

Item 2.A: Additional information related to *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*

Matteo (Matthew) Ricci (the author of this excerpt) was a Jesuit missionary to China from 1582 until his death in Beijing in 1610. He targeted the literati class for Christian education, a “top-down” approach to conversion. Ricci became fluent in Chinese and wrote or translated several works into his adopted language.

Documents 2.2 and 2.3:

By the Ming dynasty, China had already been an urbanized culture for almost a thousand years. Cities like Nanjing, Xi’an, and Beijing were crowded, lively, and cosmopolitan centers of activity. As far back as Marco Polo’s visit in the thirteenth century, Westerners had commented on the marvels and sophistication of city life in China. The Chinese, too, recognized their capital (which, by the late Ming, numbered perhaps a million people) as a splendid one. Several guidebooks were published during the Ming. And like us today, city dwellers during the Ming complained of the congestion, the dirt, and the noise that were part of urban life.

Document 2.5:

The scholar-bureaucrats functioned as the officials in the government. Highly educated, especially in the Confucian classics, they had to pass rigorous examinations before they were deemed worthy to serve in the extensive mechanism of the civil service. Each was also expected to know history, classical literature, and art, including calligraphy and painting. As the ethical and cultural elite of the Ming dynasty, they not only ran the government bureaucracy and performed important ceremonial functions but also set the standard for moral behavior and artistic taste. Many were intellectuals, who cultivated intellectual friendships with other scholar-officials with whom they would enjoy conversation, poetry contests, and outings into the countryside. Connoisseurship—of painting, calligraphy, tea, gardens, even spider fighting!—was among their highest pleasures. They worked hard, but lived well, retiring, with good pensions, often to their country estates.