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Despina Magkanari



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# Sinological Origins of Turcology in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe

Despina Magkanari

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- 1 The title of this article may seem paradoxical and therefore calls for some initial remarks\* . Firstly, when it comes to the study of knowledge production in the early modern era, we need to discard current disciplinary categories so as to avoid introducing anachronistic projections into a period preceding the rise of specialization and professionalization in scientific research. Indeed, although Enlightenment Orientalists were scholars anticipating a career – mostly in royal institutions – they were mastering as best they could different languages, engaging in multiform activity and diversified production, and holding posts not necessarily connected to their favored area of study. Their work draws on the emergence of knowledge production of a certain importance which legitimately belongs to the history of different fields of scholarship. Specialization processes and subsequent disciplinary boundaries have often overshadowed this fact; consequently, scholarly figures who have played a major role in the process of field formation during the period preceding institutionalization have been excluded from the disciplinary pantheon.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, in European countries, the field of Turcology has for a long time been inscribed in the linguistic and philological tradition. This means, on the one hand, practical learning and usage of the Turkish language in connection with diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire; on the other, the scholarly study of language and work on Ottoman texts.<sup>2</sup> However, the modern definition of Turcology denotes the investigation of various aspects of the life of Turkish peoples. In recent years in particular, institutional research has to a great extent been organized around the notion of a Turkish *aire culturelle*, often designated as “Turkish studies”, encompassing different disciplines within the human sciences (history, archeology, anthropology, sociology, ethnography, etc.) and prompting a decidedly interdisciplinary approach. Despite difficulties arising in the articulation between area studies and the social sciences, this paradigm, introducing the notion of cultural area as an epistemological category, invites us to engage in a genealogical study of the Turkish cultural area.<sup>3</sup>

- 2 I propose to discuss here the original forms of Turcological scholarship and more specifically those produced by scholars primarily known for their contributions to European sinology during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The works of the French Jesuit missionary Claude Visdelou and the French Orientalist Joseph Deguignes are hardly mentioned in the history of Turcology. My working hypothesis is that the work of these scholars played a key role in the identification and delimitation of a Central Asian Turkish world and eventually in the autonomization process of a Turcological field. Besides the contribution of sinological knowledge in the study of the history and geography of Turkic peoples, this article examines the articulation of this sinological knowledge to the Arabo-Persian field. This account is intended to contribute to recent attempts to historicize the study of Orientalist knowledge production, informed by a socio-cultural approach to knowledge.<sup>4</sup> It takes into account the actual direction of the history of science and disciplines, challenging the traditional approach in the history of Turcology, which does not allow us to seize the dynamics at work in the process of knowledge production. This direction calls into question the traditional opposition between internalist and externalist approaches (history of scientific ideas vs. social history of sciences); it postulates research in terms of the conditions of production as well as the articulation of knowledge and its specific manifestations in institutions, groups and places; knowledge production and circulation takes place in social, cultural and institutional spaces interacting with, and exerting influence on, its content. Thus, this approach involves an analysis concerned with studying agents, institutions and practices entangled in this process, alongside the investigation of the final product of intellectual production.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the process of knowledge production, circulation and validation is no longer conceived of in terms of “truth” or “influence” (as the diffusionist model postulates), but in terms of a relationist mode focusing on dynamics of circulation (meaning different and complex stages of interaction), construction (referring to practices involving exchanges and negotiations) and even relocalization (Saunier 2004; Raj 2007). This shift in orientation, related to the global perspective, introducing different spaces and scales of analysis and challenging the traditional historiographic periodizations, is crucial to our subject. The role of go-betweens (either individuals, items or practices) is all-important in this type of approach, as their examination allows us to trace the negotiation process. Due to their acquaintance with different cultures and historiographical traditions, the Orientalist scholars can be considered by definition as go-betweens, but they have also frequently assumed a more active role in transcultural connections.
- 3 This article shows that the process of emergence of a knowledge specific to the Turkish world during the Enlightenment took place in three stages, in connection with the general development in the field of Oriental studies. The first stage is related to the exploration of Muslim historiography in the writing of Oriental history. The two others concern the later encounter with the Chinese historical tradition, which took place in two phases: the first is related to the elaboration of Chinese sources by European missionaries in China; the second relates to Orientalist scholars in Europe. It intends to point out that Turcological knowledge results from a vast and complex movement of circulation of materials, information and methods between European countries, but also between Europe and Asia. Furthermore, this analysis discusses the part played by local knowledge in the constitution of European scholarship relating to Turcological matters.

## I. Exploring the Muslim historiographical tradition: Barthélemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* and the Central Asian perspective

- 4 The first stage in the emergence of European knowledge of Central Asia and the Turkic peoples is related to the practice of using Muslim sources in the study of Asiatic civilizations. In fact, an interest in the Turkish populations of Central Asia emerges at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the French Orientalist Barthélemy d'Herbelot's (1625–1695) *Bibliothèque orientale*, published posthumously by his colleague and friend Antoine Galland.<sup>6</sup> This monumental work, elaborated during three decades, summarizes the progress of Oriental studies in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, especially with regard to the constitution of Oriental collections and the grammatization of Oriental languages.<sup>7</sup> It arguably marks a turning point in the process of the intellectual autonomization of Oriental studies.
- 5 D'Herbelot set out to give a sketch of the history, geography and other aspects of Asiatic civilizations, based on original sources, especially Persian but also Arabic and Turkish. Like other scholars of his generation, d'Herbelot's initial vocation in Oriental languages originated in biblical studies.<sup>8</sup> Yet he took an interest in secular and even practical knowledge of the Oriental languages and had undertaken a study visit in Italy (1655–1657), motivated by the presence of Oriental populations, especially Armenians, in Italian port cities.<sup>9</sup> D'Herbelot had been a client of important figures and notable patrons, including Nicolas Fouquet (1615–1680) in Paris, the famous Superintendent of Finances (1653–1661) under Louis XIV who had been disgraced in 1661; and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II de Medici (r. 1621–1670), who sponsored him during his stay in Florence (1666–1670). In 1670, d'Herbelot accepted Colbert's proposal to integrate with the Parisian royal institutions, where considerable reorganization was under way.<sup>10</sup> His subsequent professional career took place within the royal institutional network, as secretary-interpreter of Oriental languages at the Royal Library and royal censor. In 1692, he was appointed professor of Syriac at the Royal College.
- 6 D'Herbelot actually lived in a critical period for the organization of knowledge production in France and, generally, in Europe. His itinerary tracks the French transition, in the 1660s, from informal forms of assisting scholars to the enhancement of state patronage. The growing importance of royal scholarly institutions as centers of knowledge production under Colbert's direction was motivated both by the desire to affirm royal glory and by considerations of utility.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, these changes are equally indicative of a general orientation in the late-17<sup>th</sup>-century economy of knowledge production, responding to new demands generated by the intellectual mutation usually referred to as the Scientific Revolution (namely specialization, experimentation, increase of information, need to collect, organize and diffuse data, etc.) (McClellan 1985; Lux 1991). The principal features of the new configuration are, on the one hand, the "localization" of scholarly practices and, on the other, the implementation of collective forms in the process of validation of knowledge and the modes of cooptation.<sup>12</sup> Henceforth, a great proportion of the correspondence and exchange networks assumes an official and systematic character, and the major part of knowledge production, circulation and validation is accomplished by scholarly societies, mostly academic institutions.<sup>13</sup>

- 7 Returning to the *Bibliothèque orientale*, we should take note of its form, which is unusual for a historical work. Indeed, the material is organized in articles presented in alphabetical order (it contains more than 800 entries) and not in a narrative form.<sup>14</sup> D’Herbelot used more than 180 sources, exclusively manuscripts in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, found either in the Royal Library in Paris, in the Laurentian Library in Florence or in his own collection.<sup>15</sup> One of the most important sources is the work entitled *Kashf al-Zunūn ‘an asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*, written by an Ottoman scholar and official, Hadji Khalfa (Katib Celebi, 1609–1657).<sup>16</sup> This work had reached the Royal Library in 1682 thanks to the mediation of Antoine Galland, who was deeply involved in official endeavors to collect books and manuscripts, organized by Colbert since the 1660s.<sup>17</sup> However, it was another Ottoman scholar close to Katib Celebi, Hüsseyun Hezarfenn, who had presented the *Kashf al-Zunūn* to the French scholar during the latter’s stay in Istanbul. Thus, d’Herbelot’s work was largely attributable both to the work of a local scholar, and to the networks created by the official initiative. Even if the *bibliothèque* form of the *Bibliothèque orientale* may be inspired both by the Occidental and the Oriental historiographic traditions, it is clear that d’Herbelot effectively translated and incorporated the entire work of the Ottoman scholar into his own book.<sup>18</sup>
- 8 Our study of various articles in d’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque orientale* relating to Turkish items reveals the emergence of some innovative outlooks pertaining to the history and geography of the Turkic peoples. It concerns, in the first place, the elaboration of a novel nomenclature cobbling together Oriental and European perspectives and a shifting of focus from the relatively familiar space of the Ottoman world to the distant Central Asian space. Likewise, on a temporal level, the focus is transferred to the Turkic peoples preceding the creation of the Ottoman Empire, especially those living beyond Anatolia, in the zones of contact with the Arabo-Persian world. This displacement implies that the Turkish pre-Ottoman past could be considered as a legitimate subject of study. In addition, Turkish populations are connected to a vast geographical space, since d’Herbelot adopts the definition of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Arab historian Ibn al-Wardi designating as Turks “...all the peoples living beyond the Gihon River also called Oxus up to Cathai, that is the northern part of China, stretching up to the Ocean”.<sup>19</sup> Thus, this work addresses one central question in the history of Turcology, namely the articulation between the Ottoman space and the Central Asian space. The semantic shift operated in the *Bibliothèque orientale*, regarding both a new historical perception of the past and a geographical representation, draws the first lines of what will be subsequently called the “Turkish world”.
- 9 For the articles on Turkic peoples, d’Herbelot uses the works of Mirkhond (Mirkhwand, 1433-1498) and Khondemir (Khwandamir, 1475 to after 1535–56), two Timurid historians who were natives of Herat.<sup>20</sup> Mirkhwand’s *Rawzat al-safa*, a seven-volume universal history, very popular in Turco-Iranian regions and one of the most frequent references in the *Bibliothèque orientale* (Laurens 1978: 52); Khwandamir’s *Khilassat alakhbar*, a brief universal history based on Mirkhwand’s, is the other.<sup>21</sup> D’Herbelot reproduces the genealogical narrative related by these two authors, based on the Muslim tradition. Both of them use the Persian historian Rachid al-Din’s (d. 1310) universal history (*Djami’ al-tawarikh*), based on the oral tradition, which investigates “The history of Turks Oğuz”.<sup>22</sup> They have thus integrated into their histories the genealogical narratives elaborated after the Mongols’ conversion to Islam (beginning at the end of 13<sup>th</sup> century for the Princes of the Tchagatay dominion), trying to marry the Muslim genealogy with the legends of the

peoples recently converted, in order to merge two principles of legitimation, Islamic law (*shari'a*) and the Mongol *yasa* (Isogai, 1997). This effort to establish a double legitimation will be continued by Tamerlane and his successors, as well as by the dynasties that succeeded the Timurids, up until the modern period (Kramarovsky 1991; Isogai 1997; Woods 1987 and 1990).

- 10 D'Herbelot himself abstains from criticizing this narrative or questioning its reliability. On the contrary, he provides some references attempting to establish a line of continuity with contemporary Turkish peoples. Generally speaking, d'Herbelot's work is essentially based on sources dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onward, in particular compilations, representing an economy of space and time. The geographical and chronological limits of his work are defined by his material. Therefore, in the *Bibliothèque orientale* the non-Muslim world and the pre-Islamic period are treated in a non-systematic way, on the basis of secondhand sources, essentially quoting tradition and legends. The subsequent problems for the study of Turkic peoples (scarcity and later character of the Muslim narrative and reliability of the oral tradition) were eventually pointed out by a European scholar with access to other sources of evidence that appeared to be considerably older and much more reliable than the Muslim historiography.

## II. Encountering the Chinese historical tradition (I): Claude Visdelou and the missionary reconfiguration of Turcological knowledge

- 11 Let us now turn to a later edition of the *Bibliothèque orientale* published in 1777–1779 at The Hague.<sup>23</sup> As a matter of fact, there had been a rediscovery of d'Herbelot's work in the late Enlightenment, due to the European public's keen interest in the Orient, as well as to the editorial success of the *bibliothèque* genre, in the form of collections and anthologies.<sup>24</sup> This pirated reissue, undertaken by Jean Neaulme (1694–1780), a bookseller in The Hague since 1718, presents some improvements over the original edition as far as presentation and material elements are concerned (paper, characters, and a handy format), but the most important aspect of the Neaulme edition is the inclusion of corrections and supplements. Actually, the *Bibliothèque orientale* belongs to the kinds of collections referred to as “works in progress”, requiring updating to avoid becoming obsolete (Stagl 1995: 119). Neaulme entrusted the work of revision to two famous Orientalists, the Dutchman Henri-Albert Schultens (1749–1793) and the German Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–1774).<sup>25</sup> The essential part of the additions to the original edition concerns the unpublished work of a French Jesuit missionary in China, Claude Visdelou (Herbelot 1777-1779, vol. 4). The aim was to incorporate the results of new research into the history of Asia so as to ameliorate the defects of d'Herbelot's work, a result of his exclusive use of Muslim sources, through a chronological and geographical extension (integration of the pre-Islamic history of Central Asia and the Far East) on the basis of information provided by Chinese sources. Besides, this idea turned out to be an extremely profitable venture.
- 12 Visdelou (1656–1737)<sup>26</sup> was one of the six French Jesuit missionaries, known as the “King's mathematicians”, sent to China by Louis XIV in 1685 in the context of antagonism between the European powers (Landry-Deron 2001). The Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1722) of the Manchu Qing dynasty, one of the most important figures in Chinese history, had adopted certain elements of the Chinese conception of rulership, in which the Sagely

emperor is also a learned patron of scholarship and promoter of scientific research. As a result, Peking became a center of power and knowledge during his reign.<sup>27</sup> He assigned an important role to Jesuit missionaries in this project of centralization.<sup>28</sup> Since their arrival in China in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Jesuits had tried to infiltrate the Chinese Empire, both through their employment at the imperial court – thanks to their scientific and technical qualifications – and through an accommodation strategy involving the encouragement of language learning, the cultural adaptation of missionaries and the favorable interpretation of Confucianism – a strategy in conformity with their policy in other extra-European districts (Jami 2005; Brockey 2007). Nonetheless, these methods were largely contested in Europe and had provoked a theological dispute known as the Chinese Rites Controversy.<sup>29</sup> Visdelou readily immersed himself in this debate, though adopting an attitude opposite to that of the Jesuit majority and aligning himself with Rome's position. The price he paid was exile, and, after a 22-year sojourn in China, he found himself obliged to take refuge in India, joining a French Capuchin monastery in Pondicherry in June 1709 and staying there until his death, in 1737.<sup>30</sup> Visdelou maintained close contact with Rome, engaging in correspondence from 1712. In 1728, responding to a papal request, he sent all his writings likely to help in the quest for arguments against the Chinese Rites to the Propaganda Fide (also known as the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith).<sup>31</sup> Besides his writings on Chinese religion and philosophy, Visdelou had composed several historical works. He had an excellent mastery of Chinese – learnt, as usual, in the field – and had carried with him in India several Chinese volumes.<sup>32</sup> His biographers often regret his involvement in the Chinese Rites Controversy, which distracted him from scholarly research. Nevertheless, these kinds of remarks are rather intended to emphasize the qualities of Visdelou's historical work.<sup>33</sup>

- 13 We are here concerned with two texts composed by Visdelou: *Observations sur différents articles de la Bibliothèque orientale* (Visdelou 1779a and 1779b), containing critical remarks on some articles in d'Herbelot's work, regarding mostly Central Asian topics, and *Histoire de la Tartarie*, a historical synthesis on Central Asia (Visdelou 1779c). Both works are seminal to the study of the historiography of the Turco-Tatar world, as well as for the history of Oriental studies in general, with regard to the sources and the method employed. Though recognizing the importance of d'Herbelot's legacy, Visdelou distances himself in regard to these two levels. In his *Observations*, Visdelou aims to control the reliability of Muslim writers and to correct their errors concerning the history of China and Central Asia. His case shows that the critical method, elaborated initially by the Maurists and the Gallicans, had been introduced into Jesuit circles despite the Jesuits' opposition to the Gallicans. His analysis of historical evidence concerns not only their reliability, namely their relation to the facts in question, but extends to a rationalist critic of myths. Visdelou offers some interpretations aiming to explore the motivations, both psychological and political, of the myth-making (Laurens 1978 : 84). The application of the critical method is particularly impressive in the case of Muslim sources and has to do with three principal points: the absence of direct testimony, the lack of an authority capable of exercising caution with regard to the facts related, and the fact that Muslim writers have been too affirmative and absolute.<sup>34</sup>
- 14 Visdelou insists on the reliability of Chinese sources and affirms the superiority of Chinese historiography to Muslim historiographical practice, even if he expresses some doubts on points relative to specific subjects (for instance, some geographical information) or legends found in the Chinese sources (for instance, the legend that the

Turks are descended from a wolf). He points out the high quality of Chinese historical writing, notes the great respect historiography enjoys in China, highlights Chinese historiography's judicious use of direct testimony and, finally, emphasizes the fact that these narratives were recorded at a moment close to the time when the events they describe had taken place.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the arguments used to highlight the qualities of Chinese sources are remarkably modern (distance, temporal proximity, direct testimony), showing his adaptation to the development of the discipline of history at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, this favorable judgment of the Chinese historians does not apply to all the historical periods, neither is it irrelevant to geographical distance. Consequently, according to Visdelou, Muslim sources are more suitable for research on the history of the Mongol Empire, for instance, whereas Chinese sources are more reliable for periods relating to the origins and history of Turkish peoples.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Visdelou tries to investigate these narratives about Turkish origins and demonstrates impressive skill in the analysis and rationalist critique of legends. Another interesting point is that Visdelou affirms that after the destruction of the empire created by the Tou-kiue nation (which he also calls "Turks"), these people migrated to the West, where they created several empires, of which the most powerful still exists nowadays ("où ils ont fondé plusieurs Empires, dont le plus puissant subsiste encore aujourd'hui") (Visdelou 1779b: 326). Thus, the Jesuit considers Tartary to be the cradle of different Turkish peoples, including the Ottomans, and he establishes a clear link between the Tou-kiue Empire and the Ottoman Empire.

- 15 Moreover, in his *Histoire de la Tartarie* (probably entirely written in exile and finished in 1719), Visdelou goes beyond the fragmentary observations on some articles in d'Herbelot's book and proceeds to a historical synthesis. He affirms the possibility of reconstructing the history of Central Asia, even though the populations that inhabited the district had mostly been nomads, which meant that local textual sources were lacking. In fact, Visdelou was the first European scholar to discover and try to reveal to European audiences the existence of another manifold local knowledge that could contribute to writing the history of Turkish peoples, namely the rich Chinese historiographical tradition. Visdelou pointed out that the Chinese bureaucratic system and official historiography had produced, elaborated and compiled a considerable mass of historical, geographical and ethnographical data on the peoples of Central Asia, composing a corpus likely to assist in the reconstruction of a history more than 2,000 years long.<sup>37</sup> He made particular use of a historical encyclopedia entitled *Wenxian tongkao*, written during the Song dynasty by the Chinese scholar Ma Duanlin (c. 1254–c. 1323). This work is considered one of the most important institutional histories of China.<sup>38</sup>
- 16 In the *Histoire de la Tartarie*, Visdelou revisits the question of the delimitation of a Central Asian space, proposing a more sophisticated system than d'Herbelot's. D'Herbelot had proposed two definitions of this space (narrow and large) as well as the use of the designation "Transoxiane" to distinguish Turkestan (in fact, a literal translation of the Arabic name Maouranahar).<sup>39</sup> Whereas Visdelou suggests three definitions of the same geographical space according to a displacement of the North-West Frontier,<sup>40</sup> and proposes a tripartite division of Tartary, in a symmetrical way, on the basis of geographical as well as historico-cultural criteria that incorporate the geographical perceptions of Chinese historians. Furthermore, he considers the use of the name "Haute Asie" to be more relevant because it is more neutral and free from ethnic connotations.<sup>41</sup> However, the major part of the *Histoire de la Tartarie* relates to historical aspects of the



subject. Visdelou tries to explore the often obscure origins of different dynasties that have left their traces in the history of Central Asia. However, in addition to dynastic histories, Visdelou shows a keen interest in the ethnic origins of various peoples and tribes of Central Asia and attempts to identify them on the basis of different arguments (study of legends, mores, usages, etc.).<sup>42</sup> Unlike the *Observations*, where he proceeds to a critical analysis of some legends, in the *Histoire de la Tartarie* the Jesuit reports carefully the legends surrounding the origins of different nations. He clarifies, however, that this choice is not made on the basis of the reliability of these narratives, but on a concern for accuracy and in order to provide any clues likely to help to better identify the nations in question.<sup>43</sup> Besides the study of literary sources, his methodology integrates some material sources, even though his interest remains focused on the textual aspect and not on their use as objects, namely as testimonies of a civilization.

- 17 The first empire studied by Visdelou is the Steppe Empire created by the Hioum-nou (Hioung-nou or Xiongnu), in the Ordos district in Mongolia (from the third century BC to the second century AD).<sup>44</sup> We can find their traces in the Chinese historiography because the Xiongnu were the principal enemies of the Qin and Han dynasties.<sup>45</sup> Visdelou seems to have been the first European scholar to propose that the Xiongnu might be the same nation that European writers have designated as Huns.<sup>46</sup> This conjecture, of great importance to the European historiography due to the role attributed to that people in the collapse of the Roman Empire, is not really explored by Visdelou.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the Jesuit is really interested in another subject, namely the ethnogenesis of the Xiongnu, and especially the ethnic identification of this nation. He particularly insists on refuting the idea of a Turkic origin for this nation.<sup>48</sup>
- 18 We thus see that missionary work defines the second stage in the emergence of a scholarly knowledge of Turkish history and geography. This consideration encourages us to join the debate in recent research with regard to the importance of missionary knowledge.<sup>49</sup> At first, it concerns the role of missionaries as go-betweens and especially as vectors of local knowledge – in our case, Chinese historical, geographical and ethnographical knowledge of foreign peoples. In fact, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, ecclesiastical bodies – and especially the Jesuits – had created remarkable networks for the production of knowledge concerning countries outside Europe, taking advantage of missionary presence in the field as well as of the activities of their long-established institutions. Secondly, we must deal with the role of missionaries in the elaboration of a secular knowledge and the complex relations between religious and social elements.<sup>50</sup> Whereas missionary knowledge practices (language and scientific formation, study of textual sources, direct observation) were primarily intended to serve the pragmatic aim of evangelization, they were also mobilized in the production of scholarly knowledge. In our case, we can see that Visdelou's religious commitment in no way precludes scholarly research as defined by the scholarly standards of his time,<sup>51</sup> pointing out on the way the enormous heuristic potentiality of the encounter of multiple scholarly traditions. At the same time, this case sets forth some significant differences in the practices of Jesuit knowledge production in the early Enlightenment in comparison to secular scholarship and reveals its contradictions. During the effort to catch up with the discoveries in different disciplines (archeological, geographical, linguistic), ecclesiastical knowledge production continues, in general, to search for a compromise between criticism and the traditional outlook (Neveu 1994: 369). The critical investigation and the quest for causalities in historical phenomena often coexist with a providential vision of history.

Thus, despite the critical analysis he developed, at the moment when Visdelou gives a general explanation of the phenomenon, namely the expansion of Turkic peoples, he renounces rational argumentation and resorts to the familiar notion of providence. This outlook perpetuates an idea quite common in the pre-Enlightenment period, namely that of positing providence as the ultimate solution, as the *deus ex machina* that could unravel historical global phenomena lacking any other explanation (this is also true of pre-Enlightenment explanations of natural phenomena). Visdelou considers the Turks to be instruments of divine punishment: Turkic peoples are conceived as “God's scourge”, the instrument used by divine justice to chasten other nations. Accordingly, this role is attributed to the Ottoman Empire – the most recent Turkish empire – as representing the expression of God's will in the modern world.<sup>52</sup> Thirdly, this case illustrates the porosity between different spaces of knowledge production, especially the nexus between missionaries and metropolitan scholars. It has been argued that knowledge production of the extra-European world was one of the most productive fields of collaboration between the Republic of Letters, States and Churches (Stagl 1995: 151). The case of the Jesuits in China is emblematic of the procurement of books, manuscripts and information for European scholars, especially members of national academies, particularly the French academies.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, as the example of Visdelou shows, there are several flaws in the collaboration between missionaries and academicians and, with the exception of the editorial projects of the Society of Jesus, the missionary works generally fail to get into print. The writings sent to Europe by Visdelou were only published four decades after his death. Portions of these manuscripts were bought by Neaulme,<sup>54</sup> certainly before 1742, but it took more than 35 years to see them printed in his new edition of the *Bibliothèque orientale*.<sup>55</sup>

### III. Encountering the Chinese historical tradition (II): Joseph Deguignes and the academic reconfiguration of Turcological knowledge

- <sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, in the meantime the French Orientalist Joseph Deguignes had already undertaken similar research. Deguignes (1721–1800)<sup>56</sup> belongs to the second generation of French lay sinologists, taking over from the generation of Étienne Fourmont (1683–1745) and Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749), initiated in Chinese by Arcadio Huang (1679–1716), a Chinese Christian working in the Royal Library in 1711–1716, while the Chinese language was still considered a curiosity in Europe and the Chinese sources accumulated in this institution were practically unexploited.<sup>57</sup> Deguignes was a disciple of Fourmont's, together with the latter's nephew, Michel Ange André Leroux Deshauterayes (1724–1795), who was appointed professor of Arabic at the Royal College in 1752, taking over from Pétis de La Croix. In 1745, Deguignes succeeded Fourmont at the Royal Library as secretary-interpreter of Oriental languages and accomplishes a career without flaws, accumulating numerous positions. He earned admission to Britain's Royal Society in 1752, became an associate of the Parisian Academy of Inscriptions (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres) in 1753, and was attached to the important scholarly publication *Journal des savants* (1753), while also working as Royal Censor. In 1757, he was appointed to the chair of Syriac at the Royal College and keeper of antiquities at the Louvre. Finally he was a member of different commissions for the Academy, for instance the commission in charge of the collection entitled *Notices des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du roi* (created in

December 1784)<sup>58</sup> and the commission created in 1755, in the context of rivalry between France and Great Britain and just before the beginning of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), with responsibility for the preparation of the *Mémoires des commissaires du Roy et de ceux de Sa Majesté britannique*.<sup>59</sup> Deguignes's professional evolution is certainly due to his skills, but also to the centralized institutional organization of 18<sup>th</sup>-century France. Nonetheless, his career comes to a sad end following the collapse of the Ancien Régime and the suppression of academies during the French Revolution (pursuant to a decision of the Convention dated 8 August 1793), since Deguignes shows no interest in being reelected when the Institute is created two years later. Deguignes is a typical academician and his trajectory demonstrates the evolution in intellectual organization of knowledge production in Enlightenment France (Roche 1988: 29). As far as Oriental languages are concerned during this period, we should mention the relocation of the École des Jeunes de Langues from Istanbul to Paris (1721) (Hitzel 1997), the growing importance of Oriental matters after the reorganization of the Academy,<sup>60</sup> the creation in the Royal Library of a group of specialists working on the classification of collections, the preparation of language tools and the realization of translations and publications of oriental texts (Bléchet 1997), and finally the new repartition of chairs in the Royal College (1772), introducing the Turkish language into this institution in 1775 (transforming the second chair of Arabic into a chair of Turkish and Persian).<sup>61</sup> This institutional context creates an appropriate environment for the emergence of a professional micro-space around Oriental studies, one favoring intellectual production as well as professional careers, though remaining closely connected to the general scholarly field and sharing the same practices, methods, rules, and references. Networks created around these “scientific complexes”, namely the royal institutions, map out the essential part of the scholarly space in Paris.<sup>62</sup>

- 20 In France, during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the development of a short-scale institutional network on a local basis is fostered by a process of centralization under Abbot Jean-Paul Bignon (1662–1743), similar to Colbert's in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Bléchet 2005). Deguignes manages to position himself at the crossroads of different local networks, to participate in collective research projects and even seems to have been on intimate terms with agents of political power, such as State Secretary Henri Léonard Jean Baptiste Bertin (1720–1792). This national network is articulated with a transnational one, based on European academies and having as central nodes, as for Oriental studies, Paris and St. Petersburg. The Academy of St. Petersburg becomes a relay point for information and acquisitions originating from Siberia and China, especially after 1730, when the German sinologist Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738) and the French astronomer Joseph-Nicolas Delisle (in St. Petersburg from 1725 to 1747) correspond with some Jesuit missionaries in Peking.<sup>63</sup> Deguignes exchanges letters with Delisle<sup>64</sup> and is active in the extended network articulated around Chinese studies (Gaubil 1970). In fact, following the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1763 in France; in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV), he assumes the role of relay for the Jesuit correspondence sent to France, containing the works of the last Jesuit missionaries in China, especially Joseph-Marie Amiot and Pierre-Martial Cibot and two Chinese converts, Ko and Yang, which leads to the important collection entitled *Mémoires concernant l'Histoire, les Sciences, les Arts, les Mœurs, les Usages, etc., des Chinois* (1776–1814) (Lopparelli 2011; Bernard-Maître 1948). Therefore, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we notice the emergence of a triangular network essentially animated by the Jesuit missionary and important sinologist Antoine Gaubil – and later, after 1750, by

Joseph-Marie Amiot (1718-1793) – in Peking,<sup>65</sup> Bayer or Delisle in St. Petersburg and Fourmont and Fréret (later Deguignes and Deshauterayes) in Paris. Moreover, Visdelou's case highlights the role assumed by Rome and the Propaganda Fide as a node for the circulatory flows connecting Europe to Asia, a subject that certainly merits further research.

- 21 Deguignes has a rich and multiform production as historian, editor of missionary writings and translator for the collective projects of the Academy of Inscriptions.<sup>66</sup> His intellectual itinerary, inspired by the scholarly model and the agenda of this institution, involve his using his linguistic qualifications in the writing of history. We are here concerned with a single aspect of his work, produced in 1740-1750, pertaining to the history of the populations of Central Asia and their migrations towards Europe: two dissertations for the Academy and a monumental book published in 1756-1758, the *Histoire générale des Huns* (Deguignes 1751, 1761 and 1756-1758). The starting point of Deguignes's work was the research on the migrations of nomadic peoples in Asia. Visdelou's conjecture of the identification of the Xiongnu and the Huns will be the subject of the first research undertaken by Deguignes (Deguignes 1751). Given that Visdelou's texts on the history of Tartary and the Turco-Tatars were published only 20 years later, it is Deguignes who reveals Central Asia to the European audience as a field of historical action which, he affirms, could and should be investigated and narrated, despite the lack of proper Turco-Tatar sources. Even if the academician does not refer at all to the Jesuit's work, there are some indications pointing to the possibility that he may have consulted Visdelou's manuscript.<sup>67</sup> Notwithstanding, it seems more relevant to examine the divergences between the two works, as regards sources, methodology, approach and conclusions. Firstly, instead of confining himself to using Chinese sources, Deguignes tries to exploit every kind of Oriental or Occidental testimony. Besides his linguistic qualifications, this approach results from a methodological position. In fact, even if both scholars adopt the rules of historical criticism, defined by Maurist scholarship in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Deguignes, belonging to another generation and environment, is deeply concerned about responding to skepticism and firmly believes that no source should be eliminated without being carefully examined, legends and tradition included. Another point of difference is that, unlike Visdelou's, Deguignes's narration is not about a territory inhabited by several ethnicities. Deguignes proceeds with the composition of a history of Turkish peoples, considered as important actors in universal history. The Xiongnu nation, identified as the Huns by European writers, is considered as a Turkish nation, and subsequently included in his narrative. Deguignes thinks of the different peoples composing his history as parts of a nation, the Turkish nation, coinciding basically with the Occidental Tatars.<sup>68</sup> The specific dynastic names have, in a way, masked this fact in the contemporary sources as well as for subsequent generations. His historical narration undertakes, then, to restore the truth, establishing a line of continuity through time and space between various empires and states created, he argues, by Turkish peoples. The Ottomans represent the most recent stage in this sequence, the last Turkish nation studied by Deguignes.<sup>69</sup> In his scheme, the legendary Muslim genealogy, ascribing a common origin to the Turks and the Mongols, is considered confirmed and corroborated by Chinese evidence. In fact, Deguignes also uses and credits a Muslim source recently discovered in Siberia, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the *Shadjara-yi Türk* (*Genealogy of the Turks*), written by Abu l-Ghazi Bahadur (1603-1663), khan of Khiva (Khwarezm), one of the most important historians in Chagatai Turkish literature.<sup>70</sup> Last but not least, while the Jesuit missionary considers the succeeding empires as inexplicable sequences of invasions, understood only

if interpreted as a divine punishment, the academician, devout though he might be, treats the same facts in a rationalist, secular way, definitely informed by the scientific goals designed by Enlightenment epistemology.<sup>71</sup>

- 22 Historians of the Enlightenment have shown a great interest in material culture, considering the modes of exploitation of natural resources as the basis of the social and cultural development of societies.<sup>72</sup> The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of development for an evolutionist conception of a sequence of stages in human progress, corresponding to different modes of utilizing and cultivating natural resources.<sup>73</sup> The most frequent schema was that of a four-stage evolution of human society (hunting; shepherding; agricultural; commercial),<sup>74</sup> which is the most famous version of a philosophical speculative history, known as “conjectural history”. Inspired by Cartesianism and based on a deductive method not based on proofs, this type of historical writing is a long way from the model of research explicitly defended by Deguignes. Nevertheless, Deguignes does share the idea of the role of material culture for the social and cultural development of societies (Wolloch 2011a: 448). His ideas on the formation of cultures and the interaction of civilizations are connected to the concerns of the philosophers of his time. In fact, even if he is officially opposed to the philosophes, Deguignes shows some philosophical interest, and seems to share the ideal of 18<sup>th</sup>-century historiography, namely to combine successfully three elements: critical method, narrative style, and philosophical thought.<sup>75</sup> Deguignes examines all available information in order to retrace the migration and histories of barbarian peoples and highlights the historical connections and interactions between Europe and Asia. He thus shows a perspective which is only implicit in Visdelou's work, the existence of a vast Eurasian space where some historical events of great importance took place. His ideas about nomads have exerted an influence on the perception of the pastoral stage in historical evolution. Consequently, European thinkers have identified “barbarians” as pastoral peoples and have considered nomadic peoples as their ancestors, interpreting European history as the result of a sequence of “barbarian” invasions (Pocock 2005, 4: 101). Thus, Deguignes's work marks a turning point in European historiography, contributing to the implementation of the concept of barbarism and introducing a shift in the conception of origins of post-Antique Europe (Pocock 2005, 4: 147).

## IV. Conclusion

- 23 This article proposes an intellectual genealogy of Turcology in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It has attempted to explore the connections between the individual trajectories, the institutional and intellectual conditions of knowledge production and the elaboration of concepts and knowledge concerning Turkic peoples. The article has also aimed to demonstrate that this production depends on the creation of networks for the collection of materials and information, language learning, publishing, etc. These networks of specific categories (missionary, academic, consular, mercantile, etc.) also overlap and are created at a local as well as a transnational level, connecting centers of different European countries, but also Europe and Asia. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Italian peninsula was an important confluence of these transnational circulations, due to the presence of Oriental populations, its commercial links, and the missionary connections of Rome. In the same period, the Ottoman capital occupied a crucial place in this network. However, since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the newly established capital of the

Russian Empire played a pivotal role in the connections between Europe and Asia and in the circulation of materials and information on Turkic peoples. Additionally, the arrival of the French Jesuits in China in 1685 was crucial for the elaboration of a knowledge of the history and geography of Central Asia.

- 24 Challenging the influence of institutional and disciplinary boundaries fixed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the article points out the porosity between the different areas of Oriental studies (sinology, Turcology, Islamic studies) and the contribution of some scholars working on sinological matters in the identification and delimitation of a Turco-Tatar Central Asian cultural area and consequently in the emergence of an autonomous subject of study. The porosity between different fields in Oriental studies results from institutional organization in a period preceding specialization and professionalization in scientific research. However, this porosity and cross-fertilization between different fields was, at the same time, an important condition for the formation of Turcology as a field, namely for the emergence of a questioning of the modalities of articulation of the Ottoman space and the Central Asian space and, consequently, of an interest in the study of Turkic languages and peoples. Our analysis was thereafter extended to a survey of the work of some scholars pertaining to aspects of geographical and historical knowledge about Turkish populations and has allowed us to follow the emergence of the idea of a Turkish Central Asian space. The article addresses the important question of the part played by local knowledge in the constitution of European scholarship concerning Turcological matters and presents missed opportunities in the process of knowledge production (Visdelou's work was undiscovered for years), which reminds us that the process of knowledge production is not linear. Additionally, our study has shown that the idea of a Turkish Central Asian space does not automatically result from the study of Oriental sources. While working on the same material, these Orientalist scholars have divergent conceptualizations of the Turkish object. Various readings take place and the criteria of ethnic identification are variables and depend largely on the evolution of intellectual and scientific conditions in Europe (spatial and temporal conceptions of the nation, theological/secular-civilizational conceptions of universal history).
- 25 Both Visdelou's and Deguignes's works announce the transition from an exclusively philological paradigm in Turkish studies, corresponding with the program defined by general grammar, to a study of ethno-historical type.<sup>76</sup> Far from a mere translation of some Chinese texts relevant to the history of Turkic peoples, their work has broader implications in terms of transforming the geographical scope, research questions and methodology of Turcology. Their sinologist perspectives and skills have allowed these scholars to challenge the traditional identification of Turkish space and history with the Ottoman Empire. On a linguistic level, this approach means that the identification of the Turkish language with that of the Ottomans is no longer possible and announces the introduction of the historical and comparative dimension in the study of Turkic languages and peoples. Visdelou and Deguignes initiated this internal shift in Turcology, which was pursued by early-19<sup>th</sup>-century sinologists. This comparatist program, as far as Turco-Tatar languages and peoples are concerned, was worked out especially by the German scholar Julius Klaproth (1783–1835) and the French scholar Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832), the first person to hold the chair of Chinese language at the Royal College, in 1815, both men being pillars of the Asiatic Society (*Société asiatique*), founded in Paris in 1822. Subsequently, Turcology is oriented to the study of languages and literature of Central Asia, a subject that earns institutionalization in 1861, when Abel

Pavet de Courteille was appointed to the Collège de France, introducing a course on the study of Oriental Turkish.<sup>77</sup> Although early-19<sup>th</sup>-century sinologists recognized the contributions of Visdelou and Deguignes in the internal shifts of Turcology, they are rarely mentioned in the historiographical approaches to the field, except for an anachronistic nationalist reading of Deguignes's work. Therefore, it seems important to integrate these scholars into the history – or “prehistory” – of Turcology, while always considering them to belong to a wider history that examines transnational circulations, possibilities and flaws of intercultural encounter, relations between knowledge-production institutions and societies, and finally modalities and usages of knowledge production, especially those related to alien cultures – issues which are still current.

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## NOTES

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1. See, for instance, Babinger 1919; Veinstein 2000.

2. The attachment to this linguistic tradition was important until recently. See, for instance, the evocation of dragomans in Veinstein 2000: 6-7.

3. We should remind ourselves that the notion of cultural area precedes its usage as an epistemological category. It is then used to designate the collective myths or narratives serving to legitimize a human group (local, national, regional or diasporic) by means of structuring a shared identity distinguishing it from another. This dimension of cultural area as a factor in collective identity is still present in the notion of cultural area as an epistemological category. On the difficulties arising in the relation between cultural areas and social sciences, see Aymes *et al.* 2012. Cf. Mahé and Bendana 2004.
4. On recent approaches to the cultural study of the history of knowledge, see Pestre 1995 and 2015; Bödeker *et al.* 1999; Smith and Schmidt 2007; Zedelmaier and Mulsow 2001; Holenstein *et al.* 2013.
5. On intellectual history, cf. Kaplan and LaCapra 1982.
6. Herbelot 1697. For a detailed presentation of this book, see Dew 2004: 237.
7. This concept designates a research program inspired by general grammar. See Auroux 2000 and 1994.
8. The most important source for biographical information on d'Herbelot is "Éloge de Monsieur Dherbelot fait par Monsieur Cousin, Président à la Cour des Monnoyes" (Herbelot 1697: 22-23).
9. *Ibid.*, p. 22. On the Armenian community in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, see Mutafian 2002. On Armenian merchant networks connecting Venice and Livorno ports to the New Djoulfa suburb of Ispahan, see McCabe 1999.
10. On the relations between patronage and clientelism in 17<sup>th</sup>-century France, see Kettering 1986. On Medicis' patronage, see Goldberg 1983. On Colbert's invitation, see Charpentier 1667. See also the two letters send by Herbelot to Charpentier (Herbelot 1666). On the backstage of this negotiation, cf. Dew 2009: 62-64.
11. Saunders 1991; Soll 2008; Damien 1995. Colbert's politics on Oriental studies sought to implement a series of institutional innovations conceived to meet the needs both in practical and scholarly fields: creation of a school for practical learning of Oriental languages (*École des jeunes de langues*) in 1669; reorganization of the Oriental section of the Royal Library; creation of an academy intended to include both the field of Oriental languages and the study of the Bible –a project which ultimately failed (Lux 1990).
12. Ophir and Shapin 1991. The term "localization" as used here designates the historical process of the implementation of knowledge production in specific places and is commonly related to the "Scientific Revolution". However, the same term borrows another signification in recent approaches in the history of sciences. In this case, the term is used to emphasize the local, situated, and contextualized character of any kind of knowledge production, and is opposed to the idealistic perception of science as objective and universal, without specific implementation.
13. We are reminded here that the Royal Society of London was established in 1662, the Academy of Berlin in 1700, and the Academy of St. Petersburg in 1715. The nexus between forms of scientific evaluation and social forms was underscored by T. Kuhn (1962).
14. On *bibliothèque* genre, belonging to the humanist tradition of compilation, see Chartier 1996. Cf. also, Zedelmaier 1992.
15. For a detailed presentation of his sources, see Laurens 1978: 49-61.
16. On Katib Celebi, see Babinger, 1927; Birnbaum, 1994.
17. See Dew 2004: 237, note 10, 238 and 2009: ch. 4.
18. See also Galland's remarks (Galland 1697: v, xiv). Cf. Laurens 1978: 50.

19. “...tous les peuples qui habitent au-delà du fleuve Gihon ou Oxus jusques’au Cathai, partie septentrionale de la Chine, qui s’étend jusques à l’Océan” (“Atra’k”, Herbelot 1697 : 145). On the geographical aspects of d’Herbelot’s work, see Gorshenina, 2007 and 2014.
20. On Timurid historiography, see Woods 1987. On Timurid legacy in Persian historiography, see Dale 1998.
21. However, Khwandamir’s best known work is the *Habib al-siyar*, written in 1520-24 in Herat and dedicated to the Safavid governor.
22. This work, commissioned by the Ilkhanid khan Ghazan, is the most important source on the Mongol Empire. Unlike the Seljuk Turks, eager to adopt Persian culture, the Ilkhanids maintained their own traditions and encouraged the development of a Persian historiography on the Ilkhanid period and on Mongol origins. On Rachid al-Din, see Spuler 1962: 131. Rashid al-Din would be the principal source of several later writers, for instance Abu l-Ghazi khan.
23. Herbelot 1777-1779. This edition is published just after the first reedition of the book, also a pirate one (Herbelot 1776). On the practice of pirate editions in Holland during the Enlightenment, see Febvre and Martin 1958: 297-298, 371.
24. This period is often called the “age of dictionaries and encyclopedias” (Chartier 1996: 113).
25. Sultens represents the exegesis tradition, while Reiske is a figure of the innovative movement in the field of Oriental studies. Cf. Toomer 1996: 313.
26. For biographical information, see especially Abel-Rémusat 1827.
27. On Kangxi’s scientific policy, see Jami 2012. On his reinvention of emperors in conquered China, see Jami 2008.
28. Kangxi issued an Edict of Toleration of Christianity in Chinese Empire in 1692.
29. There is a vast bibliography on this subject. For an introduction, see Mungello 1994.
30. On his position, see Witek 1995 and Pavone 2012.
31. These writings have never been published, but have likely been used for the composition of the two bulls issued by Pope Benoît XIV (in 1742 and 1744), condemning definitively the rites. On this dispatch, see Visdelou 1770. The German Orientalist K. F. Neumann (1798-1870), professor of Armenian and Chinese at the University of Munich from 1831 to 1852, established an inventory of Visdelou’s works (Neumann 1850). Neumann discovered in Portugal several manuscripts of which Abel-Rémusat was not aware in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
32. Thomas 1742, p. 146. On the modalities of missionary linguistic formation, see Wu 2013, 1<sup>st</sup> chap.
33. Visdelou’s pioneer role in the emergence of sinology has been highlighted by Abel-Rémusat and K. F. Neumann (Abel-Rémusat 1827; Neumann 1850: 226).
34. “Encore si ces Historiens Mahométans nous indiquoient les sources où ils ont puisé ces connoissances, s’ils nommoient quelques Historiens contemporains pour témoins des faits qu’ils avancent, du moins s’ils les proposoient comme douteux, on pourroit les excuser, ou les louer” (Visdelou 1779b: 325).
35. See “Avis de l’auteur” (Visdelou 1779c: vi).
36. “J’ajoute donc plus de foi aux Chinois, qui ont écrit dans les temps dont ils parlent, & qui pour les temps les plus reculés, ont travaillé sur les mémoires & les traditions des Turks dont ils avoient une connoissance parfaite, & qui savoient les distinguer des autres nations” (Visdelou 1779b: 325).
37. Several Chinese texts on foreign peoples were translated during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by sinologists such as Abel-Rémusat, Stanislas Julien, Gustav Schlegel, le marquis d’Hervey



de Saint Denis and W. P. Groeneveldt. For a general overview of Chinese traditional historiography, see Gardner 1961 (1938).

38. See Abel-Rémusat 1827 and 1829; Ma Duanlin, 1936. Due to his early death, Abel-Rémusat's was not able to carry out his project of translating Ma Duanlin's work. Hervey de Saint-Denys had the plan of a publication in 4 volumes, but finally only 2 volumes have been published, containing the notices on the countries situated on the East and South side of the Chinese Empire (Duanlin 1872-1876). The volumes concerning the history and ethnography of the nations of the North and West regions, that is those studied by Visdelou, have not been published.

39. According to Gorshenina, the name "Transoxiane" has been forged by Herbelot (Gorshenina 2007: 223).

40. Cf. Gorshenina 2007: fig. 11.1.

41. "Le nom de Haute-Asie conviendrait mieux à ce pays que celui de Scythie, de Tartarie, de Turkestan ou de Touran. Comme il comprend un nombre prodigieux de Nations qui ont des langues & des coutumes différents, c'est en quelque façon leur faire tort que de les réduire, &, pour ainsi dire, les assujettir à une seule nation". Visdelou 1779c: 47.

42. This question is extensively discussed in my PhD dissertation (in progress).

43. "Je marque les fables aussi bien que le reste, pour donner une idée plus juste de ces nations" (Visdelou 1779c: 238).

44. On which he devotes a chapter of 18 pages entitled "De l'empire des Hioum-nou" (Visdelou 1779c: 48-66).

45. On the Xiongnu, see Ying-Shih Yü (1990) and Vaissière 2015.

46. This conjecture is generally attributed to Joseph Deguignes. See, for instance, Sinor 1990: 177.

47. "Les *Hioum-nou*, qui pourroient bien avoir été les *Huns*, & qui ont dominé si longtemps avec un pouvoir sans bornes dans toute la Tartarie, & dans plusieurs autres parties de l'Asie, avant & après la venue de *Messie*..." (Visdelou 1779b: 325).

48. "Les *Houm-nou* n'auroient-ils pas aussi été *Turks*? Les *Chinois* qui les avoient reçus dans leur Empire, & s'étoient confondus avec eux, & qui les font descendre d'un de leurs Empereurs, témoignent le contraire" (Visdelou 1779b: 325).

49. On missionary knowledge, see for instance: Castelnau-l'Estoire *et al.* 2011; Filliozat and Leclant 2012; O'Malley 1999-2006.

50. For a critical approach of strict categorizations between "religious determination" and "social determination", see Certeau 2002: 175. Cf. Harris 1996: 290.

51. On the historiography of this period, see Grell 1993; Barret-Kriegel 1988; Levine 1999.

52. "...se sont répandus dans la suite dans l'Occident, où ils ont fondé plusieurs Empires, dont le plus puissant subsiste encore aujourd'hui. Ce fléau de Dieu après avoir servi à la justice divine pour châtier la Chine, & encore à présent le même usage entre ses mains pour punir les *Chrétiens*" (Visdelou 1779c: 146-147).

53. For instance, the royal geographer, and later academician, Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville (1697-1782) participated in a famous Jesuit publication directed by Jean-Baptiste du Halde, *Description de la Chine* (Landry-Deron 2002: 143-149).

54. Neaulme reports having bought the manuscript from the marquis of Fenelon (ca. 1688-1746), Louis XV's ambassador in Hollande in 1724-1744. See "Suite de l'Avertissement des libraires...", Herbelot 1777-1779, 4: iii-iv.

55. Neaulme affirms that one of the learned persons having encouraged him to publish Visdelou's manuscripts was Guillaume-Jacob 's Gravesande (1688-1742), physician,

geometer and philosopher. Given that the latter died in 1742, one can infer that Neaulme already possessed Visdelou's manuscript at that date.

56. For biographical information, see an obituary notice published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie* eight years after his death (Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres 1808). Cf. Desessarts 1800. According to François Pouillon's *Dictionnaire des Orientalistes de langue française* (Pouillon, 2008), de Guignes père's name should be spelt with the particle as “De Guignes,” although his son changes the spelling during the Revolution. However, we have used here “Deguignes” which is how the name is spelt in the author's first publications, *Mémoire historique* and *Histoire générale des Huns*.

57. The first scholars of Chinese in Europe were the Germans Andreas Müller (c. 1630-1694), Orientalist, and Christian Mentzel (1622-1701) botanist and physician. Unlike Fourmont, who studied Chinese language and literature for philological purposes, Fréret's interest in this language stemmed from his historical studies, especially those related to chronology. On Fréret, see Elisseeff 1978. On Arcade Huang, see Elisseeff 1985.

58. See Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres 1787-1799.

59. See Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres 1755-1757. In fact, the French were worried about the British projects in the French colonial sphere (New France, Antilles, Inde). See Deguigne's related letters (Deguignes 1755).

60. “Règlement ordonné par le Roi pour l'Académie royale des inscriptions et médailles, Versailles 16 juillet 1701,” in Aucoc 1889. These regulations are modified for the last time in 1786. See Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (1809), art. XXI: 20.

61. *Almanach royal* 1775: 389. The first holder of the chair was Denis Dominique Cardonne (1720-1783), a former student of the *École des Jeunes de langues*, already teaching the Arabic at the Royal College.

62. On this term as well as for a caution against a unidimensional reading of these institutions, see Romano 2008: 109.

63. The correspondence between Bayer and the Jesuits in Peking covers the period from 1730 to 1738 and can be found in the library of the University of Glasgow (Hunter Collections). On Bayer, see Lundbaek 1986.

64. Deguignes 1752. This exchange takes place after Delisle's installation in France, in 1747.

65. Gaubil is the author of several historical works, some of which concern the history of Central Asia. See, for instance, Gaubil 1739, 1791 and 1814.

66. Thirty dissertations, produced by Deguignes over a period of forty years, have been published in *Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions*. A list of his numerous manuscripts can be found in the first volume of a book published by his son, also a sinologist. See “Avant-Propos” in his book (C. L. J. Deguignes 1808: i-ii). At the BNF there is a series of documents under Joseph Deguignes's name (Deguignes a). These documents were found among the Fourmont family's documents, but they can safely be attributed to Deguignes.

Furthermore, a series of documents belonging probably to Deguignes are classed among Étienne Fourmont's papers (Deguignes b).

67. D'Anville affirms that Visdelou had sent his manuscripts to the academicien Jean-Roland Malet (1675-1736). He says that he used the manuscript of *Histoire de la Tartarie* when preparing the maps for the *Description de la Chine* directed by Du Halde (Anville 1776: 33-34).

68. Visdelou uses the term “Occidental Tatars” to designate peoples of different ethnic origins, while for Deguignes, the same term is identical to the name “Turk,” used as a generic term for Turkic and Mongolian peoples, Huns included. Deguignes's book is, in

fact, a history of these “Tartares occidentaux or Turks,” where the Oriental Tatars are not examined. On the contrary, the latter occupy an important place in Visdelou's narrative, which is meant to be the history of a geographical area.

69. The chapter is entitled “Origine des Turcs Ottomans” (Deguignes 1756-1758, 4: 329-338).

70. This text was written in Khiva, in the year of his death, and was completed by his son, Abu al-Muzaffar Anusha Muhammad Bahadur, in 1665. The author has used an important number of Muslim sources, among them the work of Rashid al-Din Hamadani, Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, as well as some Turkic oral traditions. A manuscript of this text was purchased in Tobolsk from a Bukhara merchant by Swedish officers detained in Russian captivity in Siberia after the Pultawa battle (1709). The text was rapidly translated into different languages (Russian, German, French, English) and was widely read in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For the English version, see Abu al-Ghāzī, Bahadur Han 1747. Cf. the French translation: Abu al-Ghāzī 1726.

71. Henceforth, the study of the origins of human civilization involves a new configuration in the relation between secular and sacred history. This will constitute the basis of a new perception of universal history discarding the idea of providence. On the Enlightenment concepts and practices of universal history, see Poulouin 1998; Gusdorf 1972; Ricuperati 2000; Campbell 1999.

72. On this subject, see Wolloch 2011b.

73. On the stage theory during the Enlightenment, see Berry 1997: 61-73, 93-99; Hont 1987: 253-276.

74. Generally associated with Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and John Millar.

75. On this subject see also R. Minuti 1994, p. 155-7, 166-7. According to Minuti, while not being explicitly philosophical, Deguignes's historical writing presents several philosophical reflections.

76. The compilations of a comparatist type (Court de Gébelin, Monboddo, Hervas, Pallas, Adelung) come into sight in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The realization of this program, based on the prior activity of creating records of rare materials (exotic languages, inscriptions, ancient texts) and on long-term research, depends on the existence of an institutional framework supporting the collection process. The cumulative results of this activity of language documentation are largely independent from the theoretical principles founding it. On this subject, see Auroux 1982.

77. This chair was however removed after Pavet de Courteille's death. In the first part of 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an institutional revival due to the creation, in 1911, of the chair “Langues, Histoire et archéologie de l'Asie centrale” at the French College, where Paul Peillot (1878-1945) was appointed. The same pattern of chair removal was repeated after Peillot's death.

## ABSTRACTS

The present article undertakes an interrogation of the genealogy of the Turkish cultural area. Challenging some readings influenced by subsequent institutional and disciplinary boundaries, I

propose to focus on the period preceding the first institutionalizations in order to capture the process of intellectual autonomization of the field of Turcology and to point out the role that early-European sinologists played in the identification and delimitation of a Central Asian Turkish world. This account is intended to contribute to recent attempts to historicize the study of Orientalist knowledge production, informed by a socio-cultural approach to knowledge, allowing us to grasp the dynamics relating to the connections and circulations in the global context of the early modern era. The question is one of an open and complex process – marked by constraints and possibilities – that can only be understood by means of close and subtle contextualized analysis.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** History of Knowledge, Orientalism, Turcology, Transnational History, Cultural History, Early Modern Era, Barthélemy d'Herbelot, Claude Visdelou, Joseph Deguignes

## AUTHOR

**DESPINA MAGKANARI**

despinamagkanari@hotmail.com