

ROUSSEAU'S AIR CHINOIS

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ABSTRACT

Among its various ancient and extra-European examples, the celebrated Plate N of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Dictionnaire de musique includes a melody of Chinese provenance. Scholars have proposed three possible sources for the melody: Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, Jean-Baptiste Du Halde and the Abbé Prévost. By synthesizing the known sources and introducing additional archival evidence I establish that Rousseau took the melody from Du Halde, not Prévost – and definitely not Amiot. Along the way, I provide an account of Amiot's extant manuscripts and their circulation in Enlightenment Paris. These details begin to suggest the broader panorama of the French Enlightenment's encounter with China and the networks of trade, diplomacy and proselytization that facilitated it.

The celebrated Plate N of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768)¹ includes among its various ancient and extra-European examples the melody reproduced here as [Figure 1](#). That melody, which Rousseau identifies only as an 'air chinois', would enjoy a long afterlife in Europe, being incorporated first into Carl Maria von Weber's *Overtura cinese* (1804), itself revised and expanded into Weber's incidental music (1809) for Schiller's German adaptation of Carlo Gozzi's *Turandot*; incorporated again into Ferruccio Busoni's incidental music for that same play (1904–1905); then into Eugène Goossens's *Variations sur un thème chinois* (1911); and, finally, into the second of Paul Hindemith *Sinfonische Metamorphosen* (1943).² But where did Rousseau himself get the melody? On this point, scholars differ.

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An earlier version of this article was read at the conference 'Music between China and the West in the Age of Discovery', Chinese University of Hong Kong, 14–16 May 2018. I am grateful to the participants in that event for their criticisms, comments and suggestions, as well as to Jen-yen Chen, Thomas Irvine, David R. M. Irving, W. Dean Sutcliffe and this journal's anonymous readers for their feedback. All translations from French are my own.

- 1 As was common in eighteenth-century publishing, the *éditio princeps*, published by Duchesnes's widow, appeared in November 1767, despite the date of 1768 on the title-page. See Claude Dauphin, ed., *Le 'Dictionnaire de musique' de Jean-Jacques Rousseau: une édition critique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 13.
- 2 I thank John Chun-fai Lam for bringing Goossens's composition to my attention in his paper 'Ravel, Debussy and Parisian Sources of Chinese Pentatonicism since the Enlightenment', read at the conference 'Music between China and the West'. The most comprehensive retracings of these peregrinations currently available in print may be found in Roberto Leydi, 'L'aria cinese da Du Halde a Hindemith: due secoli di fortune di un errore di stampa', in *Musica colta e musica popolare: atti del convegno promosso dalla SIAE, Varazze, 8 e 9 giugno 1991* (no place: Società italiana degli autori ed editori, 1992), 45–65; and Kii-Ming Lo, *Turandot auf der Opernbühne* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996), 77–113. On Weber's music for *Turandot* see also Paul Listl, *Weber als Ouvertürenkomponist* (Würzburg: Konrad Tritsch, 1936), 27–31; Kii-Ming Lo, 'In Search for a Chinese Melody: Tracing the Source of Weber's *Musik zu Turandot*, Op. 37', in *Tradition and Its Future in Music: Report of SIMS 1990 Osaka*, ed. Yosihiko Tokumaru, Makoto Ohmiya, Masakata Kanazawa, Osamu Yamaguti, Tuneko Tukitani, Akiko Takamatsu and Mari Shimosako (Osaka: Mita, 1991), 511–521. On the surprising role played by this and other Chinese melodies in nineteenth-century scholarship on Scottish music see Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111–152.



Figure 1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: La veuve Duchesnes, 1768), Plate N

Ysia Tchen, in her foundational account of the early European reception of Chinese music and musical thought, suggests that Rousseau took the melody from the Jesuit missionary Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot (1718–1793).³ In his exemplary study of the *Dictionnaire*'s extra-European examples, Roberto Leydi maintains that Rousseau copied it from the *Description de la Chine* (1735) by Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743), a view with which the editors of the Pléiade edition of Rousseau's *œuvres complètes* concur without discussion.⁴ And there is a third candidate as well: in his comprehensive study of Rousseau's exploitation of European travel literature, the distinguished *rousseauiste* Georges Pire maintains that Rousseau excerpted the melody from the *Histoire des voyages* (1749–1755) by the Abbé Prévost (Antoine François Prévost d'Exiles, 1697–1753).⁵

In what follows, I claim to resolve these discrepancies, in part by rereading the received evidence with a critical eye, and in part by adducing new manuscript and archival sources. Such an undertaking might seem primarily like an exercise in bibliographic punctiliousness – and it certainly is that; I will unapologetically delight, over the pages that follow, in the ins and outs of archival detective work. But certain larger historical and interpretative points are present in the background as well. I have argued elsewhere that knowing Rousseau's sources is essential to understanding his *Dictionnaire de musique*:⁶ a dictionary makes no intrinsic claim to originality, though Rousseau is often very original indeed, and a good part of its confection is a matter of compilation.⁷ Sometimes, in a given passage, Rousseau is quoting, paraphrasing or parodying a source, and sometimes he is not; it makes all the difference, in construing his meaning, to know which is which. Clarifying Rousseau's source(s) is thus an indispensable first step towards elucidating his attitudes towards Chinese music – and indeed towards extra-European music more generally.⁸

3 Ysia Tchen, *La musique chinoise en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Publications orientalistes de France, 1974), 73–74.

4 Roberto Leydi, 'Rousseau, pioniere dell'antropologia e dell'etnomusicologia', in *Parigi/Venezia: cultura, relazioni, influenze negli scambi intellettuali del Settecento*, ed. Carlo Ossola (Florence: Olschki, 1998), 193; Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, eds, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: œuvres complètes*, five volumes (Paris: Gallimard, 1959–1995), volume 5, 1773 (hereafter *Œuvres complètes*).

5 Georges Pire, 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les relations de voyages', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 56/3 (1956), 360.

6 Nathan John Martin, 'Lire le *Dictionnaire de musique* de Jean-Jacques Rousseau: l'exemple de l'article "Dissonance"', *Revue musicorum* 17 (2016), 13–38. And in fact, not just in the *Dictionnaire*: Rousseau often operated by means of a kind of literary pastiche. A well-known example is the paragraph from Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois* in the First Discourse, discussed in Michel Launay, 'Le *Discours sur les science et les arts*: Jean-Jacques Rousseau entre Mme Dupin et Montesquieu', in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et son temps*, ed. Michel Launay (Paris: A.-G. Nizet, 1969), 93–103.

7 See the discussion in Sidney I. Landau, *Dictionaries: The Art and Craft of Lexicography*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 43–97.

8 I have commented elsewhere on what I take the stakes of this engagement to be, namely that Rousseau is interested in finding counterexamples to Jean-Philippe Rameau's presumptuous universalizing of what are in fact parochially French musical norms. See my discussion in Martin, 'Les planches de musique de l'*Encyclopédie*: un manuscrit méconnu de Rousseau et ses enjeux ethnographiques', *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 48 (2013), 178–182. In making this claim, I am developing a thesis first advanced in Robert Wokler, 'Rameau, Rousseau and the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 117 (1974), 179–238.



Among the most interesting matters here are questions about the conditions, material and otherwise, that allowed Rousseau to claim any knowledge of Chinese music at all. As with almost all early-modern European observers, Rousseau's knowledge of China was indirect, mediated by chains of transmission and distortion ranging from the more or less 'first-hand' accounts of European travellers – in the case of China, Jesuit missionaries above all – to the works of learned compilers such as Du Halde, who, as Voltaire put it, 'had never left Paris and . . . did not know any Chinese'.⁹ This discursive network depended in turn, as its condition of possibility, on patterns of trade, proselytization and diplomacy – and these, finally, depended on and were made possible by technological and material substrata: advances in seamanship, European demands for Chinese material goods such as silk and porcelain, and so on.¹⁰ In hunting for Rousseau's sources, some of this rich background comes provisionally into view – not least the networks of transmission along which Amiot's writings flowed and circulated, in the first place from Beijing back to Paris and London, but then also within Europe,¹¹ as well as their subsequent entanglement with other Enlightenment historical and intellectual fascinations, including the Egyptological preoccupations of writers like Pierre-Joseph Roussier and Joseph de Guignes.¹² I do not follow these threads very far in what follows, in order to keep the focus squarely on the *air chinois*, but I do hope that this glimpse might serve to whet the reader's appetite for the eventual feast.¹³ With respect to that larger enquiry, this current article is, as Jeffrey Sammons wrote in another context, 'a pile of bricks and a certain amount of mortar for an edifice yet to be built'.¹⁴

I should also clarify up front that I will be commenting more or less exclusively on French sources, so that my discussion is fundamentally one-sided in the sense that it ignores Chinese viewpoints on these encounters. The reason is my own linguistic incapacity: it will be some time before I am able to read Li Guangdi or Zhu Zaiyu for myself. Fortunately, there is a cohort of young Chinese and Chinese-American scholars who are beginning to make accounts of Chinese musical thought in the late Ming and early Qing periods available to readers of European languages. I refer the reader warmly to their work.¹⁵

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- 9 *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire/The Complete Works of Voltaire*, ed. Theodore Besterman and others, 199 volumes to date (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1968–), volume 12, *Le siècle de Louis XIV (II): listes et 'catalogue des écrivains'*, ed. Diego Venturino (2017), 115. On Du Halde see in particular Isabelle Landry, *La preuve par la Chine: la 'Description' de J.-B. du Halde, jésuite, 1735* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2002).
- 10 By way of an introduction to the available literature on this topic see Nicolas Standaert, 'Jesuits in China', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 169–185.
- 11 The circulation of Chinese music and musical thought within Europe from Amiot to Adolph Bernhard Marx is surveyed in Thomas Irvine, *Listening to China: Sound and the Sino-Western Encounter, 1770–1839* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).
- 12 On Enlightenment 'Egyptomania' see Alexander Rehding, 'Music-Historical Egyptomania, 1650–1950', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75 (2014), 545–580, and Alexander Rehding, 'Die ägyptische Spieldose', in *Konstruktivität von Musikgeschichte: Zur Formation musikbezogenen Wissens*, ed. Sandra Danielczyk (Hildesheim: Olms, 2012), 11–31.
- 13 I discuss related aspects of this material in two forthcoming studies, currently in development: 'The Discovery of the Fundamental Bass' and as the first case study in 'Towards a Global History of Music Theory'. I hope to work further on Amiot in coming years.
- 14 Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Heinrich Heine: The Elusive Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), vii; Sammons's remark curiously, and I suppose inadvertently, echoes Rousseau's own judgment on his *Dictionnaire de musique*: 'This is less a finished dictionary than a collection of materials for a dictionary, which just awaits a better hand to be put to use' ('C'est ici moins un Dictionnaire en forme, qu'un recueil de matériaux pour un Dictionnaire, qui n'attendent qu'une meilleure main pour être employés') (*Œuvres complètes*, volume 5, 605). While there is of course a degree of pro-forma literary self-deprecation to these protestations, I don't think that they are merely instances of Ernst Robert Curtius's 'affected modesty' topos; see Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 83–85.
- 15 In particular, Lester Hu, 'From Ut Re Mi to Fourteen-Tone Temperament: The Global Acoustemologies of an Early Modern Chinese Tuning Reform' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2019) and Shubing Jia, 'The Dissemination of Western Music through Catholic Missions in High Qing China' (PhD dissertation, University of



The discussion that follows unfolds in three main parts. I begin with Amiot, in order to evaluate Tchen's reconstruction, then I turn to Du Halde, and then to Prévost. My conclusion will be that there is no real reason to doubt Rousseau's own word that he took the *air chinois* from Du Halde, and that the weight of the evidence is consistent with that claim. The route to that conclusion, though, especially in the case of Amiot, involves a detailed consideration of the circulation of knowledge of Chinese music and musical thought in Enlightenment France.

AMIOT

Amiot is a fascinating figure who would reward even more study than he has thus far received.¹⁶ His *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois* (1779) has a reasonable claim to being the first responsible account of Chinese

Bristol, 2012). I have also benefited greatly from conversations with Qingfan Jiang and Sheryl Chow, both of whose dissertations are in progress (at Columbia University and Princeton University respectively). On Zhu Zaiyu see Gene J. Cho, *The Discovery of Musical Equal Temperament in China and Europe in the Sixteenth Century* (Lewiston, NY: Edward Mellen, 2003).

- 16 In the older literature see Camille de Rochemonteix, *Joseph Amiot et les derniers survivants de la mission française à Pékin (1750–1795)* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1915) and Aloys Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine, 1552–1773* (Shanghai: Imprimerie de la Mission catholique, 1932). Arnold Horrex Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin: The Jesuits at the Court of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942) retains its interest as a highly readable account of the French and Portuguese missions and their influence on eighteenth-century European culture, especially in England and France – even though it is superseded in most other respects by Catherine Jami, *The Emperor's New Mathematics: Western Learning and Imperial Authority during the Kangxi Reign (1662–1722)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). By far the most comprehensive recent overview of Amiot's life and work is Michel Hermans, 'Joseph-Marie Amiot: une figure de la rencontre de l'autre' au temps des Lumières', in *Les danses rituelles chinois d'après Joseph-Marie Amiot: aux sources de l'ethnochoregraphie*, ed. Yves Lenoir and Nicolas Standaert (Brussels: Éditions Lessius, 2005), 11–77. See also Ana Luísa Balmori-Padesca, 'Os jesuítas e a música em Macau e Pequim: O caso do Pe. Joseph Marie Amiot S. J. (1718–1793)', *Revista portuguesa de musicologia* 12 (2002), 129–160; and Irvine, *Listening to China*, 25–52. Other recent studies of Amiot are cited in the following notes, as their topics arise in the course of this article's text. I am aware, finally, that there is a wealth of scholarship on Amiot in Chinese that my own linguistic incapacities have not allowed me to profit from as yet. I thank Jen-yen Chen for drawing my attention to the following: 宫宏宇 [Gong, Hongyu], 钱德明、朱载堉与中国礼仪乐舞之西渐 [Qian Deming, Zhu Zaiyu yu Zhongguo liyi yuewu zhi xijian, Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, Zhu Zaiyu and the Gradual Westernization of Chinese Ceremonial Music and Dance], 中央音樂學院學報 [Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xuebao, Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music] 2/119 (2010), 91–97; 洪力行 [Hong, Li-Xing], 錢德明的《聖樂經譜》：本地化策略下的明清天主教聖樂 [Qian Deming de "Shengyue Jingpu": Bendihua celüe xia de Mingqing tianzhujiao shengyue, Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot's Shengyue Jingpu: The Transformation of Catholic Sacred Music under the Inculturation Policy during the Ming and Qing Dynasties], 中央大學人文學報 [Zhongyang daxue renwen xuebao, National Central University Journal of Humanities] 45 (2011), 1–29; 李冉 (Li, Ran), 一位18世纪欧洲人眼中的中国音乐史 — 浅谈钱德明《中国古今音乐篇》中对中国音乐史的记录 [Yiwei 18 shiji ouzhouren yanzhong de zhongguo yinyueshi – Qiantan Qian Deming "Zhongguo Gujin yinyuepian" zhong dui Zhongguo yinyueshi de jilu, Chinese Music History in the Eyes of an Eighteenth-Century European: The Impact of Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot's Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois, tant anciens que modernes on the Writing of Chinese Music History], 赤子 [Chizi, Newborn] 16 (2014); 龙云 [Long, Yun], 钱德明研究 — 18世纪一位处在中法文化交汇处的传教士 [Qian Deming yanjiu – 18 shiji yiwei chuzai Zhongfa wenhua jiaohuichu de chuanjiaoshi, Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot: A Missionary Outside the Current of Sino-French Cultural Interchange During the Eighteenth Century] (PhD dissertation, Beijing University, 2010); 余亚飞 (Yu, Yafei), 18世纪中国音乐文化在法国的传播 — 以来华传教士钱德明为例 [18 shiji Zhongguo yinyue wenhua zai Faguo de chuanbo – Yi laihua chuanjiaoshi Qian Deming weilì, The Transmission of Chinese Music in France in the Eighteenth Century: The Activities of the Missionary Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot as Case Study], 天津音乐学院学报 [Tianjin yinyue xueyuan xuebao, Journal of the Tianjin Conservatory of Music] 4 (2013), 20–29.



music in a European language; it was widely read, cited and considered authoritative well into the nineteenth century, and it has remained an object of fascination for historians both within and outside China to the present day. The *Mémoire*, though, was both preceded and then supplemented by many other documents and missives – and tracing the specific Chinese melody that Rousseau quoted through these various texts can begin to illuminate the networks of intellectual and diplomatic correspondence within which knowledge of China circulated in the early Qing period.

Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot was born in Toulon on 8 February 1718. In 1737 he became a Jesuit novice, and he was ordained in 1746.¹⁷ Upon completion of his theological studies in 1748, he requested foreign assignment and received a commission for China. He left Paris on 17 November 1749 and embarked from Lorient on a ship called the *Villeflaix* on 29 December of that same year. The trip – presumably following the usual route around Africa and across the Indian Ocean to Goa, then around India, through the Strait of Malacca and up into the South China Sea – took about six months,¹⁸ and he arrived in Macau on 27 July 1750. Some nine months later, on 28 March 1751, Amiot left again for Beijing, and on 22 August 1751 he arrived in the capital, where he would reside until his death in 1793. Though he wrote widely on various aspects of Chinese language, culture and mores, Amiot is primarily remembered, at least among musicologists, for his *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois*, which – shipped back to Paris from Beijing in the later 1770s – was published there in 1779 in an edition supervised by Pierre-Joseph Roussier (1716–1792),¹⁹ who added extensive and not always very illuminating commentary of his own.²⁰ Roussier, in fact, had also played an inadvertent role in the inception of Amiot's *Mémoire*. For, as Amiot recounts in the *discours préliminaire* to that work, Roussier's own *Mémoire sur la musique des anciens* (1770), which the Royal Librarian Jérôme-Frédéric Bignon (1747–1784) forwarded on to Beijing in 1774, was the catalyst for Amiot's own *Mémoire*. It drew his attention to the various misunderstandings concerning Chinese music to which an earlier missive of his – the manuscript translation of Li Guangdi's (李光地) *Commentaries on the Classic Concerning the Music of the Ancients* (*Guyue jingzhuàn*, 古樂經傳) that he had sent back to France in the 1750s²¹ – had given rise. The *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois*, Amiot says quite explicitly, is meant to redress those confusions.²²

17 I take these and other biographical details from Hermans, 'Joseph-Marie Amiot', 17–19, 21–22.

18 For a harrowing account of what travel to China from Europe by sea was like see Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 64–80.

19 Roussier is himself a somewhat neglected figure who would warrant more sustained study. He played an important role in the dissemination of Rameau's theory of harmony in the later part of the eighteenth century through his *Observations sur différents points d'harmonie* (Geneva: Bailleux, 1755); his *Traité des accords, et de leur succession; selon le système de la basse-fondamentale* (Paris: Bailleux, 1764); and *L'harmonie pratique, ou Exemples pour le Traité des accords* (Paris, 1775). See the entry under his name in David Damschroder and David Russell Williams, *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker: A Bibliography and Guide* (New York: Pendragon, 1990). The *Traité des accords* receives interesting discussion in Steve Grazzini, 'Rameau's Theory of Supposition and French Baroque Harmonic Practice', *Music Theory Spectrum* 38/2 (2017), 155–177. There are occasional comments also in Erwin R. Jacobi, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Complete Theoretical Writings*, six volumes (Rome: American Academy, 1967–1972). The best general overview of Roussier's theorizing is probably that given in Cynthia Gesele, 'The Institutionalization of Music Theory in France: 1764–1802' (PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1989), 63–166, 171–172.

20 On Roussier's editorial interventions see Stewart Carter, 'The Editor from Hell: Information and Misinformation on Chinese Music in Late Eighteenth-Century France', in *Music in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, ed. Mary Sue Morrow (Ann Arbor: Steglein, 2017), 23–47. On the relationship between Roussier and Amiot more generally see Michel Brix and Yves Lenoir, 'Une lettre inédite du père Amiot à l'abbé Roussier (1781)', *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain* 28 (1993), 63–74.

21 Jean-Philippe Rameau famously referred to Amiot's translation in the appendix ('Nouvelles réflexions sur le principe sonore') to his *Code de musique pratique* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1760), 189n.

22 Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois, tant anciens que modernes* (Paris: Nyon, 1779), 4–13.



Mindful of the perils of sea voyages, he sent two copies of the text, one to Bignon and the other to Louis XV's Secretary of State Henri Léonard Jean Baptiste Bertin (1720–1792). Roussier, who in his annotations refers now to the one manuscript and now to the other, clearly had access to both in preparing the text for publication.²³ These two manuscripts were not, of course, the only texts that Amiot sent back to Paris: he subsequently added a supplement to the *Mémoire*;²⁴ the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France preserves a cache of letters from Amiot to Bertin;²⁵ one of Amiot's letters to Roussier also survives;²⁶ and, of course, there is the 1754 translation of Li Guangdi. This last seems to have enjoyed some circulation, since Amiot's contemporaries make frequent reference to it: Rameau cites it in the 'Nouvelles réflexions sur le corps sonore' that he appended to his *Code de musique pratique* (1760);²⁷ Roussier invokes it as well in his annotations to Amiot's *Mémoire*;²⁸ so too does Jean-Benjamin La Borde.²⁹ However, the manuscript itself, unfortunately, is now lost.³⁰

Amiot's 1754 translation is none the less the source from which Tchen supposes that Rousseau took the *air chinois*, though she thinks that Rousseau altered it in ways that, paradoxically, brought it closer to Amiot's own source: 'It does not entirely conform to the original from which it was drawn, but by an extraordinary chance, it is closer to the Chinese original than is Father Amiot's direct transcription' ('Il n'est pas tout à fait conforme à l'original d'où il a été tiré, mais par un hasard extraordinaire, il est plus près de l'original chinois que ne l'est la transcription directe du père Amiot').³¹ One might reasonably wonder how Tchen knows what Amiot's transcription looked like, since it was she, after all, who first reported that the 1754 translation had gone missing. The answer is that she was relying implicitly on the testimony of Rameau's former student La Borde, whose *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (1780) disparages Rousseau's transcription as follows:³²

Quant aux caracteres musicaux des Chinois, il n'est pas de notre objet de donner ici les divers exemples qu'on en trouve dans les planches qui accompagnent le Mémoire du P. Amiot; mais nous allons rapporter une partie des détails où ce savant Missionnaire est entré à cet égard, dans les manuscrits qu'il avait adressés en 1754 à M. de Bougainville (cahier C, pag. 53 & suivante); & nous présenterons en original l'air Chinois que Rousseau a donné dans son Dictionnaire.³³

As to the musical notation of the Chinese, it is not to our purpose to give here the various examples that are found in the plates that accompany Father Amiot's *Mémoire*. But we will report a part of the detail into which that learned missionary went in the manuscripts that he addressed to M. de Bougainville in 1754 (notebook C, page 53 and following). And we will present the original version of the Chinese air that Rousseau gave in his *Dictionnaire*.

23 Amiot, 'Mémoire sur la musique des chinois', Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds Bréquigny 2 and 13.

24 Michel Brix and Yves Lenoir, 'Le supplément au *Mémoires sur la musique des Chinois* du père Amiot: édition commentée', *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain* 30 (1997), 79–111.

25 Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris, MS 1515–1517.

26 Brix and Lenoir, 'Une lettre inédite'.

27 Rameau, *Code*, 189n, 191–192.

28 For example, Amiot, *Mémoire*, 12n.

29 Jean-Benjamin de La Borde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, four volumes (Paris: Eugene Onfroy, 1780), volume 1, 144.

30 Tchen, *Musique chinoise*, 52–53. See also Roberto Leydi, 'L'aria cinese', 49, and Jim Levy, 'Joseph Amiot and the Enlightenment Speculation of the Origin of Pythagorean Tuning in China', *Theoria* 4 (1989), 64, note 3.

31 Tchen, *Musique chinoise*, 73; despite what Tchen says on this page, Rameau had in fact mentioned the *air* indirectly on page 193 of the *Code*.

32 On La Borde's studies with Rameau see Thomas Christensen, 'L'Art de la basse fondamentale', *Music Theory Spectrum* 9 (1987), 20, note 9.

33 La Borde, *Essai*, volume 1, 143–144.



observer que cet air Chinois, ainsi que plusieurs autres morceaux de Musique Chinoise, n'est composé que de cinq notes, & n'a pour élémens que ce que les Chinois appellent *les cinq tons*, & qui sont ici *sol la si re mi*, dans lesquels il n'y a ni *fa*, ni *ut*, 4°. Enfin il y a, dans l'air défiguré, du Dictionnaire de Rousseau, quelques autres fautes dans les notes, qu'on pourra rectifier, soit sur l'original Chinois que nous donnons ici, soit sur la traduction qui est à la planche premiere.

Nous avons transporté à côté de la premiere colonne de la planche 2, la traduction des caracteres Chinois que contient cette colonne; il sera aisé aux amateurs, de comparer le reste de l'air avec la traduction de la planche premiere. Nous avons marqué, sur cette traduction, l'endroit précis où commence chaque colonne de la planche 2, afin de faciliter davantage cette comparaison.

Exemple 1.

Rapport des Notes Chinoises aux Notes Européennes

△ 四 上 尺 工 凡 六 五 凡 上 尺

Ho. See. 71 Shang. Tché Koung. Fan Lieou ou. y. Chang Tché

Exemple 1 2 3 4 5 6

Octaves supérieures
Designées par le caractère
Fin

Exemple 3

Exemple 4 1 2 3 Exemple 5

Air Chinois, appelé Lieou ye Kim, c'est-à-dire, Le Saule à feuilles de Saule,
Traduit par le P. Amiot. (Voyez la Planche à côté)

1^{re} Colonne 2^e Colonne.

Grave

3^e Colonne 4^e Colonne 5^e colonne

Figure 2 Jean-Benjamin de La Borde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, four volumes (Paris: Eugene Onfroy, 1780), volume 1, 146. Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr



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LIEOU YÉ KIN, AIR CHINOIS.

Le satin à feuilles de Saule.

T 2
Tome 1^{er} Page 147

Figure 3 La Borde, *Essai*, volume 1, 147. Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr

Tchen, then, took over La Borde’s account, but reversed its poles – rather than corrupting Amiot’s transcription, Rousseau somehow divined how to improve it.

La Borde makes good on his promise to present the ‘original’ a few pages further on in his discussion, where he gives the examples reproduced here as Figures 2 and 3. As the reader can easily verify, the first – which La Borde calls ‘Air Chinois, appallee *Lieou yé Kin*, c’est à dire, *Le satin à feuilles de Saule* [柳葉錦,



Liuyejin], traduit par le P. Amiot' – is identical to Rousseau's version, except that the note values are doubled and the famous error in Rousseau's bar 2 (corresponding to bar 4 of La Borde's version) has been corrected (there is also a variant in bars 10 and 23 of La Borde's version, where the first note of each of these bars is d^2 , not e^2 as in Rousseau). As La Borde writes:

C'est le même air que Rousseau a donné dans son Dictionnaire, planche N, mais qui y est étrangement défiguré. 1°. D'un morceau de Musique Chinoise, très-lent & très grave, on a fait, dans le Dictionnaire, une sorte d'air de danse, & certainement de très-mauvais goût, en y exprimant par des croches, & d'une mesure légère, ce que le P. Amiot traduit par des noires d'une mesure lente. 2°. Presque tous les repos de cet air s'y trouvent à contre-sens, pour ne l'avoir pas fait commencer en levant, comme il aurait fallu faire, dès qu'on réduisait à une demi-mesure ce qui, dans la construction de l'air Chinois, forme une mesure entier. 3°. A la mesure 3 de l'air, donné par Rousseau, on trouve deux *fa*; surquoi il faut observer que cet air Chinois, ainsi que plusieurs autres morceaux de Musique Chinoise, n'est composé que de cinq notes, & n'a pour élémens que ce que les Chinois appellent *les cinq tons*, & qui sont ici *sol la si re mi*, dans lesquels n'y a ni *fa*, ni *ut*. 4°. Enfin il y a, dans l'air défiguré, du Dictionnaire de Rousseau, quelques autres fautes dans les notes, qu'on pourra rectifier, soit sur l'original Chinois que nous donnons ici, soit sur la traduction qui est à la planche première.³⁴

This is the same air that Rousseau gave in his *Dictionnaire*, plate N, but which is strangely disfigured there. (1) Out of a Chinese piece that is very slow and serious there is made, in the *Dictionnaire*, a sort of dance, and certainly one in a very poor taste, given that what Father Amiot translated by crotchets in a slow measure is expressed through quavers in a fast one. (2) Almost all the cadences of this air are wrong-footed by his not having started on an upbeat, as should have been done once what should have formed an entire bar in the construction of the Chinese air was reduced to a half bar. (3) In bar 3 of the air given by Rousseau there are found two Fs, concerning which it must be observed that this Chinese air, like many other pieces of Chinese music, is composed of only five notes, and only has for its elements what the Chinese call 'the five tones', which here are G, A, B, D, E, among which there is neither an F nor a C. (4) Finally, in this disfigured air from Rousseau's *Dictionnaire*, there are some other wrong notes which can be corrected either from the Chinese original that is given here [page 147] or from its translation on the first plate [*sic*; the bottom of page 146].

La Borde, then, seems still to have had access to Amiot's 1754 manuscript translation in 1780. By the time that François-Joseph Fétis went looking for it, however – well after the Revolution – the manuscript had disappeared: 'It is very frustrating', Fétis writes in his entry on Amiot in the *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, 'that Amiot's translation should have gone missing, for it is certainly no longer in the Imperial Library of France, even though it was there in the epoch in which the abbé Roussier was charged with publishing the *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois*' ('il est très fâcheux que la traduction d'Amiot se soit égarée; car il est certain qu'elle n'existe pas à la Bibliothèque impériale de France, bien qu'elle y fût à l'époque où l'abbé Roussier fut chargé de la publication du *Mémoire sur la Musique des Chinois*').³⁵ Interestingly enough, however, La Borde's musical example (Figure 2) shows up in another source associated with Amiot, namely the manuscript entitled 'De la musique moderne des Chinois' that is now housed in the music department of the Bibliothèque nationale (Rés. Vmb. Ms. 14).³⁶ There, on page 136 (the manuscript is paginated, not foliated), the musical example reproduced as Figure 4a appears. As the reader should again verify, this version of

³⁴ La Borde, *Essai*, volume 1, 145–146.

³⁵ François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, second edition, eight volumes (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1860–1865; reprinted Brussels: Culture and civilisation, 1963), volume 1 (1860), 90.

³⁶ Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, 'De la musique moderne des Chinois', Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département de la Musique, Rés. Vmb. Ms. 14.



Figure 4a Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, 'De la musique moderne des Chinois', Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Département de la Musique, Rés. Vmb. Ms 14, 136. Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr

the melody corresponds closely to what La Borde gives, with the following exceptions: Rousseau's e^2 is reinstated in bars 12 and 23; there is a light rhythmic variant in bar 5 (a dotted crotchet plus quaver at the beginning of the bar, in place of La Borde's two crotchets); and bars 16–19 give a variant reading of the corresponding passage in La Borde's version.

It is worth emphasizing that 'De la musique moderne des Chinois' cannot be the missing translation of Li Guangdi. First, the reading of the *air chinois* in Rés. Vmb. Ms. 14 does not entirely agree with that given in La Borde's *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*. La Borde could, of course, have introduced these variants, but it is unclear why he would have done so, especially in a context that takes Rousseau to task for similar infidelities. Second, La Borde's citation – he refers to 'booklet C, pages 53 and following' – does not line up with the placement of the *air chinois* in Rés. Vmb. Ms. 14, where that melody appears instead on pages 136 and 139 (the latter is reproduced as Figure 4b). Finally, and more generally, Rés. Vmb. Ms. 14 contains none of the passages that contemporaneous writers attribute to it. Rameau, for instance, speaks of a great fire that destroyed Li Guangdi's first version.³⁷ (This, indeed, is one of the mangled passages for which Amiot takes Rameau to task.³⁸) No mention of any such fire appears in Rés. Vmb. Ms. 14.

The manuscript, on the other hand, is probably correctly attributed to Amiot, if only because no other contemporaneous French writer could have boasted the erudition that would have been required to pen the detailed explications of Chinese instruments that occupy pages 10–71.³⁹ And we know that the

37 Rameau, *Code de musique pratique* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1760), 189n.

38 'Rameau himself, Amiot complains, 'makes me speak of a fire that occurred, he implies, 2277 years before Jesus Christ, whereas the fire that I was speaking of, or better, the fire about which the editor of the book that I was translating was speaking of, was a fire that consumed the private house of the author, whose writings fell prey to the flames; in a word, a fire that happened, so to speak, in our times'. ('Rameau lui-même . . . me fait parler d'un incendie arrivé, à ce qu'il fait entendre, 2277 ans avant Jesus-Christ, tandis que l'incendie dont je parle, ou pour mieux dire, dont parle l'Éditeur de l'ouvrage que je traduisois, n'est qu'un incendie particulier, un incendie qui consuma la maison de l'Auteur, dont les écrits devinrent la proie des flames; en un mot, un incendie arrivé, pour ainsi dire, de nos jours'.) Amiot, *Mémoire*, 11.

39 And so admirers of Amiot's later writings must simply accept with embarrassment that the absurd speculations on the damage to Chinese ears caused by the cold, and so on, are his. On the various Chinese instruments that Amiot shipped back to France see François Picard, 'Joseph-Marie Amiot, jésuite française à Pékin, et le cabinet de curiosités de Bertin',



Figure 4b Amiot, 'De la musique moderne des Chinois', 139. Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr

manuscript must date, at the latest, from the middle part of the eighteenth century, because François Arnaud (1721–1784) published extracts from it in the *Journal étranger* in 1757, extracts that were reprised in 1768 in

Musique, images, instruments: revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale 8 (2006), 68–85, and also Picard, 'Crossing Stages, Crossing Countries, Crossing Times: Instrumental Qupai in European Scholarship', in *Qupai in Chinese Music: Melodic Models in Form and Practice*, ed. Alan Thrasher (New York: Routledge, 2016), 53–72.

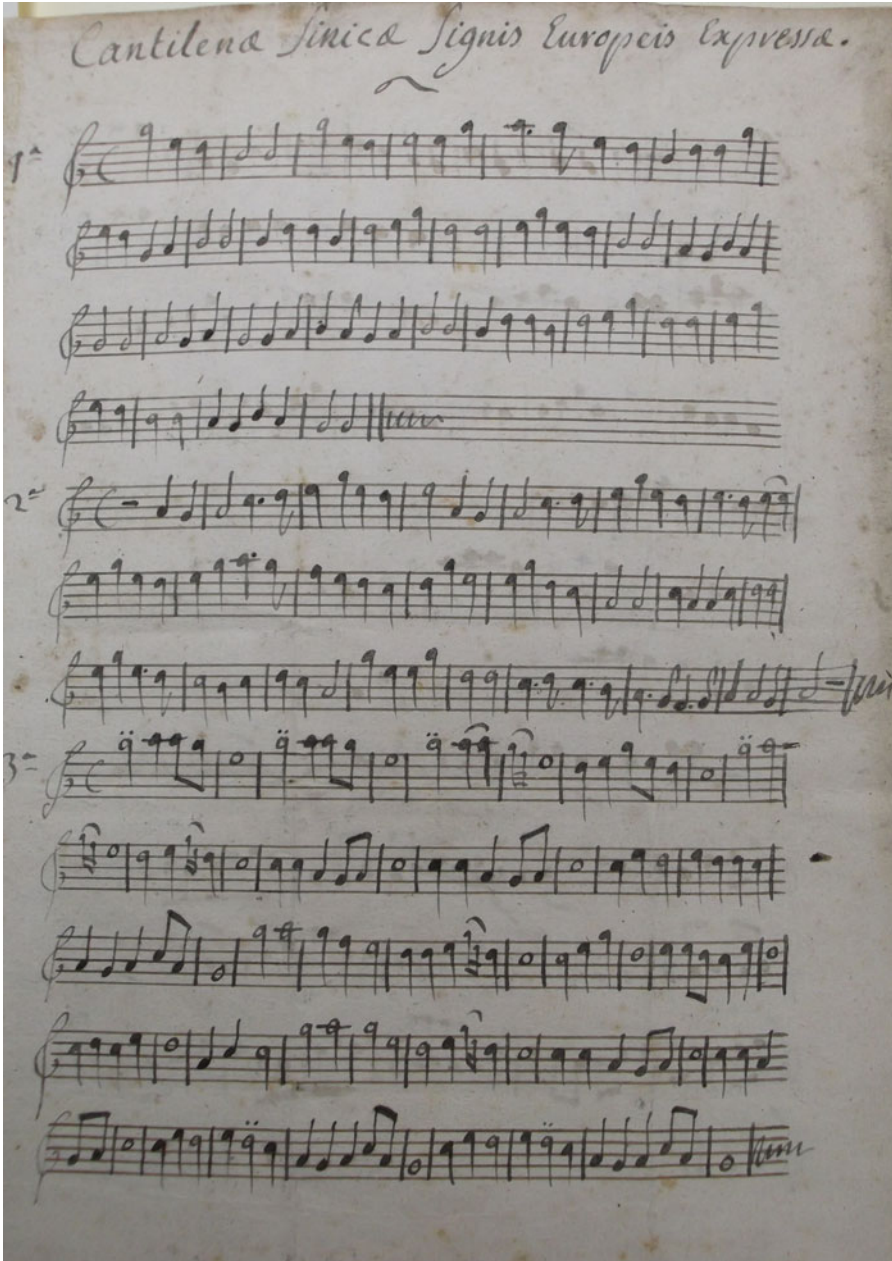


Figure 5 Amiot, 'Cantilena Sinica signis Europaeis expressa', Royal Society, London, Letters and Papers, II, 422, fol. 1r.
© Royal Society. Used by permission

his and Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Suard's (1735–1817) *Variétés littéraires*.⁴⁰ It is curious, to be sure, that Amiot makes no mention of this second text in the preliminary discourse to his *Mémoire*, but then he also fails to

40 Arnaud, 'Traduction manuscrite d'un Livre sur l'ancienne Musique Chinoise, composé par Ly-koang-ty, Docteur & Membre du premier Tribunal des Lettrés de l'Empire, Ministre, &c'. *Journal étranger* (October 1761), 5–36; reprinted in Arnaud and Suard, *Variétés littéraires* (Paris: Lacombe, 1768), volume 1, 273–311.



mention a third manuscript, the ‘*Cantilenae Sinicae signis Europeis expressae*’ that he sent to the Royal Society in London in 1751 (Figure 5).⁴¹

Arnauld and Suard, in any case, sowed considerable confusion when they styled their printed extracts as a ‘Traduction manuscrite d’un Livre sur l’ancienne Musique Chinoise, composé par Ly-koang-ty, Docteur & Membre du premier Tribunal des Lettrés de l’Empire, Ministre, &c’ (Manuscript translation of a book on ancient Chinese music, composed by Li Guangdi, Doctor and Member of the first Tribunal of Litterati of the Empire, Minister, etc.). The extracts are not, to reiterate, from Amiot’s missing 1754 translation: they come instead from ‘De la musique Moderne des Chinois’, and that manuscript corresponds in neither its content nor its physical disposition to what we know about the missing translation. Arnaud and Suard’s title is thus entirely spurious. But, as yet another wrinkle, La Borde seems to have had access to *both* manuscripts in preparing his *Essai*. For while the transcription of *Lieou ye kin* in chapter 15 of volume 1 must come, as I indicated above, from Amiot’s lost manuscript translation, extensive passages from volume 2, chapter 17 are taken instead from ‘De la musique moderne des Chinois’.⁴²

I cannot, alas, resolve all the mysteries surrounding these materials here.⁴³ I can, however, definitively evaluate Tchen’s claim that Rousseau took the melody from Amiot, whether from the missing manuscript translation, from ‘De la musique moderne des Chinois’, or even from the manuscript transcriptions in London. Recall that Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire* appeared in the final months of 1767, with a publication date of 1768 on its title-page. The *air chinois* figures in the plates joined to the end of the text, and is cited in two entries, under the headwords ‘Caracteres [*sic*] de musique’ and ‘Musique’. The *Dictionnaire* itself began life in about 1753, originally as a modest revision of the extended set of articles on music that Rousseau supplied to Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*.⁴⁴ Those entries were apparently assembled all at once, in the astonishingly short span of three months, from about January to April in 1749.⁴⁵ Once finished, the articles were sent to Diderot, who passed them on to d’Alembert (as the *Encyclopédie*’s science editor) one year later – that is to say, in about March or April of 1750.⁴⁶ These dates matter because the passages in question were in fact copied over unaltered into the *Dictionnaire* from the earlier *Encyclopédie* entries. Here, for instance, is the key passage from MUSIQUE, as it appears in the *Encyclopédie*:

On a beaucoup souhaité de voir quelques fragmens de l’ancienne *musique*, le P. Kircher & M. Burette ont travaillé à satisfaire là-dessus la curiosité du public. On trouvera dans nos *Pl[anches]*

41 Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, ‘*Cantilenae Sinicae signis Europeis expressae*’, Royal Society, London, Letters and Papers, II, 422.

42 ‘Everything that that I am going to report is taken from a memoir by the Reverend Father Amiot, a learned Jesuit who has lived in China for almost thirty years, and to whom the world of letters has a great obligation, for all the knowledge that we owe to him about that country, which is as poorly known as it is interesting to know.

After the chapter went into press, I discovered in the second volume of the *Variétés littéraires* that the better part of this memoir by Father Amiot had been printed.’

(‘Tout ce que nous allons rapporter, est tiré d’un Mémoire du Révérend Pere Amiot, savant Jésuite qui habite la Chine depuis près de trente ans, & à qui les Lettres ont de grandes obligations, pour toutes les connaissances que nous lui devons sur cette contrée, aussi mal connue, que curieuse à connaître.

Après avoir donné ce Chapitre à l’impression, nous avons trouvé dans le second volume des *variétés littéraires*, que la plus grande partie de ce Mémoire du P. Amiot y avait été imprimée.’) La Borde, *Essai*, volume 1, 360, note (a).

43 François Picard’s forthcoming article on ‘De la musique moderne des Chinois’ should, I hope, resolve many of these mysteries. See also François Picard, ‘Amiot’, in *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de langue française*, ed. François Poillon (Paris: Karthala, 2008), 14–15.

44 For details see Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, Introduction to the *Dictionnaire de musique*, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: œuvres complètes*, volume 5, cclxxii.

45 For the evidence supporting this dating see Nathan John Martin, ‘An Unknown Rousseau Autograph: The Neuchâtel Manuscript of NOTES, *en Musique*’, in *Architecture, Cultural History, Autobiography*, ed. Jonathan Mallinson, SVEC [Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century] 2008/06 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2008), 313–314, note 5.

46 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau: juge de Jean-Jacques*, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 1, 680.



de Musique deux morceaux de *musique grecque* traduits sur nos notes par ces auteurs . . . On a ajouté dans la même *Planche*, un air chinois tiré du pere du Halde[.]⁴⁷

We have very much wished to see some fragments of ancient music. Father Kircher and Monsieur Burette have worked to satisfy the curiosity of the public on this point. One will find in the music plates two examples of Greek music transcribed into our notes by these authors . . . *We have added on the same plate, a Chinese air taken from Father Du Halde.*

It stands to reason that Rousseau would have delivered, together with the discursive texts of his entries, the accompanying figures, tables and examples that were to be engraved and published in the *Encyclopédie's* plates, since he cites these ancillary materials frequently in the body of his entries.⁴⁸ Very few manuscript materials pertaining to the *Encyclopédie* have survived. One that does, however, is an autograph version of selected musical examples, including the *air chinois*, that is held in the British Library and reproduced here as [Figure 6](#).⁴⁹ (This document, incidentally, also serves to establish that the famous printing errors for which La Borde so harshly criticized Rousseau are actually engraver's errors: the notes in bar 3 of the handwritten exemplar are correct, in the sense of matching other European witnesses to the melody.) If I am correct in thinking that this manuscript is coeval with Rousseau's production of the original articles for the *Encyclopédie*, then it also serves to exclude on chronological grounds the possibility that Amiot was the source. The first manuscripts on Chinese music by Amiot to arrive in Europe were the transcriptions that he sent to London in 1751. These, we know from the Royal Society's records, were received on 1 March 1753.⁵⁰ The lost Li Guangdi translation, on Rameau's testimony, reached Jean-Pierre de Bougainville (1722–1763), the Secrétaire Perpétuel of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, in 1754.⁵¹ Whenever 'De la musique moderne des Chinois' was sent, it certainly cannot have been before 1750, the year of Amiot's arrival in China – or indeed, before 1751, when he first reached Beijing.⁵² Rousseau's *Encyclopédie* articles, however,

47 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Musique', in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, seven-teen volumes, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (Paris: Briasson, David, Le Breton and Durand, 1751–1765), volume 10, 902 (my italics in the translation). The passage reappears with only superficial alterations in the entry 'Musique' in the *Dictionnaire de musique*, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 5, 923.

48 Rousseau's autographs of the *Encyclopédie* entries are mostly lost, but the one that does survive – namely that of 'NOTES, en Musique' – contains such references, which suggests that they were not (or at least not all) added subsequently by the editors. See Martin, 'An Unknown Rousseau Autograph'.

49 On this manuscript see Martin, 'Les planches de musique de l'*Encyclopédie*', 115–136.

50 Royal Society, London, *Journal Copy Book*, volume 21, fols 281–283. See Hermans, 'Amiot', 27.

51 Rameau, *Code*, 189n.

52 In all likelihood it was somewhat later than that. Amiot arrived in Beijing, as noted above, during the summer of 1751. The description of Beijing in winter that begins on page 117 of the manuscript, however, sounds first-hand. Also, the manuscript's very opening – 'After having provided as exact an acquaintance as I was able to with the music that the Chinese cultivated in ancient times' ('Après avoir donné une connoissance aussi exacte qu'il ma été possible de la Musique que les Chinois cultivoient anciennement') – suggests that 'De la musique moderne des Chinois' postdates Amiot's lost translation of Li Guangdi, assuming that that translation is indeed the intended reference. Lastly, in the preliminary discourse to his *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois* (page 3), Amiot indicates that the impetus for his study of Chinese music came from his superior Antoine Gabil (1689–1759), who was based in Beijing. In a letter sent from Beijing to the Royal Society in London, dated 30 October 1751, Gabil mentions Amiot's arrival and his intention to study Chinese music. See Antoine Gabil, *Correspondance de Pékin, 1722–1759*, ed. Renée Simon (Geneva: Droz, 1970), 642–644. The original letter is in the British Library (MS Add. 4439, no 526/190). A translation of the letter follows the manuscript 'Cantilenae Sinicae signis Europeis expressae' in the archives of the Royal Society (Letters & Papers, II, 422). A second letter from Gabil, dated 5 November 1751, appears to be the covering letter accompanying Amiot's transcriptions. I suppose, on the grounds of the much fuller treatment therein, that 'De la musique moderne' postdates these transcriptions. The original of the second letter is likewise in the British Library (MS Add. No 4439, 530/198).



Fig. 2. premier Morceau de Musique Ancienne. Ode de Pindare

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Fig. 3. Second Morceau de Musique Ancienne. Hymne a Nemesis

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le reste est perdu

Air Chinois

Figure 1. Air Persan

Planche D.

Der d'ont d'ari teloub nar... es tou mi a et bon y ar...
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fig. 2. air de l'auvergne de l'Amour

fig. 3. Danse Canadienne

Figure 6 Rousseau, Manuscript examples for the *Encyclopédie*. British Library, Add MS 29,627, fol. 22r. © British Library Board. Used by permission

date from 1749. It follows that Rousseau cannot possibly have taken the *air chinois* from Amiot. There is also no evidence to suggest that Rousseau subsequently acquired any knowledge of Amiot's writings. Those writings are, to my knowledge, first mentioned in print in 1760, in Rameau's *Code de musique pratique*. Yet in a marginal note scrawled into the Neuchâtel manuscript of his *Dictionnaire de musique*, Rousseau claims never to have read the *Code*:



Il est vrai que je n'ai point lû le Code de Musique ni les derniers écrits de M. Rameau ainsi je n'en puis rien dire mais j'aimerois mieux cent fois jeter ce dictionnaire au feu que de relire de ma vie une seule page de cet auteur avec l'obligation de la comprendre.⁵³

It is true that I have not read the *Code de musique* or the other later writings of M. Rameau and thus I cannot say anything about them. But I would a hundred times rather throw this dictionary into the fire than ever in my life reread a single page of that author with the obligation to understand it.

Of course, that assertion might not be true (though why would Rousseau deliberately lie in a private marginal note?), but it remains the case that Rousseau's extant writings on music contain no references to Amiot (nor, to judge by the index, does the *Correspondance complète*). But in any case, on chronological grounds alone, Rousseau cannot have taken the *air chinois* from Amiot. Tchen's claim can therefore be dismissed.

DU HALDE

If Rousseau clearly knew the *air chinois* before it could have reached him through Amiot's writings, does it follow that he took it from Du Halde? This, after all, is what Rousseau explicitly says in both the *Encyclopédie* and the *Dictionnaire de musique*. The second article from the *Dictionnaire* to mention Du Halde is the entry 'Caractères de musique'. There Rousseau somewhat credulously repeats an anecdote from that learned Jesuit's *Description de la Chine*:

Il n'y a que les Nations de l'Europe qui sachent écrire leur Musique. Quoique dans les autres parties du Monde chaque Peuple ait aussi la sienne, il ne paroît pas qu'aucun d'eux ait poussé ses recherches jusqu'à des *Caractères* pour la noter. Au moins est-il sûr que les Arabes ni les Chinois, les deux Peuples étrangers qui ont le plus cultivé les Lettres, n'ont, ni l'un ni l'autre, de pareils *Caractères*. . . quant aux Chinois, on trouve dans le P. du Halde, qu'ils furent étrangement surpris de voir les Jésuites noter et lire sur cette même Note tous les Airs Chinois qu'on leur faisoit entendre.⁵⁴

It is only the nations of Europe that know how to write their music. Although in other parts of the world each people has its own music, it appears that none of them has pushed its enquiries so far as to arrive at characters for notating it. It is certain at least that neither the Arabs nor the Chinese, the two foreign peoples who have most cultivated letters, have such characters. . . As for the Chinese, we find in Father Du Halde, that they were strangely surprised to see the Jesuits notating and reading from that same notation all the Chinese airs that they were made to hear.

This much-repeated anecdote, which appears in multiple sources, seems to have originated with Ferdinand Verbiest, who recounts it in his *Astronomia europæa sub imperatore Tartaro Sinico Câm Hy* (1687).⁵⁵ To recall only the most salient detail, the scene has it that when Filippo Grimaldi (1638–1712) and Tomás Pereira (1645–1708) appeared before Kangxi in 1676, the latter greatly impressed the Emperor by his facility in jotting down and then singing back an unnamed Chinese melody performed by the Emperor and his musicians. Rousseau had the anecdote from Du Halde, who tells it in a version very close to Verbiest's. Du Halde, incidentally, only says that the Chinese lack 'notes de musique', meaning presumably that they did not have a system of musical notation that *looked* like the European one – with its staves and different noteheads and

53 Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Neuchâtel, fonds Du Peyrou, MS R. 55, fol. 488r.

54 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 5, 686.

55 Ferdinand Verbiest, *Astronomia europæa sub imperatore Tartaro Sinico Câm Hy* (Dillingen: Johan Caspar Bencard, 1687), 89–90; trans. Noel Golvers as *The 'Astronomia europæa' of Ferdinand Verbiest, S. J. (Dillingen, 1687): Text, Translation, Notes and Commentaries* (Nettetal: Steyler, 1993), 129.



so on.⁵⁶ The entirely spurious inference that the Chinese had no indigenous system of musical notation whatsoever seems to have been Rousseau's. (This error, incidentally, is a further proof that Rousseau had not read Amiot, who gives the *air chinois* not just in European but also in *gongche* (工尺譜) notation, something that would have disabused Rousseau of his error if he had seen it; see Figure 4b above. There is a particular irony here in that Rousseau's own system of musical notation, advanced in the *Dissertation sur la musique moderne*, bears a conceptual resemblance to *gongche* notation.⁵⁷)

Beyond Rousseau's explicit avowals, there is also independent evidence available to show that he was reading Du Halde in the late 1740s. In penury as ever, but now with Thérèse Lavasseur and her family to support, Rousseau took a job as secretary to the Dupin family.⁵⁸ Though he downplays and makes light of this arrangement in the *Confessions*,⁵⁹ Rousseau was extensively employed not just by Louise-Marie-Madeleine Dupin, *née* de Fontaine (1706–1799) and by her stepson Louis-Claude de Francueil (1715–1787), but also by the paterfamilias, the tax-farmer (fermier général) Claude Dupin (1696–1769), who was by that time one of the wealthiest men in Paris. He assisted M. Dupin in drafting two refutations of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*.⁶⁰ With M. de Francueil, he attended Guillaume-François Rouelle's (1703–1770) chemistry lectures and assembled the notes he took into the *Institutions chimiques* (1747).⁶¹ With Mme Dupin, he collaborated on a projected *Traité de l'amitié* as well as the proto-feminist treatise that is generally known as the 'Ouvrage sur les femmes'.⁶² (There is, of course, a particular irony to this last, given the vehement misogyny to which Rousseau would later give vent in the *Confessions*, in the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, and especially in *Émile*.⁶³)

56 Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise*, four volumes (La Haye: Henri Scheurleer, 1736), volume 3, 328–332. (This work was first published in Paris by Le Mercier in 1735.) An English translation of the passage in question is available in *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Leo Treitler and others, seven volumes (New York: Norton, 1998), volume 4, 725–729.

57 On this point see Zhang Na, *La pensée musicale de Jean-Jacques Rousseau en Chine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2018). And see, more generally, François Picard, 'Oralité et notations, de Chine en Europe', *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* 12 (1999), 35–53.

58 On Rousseau's relations with the Dupins in the 1740s more generally see Jean-Pierre Le Boulter, 'Rousseau et les Dupin en 1743: essai de chronologie critique', *Études de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 4 (1990), and Le Boulter, 'La "déclaration" de Jean-Jacques Rousseau à Madame Dupin: d'après une copie inédite', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 81 (1981), 431–437.

59 Rousseau, *Confessions*, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 1, 341.

60 Claude Dupin, *Réflexions sur quelques parties d'un livre intitulé De l'esprit des lois* (Paris, 1749), and *Observations sur un livre intitulé de l'esprit des lois* (Paris, c1755). In 2004 Claude Dupin's manuscript was discovered by Cecil Courtney: Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New York, Seligman MS./1750–51/Dupin. Dupin's critique has been much discussed in the secondary literature on Montesquieu: see Alexis François, 'Rousseau, les Dupin, Montesquieu', *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 30 (1943–1945), 47–64; Robert Shackleton, 'Montesquieu, Dupin and the Early Writings of Rousseau', in *Reappraisals of Rousseau: Studies in Honour of R. A. Leigh*, ed. Simon Harvey, Marian Hobson, David Kelley and Samuel S. B. Taylor (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1980), 234–249; and Charles Porset, 'Madame Dupin et Montesquieu, ou les infortunes de la vertu', in *Actes du colloque international tenu à Bordeaux, du 3 au 6 décembre 1998*, ed. Louis Desgraves (Bordeaux: Académie de Bordeaux, 1999), 287–306.

61 Bibliothèque de Genève, MS R. 162. The *Institutions chimiques* were first edited by Maurice Gautier and published in two volumes of the *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 12 (1918–1919), 1–164 and 13 (1920–1921), 3–178. A more recent edition by Bruno Bernardi (Paris: Fayard, 1999) is also available. On the position of the work in Rousseau's *œuvre* and in eighteenth-century chemistry see Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent and Bruno Bernardi, 'Pour situer les *Institutions chimiques*', *Corpus: Revue de philosophie* 36 (1999), 5–39. And on Rousseau's relationship to the eighteenth-century sciences more generally see Bensaude-Vincent and Bernardi, eds, *Rousseau et les sciences* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003).

62 The title is due to Gaston de Villeneuve-Guibert, who first described the work in print in *Le Portefeuille de Madame Dupin* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1884).

63 Some scholars, though, have tried to recuperate an early, feminist Rousseau. See Jean-Pierre Le Boulter, 'Sur les écrits "féministes" de Rousseau', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 199 (1981), 225–236, and Eileen Hunt



The manuscripts pertaining to Mme Dupin's 'Ouvrage sur les femmes' remained in the possession of her descendants until the mid-twentieth century, when, between 1951 and 1958, they were auctioned off in five sales at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris. The principal repositories of these materials are now the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, the Bibliothèque de Genève and the Bibliothèque municipale de Bordeaux, with some materials also held in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale, at Harvard University's Houghton Library and at the Bibliothèque d'études rousseauistes in Montmorency.⁶⁴ The manuscripts are of two broad kinds: continuous drafts of chapters intended for Mme Dupin's projected works and – something of considerable interest to *rousseauistes* anxious to reconstruct the *philosophe's* intellectual activities on the eve of the First Discourse (1750) – extracts and reading notes in Rousseau's own hand. Among these last are twenty-five leaves bearing extracts from Du Halde's *Description de la Chine*.⁶⁵ None of the leaves that I have seen preserves an extract pertaining to Du Halde's comments on music – let alone a copy of the *air chinois* – but they do serve to establish that Rousseau had all four volumes of Du Halde's work in his hands.



One might reasonably wonder why Tchen dismisses Rousseau's own testimony. Rousseau says explicitly that he took the melody from Du Halde, and he was demonstrably reading the *Description de la Chine* in approximately the right period. Part of the reason, perhaps, is La Borde, who mentions Rousseau's version in close proximity to Amiot's. But a second factor is the significant misreading of Du Halde's version (Figure 7) that Tchen inherited from earlier French scholarship. Note that Du Halde's transcription is written in French violin clef (G1), so that the starting note is g^2 – exactly as in Rousseau. In his 'Étude sur le système musical chinois' of 1901, however, Antoine Deschevrens misread the clef as a standard treble clef (G2) and so presented the example a third too low (beginning on e^2), while, curiously enough, also silently incorporating La Borde's metrical 'correction' (Figure 8).⁶⁶ Tchen takes over the mistake and likewise places Du Halde's melody a third too low (Figure 9).⁶⁷ Curiously, an early reader of Deschevrens's text, Ilmari Krohn, sensed that something had gone awry, but made things worse by proposing an alto clef (C3) for Deschevrens's treble,⁶⁸ Krohn's suggestion had the happy effect of bringing Deschevrens around to the correct solution in his reply,⁶⁹ but by that point the damage was done.⁷⁰

Botting, 'The Early Rousseau's Egalitarian Feminism: A Philosophical Convergence with Madame Dupin and *The Critique of the Spirit of the Laws*', *History of European Ideas* 43/7 (2017), 732–744.

64 Prior to being auctioned, the papers were catalogued by Anicet Sénéal in 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau, secrétaire de Madame Dupin', *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 36 (1966), 173–288. Many of the manuscripts have subsequently been tracked down thanks to the efforts of Jean-Pierre Le Bouler and Catherine Lafarge. See their 'Catalogue topographique partiel des papiers Dupin-Rousseau dispersée de 1951 à 1958', *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 39 (1980), 243–280.

65 Sénéal indicates twenty-five folios ('Rousseau, secrétaire', 216). Of these, I have seen the three preserved at the Ransom Center in Austin (Dupin papers, box 1, folder 18), as well as the seventeen folios held at the Bibliothèque de Genève (MS fr. 216, fols 205–223).

66 Antoine Deschevrens, 'Étude sur le système musical chinois', *Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 2 (1901), 526–528.

67 Tchen, *Musique chinoise*, 34–36.

68 'Fragen und Antworten', *Mitteilungen der internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 3/1 (1901), 40–41.

69 'Antwort', *Mitteilungen der internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 3/3 (1901), 125–126.

70 In the interest of charity, it is perhaps worth remembering that in 1901, and indeed even in 1974 – before the historical-performance movement had led to the widespread revival of *la musique française classique* – familiarity with the French violin clef was surely less widespread than it is today.

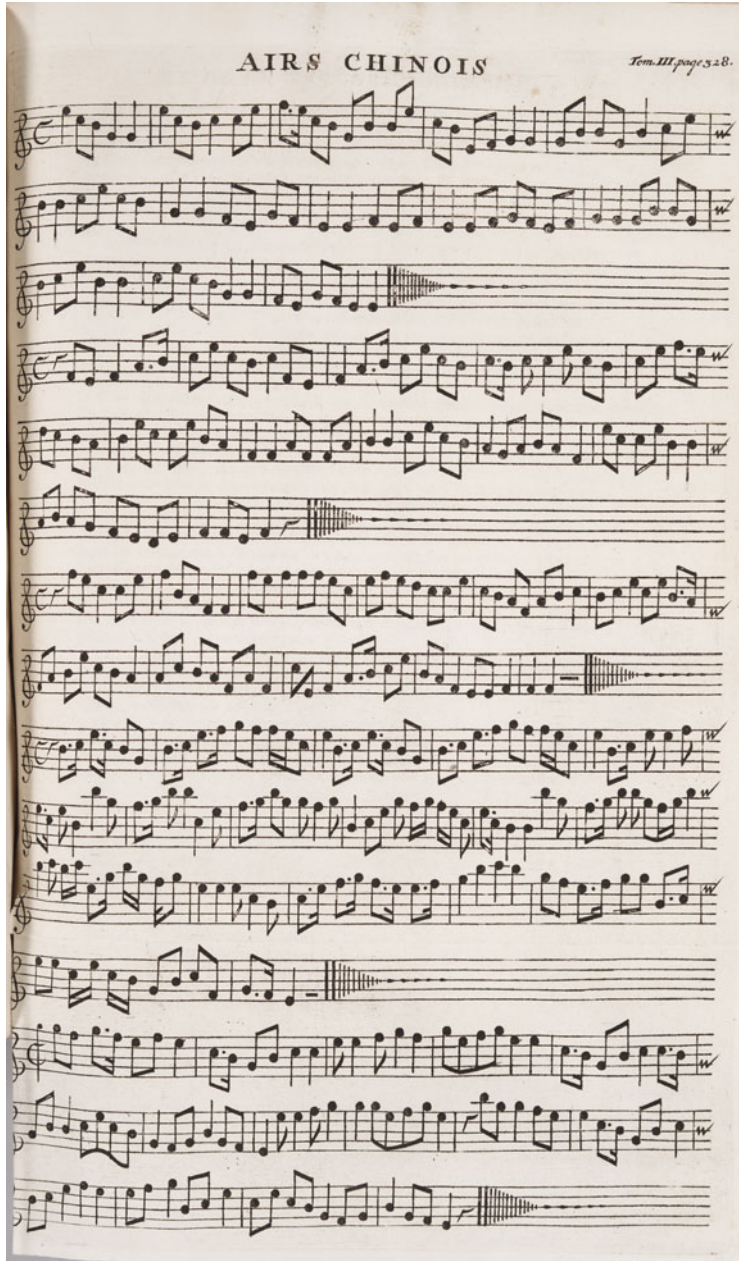


Figure 7 Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *Déscription géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise*, four volumes (La Haye: Henri Scheulerleer, 1736), volume 3, plate between 328 and 329

PRÉVOST

What, finally, of George Pire's alternative hypothesis – that Rousseau took the melody from Antoine-François Prévost (1697–1763)? One of the main preoccupations of Pire's article is simply to emphasize



Figure 8 Antoine Deschevrens, 'Étude sur le système musical chinois', *Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 2 (1901), 526

the extent of Rousseau's debt to the *Histoire générale des voyages*.⁷¹ Pire's other essential concern is with how certain 'big ideas made fashionable by travel accounts' ('grandes idées mises à la mode par les récits de voyages') came to mark Rousseau's thought, above all in the two Discourses and *Émile*.⁷² (By 'grandes idées', Pire has in mind such themes as Rousseau's polemics against swaddling clothes and in favour of maternal breast-feeding in book one of *Émile*, on the one hand, but also much of his portrait of *l'homme naturel* in the first part of the Second Discourse.⁷³) On his way to making these larger points, Pire mentions the *air chinois* in passing:

L'air chinois que nous trouvons également à la fin du *Dictionnaire de Musique* est, d'après ce qu'on lit chez Rousseau, repris au Père du Halde. En fait, il provient de l'H. G. V. Quand Jean-Jacques nous parle de l'absence de notation musicale en Chine et de l'émerveillement de l'empereur en voyant le Père Pereira écrire la musique qu'il entendait et la reproduire aussitôt, il se réfère encore à l'H. G. V.⁷⁴

The Chinese melody that is likewise found at the end of the *Dictionnaire de musique* is, according to what we read in Rousseau, taken from Father Du Halde. In fact, it comes from the *Histoire générale des voyages*. When Jean-Jacques tells us of the absence of musical notation in China and the amazement of the emperor at seeing Father Pereira write down the music that he heard and then reproducing it straight away, he is again following the *Histoire générale des voyages*.

This, however, is all he says. Pire is content to insist on the alleged fact; he says nothing about its warrant – how, that is, he thinks he knows that Rousseau took the *air chinois* from Prévost and not from Du Halde. To the extent that there is an implicit argument, it seems merely to be that Rousseau demonstrably relied extensively on the abbé Prévost's collection, and that the relevant details appear there.⁷⁵

71 Pire, 'Relations de voyage', 358. The English collection in question is John Green, *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, four volumes (London: Thomas Astley, 1745–1747).

72 Pire, 'Relations de voyage', 360.

73 Pire, 'Relations de voyage', 363–364, 367–370.

74 Pire, 'Relations de voyage', 360–361.

75 'I will not pursue this kind of enquiry further, since I have reached the goal that I set for myself: to show to the various scholars who study Rousseau that much of the knowledge he boasts of originates in travellers' accounts and in particular in the *Histoire générale des voyages*, a vast work that furnishes a host of particulars on all sorts of questions'; 'Rousseau



(b) *Ces mêmes airs rectifiés.*

(I)



Figure 9 Ysia Tchen, *La musique chinoise en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Publications orientalistes de France, 1974), 35

Of course, these details *are* transmitted by Prévost. Figure 10, for instance, gives the *air chinois* as it appears in the *Histoire générale des voyages*. And it is clear enough from Pire's substantial catalogue of borrowings that Rousseau made extensive use of Prévost's collection when he came to write his *Discours sur l'inégalité*

had the habit of giving second-hand citations . . . Jean-Jacques found in the *Histoire générale des voyages* the sum total of all earlier travelogues. When he alludes to Battel, Dapper, Kolben, Merolla, Kaempfer, Paul Lucas, Tavernier . . . it is to this collection that he is referring, and not to the original writings' ('Nous ne pousserons pas plus loin ce genre de recherches, car nous avons atteint le but que nous nous proposons: montrer aux divers spécialistes qui étudient Rousseau qu'un grand nombre de connaissances dont il fait étalage trouvent leur origine dans les récits des voyageurs et plus spécialement dans l'*H. G. V.*, vaste ouvrage qui fournit une foule de renseignements sur toutes sortes de questions'; 'Rousseau a l'habitude de fournir des citations de seconde main . . . Jean-Jacques a trouvé dans l'*H. G. V.* la somme de toutes les relations de voyages antérieures. Quand il fait allusion à Battel, Dapper, Kolben, Merolla, Kempfer [*sic*], Paul Lucas, Tavernier . . . c'est à cette collection qu'il se réfère, et non aux écrits originaux'). Pire, 'Relations de voyage', 361–362, 376.

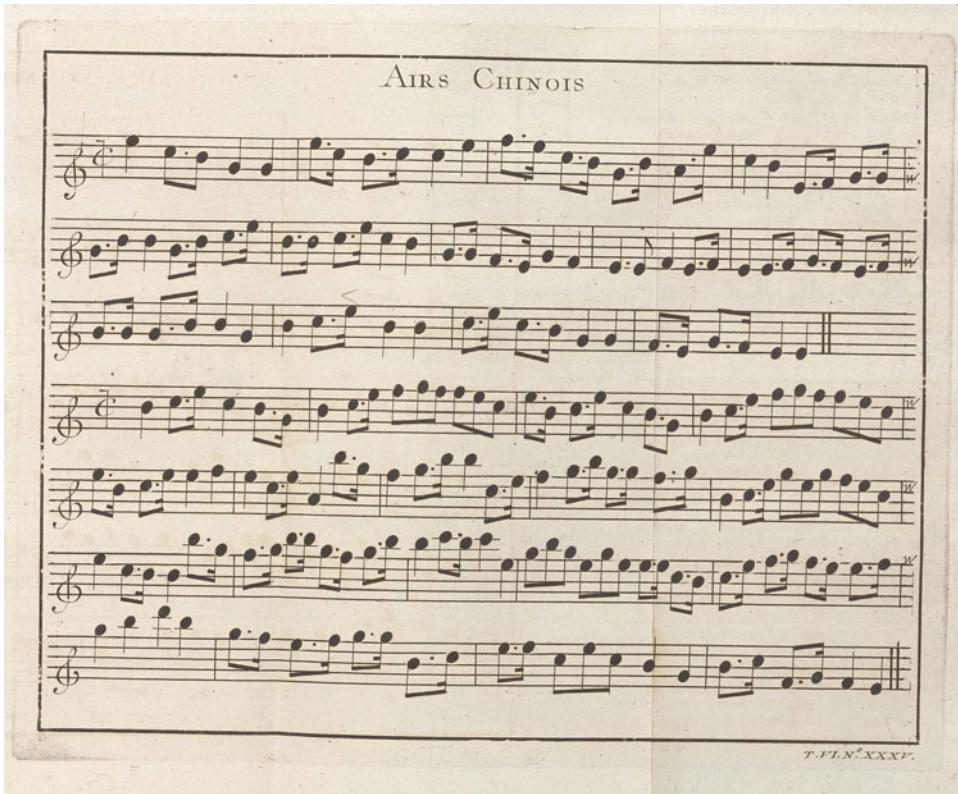


Figure 10 Antoine François Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages, ou Nouvelle collection de toutes les relations de voyage*, twenty volumes (Paris: Didot, 1746–1761), volume 6, plate between 288 and 289

(Second Discourse) in 1753–1754.⁷⁶ Prévost is mentioned twice in the *Confessions*, first in connection with the circle of friends gathered around François Mussard (1691–1755) at Passy in book eight, and then again much later on for his translations of Hume.⁷⁷ The first passage occurs in close conjunction with Rousseau's narration of the circumstances surrounding his composition of *Le devin du village*, which places it around 1752.⁷⁸ Prévost's name does not appear in Sénéchal's catalogue of the Dupin–Rousseau papers, which, of

76 See also Jean Morel, 'Recherches sur les sources du discours de l'inégalité', *Annales Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 5 (1909), 190–194. On Rousseau's exploitation of eighteenth-century natural history and (proto-)ethnography in the Second Discourse more generally see, in addition to the whole fourth part of Morel's article (pages 179–198), Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), 322–376; Robert Wokler, 'Perfectible Apes in Decadent Cultures: Rousseau's Anthropology Revisited', *Daedalus* 107/3 (1978), 107–134; Victor Gourevitch, 'Rousseau's Pure State of Nature', *Interpretation* 16/1 (1988), 23–60; Heinrich Meier, 'The Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men: On the Intention of Rousseau's Most Philosophical Work', *Interpretation* 16/2 (1988–1989), 211–228; Francis Moran III, 'Between Primates and Primitives: Natural Man as the Missing Link in Rousseau's Second Discourse', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54/1 (1993), 37–58; and Francis Moran III, 'Of Pongos and Men: "Orangs-Outang" in Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*', *Review of Politics* 57/4 (1995), 641–664.

77 Rousseau, *Confessions*, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 1, 374, 630.

78 Rousseau, *Confessions*, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 1, 375–376, 382–383. On the chronology see Jacqueline Waerber, "'Cette horrible innovation': The First Version of the Recitative Parts of Rousseau's *Le devin du village*", *Music & Letters* 82/2 (2001), 177, 181–183.



course, does not mean that Rousseau had not read the *Histoire générale des voyages* by the late 1740s, only that no reading notes survive in his hand.⁷⁹ Prévost does, on the other hand, show up in Le Bouler and Lafarge's studies of Rousseau's and Mme Dupin's borrowings from the Bibliothèque du roi, though the entry is from 14 April 1750. On that date, Mme Dupin borrowed volume 6 (1748) of the quarto edition (in twenty volumes) published by Didot.⁸⁰

Thanks to Michèle Duchet's archival sleuthing,⁸¹ we know that the old shelfmark – '1498' – given in the library's *Registres des livres prestés*⁸² corresponds to 'G.6057' in the library's current catalogue. Volume 6, the one Mme Dupin borrowed, belongs to a phase of Prévost's project early enough to remain quite close to the model of Green's *New General Collection of Travels and Voyages* (1745–1747), which Prévost began by simply translating (Green's book is the *collection anglaise* to which Pire alludes). Green in turn copied from multiple earlier sources, but principally from Du Halde's *Description de la Chine*. In fact, pages 1–499 of the volume Mme Dupin borrowed are in effect taken over largely from Du Halde. As Prévost writes in his introduction to the volume: 'In making use of all the authors just named, I did not neglect to follow here, as my principal guide, Father Du Halde, who took the trouble to excerpt everything that merits any attention from them' ('En faisant usage de tous les Auteurs qu'on vient de nommer, on ne laissera pas de suivre ici, pour principal guide, le Pere du Halde, qui a pris la peine d'en tirer tout ce qui mérite quelque attention').⁸³ This holds particularly true for the relevant part of the chapter 'Goût des Chinois pour la Musique, la Poësie & l'Histoire'. There Prévost closely paraphrases Du Halde's chapter on Chinese music ('De leur musique'), including the much-repeated story about Pereira's audience before the Kangxi Emperor.⁸⁴ As in Du Halde, a plate with examples of Chinese melodies is tipped in amidst the discussion, though Prévost produces only the first two of Du Halde's five examples. And so Rousseau's *air chinois* appears in Prévost's volume in the form given in Figure 10. The volume itself, to recall, was published in 1748, and so was in principle available to Rousseau as he was writing the articles for the *Encyclopédie*, even if Mme Dupin did not borrow it until April 1750.

So did Rousseau take the melody from Prévost or from Du Halde? To some degree, the point is moot: Prévost's account is loosely copied from Du Halde in any case, and so the question amounts in one sense to a distinction without a difference. Rousseau had clearly read Du Halde by March of 1749, when he wrote his *Encyclopédie* articles; that he may well have also read Prévost cannot be rigorously excluded. Which of these two sources he in fact had in front of him when he copied out the *air chinois* in the early months of 1749 might therefore seem unimportant. Still, a closer look at Du Halde's and Prévost's

79 'One would expect to find in the Dupin–Rousseau papers a good number of extracts from the volume borrowed from the Royal Library and, more generally, from volumes 1–7 of the *Histoire des voyages*, published from 1746 to 1749. Well: there is nothing. Although Rousseau carefully enclosed his extracts from Du Halde in a cover, there is no file devoted to Prévost' ('On s'attendrait à trouver dans les papiers Dupin–Rousseau bon nombre d'extraits du volume emprunté à la Bibliothèque du roi et, plus généralement, des tomes i à vii de l'*Histoire des voyages*, publiés de 1746 à 1749. Or il n'en est rien: alors que Jean-Jacques a soigneusement rangé dans une chemise ses extraits de Du Halde aucun dossier n'est consacré à Prévost'). Jean-Pierre Le Bouler and Catherine Lafarge, 'Les emprunts de Mme Dupin à la Bibliothèque du roi dans les années 1748–1750', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 182 (1979), 163.

80 Le Bouler and Lafarge, 'Les emprunts de Mme Dupin', 157, 160–165.

81 Michèle Duchet, 'L'*Histoire des voyages*: Originalité et influence', in *L'Abbé Prévost: actes du colloque d'Aix, décembre 1963*, ed. Jean Fabre (Gap: Éditions Ophrys, 1965), 149, note 17; and Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire*, 86, note 132, 485.

82 For details on this source and its modes of exploitation see Le Bouler and Lafarge, 'Les emprunts de Mme Dupin', 110–111.

83 Antoine-François Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages, ou Nouvelle collection de toutes les relations des voyages, ou, nouvelle collection de toutes les relations de voyage par mer et par terre, qui ont été publiées jusqu'à présent dans les différentes langues de toutes les nations connues... enrichi de cartes géographiques et de figures*, twenty volumes (Paris: Didot, 1746–1761), volume 6, 5. In the copying and compiling that is characteristic of Prévost, Du Halde and other French writers on China one sees, I think, the persistence of the kinds of earlier practices of authorship described, for instance, in Anthony Grafton, *Inky Fingers: The Making of Books in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2020), 1–28.

84 Prévost, *Histoire générale des voyages*, volume 6, 288.



transcriptions, and a comparison of their notations with Rousseau's, suggests that Du Halde is more likely. A first consideration is rhythmic: Prévost gives the melody largely in dotted rhythms, whereas in Du Halde (as in Rousseau) these are flattened into even quavers. The misprint in the rhythmic values at beat two of bar one in Prévost is easily corrected. But had Rousseau been copying from Prévost, would he have just as easily altered the c^2 on the fourth beat of bar 3 to d^2 ? Or altered the rhythmic organization of bar 2 from Prévost's version to Du Halde's two dactyls and made similar rhythmic adjustments elsewhere? In short, while Rousseau's version corresponds approximately to Prévost's, it matches Du Halde's more or less exactly.



In sum: by way of a first – bibliographical – conclusion, I can say with reasonable confidence that Rousseau took the *air chinois* from Du Halde, and not from Amiot, Prévost or any other source. Of the three principal sources, Rousseau's version of the *air* most closely resembles Du Halde's – the other two witnesses transmit variant versions. Moreover, since Rousseau himself maintains that he took the melody from Du Halde, the burden of proof clearly lies with Tchen or Pire in wanting to make the case for Amiot or Prévost respectively. On chronological grounds alone, Amiot's candidacy can be eliminated: Amiot did not arrive in China until 1750 (and was not in Beijing until the summer of 1751), but Rousseau's *Encyclopédie* articles, which cite the *air chinois*, were written in 1749. La Borde's suggestion, which Tchen echoes, that Rousseau took the melody from Amiot is therefore mistaken. Prévost's discussion, in contrast, was certainly available to Rousseau in 1749. None the less, the weight of the evidence points to Du Halde. Again: Rousseau claimed to have taken the melody from Du Halde; he was demonstrably reading Du Halde in the later 1740s; and his version matches Du Halde's up to slight rhythmic variants and of course the famous misprint (which, to reiterate, is an engraver's mistake that did not enter the transmission until the melody's publication in the *Dictionnaire de musique*). Any further argument in support of Pire's reconstruction would need to explain why Rousseau's version should depart from its alleged source in Prévost in ways that bring it closer to Du Halde, and also why Rousseau would have wished to conceal his actual source.

It is a curious fact that this one melody shows up in so many variants, in so many French sources (some of them, at least, independent of one another) and that it is so often paired with the anecdote about Pereira and Kangxi. Why this particular melody? Why this anecdote? And from where, exactly, did Du Halde, Prévost and Amiot each get the tune? Answers to these questions must, alas, await further research, as must a fuller probing of the epistolary and other networks linking the Jesuit mission in Beijing to the high Parisian Enlightenment, by way of the Académie des Inscriptions and the office of the French Secretary of State – a network that made these two far-flung world capitals seem more proximate, in the later eighteenth century, than they had any geographical right to be. In pursuing the narrow question of the source of Rousseau's *air chinois*, I hope I have at least gestured towards the scholarly, scientific and diplomatic networks that facilitated its transmission.