommodation strategy, the Jesuits used the *Four Books* as textbooks for learning Chinese and Confucianism (Meynard 2008, p. 132). Consequently, the frequent fragments of the *Shijing* in these texts became their initial source of impressions of Chinese classical poetry.

Since the late 16th century, with Michele Ruggieri (罗明坚, 1543–1607) completing translations of the *Four Books*, the *Shijing* had already been indirectly and fragmentarily translated into European languages (Hosne 2013, p. 84). In 1626, Nicolas Trigault (金尼阁, 1577–1628) translated the *Five Classics* (五經) and published the first Western translation of the *Shijing* in Hangzhou. Unfortunately, this translation has long been lost. Among the extant early Western sinological works, the earliest relatively accurate description of Chinese poetry appears in *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China* (*Imperio De La China, I Cultura Evangelica En Èl, Por Los Religios De La Compañia De Iesus*, 1642). The author is the Portuguese Jesuit Álvaro Semedo (曾德昭, 1585–1658), who wrote in the book:

> Poetry has ever been much esteemed in China; during times when there were many kings, feudatory to one emperor, when they came to do him homage every three years, the ambassadors would bring with them the poems and verses that were most popular in their kingdoms at the time, so that through them their manners and customs could be judged, which truly are much discovered in such compositions. In this particular, the Chinese have a great advantage over us, because they are very modest, in whatsoever they write, and it is very rare to find an improper word in their verses; and (admirable discretion!) they have no letters to express the shameful parts, nor are they to be found written in any part of all their books, or any other place……they compose much poetry, almost always in praise of friends and notable men, and of saints who were virtuous. (Semedo 1642, pp. 81–82)

The above passage describes the origins of the *Shijing*. Semedo's comment might reference the statement from the Weizhen 为政 (governing the country) chapter of the *Lunyu* 論語 (Confucian *Analects*), which says, "The three hundred odes are all comprehended in one phrase: No depraved thoughts" (詩三百, 壹言以蔽之, 曰"思無邪") (J. Zhang 2013, p. 13). *Siwuxie* 思無邪 (no depraved thoughts) is a well-known critique made by Confucius on the *Shijing*. Confucius originally used the phrase *Siwuxie* from the poem *Jiong* 駉 (Stalwart Horses) to describe the richness and all-encompassing nature of the *Shijing*. However, by the Tang (唐, 618–907) and Song (宋, 960–1279) dynasties, *Siwuxie* shifted to signify that reading the *Shijing* would purify one's thoughts and make them innocent (Chang 2018, p. 172). In the *Sishuzhangju Jizhu* 四書章句集注 (*Commentaries on the Four Books*) and the *Sishujizhu Chanwei Zhijie* 四書集注闡微直解 (the *Elucidation and Verbal Explanation on Sishujizhu*), used as study materials for the Jesuits, Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) and Zhang Juzheng's (张居正, 1525–1582) interpretations of *Siwuxie* both emphasized the moralizing function of the *Shijing*: to purify and free people's thoughts from evil (Zhu 2018b, p. 55; J. Zhang 2013, p. 13). Semedo applied the traditional Confucian poetic concept of *Siwuxie* to interpret all Chinese poetry, which is not entirely accurate but justifiable. Similar description also appears in the *Ancient History of China* (*Sinicae Historiae Decas Prima: Res* à *Gentis Origine ad Christum Natum in Extrema Asia, sive Magno Sinarum Imperio Gestas Complexa*, 1659). The author is the Italian Jesuit Martino Martini (卫匡国, 1614–1661), who wrote in the book:

> The art of poetry is extremely ancient in China, and there are various poems with different rhythms. All these poems conform to a fixed number of characters and follow the order of five tones. Among the five books of poetry, one is particularly studied by those seeking positions in the government. This book specifically deals with the actions of ancient monarchs, whether right or wrong, in such a way as to inspire fear in the wicked and spur the good to virtue. There are also popular verses about nature, the beauty of flowers, plants, and other similar subjects, but they strictly adhere to the principle that no fabrications are included in these writings, which is different from what is commonly found in the works of our poets. For they are wholly dedicated to teaching the beauty of morals through the harmony of natural things. There are some verses about love, but they promote chastity more than tenderness as in our poets, with a great concern for decency throughout. (Martini 1659, pp. 111–12)

Martini's introduction directly references Zhu Xi's interpretation of *Siwuxie*. According to Zhu Xi, "The words of poetry, the good can inspire people's goodness, the bad can correct people's wayward ambitions" (凡詩之言, 善者可以感發人之善心, 惡者可以懲創人之逸志) (Zhu 2018b, p. 55). In addition to briefly introducing Chinese poetry, Martini also translated a poem from the *Shangshu* 尚書 (the *Book of Historical Documents*) titled *Wuzizhige* 五子之歌 (The Song of Five Brothers) in the *Ancient History of China*. This poem is distinct from the scattered fragments of the *Shijing* interspersed within translations of the *Four Books*, and also different from the earlier exotic imitations that were labeled as Chinese poetry but had no original texts[1]. *Wuzizhige* is the first complete Chinese poem to be translated in Europe, predating the earliest published European translation of the *Shijing* by 76 years. Martini cited this poem when discussing the historical event of "Tai-Kang losing the country" (太康失國), using it to convey the traditional Chinese political philosophy of "people-oriented" (民本) governance. This poem perfectly aligned with Martini's conception of Chinese poetry.

The focus of Martini's translation of *Wuzizhige* was not on its literary value but on its moral education of monarchs. Subsequently, the translation of more Chinese poems, especially those from the *Shijing*, was closely related to the Rites Controversy. The Chinese names for God, as well as the rituals used to honor ancestors and Confucius, were at the core of this significant dispute among missionaries (Li 1998, p. 15). On one side stood mostly Jesuits, who implemented Ricci's accommodation strategy and promoted Confucianism, compromised on traditional Chinese rituals, and tolerated ancestor wor-

ship among Chinese converts. On the other side was a large array of Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian, and MEP clergy who argued against the Jesuits, stating that "the native Chinese terminology for God and the Chinese rites to ancestors and Confucius violated Christian teachings" (Marthaler et al. 2003, p. 497). From the mid-17th century onwards, fierce attacks from these orders led some Jesuits to realize that to defend their accommodation strategy in the Rites Controversy, they needed to provide a more systematic explanation of Confucian classics (Meynard 2008, p. 134). Such perceptions facilitated their translation activities; a foundational work is the *Chinese Philosopher Confucius* (*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis latine exposita studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet*, 1687). In the first chapter of this book, Intorcetta systematically introduces the *Four Books and Five Classics*. When discussing the *Shijing,* he directly quoted the sentence of *Siwuxie*, asserting that in these poems "much praise and commendation of virtue are found, much is said gravely, severely, and wisely", and that they "let nothing depraved or shameful be considered" (Intorcetta et al. 1687, vol. 1, p. xvii). Although this book does not contain a complete translation of any poem from the *Shijing*, the translations of the *Daxue* 大學 (the *Great Learning*), *Zhongyong* 中庸 (the *Doctrine of the Mean*), and *Lunyu* 論語 include numerous fragments from the *Shijing*. Many European scholars were indirectly introduced to the *Shijing* through this book and became interested in it.

In the following year, Gabriel Magalhães (安文思, 1609–1677) attempted to classify the poems in the *Shijing* into five categories in his *New Description of China* (*Nouvelle relation de la Chine, contenant la description des particularitez les plus considerables de ce grand Empire*, 1688): *Yasong* 雅頌 consists of hymns and eulogies, which praise individuals of virtue or exceptional talent, as well as didactic poems used for funerals, sacrifices, and similar occasions. *Guofeng* 國風 describes the ceremonies of the people and the methods of imperial governance. *Bifu* 比賦 explains the content of the poems through comparison or analogy. *Xingfu* 興賦 begins with unique and lofty sentences, leading into the main content. *Yishi* 逸詩 includes poems that Confucius excluded during his compilation because he considered them erroneous (Magalhães 1688, p. 119). Although this classification confused the themes and literary techniques of the *Shijing*, it clearly demonstrated the Jesuits' deepening understanding of the text. Subsequently, systematic translations and studies of the *Shijing* by Jesuits emerged in abundance.

The earliest recognized translation of the *Shijing* into a Western language was by the French Jesuit Alexandre de la Charme (孙璋, 1695–1767). He translated the *Shijing* into Latin between 1733 and 1752, but this translation was not published until nearly a hundred years later. His work had a profound influence on subsequent translations, including the German version by Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), the English version by James Legge (1815–1897), and the French version by Seraphin Couvreur (1835–1919). During the same period, Jesuits such as Joachim Bouvet and Joseph-Marie de Prémare also undertook the translation and study of the *Shijing* (Pfister 1932, pp. 438, 521). Among them, Prémare's translation was the first to be publicly published in Europe. Prémare selected eight poems, including *Jingzhi* 敬之 (Prudence) and *Tianzuo* 天作 (Heavenly Deeds), deliberately rearranging them to form an epic that recreates the rise, development, and decline of the Zhou (周, 1046BC–256BC) dynasty. These poems reflect the thoughts of the ancient Chinese people on the Heaven–human relationship and cultivation of virtue.

Prémare's work was published in the second volume of *A Description of China* (*Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise*, 1735). This book emerged during the late period of the Rites Controversy and was compiled from the reports and translations of 27 Jesuits in China. It is also a work through which the Jesuits defended their accommodation strategy. This book is comprehensive in content and considered one of the most important sources of knowledge about China in 18th-century Europe (Landry-Deron 2002, p. 11). The editor, Jean Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743), highly praised Chinese poetry, stating, "Qu Yuan's (屈原, 340BC–278BC) poems are extremely delicate and gentle" and "Li Bai (李白, 701–762) and

Du Fu (杜甫, 712–770) hardly yield to the Anacreons and Horaces" (Du Halde 1735, p. 285). In addition, this book also included poems by Fan Zhongyan (范仲淹, 989–1052) and Shao Yong (邵雍, 1012–1077), three short stories from *Jingu Qiguan* 今古奇觀 (*Strange Tales New and Old*), the play *Zhaoshi Guer* 趙氏孤兒 (*The Orphan of Zhao*), and prose from works such as *Doupeng Xianhua* 豆棚閑話 (*Conversations Under the Bean Arbor*). These works collectively started a new era of the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature in Europe (Tan and Zhang 2021, p. 49).

By the second half of the 18th century, the "Chinese fever" that emerged against the backdrop of the Rites Controversy had sparked European secular scholars' curiosity about the Orient. Jesuits such as Joseph-Marie Amiot (钱德明, 1718–1793) and Pierre-Martial Cibot began to present China in a more secularized and novel way. For instance, in 1770, Amiot translated poems such as *Yuzhi Shengjing Fu* 禦制盛京賦 (Emperor Qianlong's Imperial Odes on Shengjing), which not only reproduced the customs and history of Manchu, but also conveyed strong political messages, presenting a positive image of Emperor Qianlong (乾隆, 1711–1799) into Europe (Long 2015, p. 131). In 1779, Cibot selected seven poems from the *Shijing*, including *Wenwang* 文王 (Lord Wen) and *Baizhou* 柏舟 (The Cypress Boat), to illustrate the Chinese filial piety (Cibot 1779, pp. 171–77). Different from Prémare's selections, which were entirely from the *Ya* 雅 (Hymns) and *Song* 頌 (Eulogia), Cibot selected two poems from the *Guofeng* 國風 (Ballads from the States). Although Cibot's focus remained on Chinese virtues and moral concepts, his works are more representative of the lives of ordinary people in the pre-Qin (先秦, before 221 BC) period and contain more folklore and customs (Qian 2015, p. 15). The following table (Table 1) summarizes the Chinese poems found in the published works by the Jesuits discussed above:

Table 1. Some Chinese poetry in Jesuit publications of the 17th–18th centuries[2].

	Translator	Original Text	Title of Translated Poetry	Themes of Translated Poetry (Ranked by Order of Importance)
1659	Martini	*Wuzizhige* 五子之歌 (The Song of Five Brothers)	- No title	Monarchical governance Moral education
1687	Intorcetta, Couplet, Herdtrich, Rougemont	29 fragments from *Shijing*		Monarchical governance Moral education Heaven–human relationship
		Wenwang 文王 (Lord Wen) *Huangyi* 皇矣 (Magnificence) *Zhengyue* 正月 (Early Spring) *Changdi* 常棣 (The Kerria) *Yi* 抑 (Deiginity) *Jienanshan* 節南山 (The Lofty South Hill) *Qiao* 淇奧 (The River Bay) *Taoyao* 桃夭 (The Beautiful Peach) et al.	- No title	
1735	Prémare	8 poems from *Shijing*		Heaven–human relationship Monarchical governance Moral education
		1. *Jingzhi* 敬之 (Prudence)	*Un jeune Roi prie ses Ministres de l'instruire* (A Young King Desires Instruction from his Ministers)	
		2. *Tianzuo* 天作 (Heavenly Deeds)	*A la louange de Ven Vang* (In Praise of Wenwang)	
		3. *Huangyi* 皇矣 (Magnificence)	*A la louange du même* (In Praise of the same)	
		4. *Yi* 抑 (Deiginity)	*Conseils donnés à un roi* (Advice Given to a King)	
		5. *Zhanyang* 瞻卬 (Look Up to the Sky)	*Sur la perte du genre humaine* (Upon the Ruin (or Fall) of Mankind)	

Table 1. *Cont.*

	Translator	Original Text	Title of Translated Poetry	Themes of Translated Poetry (Ranked by Order of Importance)
	Prémare	6. *Zhengyue* 正月 (Early Spring)	*Lamentations sur les miseres du genre humain* (Lamentations on the Miseries of Mankind)	
		7. *Ban* 板 (Insanity)	*Exhortation* (Exhortation)	
		8. *Dang* 蕩 (Chaos)	*Avis au Roy* (Advice to the King)	
1735	d'Entrecolles	1. *Shushan Shi Menren* 书扇示门人 (Writing on a Fan to Show the Disciples) 2. Poems from *Yuanti Ji* 愿体集 (The Characters or Manners of the Chinese) 3. Poems from *Jingu Qiguan* 今古奇觀 (Strange Tales New and Old) et al.	- No title	Moral education Heaven–human relationship
	Herieu	*1. Anle Yin* 安樂吟 (Song of Contentment)		Moral education
		2. *Shaonian Xing* 少年行 (the Youth's Journey)		
		3. *Xingshi Shi* 醒世诗 (Poem to Alert the World) et al.		
1770	Amiot	*Yuzhi Shengjing Fu* 禦制盛京賦 (Emperor Qianlong's Imperial Odes on Shengjing)	*Éloge de la ville de Moukden et de ses environs: Poème composé par Kien-Long, empereur de la Chine & de la Tartarie, actuellement régnant* (Praise of the City of Mukden and Its Surroundings: A Poem Composed by Qianlong, Emperor of China and Tartary, Currently Reigning)	Monarchical governance Moral education History and customs Heaven–human relationship
1779	Cibot	7 poems from *Shijing*		Moral education Customs and folkways Monarchical governance Heaven–human relationship
		1. *Lue* 蓼莪 (Thick Tarragons)	*Le fils affligé* (The Afflicted Son)	
		2. *Baizhou* 柏舟 (The Cypress Boat)	*La jeune veuve* (The Young Widow)	
		3. *Qifu* 祈父 (Minister of War)	*Le général d'armée* (The General of the Army)	
		4. *Changdi* 常棣 (The Kerria)	*Le frere* (The Brother)	
		5. *Qiangzhongzi* 將仲子 (Prithee)	*La bergere* (The Shepherdess)	
		6. *Wenwang* 文王 (Lord Wen)	*Louages de Ouen -ouang* (Praises of Wenwang)	
		7. *Siqi* 思齊 (Reverence)	*Louages de Tai-Gin, Mere de Ouen-ouang* (Praises of Tai-Gin, Mother of Wenwang)	

Examining the introduction and translation of Chinese poetry in the 17th and 18th centuries, it is evident that Confucian poetics significantly influenced the Jesuits. Jesuits like Semedo, Martini, and Intorcetta all used the concept of *Siwuxie* to summarize the characteristics of Chinese poetry, emphasizing its function in moral education and monarchical governance. The poems they selected primarily reflected these themes. However, beneath the explicit narrative lies an implicit one, where some poems also carried the Jesuits' interpretations of Chinese reverence for Heaven, ancestor worship, and "mutual interaction between heaven and humans" (天人感应). These interpretations are often subtler, reflected through deletions, modifications, or additions of paratexts to the original text.

3. Poetry as a Medium for Illustrating Chinese Moral Education and Virtuous Monarchs

Among the Chinese poems translated by the Jesuits, moralizing poems occupied a large proportion. This is partly due to the influence of the traditional Confucian poetic concept of *Siwuxie*, which holds that the purpose of poetry is to "inspire fear in the wicked and spur the good to virtue" (Martini 1659, p. 111). Additionally, this focus reflects their efforts to justify their accommodation strategy. During the 17th–18th centuries, the Jesuits mostly viewed poetry as a vehicle for Confucianism and as evidence of Chinese reverence for virtue. As Couplet pointed out:

> Since frequent and grave crimes and moral dissolution eventually pave the way to the greatest of all crimes, Atheism; so too every virtue and rule of right living, and the pious administration of the people, are clear indications of true Religion. (Intorcetta et al. 1687, vol. 1, p. lxxxii)

In the view of the Jesuits, virtues were evidence that the Chinese had already recognized the true God. This also explains why they favored poetry focused on moral education. These poems explore personal cultivation and social morality, promote Confucian ideals of loyalty and filial piety, praise virtuous monarchs and their governance, and convey warnings and teachings. However, compared to the virtues related to ordinary people, the Jesuits valued more highly the virtues of monarchs. Sometimes, even when the original text was not entirely about monarchs, the Jesuits would link it to the virtues of monarchs in their translations or interpretations. The moral education in these poems itself played a significant role in shaping the image of the wise and virtuous Chinese monarch. For example, in Martini's records, Emperor Taikang 太康 lost his kingdom due to a lack of virtue, prompting his five brothers to reflect on Yu's 禹 admonitions, resulting in the *Wuzizhige* to express their remorse. Here is the translation of the first stanza of this poem as an example:

> Original text: The great ancestors once issued a clear instruction: the people should be respected and not looked down upon; the people are the foundation of the nation, and only when the foundation is strong will the country be stable. I see that everyone in the world, even the most ordinary people, can surpass me. A person who repeatedly makes mistakes but still does not realize their need for repentance—does he need to feel the people's resentment before he becomes aware of it? It should be addressed before it fully manifests. Governing the masses, I am as fearful as if driving six horses with a damaged rope; how can a ruler not be respectful and cautious? [皇祖有訓，民可近，不可下。民惟邦本，本固邦甯。予視天下愚夫、愚婦，壹能勝予，壹人三失，怨豈在明，不見是圖。予臨兆民，懍乎若朽索之馭六馬，爲人上者，奈何不敬？] (*Shangshu* 2012, p. 370)
>
> Martini's translation: Ab Yuo avo nostro haec est imperanti dicta lex, Populum amandum, non spernendum, aut opprimendum. Hunc enim regni radicem esse, cujus robore & constantia regni quoque firmitatem niti. Aurigae similem esse, qui aliis praest, qui vero sex equos putri fune colligat, an non ei caute agendum? (Martini 1659, p. 56)
>
> In English: From our ancestor Yu 禹 came this ruling law: The people must be loved, not despised or oppressed. For they are the root of the kingdom, whose strength and stability the firmness of the kingdom depends on. He is like a charioteer who leads others, but if he binds six horses with a rotten rope, should he not proceed with caution?

Through comparison, it can be observed that Martini did not aim for a faithful translation but rather simplified and selectively translated the text. The poem begins by depicting Yu 禹, a wise Chinese monarch who adhered to the "people-oriented" philosophy. Martini, however, deleted sentences suggesting that ordinary people's abilities could surpass those of the monarch. To highlight the virtues of the monarch, Martini also modified the original poem, translating the third stanza's "Emperor Yao 尧 of the Tao Tang clan once

governed the region of Jizhou" (惟彼陶唐, 有此冀方) as "Ever since the times of Yao 尧, the royal house has flourished with all kinds of virtues" (Martini 1659, p. 56). The emphasis on virtue culminates in the final stanza: "But I suffer this deservedly because I deviated from the path of righteousness and did not follow virtue as my guide. Yet it is too late to grieve and weep for what has passed" (Martini 1659, p. 57).

The emphasis on the virtue of monarch is not an isolated case. Intorcetta and Couplet, in their interpretation of the *Shijing*, praised ancient virtuous monarchs like Wenwang (周文王, 1152BC–1051BC) and Weiwugong (卫武公, 852BC–758BC), even referring to Wenwang as "among the gods" (inter divos) (Intorcetta et al. 1687, vol. 1, p. 10). In Prémare's translation, similar attention is also given to Wenwang. The word "virtue" appears a total of 17 times in his translation, with many verses directly referring to the virtues of Wenwang. For instance, "The Lord penetrates Wenwang's heart and finds there a secret and inexplicable virtue, whose scent spreads everywhere" and "The Lord said to Wenwang: I love a pure and simple virtue like yours" (Prémare 1735, p. 310). To strengthen the image of Wenwang as a virtuous monarch, Prémare not only titled both *Tianzuo*天作 (Heavenly Deeds) and *Huangyi*皇矣 (Magnificence) as "In Praise of Wenwang" (Prémare 1735, p. 309), but also rewrote the original text. For example, *Huangyi* originally described the history of the Zhou dynasty, also praising figures like Taiwang 太王, Taibo 太伯, and Wangji 王季. However, in Prémare's version, the poem becomes an "autobiography" of Wenwang alone. Praises originally directed at previous kings were attributed solely to Wenwang, with no mention of any other figures. The achievements of the Zhou ancestors were transformed into acts guided by Heaven and Wenwang's diligent governance. Additionally, Prémare omitted and modified actions by Wenwang that did not align with Jesuit views. Taking the verses in *Huangyi* as an example:

> Original text: Captives are brought in groups; ears of the enemy are cut off calmly. Sacrifices to the gods are made to seek victory, the Chong nation is summoned and pacified, and no one dares to invade our country. [执讯连连，攸馘安安。是类是祃，是致是附，四方以无侮。] (Cheng and Jiang 2017, p. 611)
>
> Prémare's translation: Ven vang n'estpas précipité dans sa marche: sa colère ne respire que la paix: il prend le Ciel à témoin de la bonté de son cœur: il voudrait qu'on se rendît sans combat, & il est prêt de pardonner aux plus coupables. Bien loin qu'une si grande douceur lui attire aucun mépris, jamais il ne parut plus digne d'être aimé. (Prémare 1735, pp. 310–11)
>
> In English: Wenwang is not precipitant in his march: He breathes nothing in his anger but peace. He takes Heaven to witness the goodness of his heart: He is willing that they should submit without fighting and is ready to pardon the most criminal. Far from incurring any contempt by this lenity, he never appeared more amiable.

In the original text, the term *Guo* 馘 refers to cutting off the left ear of enemy corpses to calculate military achievements. However, portraying Wenwang, a benevolent and kind monarch, as someone who acts so bloodily was deemed inappropriate, and thus this detail was deleted. Similarly, the terms *Lei* 类 and *Ma* 祃, which refer to sacrifices made before and after military expeditions, were also removed due to their description of conquest and rituals. Beyond shaping the image of Wenwang as a "peaceful king" (Prémare 1735, p. 309), this sentence also underscores the relationship between Wenwang and Heaven. In fact, Prémare consistently highlighted the guidance and blessings from Heaven in his description of Wenwang's achievements. The praise of Wenwang was always intertwined with reverence and awe for Heaven, with Prémare even intentionally portraying him as a Chinese "Jesus" (Du 2012; Li and Tan 2022). However, Prémare's excessively Christianized translation was not universally accepted by scholars of his time. In the German version of *A Description of China*, some translations with overly explicit Christian elements were removed[3]. Although Prémare tended to over-interpret in his translations (Jiang 2015, pp. 84–85), their dissemination in Europe undoubtedly influenced European perceptions

of China. Even the great German writer Goethe expressed admiration for Wenwang in his 1781 diary, exclaiming "Ah! Wenwang!" (Chen 1997, p. 11).

By the latter half of the 18th century, the Rites Controversy had been largely settled. The translations by Amiot and Cibot, though also describing the Chinese monarchs Qianlong and Wenwang, contained significantly fewer religious interpretations than those of Prémare. Amiot introduced Qianlong by translating his poems, and in the prefaces and commentaries of these translations, readers could perceive Qianlong as an emperor who strictly adhered to traditional rites and governance, diligently and elegantly ruling "the largest country on earth, while in his leisure composing this work requiring extraordinary knowledge" (Amiot 1770, p. i). Voltaire once commented after reading the poem, praising Qianlong as "an emperor greater, more awe-inspiring, and more diligent than Augustus, who writes poetry solely for the enlightenment and happiness of humanity" (Long 2015, p. 203). It can be argued that *Yuzhi Shengjing Fu* 禦制盛京賦 were directly integrated into the French collective imagination about Chinese culture and Qianlong.

From Yu to Wenwang to Qianlong, virtuous monarchs have consistently been an important part of these poems. This choice of translation material reflects the Jesuits' political views. At that time, most Jesuits were supporters of "absolute monarchy", believing that only such a system could provide the most stable social order, allowing Catholicism to better spread and develop (Meynard 2008, p. 140). Through these poems, the Jesuits not only showed Europeans how virtuous Chinese monarchs governed their countries, but also conveyed their own political stance, suggesting the universality and rationality of such a monarchical system.

4. Poetry as a Carrier of the Chinese Concept of Heaven-Human Relationship

As discussed in Section 3, virtue is not a separate value orientation. To a large extent, virtue was promoted by the Jesuits as evidence of God's instruction to humanity. For example, when Couplet and others interpreted the verse from *Wenwang* 文王, they wrote that "because of the conformity of his virtue with Heaven, he was able, or worthy, to be admitted into the society and fellowship of the supreme Emperor of Heaven" (Intorcetta et al. 1687, vol. 1, p. 28). To the Jesuits, the admiration of virtue was in fact an outward manifestation of reverence for Heaven.

The Jesuits' interpretation is not an overstatement. According to some Chinese scholars, the terms *Tian* 天 (Heaven, sky) and *Di* 帝 (Lord, the Supreme Being, Sovereign on High) in the *Shangshu* and *Shijing* also refer to a personified deity. *Tian* or *Di* explicitly issue decrees to humans, and the core content of the Mandate of *Tian* is virtue (Zhao 2015, p. 97). For example, in *Huangyi* 皇矣 (Magnificence), it is stated, "Di said to Wenwang, I admire your noble virtue" (帝謂文王, 予懷明德) (Cheng and Jiang 2017, p. 595). Virtue is the main representation of the relationship between Heaven and humans and is considered sacred. The Belgian sinologist Nicolas Standaert also pointed out that the Heaven–human relationship in the *Shijing* actually involves three roles: *Tian* or *Di*, the monarch, and the people. The relationship among these three is that "*Tian* (*Di*) seeks a monarch to lead and protect the people" (Standaert 1998, p. 104). The monarch's ability to fulfill this responsibility is determined by his virtue. Therefore, the Confucianist view on moral education, a virtuous monarch, and the Heaven–human relationship is actually an integrated whole.

Discussions of the Chinese Heaven–human relationship have been going on since the beginning of the Jesuits' missionary work in China. Ricci quoted verses from the *Shijing* in his work *Tianzhu Shiyi* 天主實義 (*The True Meaning of God*) to argue that "Our God is the *Shangdi* 上帝 referred to in your ancient scriptures" (吾天主, 乃古經書所稱上帝也) (Ricci 2014, p. 100). Ricci's accommodation strategy garnered recognition from Chinese scholars during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, receiving positive responses (X. Zhang 2020). Most Jesuits adhered to Ricci's strategy, striving to portray Confucianism as an "Oriental religion" that worshipped a singular supreme deity consistent with Christian doctrine. They argued that the objects of worship in Chinese texts, *Tian* 天 and *Di* 帝, were congruent with the Christian God (Deus), thereby defending the compatibility of

Christianity with Chinese culture. To achieve this, the Jesuits employed various methods in their interpretations of the Chinese Heaven–human relationship, which is also reflected in the poetry they translated.

4.1. Adopting a Base Text More Aligned with Jesuit Perspectives

The French sinologist Thierry Meynard once pointed out that, compared to Zhu Xi's interpretations, Couplet and Intorcetta preferred Zhang Juzheng's interpretations when translating the *Four Books* because Zhang Juzheng emphasized the importance of "Heaven" and "reverence for Heaven" more than Zhu Xi did (Meynard 2014, p. 74). Therefore, the translations of *Shijing* verses related to the Heaven–human relationship in their works also tended to emphasize "reverence for Heaven". For example, in translating the verse from *Huangyi* 皇矣 "I admire your noble virtue, free from any harsh words or stern expressions" (予懷明德, 不大聲以色) (Cheng and Jiang 2017, p. 595), Intorcetta translated *Yu* 予 (I) as "The supreme emperor of heaven" (Intorcetta et al. 1687, vol. 2, p. 93), referencing Zhang Juzheng's commentary. In contrast, Zhu Xi's commentary did not explicitly identify the subject *Yu* 予.

When translating the *Shijing*, Prémare also did not choose Zhu Xi's *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳 (*Collected Commentaries on the Shijing*) as his base text but instead opted for *Shijing Zhengjie* 詩經正解[4] (*Authoritative Interpretation of the Shijing*), a text used in imperial civil examinations during the early Qing dynasty. This work was compiled by Jiang Wencan (姜文灿) and Wu Quan (吴荃), whose interpretations, compared to Zhu Xi's, similarly contained more religious ideas of "reverence for Heaven". For example, in the verse from *Dang* 荡 (Chaos):

> Original text: Heaven gives life to the multitude of people, whose destinies are often variable and uncertain (天生烝民, 其命匪谌). (Cheng and Jiang 2017, p. 641)
>
> Zhu Xi's interpretation[5]: Indeed, Heaven creates the multitude of people, and among them, there are those whose destinies cannot be trusted. Although their decrees from Heaven are initially good, few can follow the path of goodness to the end, resulting in this great chaos (蓋天生衆民, 其命有不可信者, 蓋其降命之初, 無有不善, 而少能以善道自終, 是以致此大亂). (Zhu 2018a, p. 309)
>
> Jiang and Wu's interpretation: If the Mandate of Heaven cannot be fulfilled, as illness and calamities are numerous, it is the result of human actions. How can this be blamed on Heaven? (使天命亦罔克終, 如疾威而多僻也, 乃人之所爲也,豈可歸咎于天哉?). (Jiang and Wu 1684, p. 39)
>
> Prémare's translation: Heaven, it is true, gives life and being to all the inhabitants of the world: But we must not depend too much upon its generosity and clemency. (le Ciel donne, il est vrai, la vie & l'être à tous les peuples de la terre; mais il ne faut pas entièrement compter sur sa libéralité & sur sa clémence). (Prémare 1735, p. 316)

Zhu Xi's interpretation focuses on the moral aspect of individuals, viewing human destiny as dependent on their moral transformations. In contrast, Jiang Wencan's interpretation emphasizes the relationship between Heaven and humanity. Prémare adopted Jiang's interpretive model, highlighting the Heaven–human relationship while maintaining the benevolent and magnanimous image of Heaven. De La Charme, who was contemporaneous with Prémare and conducted research on translating the *Shijing*, also explained in the preface to his translation the base texts he referenced. He mentioned that, in addition to Zhu Xi's annotations, he particularly consulted the Manchu translation commissioned by the Emperor Shunzhi (順治, 1638–1661), noting that this Manchu version "oriented the translation towards religious interpretation" (De La Charme 1830, p. xv).

4.2. Christian Theological Translation and Interpretation of Tian 天 and Di 帝

The Jesuits' shaping of the Chinese Heaven–human relationship is most centrally reflected in their translation and interpretation of the terms *Tian* 天 and *Di* 帝. And for a

long period, these two terms were related to God by the Jesuits. As Ricci stated, "*Shangdi* and God are different in name only" (上帝與天主, 特異以名也) (Ricci 2014, p. 101). Following Ricci's accommodation strategy, the Jesuits naturally continued this interpretative approach in translating the Chinese terms *Tian* and *Di*. In the preface to *Chinese Philosopher Confucius*, Couplet explicitly supported *Shangdi* 上帝 as the Chinese translation for the term God. Intorcetta, moreover, relied on "Heaven always acts in this way, without sound or discernible scent" (上天之載, 無聲無臭) (Cheng and Jiang 2017, p. 571) and other verses to suggest that the Chinese already recognized and believed in the existence of God (Intorcetta et al. 1687, vol. 2, p. 93). Although the Jesuits had already decided to adopt *Tianzhu* 天主 as the only translation of God at the Jiading Conference in 1627, banning other translations such as *Shangdi* and *Tian*, Couplet and Intorcetta continued to promote the use of *Shangdi* at that time.

However, with the escalation of the Rites Controversy, Pope Clement XI issued the papal bull *From That Day* (Ex Illa Die) in 1715, which forbade the use of the Chinese words *Tian* and *Di* to refer to God, which undoubtedly made the Jesuits more cautious in their use of terminology. In a 1728 letter to Étienne Fourmont (1683–1745), Prémare lamented, "If only the Propaganda had straightforwardly told us that we could freely preach to the Chinese that what their ancient texts refer to as *Tian* and *Di* is indeed what we mean by 'God'..." (Lundbæk 1991, p. 29).

Prémare consistently interpreted *Tian* and *Di* in a Christian theological manner, but due to the terminological issues arising from the Rites Controversy, he had to make compromises. In the original text of his selection of the *Shijing*, *Tian* appears 29 times and *Di* 16 times. Of these 29 instances of *Tian*, 25 are directly translated as the capitalized "Ciel" (Heaven) while others are translated along with *Di* as "le Seigneur" (the Lord), "Le Très Haut" (the Highest), "Maître de l'univers" (Master of the Universe), or "le seul Souverain" (the sole Sovereign), "le souverain maître du monde" (the sovereign Master of the world), and "l'Etre suprême" (the Supreme Being). In French, the capitalized "Ciel" is usually used in religious or theological texts to denote the will of Heaven, while the lowercase "ciel" refers to the natural sky. In the French *Bible*, "le Seigneur" is often used to translate "Jehovah" or "God". Thus, although Prémare did not directly equate *Tian* or *Di* with God, the terms he used highlighted their supreme status and personal god-like characteristics. Furthermore, other poems related to the Heaven–human relationship included in *A Description of China* also adopted similar translation strategies. For example, Dentrecolles translated *Tian* as "le Ciel," denoting the will of Heaven.

De La Charme's translation strategy is even more interesting. Although he explained in the preface, "By reading the *Shijing*, it is gathered that the older the nation, the older their worship of God among them" (De La Charme 1830, p. xiv), in translating all the verses involving *Tian* he uniformly used "Coelum/Coelus", a term that mostly refers to the natural, material sky. In the main text, he did not seem to consider *Tian* to have will or sanctified connotations, but in the annotations, which occupy one-third of the appended notes, he frequently mentioned that the Chinese had long recognized and worshipped God. For example, in the notes to the poem *Jigu* 擊鼓 (Drum Beating) he wrote, "Whoever should violate the oath would suffer the greatest punishment from the supreme lord of all things, God" (De La Charme 1830, p. 233).

By the late 18th century, such Christian theological interpretations of *Tian* and *Di* began to gradually decline, as evidenced by Cibot frequently using pinyin to transliterate these two words in his translations.

Text 1: le **Chang-ti** a détourné ses regards de dessus elle

In English: The *Shangdi* has turned His gaze away from her

Text 2: la faveur du **Tien** n'est pas inamissible

In English: The favor of *Tian* is not irreplaceable

Text 3: On eternise par-là les promesses du **Tien**

In English: By this, the promises of *Tian* are eternalized

Text 4: les Chang avant leur ruine mériterent les complaisances du **Chang-ti**

In English: Before their downfall, the *Shang* dynasty deserved the favor of *Shangdi* (Cibot 1779, pp. 175–76)

Overall, the Chinese poetry translated by Jesuits in the 17th–18th centuries is filled with numerous references to *Tian* and *Di*. In these translations, *Tian* and *Di* were almost equated with the supreme God, with the Chinese people having absolute and unconditional reverence for these entities. But does this truly reflect the Chinese concept of the Heaven–human relationship? During the Shang dynasty, people had unconditional trust and dependence on *Tian*. However, after Zhou overthrew the Shang dynasty, the Zhou people learned from the Shang's downfall that without reverence for Heaven, one would lose the Mandate of Heaven, which is reflected in the concept of "Heaven's mandate is not constant" in their poetry (Chu and Zhang 1983, pp. 54–55). Therefore, while there are many poems expressing reverence for Heaven, there are also numerous lamentation poems in the *Shijing* where Heaven is depicted as unjust, blind, or even terrifying. In these poems, people complain about the capriciousness of Heaven, sometimes believing that Heaven causes chaos (Standaert 1998, pp. 104–7). However, the Jesuits like Prémare and Ciobt chose not to translate these poems. Even when negative depictions of *Tian* and *Di* appeared in the poems they translated, the translators would delete, modify, or beautify them, as evidenced in the translations by Prémare and De La Charme (Li and Tan 2022, pp. 47–48; Lei 2024, pp. 157–61). Thus, what was presented to the readers was an image of an exalted, revered, and benevolent Heaven, one that inspired awe without fear or complaint. This deliberate shaping, although deviating from the true Chinese concept of the Heaven–human relationship, aligned with Christian theological thought, highlighting the compatibility between Christianity and Chinese culture, and served the Jesuits' goal of promoting a China image that aligned with their interests in Europe.

5. Conclusions

The Chinese poetry translated by Jesuits in the 17th and 18th centuries predominantly focused on themes of moral education, the image of virtuous monarchs, and the Heaven–human relationship in Chinese culture. Although these translations held significant documentary value, they often lacked literary flair. By depicting the moral education of Chinese individuals, particularly the virtuous monarchs, the Jesuits showcased to Europe how they governed their countries. Additionally, they conveyed their own political views to readers, implying the universality of this absolute monarchical system. Through their Christian theological interpretation of the Chinese Heaven–human relationship, the Jesuits sought to demonstrate the compatibility between Christianity and Chinese culture, thereby defending their accommodation strategy.

The Jesuits' sinological works were crucial sources of knowledge about China for European readers, shaping their initial impressions of Chinese poetry. In the first Western work on the Chinese language, *An Historical Essay: Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language*, the author John Webb (1611–1672) referred to Martini's description to introduce Chinese poetry (Webb 1669, pp. 98–99). And in the appendix of the first Chinese novel translated into English, *Haoqiu Zhuan* 好逑傳 (*Hau Kiou Choaan or The Pleasing History*, 1761), the translator Thomas Percy (1729–1811) directly quoted Martini's description as the preface in his discussion of Chinese poetry (Percy 1761, p. 198). Additionally, Percy collected 19 poetic fragments[6] from the *Ancient History of China*, *Chinese Philosopher Confucius* and *A Description of China*, which are almost all related to moral education. Percy thus mistakenly considered Chinese poetry to be "collections of moral Apothegms" (Percy 1761, p. 217). He retranslated these Chinese poems, originally rendered in prose by Jesuits, into poetic form in English, providing European readers with a direct experience of Chinese poetry. This clearly demonstrates the profound impact that the Jesuits' works had on Europe's understanding of Chinese poetry. Although these trans-

lations were but a drop in the ocean, they paved the way for the surge of interest in Chinese poetry translation that emerged in 19th-century Europe.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, X.L.; methodology, X.L.; formal analysis, X.L.; resources, X.L. and Y.T.; data curation, X.L.; writing—original draft preparation, X.L. and Y.T.; writing—review and editing, X.L. and Y.T.; project administration, Y.T.; supervision, Y.T.; funding acquisition, Y.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the major program of The National Social Science Fund of China "Euro-Asian Encounters in the Literary Cultures of the 18th century" (21&ZD278).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Data is contained within the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

1. In 1589, the English writer George Puttenham (1529–1590) mentioned in *The Arte of English Poesie*: "They (Chinese) are in all their inventions most wittie, and have the use of Poesie or riming, but do not delight so much as we do in long tedious descriptions, and therefore when they will utter any pretie conceit, they reduce it into metricall feet, and put it in forme of a Lozange or square, or such other figure" (Puttenham 1869, pp. 104–5). He also included in his book two Chinese poems arranged in the shape of diamond, which were said to be written by the Tartary emperor Temir Cutzclewe and his lover Kermesine. However, these two poems were heard by Puttenham from an Italian friend, and no corresponding Chinese originals can be found.
2. This table does not include all Chinese poems translated into European languages by Jesuits in the 17th and 18th centuries. We have selected some examples from books publicly published in Europe. There are many other translations in unpublished works, such as Bouvet's *Study of the Shijing* (*Dissertation sur le Che-king*). Additionally, although Alexandre de la Charme's translation of the *Shijing* was completed during this period, it was not published until 1830. Therefore, it is not included in this table. Additionally, our categorization and summarization of the "Theme of Translated Poetry" are based on close textual analysis as well as existing research articles (Du 2012; Jiang 2015; Qian 2015; Long 2015; Tan and Zhang 2021).
3. While praising Wenwang, Prémare translated "Heaven appointed the spouse for Wenwang" (天立厥配) as "Heaven would give itself an Equal". In a subsequent letter sent back to Europe, he explained: "Let me explain why I translated 'Heaven appointed the spouse for Wenwang' as 'Heaven would give itself an Equal'. This phrase can only be valid when it involves the 'human-God' relationship, as it implies being both inferior and equal. We are correct in saying that God is unique. However, Jesus' statement 'I and the Father are one' is also indisputable" (Landry-Deron 2002, p. 200). However, in the German version, this Christianized phrase was removed. Furthermore, some German sinologists have speculated: "The German translator of *A Description of China* was likely the Protestant theologian F. E. Rambach" (Walravens 1987, p. 110). Other scholars believe that the German version of *A Description of China* is not a simple translation of the French original; the translator made remarks in the work that were considered unfavorable to the Jesuits (Ke 2017, p. 87). Readers can sense the influence of the translator's personal stance on the translation strategy through the subtle changes in different versions.
4. Prémare mentioned in his letter: "The *Shijing* I have is called *Zhengjie*"; furthermore, he indicated the page numbers of the poems he translated in the 1684 edition of *Shijing Zhengjie* 詩經正解 in his manuscripts (Landry-Deron 2002, pp. 198–200), confirming that Prémare used *Shijing Zhengjie* as base text for his translations.
5. Chinese classics like *Shangshu* 尚書 and *Shijing* 詩經 have been annotated by scholars over different dynasties, leading to varied interpretations without an absolute standard. Some interpretations, like Zhu Xi's *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳, are widely accepted. Jesuits translating these texts relied on these interpretations, not the ancient Chinese directly. The choice of different interpretations reflects their different translation stances. The "Original Text" here refers to contemporary scholars' interpretations, which, while based on earlier interpretations like Zhu Xi's, refer to more sources to restore the classics' original meaning. Thus, significant differences appear between the "Original Text" and the "Prémare's translation". This difference arises partly from the *Shijing Zhengjie* 詩經正解 referred to by Prémare, and partly from his deliberate Christianized interpretations.
6. These poetic fragments include the following: *Wuzizhige* 五子之歌 (The Song of Five Brothers); *Qiao* 淇奧 (The River Bay), *Taoyao* 桃夭 (The Beautiful Peach), *Jienanshan* 節南山 (The Lofty South Hill), *Wenwang* 文王 (Lord Wen), *Mianman* 綿蠻 (A Chirping Oriole), and *Yi* 抑 (Deiginity) from *Shijing*; poems from *Yuanti Ji* 愿体集 (The Characters or Manners of the Chinese) and *Jingu Qiguan* 今古奇觀 (Strange Tales New and Old); *Anle Yin* 安樂吟 (Song of Contentment); *Shaonian Xing* 少年行 (the Youth's Journey); *Xingshi Shi* 醒世诗 (Poem to Alert the World); and *Shushan Shi Menren* 书扇示门人 (Writing on a Fan to Show the Disciples).

References

Amiot, Joseph-Marie. 1770. *Éloge de la ville de Moukden et de ses environs: Poème composé par Kien-Long, empereur de la Chine & de la Tartarie, actuellement régnant*. Paris: N. M. Tilliard.

Chang, Sen 常森. 2018. *Siwuxie* zuowei *Shijing* huayu ji qi yiyi zhuanhuan "思无邪" 作为《诗经》学话语及其意义转换[*Siwuxie*, As a Discourse of Study of the *Shijing* and Its Meaning Transformation]. *Wenxue Pinglun* 文学评论 *[Literary Rwview]* 3: 172–81.

Chen, Quan 陈铨. 1997. *Zhongde Wenxue Yanjiu* 中德文学研究 *[Studies in Sino-German Literature]*. Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe 辽宁教育出版社 [Liaoning Education Press].

Cheng, Junying 程俊英, and Jianyuan Jiang 蔣見元. 2017. *Shijing Zhuxi* 詩經注析 *[A Commentary on the Shijing]*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju中华书局 [Zhonghua Book Company].

Chu, Binjie 褚斌杰, and Bigong Zhang 章必功. 1983. *Shijing* zhong de zhoudai tianmingguan ji qi fazhan bianhua《诗经》中的周代天命观及其发展变化 [The Concept of the Mandate of Heaven in the Zhou Dynasty as Depicted in the *Shijing* and Its Evolution]. *Beijing Daxue Xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 北京大学学报 (哲学社会科学版) *[Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)]* 12: 50–69.

Cibot, Pierre-Martial. 1779. Diverses Pieces en Vers et en Prose sur La Piété Filiale. In *Mémories concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les moeurs et les usages des Chinois par les Missionnaires de Pékin*. Paris: chez Nyon l'ainé, vol. IV, pp. 168–77.

De La Charme, Alexandre. 1830. *Confucii Chi-King sive Libre Carminum*. Edited by Julius Mohl. Stuttcartiae and Tubingae: J.G. Cotte.

Du, Xinxin 杜欣欣. 2012. Maruose *Shijing* fanyi chutan 马若瑟《诗经》翻译初探 [A Preliminary Study of Joseph-Marie Prémare's Translation of the *Shijing*]. *Zhongguo Wenzhe Yanjiu Tongxun* 中國文哲研究通訊 *[Newsletter for Research in Chinese Literature and Philosophy]* 1: 43–71.

Du Halde, Jean-Baptiste. 1735. *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise*. Paris: P. G. Le Mercier, vol. 2.

Hosne, Ana Carolina. 2013. *The Jesuit Missions to China and Peru, 1570–1610: Expectations and Appraisals of Expansionism*. New York: Routledge.

Intorcetta, Prospero, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, and Philippi Couplet. 1687. *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis latine exposita studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet*. Parisiis: Apud Danielem Horthemels.

Jiang, Wencan 姜文灿, and Quan Wu 吴荃. 1684. *Shijing Zhengjie* 诗经正解 *[Authoritative Interpretation of the Shijing]*. Suzhou: Shenliu tang 深柳堂, vol. 24.

Jiang, Xiangyan 蒋向艳. 2015. A Preliminary Study on the First Selected Translation of The Book of Poetry into French. *Asian Studies* 3: 75–86. [CrossRef]

Ke, Hui 柯卉. 2017. Zaihua yesuhuishi yu hou liyizhizheng shidai—yi deyizhi yesuhuishi weijijin wei li 在华耶稣会士与后 "礼仪之争" 时代—以德意志耶稣会士魏继晋为例 [Jesuits in China and the Period After the Rites Controversy—A Study Based on the Example of the German Jesuit Florian Joseph Bahr]. *Deguo Yanjiu* 德国研究 *[Germany Studies]* 2: 81–96.

Landry-Deron, Isabelle. 2002. *La Preuve Par La Chine: La "Description" de J.-B. Du Halde, jésuite, 1735*. Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales.

Lei, Ming 雷鸣. 2024. *Shijing zhi Jing: Sunzhang Shijing Ladingwen Yiben Yanjiu* 《诗经》之镜：孙璋《诗经》拉丁文译本研究 *[A Mirror of the Shijing: On Alexandre de la Charme's Confucii Chi-King sive Liber Carminum]*. Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社会科学文献出版社 [Social Sciences Academic Press].

Li, Guangwei 李广伟, and Feng Yue 岳峰. 2020. Chanshixue shiyu xia *Shijing* zhong *Tian* zhi yuanliu ji qi fanyi yingxiang yinsu kaocha 阐释学视阈下《诗经》中 "天" 之源流及其翻译影响因素考察 [The Origin of "Tian" and Its Translation Factors in *Shijing* from the Perspective of Hermeneutics]. *Zhongguo Waiyu* 中国外语 *[Foreign Languages in China]* 5: 100–7.

Li, Tiangang 李天纲. 1998. *Zhongguo Liyizhizheng: Lishi*、*Wenxian he Yiyi* 中国礼仪之争：历史、文献和意义 *[The Chinese Rites Controversy: History, Documents, and Significance]*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社 [Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House].

Li, Xiaoshu 李晓书, and Yuan Tan 谭渊. 2022. Maruose *Shijing* yiben yu liyizhizheng 马若瑟《诗经》译本与 "礼仪之争" [Prémare's Translation of the *Shijing* and the Chinese Rites Controversy]. *Guoji Hanxue* 国际汉学 *[International Sinology]* 2: 45–52.

Long, Yun 龙云. 2015. *Qiandeming: 18 Shiji Zhong Fa jian de Wenhua Shizhe* 钱德明：18世纪中法间的文化使者 *[Joseph-Marie Amiot: Cultural Emissary between China and France in the 18th Century]*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大学出版社 [Peking University Press].

Lundbæk, Knud. 1991. *Joseph de Prémare (1666–1736), S. J. Chinese Philology and Figurism*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Magalhães, Gabriel. 1688. *Nouvelle relation de la Chine, contenant la description des particularitez les plus considerables de ce grand Empire*. Paris: Claude Barbin.

Marthaler, Berard Lawrence, Richard E.McCarron, and Gregory F. LaNave, eds. 2003. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Detroit: Thompson Gale.

Martini, Martino. 1659. *Sinicae Historiae Decas Prima: Res* à *Gentis Origine ad Christum Natum in Extrema Asia, sive Magno Sinarum Imperio Gestas Complexa*. Amstelaedami: Apud Joannem Blaev.

Meynard, Thierry 梅谦立. 2008. Kongfuzi: Zuichu xiwen fanyi de rujia jingdian 《孔夫子》：最初西文翻译的儒家经典 [Early Translation in Western Languages of Confucian Classics]. *Zhongshan Daxue Xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 中山大学学报 (社会科学版) *[Journal of Sun Yat-se n University (Social Science Edition)]* 2: 131–42.

Meynard, Thierry 梅谦立. 2014. Yesuhuishi yu rujia jingdian: Fanyizhe, yi huo pannizhe? 耶稣会士与儒家经典: 翻译者, 抑或叛逆者? [The Jesuit and Confucian Classics: Translation or Subversion?]. *Xiandai Zhexue* 现代哲学 *[Modern Philosophy]* 6: 67–78.

Mungello, David Emil. 1989. *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Percy, Thomas. 1761. *Hau Kiou Choaan or The Pleasing History*. London: R. & J. Dodsley, vol. 4.

Pfister, Louis. 1932. *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine 1552–1773*. Changhai: Mission catholique.

Prémare, Joseph-Marie. 1735. Le CHI KING. In *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise II*. Paris: P. G. Le Mercier, pp. 308–17.

Puttenham, George. 1869. *The Arte of English Poesis*. London: Alex. Murray & Son.

Qian, Linsen 钱林森. 2015. 18 shiji faguo chuanjiaoshi hanxuejia dui *Shijing* de yijie yu yanjiu 18世纪法国传教士汉学家对《诗经》的译介与研究——以马若瑟、白晋、韩国英为例 [Translation of, Introduction to and Studies on *The Book of Odes and Hymns* by the French Missionary Sinologists in the 18th Century, with such Examples as Joseph Marie de Prémare, Joachim Bouvet and Pierre-Martial Cibot]. *Huawen Wenxue* 华文文学 *[Literatures in Chinese]* 5: 10–19.

Ricci, Matteo. 2014. *Tianzhu Shiyi Jin Zhu* 天主實義今注 *[The True Meaning of God with Modern Annotations]*. Noted by Thierry Meynard. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 [The Commercial Press].

Semedo, Álvaro. 1642. *Imperio De La China, I Cultura Evangelica En Èl, Por Los Religios De La Compañia De Iesus*. Madrid: Impresso por Iuan Sanchez en Madrid.

Shangshu 尚書 *[The Book of Historical Documents]*. 2012. Noted by Shishun Wang 王世舜 and Cuiye Wang 王翠叶. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局 [Zhonghua Book Company].

Standaert, Nicolas. 1998. *Keqin de Tianzhu: Qing Chu Jidutu Tan Di Lun Tian* 可親的天主: 清初基督徒論 "帝" 談 "天". *[Early Qing Christians Discuss Di and Tian]*. Taibei: Guangqi chubanshe 光啓出版社 [Kuangchi Press].

Tan, Yuan 谭渊, and Xiaoyan Zhang 张小燕. 2021. Liyizhizheng yu zhonghua diguo quanzhi dui zhongguo dianji yu wenxue de yijie 礼仪之争与《中华帝国全志》对中国典籍与文学的译介 [The Rites Controversy and Translation of Chinese Literature in Description de l'Empire de la Chine]. *Zhongguo Fanyi* 中国翻译 *[Chinese Translators Journal]* 4: 49–56.

Walravens, Hartmut. 1987. *China illustrata: Das europäische Chinaverständnis im Spiegel des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*. Weinheim: Acta Humaniora VCH.

Webb, John. 1669. *An Historical Essay: Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language*. London: Printed for Nath Brook.

Zhang, Juzheng 张居正. 2013. *Zhang Juzheng Jiangping Lunyu* 张居正讲评论语 *[Zhang Juzheng's Commentary on Confucian Analects]*. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe 上海辞书出版社 [Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House].

Zhang, Xiping 张西平. 2016. *Ruxue Xichuan Ouzhou Yanjiu Daolun* 儒学西传欧洲研究导论 *[Introduction to the Study of the Transmission of Confucianism to Europe]*. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大学出版社 [Peking University Press].

Zhang, Xiping 张西平. 2020. Limadou ruxueguan de kunjing yu zhangli 利玛窦儒学观的困境与张力 [The Dilemma and Tension of Matteo Ricci's View of Confucianism]. *Beijing Xingzheng Xueyuan Xuebao* 北京行政学院学报 *[Journal of Beijing Administration Institute]* 1: 119–28.

Zhao, Fasheng 赵法生. 2015. Xunzi *Tian* lun yu xian Qin rujia tianrenguan de zhuanzhe 荀子天论与先秦儒家天人观的转折 [Studies on Xunzi's Views Towards Heaven and the Turning Point View About the Relationship Between Heaven and Human Beings of the Pre-qin Confucians]. *Qinghua Daxue Xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 清华大学学报 (哲学社会科学版) *[Journal of Tsinghua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)]* 2: 97–106.

Zhu, Xi 朱熹. 2018a. *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳 *[Collected Commentaries on the Shijing]*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局[Zhonghua Book Company].

Zhu, Xi 朱熹. 2018b. *Sishu Zhangju Jizhu* 四書章句集注 *[Commentaries on the Four Books]*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局 [Zhonghua Book Company].

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.