Claudia von Collani and Erich Zettl, eds.*Johannes Schreck-Terrentius SJ: Wissenschaftler und China-Missionar (1576–1630).*

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Johannes Schreck was one of the most remarkable Jesuit missionaries in late imperial China and who has been little studied. Among the earliest members of the Accademia dei Lincei, the prestigious group of natural scientists in early seventeenth-century Rome, Schreck was also a friend of Galileo and, for many years, an avid student of alchemy, the seeker of the philosopher's stone and the mysteries of natural knowledge. The reasons for his neglect, until recently, are two: he entered the Society of Jesus at a mature age and spent only a decade in the China mission, leaving behind only one major scientific work; and the sources that document his life, above all his letters, are scattered in archives and libraries all over Europe. All that has changed with the present volume, which gathers together nineteen essays written by thirteen scholars from Germany, Italy, France, and China (of which seven are authored by Zettl and two by Collani), arranged topically and chronologically, giving the reader a vivid and new picture of Schreck's life. Above all, it gathers and publishes for the first time all of Schreck's extant correspondence, as well as contemporary testimonies about him.

A great deal of new information is presented. Schreck's birthplace, Bingen in the Black Forest, is identified as well as records of his university studies at Freiburg. Schreck's peregrinations in central Europe, which took him from his native Swabia to the north and east to Prague, showed a restless spirit in pursuit of ultimate knowledge. His correspondence shows a fascination with alchemy and also the consequent disappointment in failing to find the philosopher's stone, a key to universal knowledge. Leaving the Holy Roman Empire Schreck settled in Rome and became friends with leading members of the German community in the papal curia. There, he became associated with the Accademia dei Lincei and was employed in the botanical study of the New World. With his broad interests in all of natural history, Schreck also befriended Galileo, who, surprised and somewhat dismayed by the German's sudden decision to join the Society of Jesus, lamented the loss of his talent to the world of science. His botanical knowledge notwithstanding, Schreck's true interest probably lay in alchemy, as his treatise on the work of Paracelsus demonstrates. After essays that address this aspect of Schreck's life, a second group of papers describe his experience as a Jesuit. Crucial in this regard was his decision to request the China Mission. In 1618, he accompanied Nicolas Trigault on his tour of Germany and the Low Countries. A Belgian Jesuit, Trigault acted as the procurator of the China mission. His return to Europe was the occasion for the

publication of Trigault's Latin translation and adaptation of Matteo Ricci's memoirs (*De christiana expeditione apud Sinas* [Augsburg, 1615]), which put the Jesuit China Mission at the top of the hot topics in early seventeenth-century Europe. The trip, a fund drive and a recruiting tour, was highly successful. Among the new recruits were two colleagues with whom Schreck would serve as mathematicians in Beijing: the Italian Giacomo Rho and the German Adam Schall. We follow Schreck on his trip from Lisbon to China. Then, a series of essays discuss his work in the mission, including one contribution by Collani on Schreck and Xu Guangqi, the leading Chinese convert of his generation, and another on his scientific collaboration with Wang Zheng, another leader of the convert community, resulting in Schreck's chief work in Chinese, the *Qiqi Tushuo* (Book of wonderful machines, 1627). The first part of the book is rounded up by essays on the commemoration and subsequent reputation of Schreck. As I have mentioned, the second part of the book consists of the unpublished correspondence of Schreck, both letters composed by him in Europe and in China, and the letters addressed to him. There are also several revealing contemporary sources that testify to his career and reputation. In sum, this is an excellent volume that pays tribute to this remarkable China missionary and Jesuit scientist, illustrated with fifty-five images, including the only pencil drawing and portrait of this son of the Society.

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