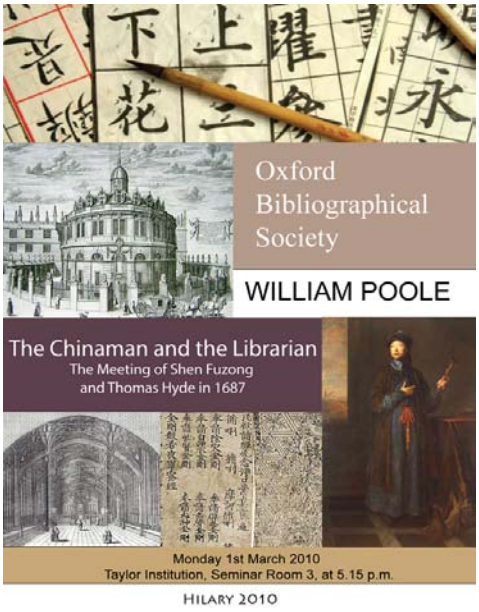
The Chinaman and the Librarian



The Meeting of Shen Fuzong and Thomas Hyde in 1687

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In September of 1687, that ill-fated monarch James II and VII, visited the University of Oxford. His was no social call: from afar, James had attempted to intrude an undesired President on the Fellows of Magdalen College; the Fellows refused; and James was forced to visit in person. ‘Let those who refuse look to it. They shall feel the whole weight of my hand. They shall know what it is to incur the displeasure of their Sovereign.’ But James famously bungled, and his handling of the Oxford affair was a further stumble towards his desertion of the throne the next year, and the collapse of his tedious line.

James’ Oxonian visit, however, was not all brow-beating. On 5 September, a Monday, James touched for the King’s Evil in Christ Church Cathedral, frequented the Schools, and then walked across to the Bodleian Library, ascending the stairs to the Selden End. There he was greeted by ‘a most admirable collation’ of 111 dishes, hot and cold, at a reputed cost to the University of £160. James summoned Bodley’s

Librarian Thomas Hyde, who kissed his hands, and for a brief moment the monarch and the librarian forgot about politics:

> ... well D^{r} Hyde [said the King] was y^{e} chinese here? to w^{ch} he answered yes if it may please y^{r} maj. & I learnd many things of him. Then s*ai*d his majestie, he was a little blinking fellow was he not? to w^{ch} he answerd, yes – & added y^{t} all the chineses Tartars & all y^{t} part of the world was narrow eyd – then y^{e} k. said y^{t} he had his picture to y^{e} life hanging in his roome next to y^{e} bed-chamber.
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> Then his maj. told D^{r} Hyde of a book of Confucius translated fro*m* China language by y^{e} Jesuits (4 in number) & asked whether it was in y^{e} library – to w^{ch} D^{r} Hyde answered, y^{t} it was – & y^{t} it treated of philosophy, but not so as y^{t} of European philosophy – whereupon his majest. asked whether y^{e} Chinees had any Divinity, to w^{ch} D^{r} Hyde answered yes – but twas Idolatry, they being all heathens – but yet y^{t} they have in their Idol-Temple statutes representing the Trinity, & other pictures w^{ch} shew y^{t} antient Xtianity had been amongst them – to which he assented by a nod.

The ‘Chinese’ of whom monarch and librarian talked was Shen Fuzong (c. 1658-91), a young Chinaman whose father, a Nanking doctor, had converted to Catholicism at the hands of the Jesuit China Mission at some point in the previous decade. Shen’s visit to the West is one of the most remarkable cross-cultural encounters of the entire early-modern period, and Shen arrived in the West at a time when fascination with Chinese culture and scholarship was running at high-point. Even the king had heard of the very recent Latin edition of Confucius and the religious controversies it had provoked; and James had indeed commanded Sir Godfrey Kneller to paint Shen’s portrait, with justly famous results. His visit to England is of especial significance, because his meeting with Thomas Hyde, Bodley’s Librarian, holder of both the Hebrew and Arabic chairs, and the foremost oriental scholar in Britain, marked the birth of informed Anglophone sinology. Shen accepted an invitation to work for Hyde on oriental materials in the Bodleian over the summer, and the men continued to correspond after Shen left Oxford for London. Shen sailed for Lisbon in 1688, and thence for China.

My business today is to put this extraordinary encounter into some intellectual and bibliographical context. European scholars had by this date amassed over a century's worth of accounts, mainly but by no means solely Jesuit in origin, of travel to the Far East, and the bulk of these concerned China. These primary accounts soon inspired a tradition of commentary and speculation on all matters Chinese, usually generated by those who possessed no first-hand knowledge themselves. It is really this latter category that most interests me in my broader work on this topic, as it was in this emergent subgenre that western scholars debated the difficult questions of the religion, language, and history of a culture that was heterodox in all three areas.

What could learned Oxford know about China and Chinese by the later seventeenth century? There were of course medieval accounts, such as the genuine material of Odoric of Pordenone captured within the fictitious framework of Sir John Mandeville, with his surprisingly accurate portrayal of China under its first period of Tartar or Manchu rule. And how medieval Cathay and early-modern China were finally identified by western scholars as referring to the same place is itself a tale for another day, but it involves a missionary and an academic reciting zodiacal signs to one another beside a Leiden barge canal in the late spring of 1654. Franciscan and Jesuit accounts of the Middle Kingdom were starting to appear from the late sixteenth-century, and the appearance in 1588 of an English translation of Mendoza's *History of China* marks the origin of extended Anglophone discussion of Chinese culture. (1588, incidentally, also saw the first English shorthand system in print, in which Timothy Bright claimed that his *Characterie* was a sort of superior Chinese.) Dutch traders from the late sixteenth century had carried back on their boats books in Chinese script, and these became must-haves for seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosity and museums across Europe. Mendoza had provided a basic discussion of the language, and the English translation includes two very garbled woodcuts of Chinese characters, the first printed representations in England. Samuel Purchas in his vast compendium of travel narratives, the multi-volume *Pilgrimes* of 1625 added a sheaf of documents to the growing pile, and indeed I believe that Purchas' redaction of the account of the missionary Diego Pantoja, a colleague of Matteo Ricci, who taught harpsichord to the Chinese Emperor's eunuchs and ended up in charge of the mission to Japan, is the direct source behind the concluding section of the first work

of English science-fiction, Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone* of 1638. Purchas also provided a translation of the Ricci-Trigault account of China, in which the tonal nature of Chinese speech was first promulgated.

Easily the most important scholarly materials, however, emanated from the later pen of the missionary Martino Martini, the man next to the Dutch canal, who returned from China in the 1650s to see through the press several sinological studies, including his celebrated *Atlas Sinensis* (1655) and his *Decas prima* (1658), a chronological work, which caused a century of shock in Europe by accepting with surprisingly little fuss that the Chinese dynasties securely extended to before the Hebrew reckoning of the date of the biblical Flood, a move reliant on a slightly earlier Jesuit decision that the longer Greek Septuagint chronology of the Bible was to be preferred in China to the shorter Vulgate Hebrew figures. Martini's *Decas prima* remained untranslated, but the important subsequent narratives of Semedo and Magalahaes appeared in English in 1655 and 1688 respectively. Western scholarly chewing over such materials itself produced a sub-genre of scholarly publication, of which easily the most important is Athanasius Kircher's *China Illustrata* of 1667. The original Bodleian copy, we may note, was gifted by Hyde's friend the aristocratic natural philosopher Robert Boyle. At the other end of the scale we might think of the Augsburg Lutheran Theophilus Spizelius' handy *De re literaria Sinensium commentarius* (1661), a derivative collection on Chinese literary culture; the Bodleian copy, in the Lincoln series, was originally owned by Sir Thomas Clutterbuck, almost certainly the F.R.S. and merchant of that name. John Wilkins in his famous attempt at an artificial language, the *Essay* of 1668, referred to the work, and indeed Wilkins also managed to produce an engraved plate of Jesuit-authored Chinese evangelical material, to my knowledge the first extended example of accurate Chinese script in a book printed in England.

Indeed, English sinology (or proto-sinology as modern sinologists a little sniffily insist on calling it) peaked from about 1668 to 1688. If Martini's publications had opened up the geography and chronology of the country to general scholars; Kircher's *China illustrata* attempted to locate Chinese custom and language within Christian scholarship by enquiring into the nature and origin of Chinese culture – in effect, its precise connection to biblical history. Kircher argued for a connection between his beloved Egyptian culture and that of the Chinese, but he was careful to

emphasise that whereas Egyptian hieroglyphs both bore and enshrouded mystical meanings, the possibly descendant Chinese script had degenerated into a language for common, practical use. Kircher's book directly inspired the first really detailed English vernacular discussion, the architect John Webb's notorious attempt to modify and contest Kircher's thesis in order to propound his own notion that Chinese was the language of Adam and Eve, and that Noah had both set out from and landed in China. Inevitably, Webb was not widely supported, but he got people talking, and in many ways his importance lay in popularising the ideas of his sources. The most famous English sinophile, however, was the contrarian philologist Isaac Vossius, who in a Latin essay he published in 1685 argued that all the arts and sciences were Chinese in origin, and that Chinese culture was the greatest and the oldest the world had ever known.

Vossius was a fellow of the fledgling Royal Society of London, and Chinese language and philosophy fascinated the Royal Society at large. In the year of Vossius' publication and the next the minor FRS and Africa Company merchant Arthur Bailey presented the Society with letters in 'Chinese' script. Bailey was fascinated by the intricacy of the characters, detecting 18 to 24 pen-strokes in some characters. In that year too another minor FRS, Nathaniel Vincent, finally published a 1674 sermon that in an appendix contained what has recently been recognised as the first snatch of Confucius to appear in English, translated from a Chinese-Latin Jesuit publication. Vincent also revealed that two of his colleagues were contemplating a complete translation of Confucius, and by context these FRSs were almost certainly Robert Hooke and his linguist friend Francis Lodwick. Lodwick himself had owned (probably Jesuit) Chinese books since the 1650s and supplied examples to both John Wilkins and Robert Hooke for their publications; these papers were subsequently destroyed in the Great Fire, as both Wilkins and Hooke lamented. Again in 1685 Hooke lectured on the Chinese abacus, and the following year he turned to the Chinese language in what is the first English scientific paper on its nature and origins. Hooke proposed that Chinese script is the remnant of an artificial and philosophical language, but now overlaid by a purely arbitrary phonology, suggesting that the original insights of the script were no longer recognised or exploited by its modern users. In May of 1687 the Jesuit's Latin Confucius, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, appeared in Paris, and was the talk of the learned world. In 1688, the

English translation of the Jesuit Magalhaes *Twelve Excellencies of China* appeared, in which the hieroglyphic nature of Chinese script was reasserted, perhaps as a move in the increasingly fraught Rites Controversy. Hooke soon obtained it. It is in these years, then, coincident with the reign of James II, that English discussions of China and Chinese reached the level of a craze among the *virtuosi*. It is not my intention to elaborate further on the London *virtuosi*, but it is worth stressing that Hooke's milieu engaged deeply with both Chinese ideas and Chinese materials. They experimented on themselves with Chinese moxibustion and acupuncture. They went to the trouble of obtaining Chinese word-lists and printed books through their various trading contacts. Hooke built the very abacus on which he lectured; and he, with Lodwick, took tea with, and tried to talk to, some visiting Chinese merchants in 1693. Hooke recorded in his journal that they didn't have much luck: but he could at least confirm that spoken Chinese was a tonal language. Later, in 1696 Hans Sloane wrote to John Locke that he had spoken to a Chinaman in London who had returned on an EIC ship, 'but the Language made us have little conversation'. Shen, then, visited England at a propitious time, but his real impact was not in London, but in Oxford. And so we turn to the Bodleian.

The Bodleian in particular was the major repository of British Sinica, even though little of it was understood. The Bodleian had been receiving books in Chinese since 1606, but their titles and contents remained meaningless. Laud supplied several Chinese books in the 1630s. Merchants trading in the East such as William Thurston (gifts of 1661), George White (1684), and Alexander Brown (1698) continued to donate oriental books and maps over the course of the century; by 1674 Hyde could note seventy printed Chinese books in the Bodleian, though he was unable to give their titles. Besides books, oriental objects were also donated, such as the London merchant Jeremiah Carter's 1663 gifts, including 'a little tube from which nicotine smoke is inhaled.' Gifts of Chinese books to the Bodleian also came from the bookseller Octavian Pulleyn, the academician Henry Aldrich, and the natural philosopher Robert Boyle. Detailed Jesuit maps of China were available in Martini, but the most remarkable indigenous cartographical holding in the Bodleian has only recently been recognised as such. This, MS Selden supra 105, dubbed the 'Selden Map', must have entered the Bodleian with Selden's books in 1659, along with a Chinese compass from the same source, now in the MHS (MHS 44055). The map is

late Ming, acquired by Selden before 1654, and is unique in two ways: it shows detailed shipping routes, and it is the first map to show China as part of a wider world, and not just the world itself. It was probably constructed in the late 1620s, and was certainly known to early readers as it bears some Latin annotation, presumably added in the Bodleian.

One seventeenth-century pair of resources now in the Bodleian was not quite available to Hyde's generation, but is certainly worth mentioning, and this is the set of Chinese-Latin Christian materials and formularies, now MS Marsh 456 and a Dutch-Chinese-Latin dictionary, MS Marsh 678. The dictionary was commenced in February 1628, in 'Bataviæ Jacartranæ' and is arranged A-Z in Dutch in one column, with the corresponding character in the next, and its mandarin vocalisation with a Latin gloss in the next. A Dutch to Chinese lexicon, it is a therefore a dictionary for writers, not readers, and is thus not very useful for learning how Chinese might work as a language. Here the 'Compendium Doctrinæ Christianæ' (Marsh 456) can offer some initial hints: for the reader quickly meets the character that functions as the genitive marker, as well as ones corresponding to the Latin *ut* and *ne*, the negative *pú*, the prepositional marker for *per*, the 'above' and 'below' characters, one the inversion of the other, the character that marks the end of a sentence or paragraph, the question mark character, the character that marks a number as ordinal, as well as characters obviously used for purely phonetic purposes, such as the string approximating to 'Jesus Christus'. In other words I can with a little effort see a character functions in one of three ways: as a lexical item, as a phonetic item, or as a grammatical function word. These manuscripts are those of Heurnius, a Dutch Protestant minister in Batavia, and they ended up in the library of the Leiden orientalist Jacobus Golius, who in 1655 made the claim in his *additamentum* to Martini's *Atlas Sinensis* that classical Chinese had been artificially created. These manuscripts were eventually purchased on behalf of Bishop Marsh by the Oxonian Edward Bernard, who listed them in the Irish supplement *CMA* as nos. 1939 and 1940, along with Spanish- and Portuguese-Chinese vocabularies. But alas these only came to the Bodleian with the Marsh MSS following his death in 1713. Hyde could not profit here, but he of course had the advantage of a native speaker, something no other English scholar had had.

Hyde and Shen

And so we return to Shen. Shen was not the first Chinaman to reach England. The English who ran the Taiwan factory from 1670-85 were allowed to replace dying sailors with natives, and so it is possible that a few Chinese sailors put in to an English harbour. But even Oxford had seen one Chinaman before, as we shall see.

Shen arrived in Oxford in June 1687, having toured the Spanish Netherlands in 1683-4, wowed Louis XIV at Versailles, a month before the famous Siamese embassy arrived; travelled on to Rome in late 1684, achieved an audience with Innocent XI in June of 1685; returned with Phillipe Couplet to Paris in early Spring 1686, worked in the *Bibliotheque du roi* on Chinese all year, and eventually landed with Spinola in London in March 1687. In May, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was published in Paris, and a copy was in the Bodleian within months. Also in May, Thomas Hyde first wrote to Shen, and Shen responded on the 25th. It is the first piece of evidence of their contact.

How exactly had Hyde heard about Shen? One initial idea is Robert Boyle. They had been corresponding for two decades, and Boyle was certainly interested in Chinese, corresponding with Wallis in Oxford in 1671 about translating an almanac. Certainly Shen left Oxford in late July bearing an English letter from Hyde to Boyle:

> SIR,
>
> THE bearer hereof, the Chinese, hath been with us at *Oxford*, to make a Catalogue of our Chinese books, and to inform us about the subjects of them. We have some of *Confucius's* books; but most of what we have is physick [...] His Latin is a little imperfect; but it is well he hath any Latin; for before him there was never but one (who is dead) that understood any Latin. [...] You may make a shift to understand him, though he speaks but imperfectly.

(That earlier Chinese *Latinista* is our ghostly first visitor, intriguing and untraced; surely he cannot have been a sailor.) Hyde treats Boyle as if he had heard of Shen – 'the Chinese' – but not met him. Yet Hyde is incorrect here, because Robert Boyle's 'Workdiaries' show that the natural philosopher had interviewed Shen almost three months previously, and hence it seems Boyle had been introduced to Shen via Royal Society contacts before Hyde at Oxford had heard of his arrival. Boyle quizzed Shen solely about Chinese – the number of its characters, its dialects, and Mandarin. Shen

said that he knew 10-12 thousand characters, and spoke ‘some’ Mandarin. Perhaps, then, Hyde heard about Shen from another source, and more likely is Mechisédech Thevenot, the French librarian, as he had long corresponded with Hyde, and in as early as 1673 Hyde was thanking the Frenchman for the ‘Confucii libru*m* de Scientiis Sinensiu*m*’.

We can fix Shen’s time in Oxford, therefore, as lying between early June and late July of 1687. His first reply to Hyde is a short letter, in which he explains two characters for Hyde (*qu* currus; *ma* equus), and promises to visit Oxford if time will allow. Time did allow, and Shen must have soon arrived. While in Oxford, Shen worked hard for Hyde, and the Bodleian accounts for that year contain the entry ‘Item p*ai*d the Chinese for making catalogues to the China Bookes for his expences and Lodging’, £6. Six pounds is a substantial sum of money. After his arrival, Shen worked through the one-hundred-odd Chinese books, scribing on their title-pages or fly-leaves in three vertical lines from right to left a Chinese description of the book, a romanisation, and then a Latin gloss on the title. These can still be seen today. Hyde also compiled a manuscript ‘Catalogus Libroru*m* Chinensium in Archivo’, surviving among his papers, numbering 70 volumes, and followed by lists of the Chinese books in the Selden, Laud, and Thurston books, seemingly kept in the Librarian’s study. Shen and Hyde also sat down with a great deal of loose paper, and talked and wrote together in Latin and Chinese. This box was Hyde’s thesaurus of Chinese knowledge, and from it he drew all of his future work on the language. It passed to Hans Sloane after Hyde’s death, and is thus unfortunately not in the Bodleian today, but in the Sloane MSS. It is a rather disorganised box of materials, but an electrifying browse. Shen drew characters and added romanised vocalisation; Hyde annotated in Latin what the characters meant. Their working papers range over several subjects: basic issues, such as number and mensuration, some simple Christian texts in Chinese, such as the Creed; calendrical material; and some hexagrams showing that they talked too about the I Qing (‘Ye King’), a text that had long fascinated Europeans since its partial illustration in Martini, and which would soon electrify Bouvet and Leibniz, who discerned its binary logic.

Shen left Oxford in late July for London, where Hyde soon found occasion to write to him. In September Shen sent Hyde a Chinese ‘papyrus’ and apologised elegantly for being barely able to write with a European quill. Hyde evidently asked

Shen to explain the papyrus, but only in late December did Shen find time to reply, describing a bird depicted therein as a *fum*. What is interesting here is that very bird had been illustrated under that very name in Kircher's *China illustrata*, a confluence Hyde must surely have spotted. Shen, however, politely asked for a return favour: some mathematical instruments or telescopes for Shen to carry back to China. Hyde then wanted to know more about Chinese weights and measures and had further queries on Chinese religion. He appears to have presented some mathematical instruments, but not the especially-prized optical apparatus, as Shen's next letter renews the request with the utmost elegance:

> ... If however you would be pleased to send curious glasses such as microscopes or optic tubes, and the like, things most pleasing to the Chinese and to me, they would be an eternal monument to your benevolence. Farewell to you, mindful of me, most learned master: of whom shall I too always live mindful, even in China.

But Hyde evidently rather overloaded Shen. He sent one Greenberg after him in order to wave requests at him and send back Shen's verbal responses, as Greenberg did. Shen's subsequent letters also reveal that Hyde wrote two letters, and then a further four to the long-suffering visitor, and all of these between late January and some time in February, so about two letters a week. Shen replied as best he could, but put off final responses until he had further investigated the matter in Lisbon. We do not know if Hyde ever sent Shen the telescopes and microscopes he wanted. But no further letters survive among Hyde's Chinese papers, and I must regretfully conclude that Shen found more important affairs to occupy himself upon arrival in Portugal. Indeed he did, as he was soon accepted into the Jesuit novitiate, and correspondence with a Protestant librarian with attested interests in Protestant evangelism, indeed the client in these matters of Robert Boyle, may no longer have seemed to Shen a neutral business, especially if he were told in Lisbon upon his arrival of the fall of England's monarch and hence the collapse in toleration of men like Shen. There is a sad end to all of this: Shen died in a shipboard epidemic off Mozambique in early September, 1691, so he never made it back to 'my China', with or without Hyde's telescopes. Later in life, Hyde recalled Shen in a letter to the merchant Thomas Bowrey (d. 1713),

‘As for the Chinese you mention in London I scarce believe it is the same who was with me, whose name was Shin Fo-Sung a man of Nontin and he understood Latine, and did write and read his own China language very well ... if it is my Chinese that was at Oxford, I can write to him and receive his answer. But if it is another, I cannot correspond with him, not knowing what European language he understands’. Hyde, therefore, had indeed never heard back from Shen, and never ascertained what had happened to the young man whom he had last seen fourteen years earlier on his way to Robert Boyle in London, with Hyde’s introduction in his hand.

But for his part, Hyde capitalised on the precious relics of their meeting, and he found occasion to discuss them and their source, *Chinensis meus, amicus charissimus noster Chinesis, nativus Chinesis non indoctus* in almost all his subsequent printed works. The immediate fruit is perhaps the most interesting, as it is here that Hyde revealed that Shen was not his only Chinese source. This is his appendix to Edward Bernard’s study of ancient weights and measures. Styled as a letter to Bernard, Hyde significantly titled his appendix *Epistola de mensuris et ponderibus Serum seu Sinensium*, and took occasion to discuss the Great Wall, and Chinese tea-picking, two abiding European fascinations. That variant in the title – *Serum* – shows, surely, that Hyde had been reading Isaac Vossius on the Septuagint, who in his strong support for Martini’s Chinese chronology, had likewise insisted on calling the Chinese the *Seres* and not the more common *Sinenses*.

One of Hyde’s enduring pleasures in his published sinological work was the correction of Jesuit claims. On the topics of mensuration and oriental games, for instance, Hyde found the Jesuits misleading, and enjoyed saying so, usually with the comment that Shen had in fact never heard of a word or practice claimed as current by the Jesuit fathers. Hyde’s other aids were two merchant vocabularies for use in the province of Folkien, and reflecting its dialect. Hyde rehearsed the claims of Martini about the Chinese *li*, and we can see this interested reflected in his correspondence with Shen, who in his last extant letter to Hyde responded to various metrological questions, but deferred to Martini, who had made, Shen insisted, this area his own. Hyde, interestingly, rejects Martini’s authority in his *De mensuris*, on the grounds that merchants rather than missionaries should be trusted in matters of weights and measures, because their kind of profit depends on accuracy. Hyde, as he explains elsewhere, was working from two manuscript vocabularies that he had acquired from

the English merchant John Dacres. Now Dacres was one of the two Resident Agents in Taiwan along with Simon Delboe, who may have been the brother-in-law of Francis Lodwick the merchant, linguist, F.R.S., and intimate of Robert Hooke. Other Dacres-provenanced texts can still be found in Britain: an almanac in St John's College, Cambridge, for instance, is inscribed as given to Dacres by the King of Taiwan, i.e. Coxinga's son. I suspect this is the same text as Bodleian Sinica 57, one of fifty copies of an almanac given by the King to Dacres' colleague Elis Crisp, and thence presented by Hyde's friend Robert Boyle to the Bodleian in 1671. Dacres also presented oriental gifts to the Royal Society through another of Hooke's circle, the merchant and F.R.S. John Houghton. But can we identify Hyde's English-Chinese merchant vocabularies? We can. In 1692 Hyde sold the Bodleian Library several oriental manuscripts, including two Chinese 'parva vocabularia', in oblong format. These are now MSS Hyde 6 and 7, and 7 is indeed marked as in the dialect of 'Fokien' (modern Fujian). The other, MS Hyde 6, is a holster MS, 'An Alphab*e*t of Eng*li*sh and China', arranged alphabetically in columns in English with romanised Chinese, and followed by tables of numbers and other discussions. It is a highly practical merchant's vocabulary, on how to call the hours, name commodities, plants, animals, money, weapons, and acts like urinating or vomiting. Crucially, it also contains exactly the distinction between the units of the silversmiths and the carpenters, as well as the manner of calculating Chinese New Year, something Hyde also repeats verbatim, and this also allows us to date this vocabulary, which must have been assembled in around 1673. Hyde presumably discussed some of these claims with Shen, as one of their papers bears in Hyde's hand remarks on the *aurifabri*. He also presumably sat over a Chinese map with Shen, as he can refer to one gifted by the trader George White (in 1684), containing Chinese characters which he then interprets. (This is now Sinica 123, a pair of hanging scrolls.) Hyde's work on mensuration is impressive: unlike all previous writers on the subject, Oxford-bound Hyde nevertheless is able to compare accounts of Jesuits, Protestant merchants, and a native Chinese whom he has personally questioned.

Hyde's own obsessions was the history of board games, and his correspondence contains frequent requests for information on versions of chess or card games in languages ranging from Irish to Russian. And this proved the occasion for his next printed touting of Shen. Hyde's *De ludis orientalibus libri duo* (1694)

contained a chapter *De Shahiludio Chinensium*, in which Hyde explained how Chinese chess (also 'the elephant game') is played with seven distinct pieces under ten names, played on a board divided in the middle by a river, supposed to represent the Yellow River. The winner, who must capture the opposing player's general, shouts '*Çiang*, id est, *Generalissimus!*' Hyde's account was accompanied by engravings of 26 characters, vocalised and translated, as well as two diagrams of game boards, and the ten characters for the various pieces. (These engravings were presumably executed by Michael Burghers, the monopolist Oxford *calcographus academicus*.) These characters included *Ma*/*Ba*, a horse, and *Cu*/*Che*, a chariot (Hyde's variant pronunciations distinguish between Mandarin and the Folkien dialect). Now these, we may recall, were exactly the two characters Shen explained to Hyde in his very first letter, and we can conclude, therefore, that Hyde was investigating these characters as gaming terms. Here too we learn that when Shen was in Oxford, he and Hyde played the game together. Hyde also accepts here the standard Jesuit account that the characters were instituted by the early king Fohi, on a broadly pictographic basis: 'Hodiernis Characteribus (quorum magna pars ab antiquo Imperatore *Fohi* desumpta), ubi res per suas similitudines seu picturas exprimebantur.' Hence he interprets *wang*, 'king' as a rough depiction of a sceptre surmounted by an eye. Again, *ma*, 'horse', 'Hieroglyphico more', is a kind of sketch of a *juba* or horse's mane, with a tail at the back and four feet poking out at the bottom.

As the English gaming doublet was 'chess and tables', so Hyde's second book on oriental games turned to 'tables', what we might call 'checkers' and its variants. Here too great attention was given to various Chinese games, and Hyde accompanied his discussion of the mandarin 'game of promotion' with another very large fold-out table from workshop of Burghers. This game particularly impressed Hyde as it mimicked the *cursus honorum* of Chinese officialdom, and hence represented in miniature the Chinese political and administrative economy. The plate illustrates a *cursus* winding in from the edge to the centre of the board as the players progress through ninety-eight possible grades, from first scholarship to the supreme palace. Here too Hyde took occasion to lament the lack of materials at his command:

> All things pertaining to this language might be better taken note of if we were able to obtain Chinese dictionaries of which the ancient one, containing the older characters, is called *Hai-pien* [i.e. the *Shi Zhou Pian*], or *Mare liberum*, that is 'the full and spacious sea of words'. The modern dictionary, containing the more recent words, is called the *Ta çu hoei*, that is, 'the great collection of letters (or characters)'. [*pinyin*: *Zihui*]

Hyde then comments that this latter dictionary was in the hands of Mentzel of Germany, who, if life and funding allowed, was going to publish a western edition. This is Christian Menztel, a Berlin court physician and an important early sinologist. He had indeed published a *Sylloge* for a Chinese-Latin dictionary in 1685, of which there is a copy in the Med series in the Bodleian. He indeed acquired two copies of the late Ming *Zihui* dictionary, and interleaved one as eight separate volumes. This dictionary introduced the stroke-radical lexicographic system still used today. But Mentzel's copy disappeared from the Stabi in the Second World War.

Hyde's final sinological foray came in his last and most celebrated work, the *Historia veteris religionum Persarum*. This was printed at Hyde's expense in 1699 bearing the date 1700, and Hyde was at great pains to get copies sold. With plates galore and scripts in every conceivable oriental language, it's not surprising Hyde wanted 10*s* per copy even in quires. In early 1702 he was still moaning to Hans Sloane in London that the book had financially crippled him, as he had been, as he put it, 'left in the lurch' by many of his supposed subscribers. The book included important calendrical work, including a final Burghers table of the Chinese sexagenary calendrical cycle cut from the autograph of Shen together with other cycles coped from a Chinese-Tartar book given to Hyde by Shen.

Hyde was exceptionally proud of his Chinese encounter. After he resigned as Bodley's librarian in 1701, his portrait was painted, and it currently hangs in the Bodleian shop, above the till, of all places. Hyde is holding a scroll, and we can just discern that the script is not Hebrew, nor Arabic, nor Persian, nor Turkish, nor Malabaric, nor Uighur – but Chinese. Sometime before his death, he composed a list of 31 *inedita* that he intended to publish, and this list made it into the later editions of Wood's *Athenæ*. These included *Curiosa Chinensia et Selanensia* and *Varia Chinensia*, the latter on Chinese idolatry, beliefs on God, paradise, heaven, hell and its

grades of suffering, Chinese books, literature and maps, printing and its origin, all taken ‘ex Ore & Scriptis nativi Chinensis Shin Fo-Burgh’, clearly a misreading of Shen’s name. Also among Hyde’s papers is a draft dedication to Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely, of printed tables of Chinese astronomical terms. Shen also gave him a drawing of a ‘Chinese garden’ carried from China by the Jesuit Spinola, and there is a long exegesis of the picture in Shen’s Latin also in Hyde’s papers; it would be interesting to see if the original picture might be identified today. Yet Hyde met with little success. Despite some heavy hints, Boyle did not fund Hyde’s sinological work. In the last few years of his life, Hyde was ground down by the financial difficulties he had met with in printing his *Historia Persarum*. If he had not met with such obstacles, no doubt we would have seen these works from the learned Oxford press – or at any rate, more than the snippets the antiquary and orientalist Gregory Sharpe chose to print in his 1767 edition of Hyde’s miscellaneous tracts. As it was, they remained locked in Hyde’s manuscripts, in fragmentary form, and there they remain today, in London, a feast for a scholar with greater technical expertise than myself. But let us leave Hyde, though, at that high point of early English sinology, and the high point indeed for Hyde too, in the late 1680s, sitting in the Bodleian with Shen Fuzong and playing Chinese chess. The winner shouts: *Çiang*! *Generalissimus!*

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Timeline:

1681	December 4	Shen leaves Macau
1683	October	Shen arrives at Enkhuisen; tours Spanish Netherlands until the summer of 1684
1684	September	Shen arrives at Paris; audience with Louis XIV at Versailles
	October	Siamese embassy visits Versailles
	December	Shen arrives at Rome
1685	June	Audience with Innocent XI
	December	Shen leaves Rome with Couplet for Paris, via Florence
1686	March	Shen arrives in Paris with Couplet; they will be paid

		400 *livres* (to Couplet and 'Sr Michel, Chinois') for work in the Bibliothèque du roi. (Guiffrey, *Comptes*, vol. 2)
	August	Second Siamese embassy to Paris
1687	March	Shen journeys from Paris to London with Spinola; Couplet will join them in December
	May	*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* published in Paris
	May 4	Robert Boyle interviews Shen
	May 25	**Letter I to Hyde**
	July 26	Shen bears a letter from Hyde to Boyle
	September	James II visits Oxford and asks Hyde about Shen
	September 3	**Letter II to Hyde received on this date**
	October 19	A pass is issued for Shen to set sail from England
	December 29	**Letter III to Hyde**
1688		Shen used by Hyde in *De mensuris Sinensium*
	January 25	**Letter IV to Hyde**
	February 1	**Letter V, Greenberg on Shen to Hyde**
	February	**Letters VI, VII to Hyde**
	April	Shen leaves London for Lisbon
1691	Spring	Shen leaves Lisbon for Goa
	September 2	Shen dies in a shipboard epidemic off Mozambique
1692		Books purchased by the Bodleian from Hyde include two Chinese 'parva vocabularia', in oblong format, the two vocabularies referred to in the *De mensuris* (Bodleian MS Lib. recs. c. 950, fol. 6r; the vocabularies are MSS Hyde 6, 7, referred to in *CMA*, nos. 6410, 6411)
1693-4		Shen used by Hyde in *De ludis orientalibus*
1694		Hyde compiles a list of *inedita*, including 'Curiosa Chinensia & Selanensia' and 'Varia Chinensia ... ex Ore & Scriptis nativi Chinensis Shin Fo-burgh' (mistranscribed by Wood)
1700		Shen used by Hyde in his *Historia religionis veterum Persarum*

Some basic materials:

MSS:
British Library,
MS Sloane 853a, unbound collection of Hyde and Shen's working papers.
MS Sloane 3323, fols. 270r-72v, a list of oriental books in Hyde's possession at his death, including a book explicitly annotated by Shen, no. 11, 'A China Almanck or Calendar'.

The Bodleian Library,
MSS Hyde 6, 7, Hyde's English-Chinese (Folkien) merchant vocabularies

MSS Marsh 456, 678, the Heurnius religious and lexicographical MSS (on which see Kuiper below)
MS Selden supra 105, 'the Selden Map' (viewed via the Artstor interface in Special Collections in the RSL)
Selection of Sinica with early inscriptions: *Summary Catalogue* 3995 [now shelved as Sinica 55] (Pulleyn, 1659), 3997 [Sinica 57] (Boyle, 1671), 3998 [Sinica 58] (Aldrich, between 1669 and 1682)
(On such books see especially David Helliwell's excellent webpage inventory: http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/users/djh/17thcent/17theu.htm)

Primary:
R[obert] H[ooke], 'Some Observations, and Conjectures concerning the Chinese Characters', *Philosophical Transactions* 180 (1686), pp. 63-78.
Thomas Hyde, *Syntagma Dissertationum*, ed. G. Sharpe, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1767), esp. vol. 2.
Athanasius Kircher, *China illustrata ... monumentis* (Amsterdam, 1657)
Gabriel de Magalhães, *A New History of China* (London, 1688)
Martino Martini, *Novus Atlas Sinensis* [with the *Additamentum* of Jacobus Golius] (Amsterdam, 1655)
- - - , *Sinicæ historiæ decas prima* (Strasburg, 1658)
- - - , *Opera omnia* (Trent, 1998-)
Juan González de Mendoza, *History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China* (London, 1588)
Christian Mentzel, *Sylloge minutiarum lexici Latino-Sinico-Characteristici* (Nuremberg, 1685)
Alváro Semedo, *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China* (London, 1655)
Nicolas Trigaultius, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* (Augsburg, 1615 etc)
Nathaniel Vincent, *The Right Notion of Honour* (London, 1685)
Isaac Vossius, *Variarum Observationum Liber* (London, 1685)
John Webb, *An Historical Essay Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language* (London, 1669)
John Wilkins, *An Essay towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language* (London, 1668)

Secondary:
Robert K. Batchelor, 'Shen Fuzong' in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
John Bold, 'John Webb: Composite Capitals and the Chinese Language', *The Oxford Art Journal* 4 (1981), pp. 9-17.
J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'Early Chinese Studies in Holland', *T'oung P'ao* 32 (1936), pp. 293-344.
Theodore N. Foss, 'The European Sojourn of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong, 1683-1692', in Jerome Heyndrickx, ed., *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623–1693): the man who brought China to Europe* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1990), pp. 121-40.
Noël Golvers, *Ferdinand Verbiest, S. J. (1623-1688) and the Chinese Heaven* (Leuven, 2003).
- - - , 'The Chinese Assistants of the Jesuit Procurators from China in Europe: the case of (Dominicus and) Shen Fu-tzung', paper read at The 8th Symposium of the F. Verbiest Foundation (Leuven/Vaalbeek, 1-4 September 2004).
Matthew Jenkinson, 'Nathaniel Vincent and Confucius's 'Great Learning' in Restoration England', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 60 (2006), pp. 35-47.
Koos Kuiper, 'The earliest monument of Dutch Sinological studies', *Quaerendo* 35 (2005), pp. 109-39.
Knud Lundbæk, *T.S. Bayer (1694-1738): Pioneer Sinologist* (London and Malmö, 1986).
David Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart, 1985; Honolulu, 1989).
Franklin Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light* (Cambridge, 2004).
Rachel Ramsey, 'China and the Ideal of Order in John Webb's *An Historical Essay*', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001), pp. 483-503.
Boleslav Szczesniak, 'John Floyer and Chinese Medicine', *Osiris* 11 (1954), pp. 127-56.

Quotations:

1. James II and Hyde:

> ... well D^{r} Hyde [said the King] was y^{e} chinese here? to w^{ch} he answered yes if it may please y^{r} maj. & I learnd many things of him. Then s*ai*d his majestie, he was a little blinking fellow was he not? to w^{ch} he answerd, yes – & added y^{t} all

the chineses Tartars & all y^{t} part of the world was narrow eyd – then y^{e} k. said y^{t} he had his picture to y^{e} life hanging in his roome next to y^{e} bed-chamber. Then his maj. told D^{r} Hyde of a book of Confucius translated fro*m* China language by y^{e} Jesuits (4 in number) & asked whether it was in y^{e} library – to w^{ch} D^{r} Hyde answered, y^{t} it was – & y^{t} it treated of philosophy, but not so as y^{t} of European philosophy – whereupon his majest. asked whether y^{e} Chinees had any Divinity, to w^{ch} D^{r} Hyde answered yes – but twas Idolatry, they being all heathens – but yet y^{t} they have in their Idol-Temple statutes representing the Trinity, & other pictures w^{ch} shew y^{t} antient Xtianity had been amongst them – to which he assented by a nod.

Source: MS Wood D 19 (3), fols. 87v-88r. I cite directly from Wood's autograph MS; slightly differing transcripts are offered in Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ed. Bliss, vol. 1, p. cxi; and *Wood's Life and Times*, ed. Clark, vol. 2, pp. 236-37. The following emendations have been made: '& added y^{t} all the chineses' for MS '& added y^{t} all y^{t} ~~part~~ the chineses'; 'Confucius' for MS 'Confution'; 'but not so as' for MS 'but not so was as'; 'to which he assented' for MS 'to which he ~~consented~~ assented'. Although the account is in his hand, Wood was not actually present.

2. Hyde to Robert Boyle, 26 July 1687:

SIR,

THE bearer hereof, the Chinese, hath been with us at *Oxford*, to make a Catalogue of our Chinese books, and to inform us about the subjects of them. We have some of *Confucius's* books; but most of what we have is physick [...] His Latin is a little imperfect; but it is well he hath any Latin; for before him there was never but one (who is dead) that understood any Latin. [...] You may make a shift to understand him, though he speaks but imperfectly.

Source: *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. 6, p. 226.

3. Boyle's report on Shen:

The Chinois I was visited by yesterday, told me by in answer to some Questions I made him, 1. That y^{e} number of their Characters was really incredibly great, & yt He himself was Master of between 10 & <12> thousand of them. 2. That y^{e} language of y^{e} Mandarins (or Magistrates) was very different from yt of y^{e} Com*m*on people, & also from yt of y^{e} Clergy, & some of y^{e} <u>Literati</u>: insomuch yt few understood y^{e} Mandarins Language, or could make any use of it; thô, for his part, He had made some progress in it.

Source: Royal Society, Boyle Papers 21, p. 288, 4 May 1687. Emendations: 'told me in' replaces MS 'told me ~~by~~ in'. This has also been edited electronically as Boyle's Workdiary 36 (entry 69), available at http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/wd/view/text_dip/WD36_dip.html