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*Zhongwai jiaotong gu ditu ji* 中外交通古地圖集. 14 + 4 + 10 + 335 pp. Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2017. ISBN 978 7 5475 1192 3. 158 RMB.

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This finely printed large-size volume on traditional Chinese cartography contains the following parts: a cluster of coloured illustrations; a detailed introduction; 123 entries or short chapters, each on one particular map and each with black-and-white illustrations; a short bibliography; a list of non-Chinese maps shown and briefly discussed in the different entries; a short postscript. The book may serve as a research tool or simply as a guide through the history of ancient Chinese maps. Its focus is on cartographic works that tell us something on China's periphery and foreign relations more generally; this also explains the title of the book, which can be translated as "Collection of ancient maps on Sino-foreign exchange".

The sequence of the 123 segments follows a chronological order; the earliest pieces are based on material or ideas that go back to pre-Han times; the latest pieces are works of the nineteenth century. Each segment shows one non-European map of approximately the same period. This arrangement encourages readers to compare the characteristics of foreign cartography with the essential features of contemporary Chinese works. Some entries also juxtapose related maps; examples are found in the segments on Chinese Jesuit works and their European "counterparts". Evidently, the idea is to show that Chinese cartography was special in many ways; at the same time it was no less important than Near Eastern or European works; also, from the Ming period onwards it absorbed European elements, a process that produced new cartographic styles with mixed characteristics.

The editors/authors of *Zhongwai jiaotong gu ditu ji* are all known for their expertise in the history of Sino-foreign contacts, including geography and cartography. One may add, Tan Guanglian is a collector of ancient maps and has generously supported the Maritime Museum in Hong Kong. Clearly, the chief interest of all authors is China's maritime past; this explains why their book gives a certain preference to maps loosely linked to Sino-foreign exchange across the oceans. Of course, such an observation does not imply criticism; on the contrary, from the sixteenth century onwards, it was mainly through contacts between Chinese intellectuals and Europeans reaching China from the seaside that cartography began to bear new fruits. Therefore it makes sense to find in this book various entries on coastal maps, maps with navigational routes, world maps, and maps of foreign countries accessible via the sea.

However, at the same time, the Inner Asian "frontier" is not neglected. The beautiful *Menggu shanshui ditu* 蒙古山水地圖, discussed in segment 33, is a case in point. Such works as well as some pieces showing China in toto suggest that the

cartographic depiction of the empire's northern and western parts followed distinctly Chinese conventions. One recurrent element is the presentation of the northern deserts as a long zone. This concept, as well as the manner in which certain toponyms were distributed across the northern spaces, also influenced European cartographers. Indeed, specialists have noticed many iconographic features which "Western" maps adapted from Chinese sources. Early maps of Macau provide some examples, other examples are the form of the Gulf of Tongking, the depiction of the Xisha Islands 西沙群島 as a dotted zone, and so on. But these details take us beyond the intended framework of the present volume.

Generally, the length of the entries in this carefully edited volume varies from two to nine pages. Several segments contain very detailed descriptions. One case is the entry on a map of Southeast Asia drawn before 1721 (entry no. 83). Similar to the famous Selden map, it shows navigational routes and gives basic sailing instructions. The explanations present the latter and list the relevant toponyms. Furthermore, all entries refer to representative books and articles for additional reading. The most frequently cited source is the collection *Zhongguo gudai ditu ji* 中國古代地圖集 by Cao Wanru 曹婉如 and others (Beijing 1990–97). Finally, the quality of the images varies from one entry to the next, partly because some original works are so large that, when reproduced, their characters become illegible. Certainly, several items are now available through the internet and one may access them sector by sector, but it is more convenient to have such works on paper as well. In that sense, to me the present volume conveys the message that more works should be printed – a *conditio sine qua non* for future research on them. There are in fact many studies on the Zheng He map (鄭和航海圖), the Jesuit and Selden maps – all of which have appeared in printed form – and on some smaller pieces found in old books, but other important works still await a thorough treatment.

No doubt one could enlarge this volume by adding more material to it, for example long scrolls depicting China's coast, or maps found in local gazetteers such as the *Qiong tai zhi* 瓊臺志 (early sixteenth century), but such drawings rarely left significant imprints on later cartographic works. Put differently, the collection by Zhu Jianqiu and his colleagues has a representative character and follows carefully determined selection criteria. It definitely has much more to offer than the popular work by Liang Erping 梁二平, *Haiyang ditu. Zhongguo gudai haiyang ditu juyao* 海洋地圖. 中國古代海洋地圖舉要 (Hong Kong, 2015).

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