

Document 4.1a & b: Stamps issued commemorating Jesuit missionary Ferdinand Verbiest

*The Jesuit missionaries brought with them to China the latest learning from Europe. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this included scientific instruments as well as a wealth of information about astronomy. Chinese emperors had long welcomed foreign scholars, including Muslims and Jews, for their scientific and mathematical skills. So it was not unusual for the Jesuits to settle into the royal household and advise the emperor on astronomy, engineering and cartography. Below are two images of Ferdinand Verbiest, a Jesuit missionary in China from 1659 to his death there in 1688.*

a. Next to Verbiest is a picture of the celestial globe he made for the Chinese emperor in 1673. By using the wheel attached to the polar axis, the globe could be turned to show the positions of the stars at any time of the day.



<http://www.danstopicals.com/astronomical.htm>



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The stamp features a sketch attributed to Verbiest of the instruments in the Imperial Observatory in Peking. It was issued with five others to commemorate Portuguese influence in the Far East. In the upper left corner is an azimuthal quadrant. In the upper right corner is a bipartite arc. The picture is actually of Tycho Brahe's arc from Tycho's observatory as illustrated in his *Astronomiæ instauratæ mechanica* (Wandesburg, 1598) rather than Verbiest's. In the lower right corner is the celestial globe which Verbiest made for the emperor. The instrument in the lower left corner is a zodiacal armillary. The fifth instrument is a horizon circle.

Source: *Dan's Topical Stamps*, <http://www.danstopicals.com/astronomical.htm>