

The Letters of Shen Fuzong to Thomas Hyde, 1687-88

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I. Introduction

The earliest surviving direct correspondence of a learned nature between a Chinese person and an Englishman comprises several letters sent between May 1687 and February of 1688 by a young Christian convert from Nanjing, Michael Shen Fuzong (c. 1658-1691), to the Oxonian oriental scholar and librarian Thomas Hyde (1636-1704). This correspondence had been sparked off by the visit of Shen to London in 1687 in the entourage of visiting Jesuits, and Hyde, always keen to attract native speakers of oriental languages, soon persuaded Shen to visit Oxford.¹ There in the summer of 1687 Shen catalogued the Bodleian Library's previously mysterious Sinica, and the two men conversed in Latin about Chinese matters. Shen was handsomely paid for his labour by the library: 'Item paid the Chinese for making catalogues to the China Bookes for his expences and Lodging', £6; Shen's vocalizations and the Latin glosses of Shen and Hyde remain visible on the books today.² These were the sources for Hyde's rough manuscript catalogue of the Bodleian Sinica, in turn the source for the entries printed under the relevant manuscript collection headings in the first union catalogue of English and Irish manuscripts, the *Catalogus Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ* (Oxford, '1697' [1698]), nominally edited by the Savilian Professor of Geometry, Edward Bernard.³ Although this did not render the books

I am especially grateful to Justin Winslett for his patient help with literary Chinese, to Timothy Brook, Noël Golvers, and Kristine Haugen for learned comments on a draft of this article, and to David Helliwell and Anna Winterbottom for our continuing conversations on Thomas Hyde. Helliwell maintains at <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/users/djh/17thcent/17theu.htm> a list of 'Chinese Books in Europe in the Seventeenth Century'; oriental printed books were as a rule classified among manuscripts in western library catalogues of the period. For literary Chinese my reference grammar is Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* (Vancouver, 1995).

¹ 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, 1990), pp. 121-40; Nicolas Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume One: 635-1800* (Leiden, 2001), p. 450; Noël Golvers, *Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (1623-1688) and the Chinese Heaven* (Leuven, 2003), pp. 196, 203-10, 301-3; Golvers, 'The Chinese Assistants of the Jesuit Procurators from China in Europe: The Case of (Dominicus and) Shen Fu-tzung', in Rachel Lu Yan and Philip Vanhaelemeersch (eds.), *Silent Force: Native Converts in the Catholic China Mission* (Leuven, 2009), pp. 131-46, esp. pp. 132-42; Timothy Brook, *Mr. Selden's Map of China: The Spice Trade, a Lost Chart, and the South China Sea* (London, 2013), pp. 45-66; Robert K. Batchelor, *London: The Selden Map and the Making of a Global City, 1549-1689* (Chicago, 2014), pp. 1-3, 220-28.

² A pioneering recognition of Shen's work in the Bodleian Library is J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'An Old Chinese Fragment in the Bodleian', *Bodleian Library Record*, ii (1941-49), pp. 245-47.

³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lib. recs. c. 28, under the year 1686/7; Sloane MS. Or. 853a, 'Catalogus Librorum Chinesisium in Archivo', unfoliated, four pages including some Japanese material. Most of these books had arrived in the West on Dutch and then English East India Company boats; for an important 1605 Amsterdam auction of a seized Portuguese cargo, including Chinese books, see Bert van Selm, 'Cornelis Claesz's 1605 Stock Catalogue of Chinese Books', *Quaerendo*, xiii (1983), pp. 247-59.

themselves legible in Oxford, it at least alerted western scholars to the titles and genres of these books. The box of now loose papers that Hyde and Shen generated over the course of Shen's visit, in Latin and Chinese, also survives, Shen once again writing characters, romanizing them in his own hand, and Hyde then typically adding a Latin gloss. This collection was to have been the basis of a printed book by Hyde, entitled *Adversaria Chinensia*, 'taken from the writings and speech of a native Chinese, and containing the Decalogue, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, grammatical topics and formulae for speaking, the geography around and beyond the Great Wall, a Dialogue between ten persons, and many other chapters.' This wishful manuscript title page sits in the middle of the still unpublished materials it describes, 'on separate pieces of paper, because they were written down so quickly.'⁴ Here we can find jottings and sample texts on the above subjects, as well as fragments including notes on the Yi Jing (Book of Changes), zodiacal and planetary names, and a map drawn by Shen. This map is particularly interesting as it is a copy of the upper portion of one of a pair of Chinese scroll-maps presented to the Bodleian in 1684, depicting what we would now think of as the areas of China and its bordering countries around the Great Wall.⁵ As with so many of Hyde's more ambitious projects, he failed to secure funding for what would have been an expensive book to produce, and his targeted patron was the wealthy aristocrat and natural philosopher

⁴ Sloane MS. Or. 853a, f. 38r: 'Adversaria Chinensia à scripto et ore nativi Chinensis excerpta, in quibus sunt Decalogus, Symbolum Apostolicum, Oratio Dominica, Ave Maria, Grammaticalia et Formulae loquendi, Geographica circa Murum, et supra eum, Dialogus inter 10 personas cum multis aliis capitibus ...'; 'In chartis simplicibus et solutis prout raptim notata sunt.' The deleted Dialogue of Ten Persons is now the separate manuscript, MS. Or. Reg. 16 B XXI, from which it was edited by Gregory Sharpe for the *Syntagma dissertationum quas olim auctor doctissimus Thomas Hyde S.T.P. separatim edidit*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1767), vol. i, pp. 523-6. See also Brook, *Mr Selden's Map*, p. 62, for more recovered texts in the British Library, presumably BL, OIOC, E 192 J 763, items 15/1, 15/2, 15/7 (i.e. among the papers of Thomas Bowrey, on whom see below), being an English-Chinese vocabulary list; the Lord's Prayer, Credo, and Ten Commandments, duplicated; and series of incantations, written out by Shen, to ward off bad luck, framed in mainly Daoist terms. These were evidently at one point destined for Hyde's 'Adversaria Chinensia'. There is another duplicate of the Christian material in Sloane MS. 4090, f. 5 (a fold-out table, marked 'For Doctor Sloane' on the dorse), too. My thanks to Frances Wood for clarification of this material.

⁵ Sloane MS. Or. 853a, f. 37r. The maps were presented by George White (Thomas Hyde, *Epistola de ponderibus et mensuris Serum seu Sinensium* (Oxford, 1688), p. x; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Registrum Donationum, vol. I (= Lib. recs. b. 903), p. 426); they are two hanging scrolls, of the earth and of the heavens, today Sinica 123/1, 2, the latter endorsed in Hyde's hand 'Hypothesis caelestis Sinicé. Given by mr White merchant' (the dorse of the former is not currently visible). George White (fl. 1665-1702) was a merchant to Siam, and brother to the notorious Samuel 'Siamese' White (c. 1650-89), on whom see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [ODNB] (Oxford, 2004), s.n.; Brook, *Mr Selden's Map of China*, pp. 59-61. The donation is discussed by Batchelor, *London*, pp. 210-14, but *pace* Batchelor I can find no evidence that this donation was formally associated with the 1684 Siamese delegation to Charles II; the donation was to the Bodleian, not to the Royal Library, and was recorded as from George alone. But Hyde did get his hands, via the scholar Thomas Smith, on an 'Alphabetum Syamense' in the hand of the 'Siam Ambassador' (MS. Or. Reg. 16 B IV); when later pressed by Smith to return it, Hyde seemingly deceived his old friend, 'disow[ning] the having of it' (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Smith 57, p. 103, letter of Smith to Edward Bernard, 24 August 1689).

Robert Boyle, who for once did not rise to the challenge.⁶ This is a great pity, as the resulting book would have changed the history of western Sinology.

Shen's encounter with Hyde was admittedly not quite the first learned interaction of this kind. In the late sixteenth century, Thomas Cavendish had returned from his voyages in the Far East with boys from Japan and Manila, and the clergyman and writer on navigation William Barlow interviewed these exotic strangers in order to ascertain how East Asian compasses worked, a conversation he subsequently published in 1597.⁷ We may suppose that many unrecorded conversations of this type took place between oriental and western sailors and pilots in the period. But if we are seeking more obviously academic encounters, these are scarce. As early as the 1650s there had been half-Japanese students at Leiden, sons of a Dutchman who had lived for twenty years in Japan, and his Japanese wife, but surprisingly these brothers do not appear to have been sought out by scholars eager for first-hand accounts of the languages of the Far East.⁸ Around that time too, there was Emmanuel de Siqueira (1633-73), born Zheng Weixin, also known as Zheng Manuo (i.e. an approximation of 'Manuel', his Christian name), who underwent a Jesuit education from 1651 in Rome, Bologna, and Coimbra, before returning as a Jesuit priest to China in 1668. Nevertheless Zheng had left China as a boy in his pre-teens, and his literacy in Chinese must have been basic.⁹ But a passing comment in a letter of recommendation for Shen from Hyde to Boyle suggests that a Latin-speaking Chinese person had been seen in learned circles within living memory:

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.¹⁰

⁶ Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio, and Lawrence Principe (eds.), *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, 6 vols (London, 2001), vol. vi, pp. 274-5 (letter of 25 October 1688). Boyle had earlier funded Hyde's rather pointless edition of the Gospels in romanized Malay (Oxford, 1677); at various times Boyle also backed evangelical translation projects into Algonquian, Arabic, Irish, Lithuanian, and Turkish. Hyde sent Shen on to Boyle himself, who recorded their meeting in some detail in his 'work diaries': Royal Society, Boyle Papers 21, p. 288 (4 May 1687), also available online through the Boyle Project website (<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/boyle/>). For Hyde's unpublished projects, see Hyde's autograph list at Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b. 9, manuscript inserts between cols. 972/3 and 974/5, from which Anthony Wood's slightly inaccurate account in his article on Hyde in the *Athenae Oxonienses* (ed. Philip Bliss, 4 vols (London, 1813-20), iv, cols 522-7), derives; and for oriental books in Hyde's possession at his death, including many Chinese items, see Sloane MS. 3323, ff. 270r-272v. Hyde had been corresponding with Robert Boyle on oriental and scholarly matters since 1667, and Boyle himself had long been interested in *orientalia*. In March 1666, for instance, Robert Hooke had reported to Boyle that Christopher Wren had a 'relation of china' worth the reading; Hooke forwarded the book with the relevant pages turned down. See *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. iii, p. 120 (Hooke); vol. iii, pp. 298-99 (first Hyde-Boyle letter), vol. vi, p. 286 (Hyde on 'China Learning'). The editors of the *Boyle Correspondence* overlooked two letters from Boyle to Hyde printed in the second volume of Sharpe's edition of Hyde, *Syntagma*, vol. ii, pp. 467-69, originals unlocated.

⁷ William Barlow, *The Navigators Supply* (London, 1597), sigs A3v-A4r; Batchelor, *London*, pp. 65, 74-5.

⁸ Thijs Weststeijn, 'Vossius' Chinese Utopia', in Eric Jorink and Dirk van Miert (eds.), *Isaac Vossius (1618-1689): Between Science and Scholarship* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 207-42, at pp. 212-13.

⁹ Francis A. Rouleau, 'The First Chinese Priest of the Society of Jesus: Emmanuel de Siqueira, 1633-1673', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, xxviii (1959), pp. 3-50; D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu, 1989), pp. 108-9.

¹⁰ *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. vi, p. 226, letter of 26 July 1687. Zheng is usually encountered as 'Cheng Wei-Hsin' and 'Cheng Ma-No' in the older texts.

In 1653 the Danish scholar Olaus Wormius wrote that the great Leiden mathematician and orientalist Jacobus Golius, a scholar with a known interest in Chinese, had a real Chinese person staying in his house, to whom Wormius wished to send a picture of what he thought was a nautical compass for explanation.¹¹ At that time Golius was engaged in meetings, first in Leiden and then in Antwerp, with the Jesuit Martino Martini, and Martini had with him a supposedly literate Chinese boy.¹² Despite the occasional confusion in the historical literature, this boy was not Zheng, who had arrived in Europe before Martini and who remained in the south, but rather another youth, known as Domingo or Dominicus Siquin.¹³ This was surely the individual known to Wormius and Golius, and Hyde may be repeating a half-remembered anecdote about Dominicus or perhaps even Zheng; for it is very unlikely that there were Latinate Chinese wandering the west other than those in the company of returning Jesuits.¹⁴

If these boys could communicate, then the handful of Chinese visitors to England I have traced up to the turn of the century could probably not communicate at all. There were the Chinese visitors with whom Robert Hooke and his friend Francis Lodwick took tea in mid-1693, and attempted to talk: 'I could learn little, 8 or 10 characters pronounced all alike but of differing signification', Hooke recorded in his diary.¹⁵ There was the Chinese sailor from Amoy whom Hans Sloane sought out in 1697: 'I talk'd with him once but the Language made

¹¹ Olaus Wormius, *Olai Wormii et ad eum doctorum virorum epistolæ*, 2 vols (Copenhagen, 1751), pp. 1120, 1122, 1123. For the 'compass', which was actually for sortilege, see Martino Martini, *Opera Omnia*, 5 vols (Trent, 1998-2013), vol. i, pp. 257-66.

¹² For Golius's sinological interests and his memorable encounters with Martino Martini see Golius's own account in his *De Regno Catayo Additamentum* ([Amsterdam], [1655]), pp. ii-iii, printed as an appendix to Martini's *Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam, 1655); also J. J. L. Duyvendak, 'Early Chinese Studies in Holland', *T'oung P'ao*, xxxii (1936), pp. 293-344, esp. pp. 298-305; Emilie Savage-Smith and Colin Wakefield, 'Jacob Golius and Celestial Cartography', in W. D. Hackmann and A. J. Turner (eds.), *Learning, Language and Invention: Essays Presented to Francis Maddison* (Aldershot & Paris, 1994), pp. 238-60, esp. pp. 250-3. Martini arrived in Amsterdam from China in late 1653 with the express intention of engaging the Blaeu firm to publish his *Atlas Sinensis* (1655) and his *Sinicae historiae decas prima* (1659, having also just been published in 1658 in Munich). For Martini's dealings with Blaeu, see now Paul Begheyn, 'The Contacts of Martino Martini S.J. with the Amsterdam Printer Joan Blaeu', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, lxxi (2012), pp. 219-30. Noël Golvers, 'Viaggio de reclutamento di M. Martini S.J. attraverso i Paesi Bassi nel 1654: a proposito di bussole geomantiche, collezioni di oggetti Cinesi, proiezioni di lanterna magica, e del R.P. Wilhelm Van Aelst S.J.', *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche*, lxxiv (1995), pp. 447-74, has also shown from references in the correspondence of Wormius that Martini had originally hoped to publish with the Plantin press in Antwerp, but this proved financially impossible.

¹³ Rouleau, 'Emmanuel de Siqueira', pp. 6-7; Lundbæk, *T. S. Bayer (1694-1738): Pioneer Sinologist* (London and Malmö, 1986), pp. 52, 98-9. Mungello, *Curious Land*, pp. 108-9, despite citing Rouleau, repeats the mistaken conflation of Zheng and Dominicus. Dominicus is the subject of a hostile anecdote by Domingo Navarrete, *Tratados historicos, politicos, ethicos y religiosos de la Monarchia de China* (Madrid, 1676), p. 25, who claimed that Martini falsely paraded Dominicus about the European courts as a learned physician. See also Golvers, 'Chinese Assistants', pp. 131-2; Luisa M. Paternicò, 'Martino Martini e Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz, La Grammatica Linguae Sinensis', *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche*, lxxxvii (2008), pp. 407-24, esp. pp. 408, 417, 419; and see now Paternicò's *When the Europeans Began to Study Chinese: Martino Martini's 'Grammatica Linguae Sinensis'* (Leuven, 2013). But Caramuel's comments on Dominicus suggest that he spoke Portuguese rather than Latin.

¹⁴ For the sake of completeness, we might note the two boys who accompanied Michal Boym back west in the 1650s, Andreas Xu and Joseph Ko (Foss, 'European Sojourn of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong', p. 123). Yet the two Chinese who subscribed to Boym's epistle before his edition of the Nestorian Stele in Kircher's *China illustrata monumentis* (Amsterdam, 1667), p. 10, are named 'Andreas Don Sin, Sina' and 'Matthæus Sina'.

¹⁵ See Hooke's later journal (as edited by R. T. Gunther in *Early Science in Oxford*, vol. x, *The Life and Work of Robert Hooke* [Oxford, 1935]), under 31 July 1693. For Hooke and sinology, see further William Poole, 'Vossius, Hooke, and the early Royal Society's Use of Sinology', in John Robertson and Sarah Mortimer (eds.), *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy 1600-1750* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 135-53.

us have little conversation', as Sloane reported to the philosopher John Locke.¹⁶ And a further Chinese was sighted in London by the merchant and Malay scholar Thomas Bowrey in 1702, concerning whom, as we shall see below, Bowrey then wrote to Hyde. Much later, there was 'Loum Kiqua' (Lin Qi), who fled from Lisbon to London after the earthquake of 1755, and there met George II, and performed Chinese music.¹⁷ But the meeting of Shen and Hyde was the first intellectual encounter in which the interlocutors could converse properly, and which generated a cache of working papers which we can examine today. Prior to his arrival in England Shen had been working in Paris with the librarian Melchisédech Thévenot, and similar materials may well have arisen from that collaboration – but, unlike the Oxford encounter, it would seem that no corresponding papers survive.¹⁸

Although Hyde's projected Chinese book never appeared, Hyde found occasion in all his subsequent published works to include snippets from the Chinese materials he had gathered from Shen, starting with his first work subsequent to Shen's visit, the *Epistola de ponderibus et mensuris Serum seu Sinensium* (Oxford, 1688), and concluding with Hyde's magnum opus, the *Historia religionis veterum Persarum eorumque Magorum* (Oxford, 1700).¹⁹ Hyde had elaborate plates of Chinese engraved for these publications by the *calcographus academicus*, Michael Burghers, and many of these plates survive in the archives of Oxford University Press.²⁰ Hyde also had at least one plate separately cut from Shen's papers, depicting the Chinese compass points, calendrical nomenclature, and different ways of notating and pronouncing numbers.²¹ A full study of Hyde and Shen's working papers and of Hyde's subsequent use of these and other sinological materials in his published work has yet to be undertaken, and the nature and extent of Hyde's achievement have been obscured by the difficulty of the material, primarily in Latin and Chinese, and the odd places

¹⁶ *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. De Beer, 8 vols (Oxford, 1976-89), vol. vi, pp. 55-6 (letter of 18 March 1697).

¹⁷ David Clarke, 'An Encounter with Chinese Music in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London', *Early Music*, xxxviii (2010), pp. 543-57.

¹⁸ Nicholas Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 205-33.

¹⁹ Thomas Hyde, *Epistola de ponderibus et mensuris Serum seu Sinensium* (Oxford, 1688, originally appended to the Savilian Professor of Geometry Edward Bernard's *De mensuris et ponderibus antiquis* (Oxford, 1688), then immediately revised by Hyde and issued as a separate imprint; he then corrected the Bodleian copy by hand (8°P 201(4) Art.); Abraham Peritsol [Abraham Ben Mordechai Farissol], ed. and tr. Thomas Hyde, *Itinera Mundi* (Oxford, 1691), sig. [a4]v, 'Addenda paginæ 16' (in the Bodleian copy at 4° M 13(1) Th., Hyde has once again supplemented the errata and several places in the text in his own hand); Thomas Hyde, *De ludis orientalibus libri duo* (Oxford, 1694), first pagination, sig. [(f4)]r-v, p. 66, pp. 158-78; third pagination, pp. 65-68, 70-101, 195-201, 211, 215-16, 277 (Hyde has corrected and annotated the copy at Bodleian 8° B 175 Art.); Thomas Hyde, *Historia religionis veterum Persarum eorumque Magorum* (Oxford, 1700), pp. 213-36. On sig. B4v it appears that Hyde has even managed to get one piece of type cut for an astronomical character *cha* omitted by Shen.

²⁰ Burghers evidently engraved his characters directly from the papers now gathered as Sloane MS. Or. 853a. Many of the characters are accompanied by small superscript numbers in red crayon, possibly to assist this process.

²¹ It appears to survive uniquely, inserted at the end of a copy of Thomas Bowrey, *A Dictionary English-Malayo, Malayo-English* (London, 1701), at British Library, 68 c. 12, a rather soiled copy with Burghers's receipt of £2 for the plate on the verso, dated 12 April 1701. Its occurrence here is probably fortuitous, and it is not present in the Bodleian copy (4° R 33 Art), which does however bear in Hyde's own hand a note of its presentation to the library by Bowrey; Hyde had assisted Bowrey by supplying him with a specimen of Malay using the Oxford type. It is illustrated in Anna Winterbottom, 'Company Culture: Information, Scholarship, and the East India Company Settlements 1660-1720s' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2010), p. 131. This plate for the 'China compass' appears in the list 'Books and Papers of the late Doctor Hyde &c' in Sloane MS. 3323, ff. 270r-272v, at f. 271r (no. 16, items 1-4). Hyde discusses the interpretation of the 'Chinese Compass' in letters to Bowrey of 7 February and 30 March 1700 (British Library, MS. Eur. E 192, '8.f.1' = f. 16r, '11.f.1' = f. 20r).

in which it must be sought.²² Hyde digressed on Chinese subjects in works otherwise on Jewish cosmography, on oriental board games, and on Persian religion. His only work solely on sinological matters, the 1688 essay on Chinese weights and measures, was first published as an appendix to another scholar's work, and is almost entirely forgotten today. Yet it contains interesting evidence concerning Hyde's sources and contacts, which extended beyond Latin printed accounts and the Chinese testimony of Shen himself, to the working phrasebooks of English merchants trading in Fujian, at least two of which Hyde managed to purchase, and which he subsequently sold to the Bodleian itself in 1692.²³ It is also the first work to be printed in England and one of the earliest in Europe with extensive examples of legible as opposed to fantastical Chinese script, here appended as a table cut by Burghers and keyed to words in the text by superscripts; on the continent Jacob Golius's *Additamentum* (Amsterdam, 1655), with calendrical characters in woodblock, Michal Boym's *Flora Sinensis* (Vienna, 1656), with engraved characters accompanying flora, Athanasius Kircher's *China monumentis illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667), which included Boym's edition of the inscriptions on the Nestorian Stele, and then Christian Mentzel's *Sylloge Minutiarum Lexici Latino-Sinico-Characteristici* (Nuremberg, 1685), an impressive attempt, with accompanying wood-block characters, at a grammar and a dictionary – a recent work, and known to Hyde²⁴ – are its major antecedents. As mentioned, the *Epistola* is also a work Hyde slightly revised, and one type of source

²² Several strides have now been taken by Timothy Brook in *Mr Selden's Map*, pp. 53-63, and by Robert Batchelor in *London*, pp. 221-2.

²³ The manuscripts sold by Hyde to his own library are listed in the *Catalogus Manuscriptorum Angliæ* (Oxford, 1697 [1698]), first pag., pp. 286-87, printed from the scribal list annotated by Hyde at Bodleian, Lib. recs. c. 950, ff. 5r-6v; the two merchant vocabularies are listed under nos 6410-11. A list was also placed in the Bodleian Library's register of benefactors: Lib. recs. b 904, ff. 37r-38v. Hyde was paid £50 for this collection of manuscripts (W. D. Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1890), p. 160; Vice-chancellor's computus, Oxford University Archives, WP b/21/5, 1666-97, *sub anno*). The merchant vocabularies are now Bodleian, MSS. Hyde 6 and 7, the former more extensive than the latter, both compiled around 1673; Hyde also mentions these in *De ludis orientalibus*, first pagination, pp. 158, 174. They are phrase-books, with romanized approximations of Fujian dialect. They were acquired from Hyde's friend the East India Company merchant John Dacres, on whom see below too. Hyde also owned three items printed in China, now in the British Library, listed in Sloane MS. 3323, ff. 270r-272v (nos. 9, 10, 11), and then by Sharpe in his edition of Hyde, *Syntagma dissertationum*, vol. ii, pp. 510-11, and by Helliwell, 'Chinese Books in Europe in the Seventeenth Century'. Today these are shelved as: 15298.a.30 (annotated by Hyde: 'Chinense Calendarium, cum quarundam rerum interpretatione'); 15298.a.32 (annotated by Hyde: 'Sinicus commentarius in Lineolas Fokianas, positas ab Imperatore Foki, quae in hac prima pagina cernuntur forma rotunda') (for 'Foki' see n. 75 below); Or.74.b.6 (annotated by Hyde: 'Phases lunares Sinico-Tartarice descriptæ, viz. an account of an eclipse as it appeared in China, printed in the Chinese and Tartar languages answering to each other column-wise, printed by Father Verbiest late Professor of Astronomy in China. This tho small in bulk, is a great Rarity, it being the only thing of this kinde now in England. 1700.'). For Sloane and the British Library's earliest Chinese (and Japanese) accessions, see Frances Wood, 'Chinese books in the British Museum', in Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (eds.), *The Art of the Book in China* (London, 2006), pp. 219-30.

²⁴ Hyde's discussion of Chinese dictionaries in *De ludis orientalibus*, 3rd pag., pp. 87-8, is partly derived from Mentzel. Hyde had replied to a letter from Mentzel (Hyde's reply is dated 16 February 1683), which survives now only in T. S. Bayer's copy (Glasgow University Library, MS. Hunter 299, p. 195, in German (the original may have been in Latin)). For Hyde and Mentzel, see Eva S. Kraft, 'Frühe chinesische Studien in Berlin', *Medizinhistorisches Journal*, xi (1976), pp. 92-128, esp. p. 108, where a text of this letter is provided. Hyde's reply shows that he had once had 'in my keeping' ('in meiner Verwahrung'), a Portuguese-Chinese manuscript dictionary of Jesuit origin, and commented too that there were London merchants who possessed wordlists, but in western script; we should associate this last remark with the wordlists Hyde acquired from John Dacres, referred to above (n. 23). Hyde also communicated to Mentzel that there were fragments in Oxford of what he termed the 'Hai Pien' or 'Great Sea' dictionary (really 'Sea-Compilation', 'sea' being a conventional metaphor for dictionaries and encyclopedias), and indeed Shen would identify several fascicles of this work among the Bodleian's Sinica (see Bernard, *Catalogi*, nos. 2810-13 (1st pag., p. 149)).

that changed his mind was cartographical, namely the several Chinese maps in the Bodleian by that date, including a pair of scrolls donated to the library by a merchant in the Siamese trade, and the now celebrated Selden Map, ‘the only Ming China nautical chart in the world’, and which itself bears minute annotations in the Chinese and Latin hands of Shen and Hyde respectively.²⁵

Shen never saw China again: like so many others, he died on the return journey *in via*, in a shipboard epidemic off Mozambique. Hyde had genuinely treasured their brief friendship, mentioning Shen’s character and learning in both his Latin publications and his English correspondence. His final remarks on Shen come from two letters written well over a decade after Shen had left England, to his friend Thomas Bowrey in London, in 1701 and then again in 1702. Hyde had evidently never heard again from Shen after he left for Lisbon, and never learnt of his fate:

My Chinese Michael Shin Fo-çung, (for that was his name) was bred a Schollar in all the Learning of their countrey, read all their Books readily, and was of great honesty and sincerity, and fit to be relyed upon in every thing: for indeed he was a very knowing and Excellent man, very Studious and laborious in all things, and could speak Latine, whereby I conversed with him very freely and easily.

As for the Chinese you mention in London, I scarce beleive its the same who \was/ with me, whose name was Shin Fo-Sung a man of Nankin, and he understood Latine, and did write and read his own China language very well. ... If its my Chinese that was at Oxford, I can write to him in Latine and receive his answer. But if its another, I cannot correspond with him, not knowing what European language he understands.²⁶

²⁵ Hongpin Annie Nie, *The Selden Map of China: A New Understanding of the Ming Dynasty* (Oxford, 2014, published solely as an ebook available online through the Bodleian website), p. 20. The ‘Selden Map’ is Bodleian Library, MS. Selden supra 105: in addition to the studies by Batchelor and Brook cited above, see also, with caution, Robert K. Batchelor’s initial appraisal ‘The Selden Map Rediscovered: A Chinese Map of East Asian Shipping Routes, c. 1619’, *Imago Mundi*, lxxv (2013), pp. 37-63. Hyde in the *Epistola* refers to maps given to the Bodleian in 1684 by White, on which see n. 5 above. Earlier in Oxford, the Savilian Professor of Geometry, John Greaves, owned a Chinese map of China (‘a large Mapped of mine of that Countrey, made, and printed in China’), but what this was, whether it was in Oxford in the time of Hyde, and where it is now, are all unanswered questions (John Greaves, *Pyramidographia* (London, 1646), p. 24). There was a further indigenous Chinese periplus or rutter in the Bodleian, among Laud’s manuscripts: MS. Laud Or. 145 (‘the Laud Rutter’), acquired by Laud by 1637, and this was certainly consulted by Hyde and Shen too as it bears their characteristic annotations, Hyde describing the book as ‘Liber docens navigationem partium Maris prope Chinam’ (‘a book teaching how to navigate the parts of the sea near China’). The German scholar of Ethiopic and Hottentot, Job Ludolph, who visited the Bodleian in late 1683 and made friends with Hyde and Bernard, recalled being shown there among other oriental books and manuscripts a ‘Tabulam Chorographicam Tzchinensis regni pictam non admodum scite’, i.e. a chorographic map of the Chinese kingdom, but ‘not particularly well drawn’, and I conjecture that this was the Selden Map, as of the only two Chinese maps in the collections at that time, the Selden Map and the Laud Rutter, this is unlikely to be the rutter (Christian Junker, *Commentarius de vita ... Jobi Ludolphi* (Leipzig and Frankfurt, 1710), p. 128). By the early eighteenth century, the Selden Map had been transferred to the museum in the Anatomy School, where visitors might also observe several other Chinese curiosities (Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. B 399*, p. 52). There was also the printed map engraved from a Chinese original carried from China by John Saris included in the third volume of Samuel Purchas’s 1625 *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (on this see Batchelor, *London*, pp. 135-38). This is evidently not the one referred to above by Greaves as ‘of mine’, but given that Purchas’s original has not been traced, one conjecture may be that Greaves obtained the original after Purchas’s death in 1626 and it is to this that he refers. Purchas reproduced the eight-character title of his source map, but he will not have understood it. Greaves’s seminal edition of Ulugh Beg, *Epochæ Celebriores* (London, 1650), included Beg’s influential exposition of the sexagenary calendrical cycle of the ‘Cathays’, pp. 45-50.

²⁶ BL, MS. Eur. E 19, letters of 9 June 1701 and 17 November 1702 (‘15,f.1’ = f. 24r; ‘30,f.1’ = f. 41r). For Hyde and Bowrey see Winterbottom, ‘Company Culture’, ch. 3; appendix 3.

Hyde retained a strong fascination in matters Chinese right up to his death. In late 1702, Hyde was consulted by his successor as Bodley's Librarian, John Hudson, on two Chinese books that the library had an opportunity to buy. One was a miscellany collection, no further information given, but the second was a German-Chinese dictionary, something that Hyde must have wished he had had the use of earlier in his career – he had seen the sample dictionary of Mentzel, but that was all. Hyde advised Hudson 'man to man' that even if the two were worth only £5 or £6, it was imperative to offer £10, 'rather than lose them; because they really are a Rarity, and there is not yet any thing of that kinde in the public Library.'²⁷ Now this 'German'-Chinese dictionary was, I propose, a copy of the manuscript Dutch-Chinese dictionary of the Protestant missionary Justus Heurnius, compiled in Batavia in 1628 by Heurnius and an anonymous Macanese schoolmaster; and the miscellany collection was Heurnius's Chinese-Latin 'Compendium Doctrinae Christianae', with several accompanying texts.²⁸ Three copies of Heurnius's dictionary survive today, each associated with a version of the 'Compendium Doctrinae Christianae' collection: one, the original, in the Bodleian (MSS. Marsh 456, 678, the dictionary in Dutch-Latin-Chinese); one in Leiden (MSS. Acad. 224, 225, the dictionary in Dutch-Chinese); and one in the Sloane collection in the British Library (MS. Sloane 2746, the dictionary in Dutch-Latin-Chinese). As the Bodleian copies only arrived in 1714 among the bequest of oriental manuscripts of Narcissus Marsh, Archbishop of Armagh, having originally been purchased from the auction of Golius's library by Edward Bernard for Marsh in Leiden in 1696, the books offered to Hyde cannot have been those present in the Bodleian today.²⁹ The Leiden copies were sent in 1629 by Heurnius to his brother Otto (1577-1652), professor of medicine in Leiden University, and have seemingly not left the Low Countries. At this point in time they were in the possession of the recently appointed professor of oriental languages at the University of Utrecht, Adriaan Reland (1676-1718).³⁰ The Sloane copy, once again accompanied by the *Compendium* and its associated texts, contains Latin glosses, and it is suspicious that Hyde's letter to Hudson does not mention this, if these were the books on offer; and at any rate these copies were at this point in the hands of the Walloon minister Philippe Masson, who would later essay to prove a correspondence between Hebrew and Chinese.³¹ Hence I conjecture that in late 1702 the Bodleian was offered, but in the event declined or failed to purchase, what are now the Leiden copies of the dictionary and of the compendium and accompanying texts when these were in the possession of Reland, or possibly the person who sold these manuscripts to Reland. If Hyde knew that in Dublin Narcissus Marsh owned superior, indeed the source, versions of both texts, he perhaps prudently did not tell Hudson. Within twelve years the Marsh copies were to reach the library, but Hyde had died before this point.

Hyde's official Bodleian portrait features him holding a rolled scroll in his right hand, with some script just visible. Now the man who was simultaneously Regius professor of Hebrew and

²⁷ Bodleian Library, MS. Add. C 78, f. 9r, letter of 3 December 1702; Macray, *Annals*, p. 172.

²⁸ Koos Kuiper, 'The Earliest Monument of Dutch Sinological Studies: Justus Heurnius's Manuscript Dutch-Chinese Dictionary and Chinese-Latin *Compendium Doctrinae Christianae* (Batavia 1628)', *Quaerendo*, xxxv (2005), pp. 109-39.

²⁹ They are the first two books listed in the section on Chinese manuscripts in the *Catalogus insignium ... librorum M.SS. quos ... Jacobus Golius ... collegit* (Leiden, 1696), p. 39 (this is the duodecimo catalogue; a quarto catalogue published – actually a reissued 1668 Elsevier inventory for an earlier failed sale – earlier in the same year by the same publisher lists the same manuscripts on p. 26). Bernard, acting as a factor for Marsh, acquired around 70% of Golius's oriental manuscripts and printed books at the auction. For these manuscripts, see Macray, *Annals*, pp. 184-85; J. J. Witkam, *Jacobus Golius (1596-1667) en zijn handschriften* (Leiden, 1980), pp. 61-2, 68-71.

³⁰ Koos Kuiper, *Catalogue of Chinese and Sino-Western Manuscripts in the Central Library of Leiden University* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 69-71; J. J. Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts in the Royal Academy in Amsterdam* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 75-8. For Reland's sinology, see Lundbæk, *T. S. Bayer*, pp. 98-9.

³¹ Kuiper, 'Earliest Monument', p. 114.

Laudian professor of Arabic might have been expected to hold a text in one of those languages, but in fact for his official portrait Hyde chose instead to memorialize his interest in Chinese. Four discernable characters are visible: 古 *gu*, ‘ancient’, repeated at the bottom; 里 *li*, the standard Chinese unit of distance, and itself the subject of Hyde’s first extended sinological work; and a slightly ill-formed 金 *jin*, ‘gold’ (less likely 全 *quan*, ‘perfect’). Although these characters form a seemingly meaningless string, these were evidently painted from real characters, and individually they might even be seen as appropriate to Hyde’s interests.³² An alternative explanation is that they were simply copied from a convenient source, and indeed the characters 古里国 (i.e. ‘Gu-Li-Guo’, a phonetic approximation for ‘Calicut’) can be seen (the first two several times as a pair) on the western edge of the Selden Map, among directions to Calicut (Kozhikode) and beyond.³³ But the fit is not exact, and it is odd that the reference should be both so specific and yet so arbitrary given that Hyde must have directed his painter to a genuine source for these characters. Nevertheless it is interesting that Hyde is presented holding a scroll, for the Chinese books in his keeping were codices, although maps were typically scrolls.



Portrait of Hyde: detail of right hand and scroll. With permission.

³² Bodleian Library, LP 183. The portrait is not signed, but Willem Sonmans (d. 1708), who was prolific in Oxford, is a plausible candidate: see Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain 1530-1790* (New Haven, 1994), p. 346, and *ODNB*. I am very grateful to Dana Josephson for this suggestion. Sonmans also painted Hyde’s successor, John Hudson. Hyde’s (and his wife’s) correspondence with the palaeographer Humfrey Wanley concerning the framing of what is probably this portrait as well as one of his wife may be found in Harley MS. 3779, among the twenty-three letters comprised in ff. 216-43. Hyde in turn had heard from the king himself about the famous portrait of Shen by Sir Godfrey Kneller, subsequently often known as ‘The Chinese Convert’. Compare the remark of the Plymouth surgeon James Yonge, visiting London in 1687, who wrote in his diary for 3 July that he had seen Shen at the Royal reception of the papal nuncio in a coach with ‘4 or 5 Jesuits and priests’, describing Shen as ‘the Chinese, a young, pale-faced fellow who had travelled from his country and become a papist (his picture being done very well like him in one of the King’s lodgings)’ (F. N. L. Poynter (ed.), *The Journal of James Yonge (1647-1721)* (London, 1963)). For this important artistic result of Shen’s visit, see Cherry Barnett, ‘The Chinese Convert’, *History Today* (July 2002), p. 5; Glenn Timmermans, ‘Michael Shen Fuzong’s Journey to the West: A Chinese Christian Painted at the Court of James II’, in *Culture, Art, Religion: Wu Li (1632-1718) and His Inner Journey* (Macau, 2006), pp. 173-202.

³³ The suggestion of Brook, *Mr Selden’s Map of China*, pp. 64-6, 128, and see plate 17; for Calicut see also Batchelor, *London*, p. 143, and the map and key on pp. 20-1. The map can be viewed online at <http://seldenmap.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/map>.

Finally, we may ask what Hyde gained from his Chinese encounters – or, more practically, to what uses he considered such learning might be put. This is a complex topic, and only one preliminary idea will be offered here.

The contexts in which Hyde published his sinological observations are significant. His first proper sinological work, the 1688 *Epistola*, was a commissioned piece, accompanying Edward Bernard's own revised treatise on specifically *ancient* weights and measures; Bernard's first version had appeared as an appendix to the Oxonian Arabist Edward Pococke's commentary on Hosea (1685).³⁴ Hyde's last printed sinological digressions were placed, once again, within his study of *ancient* Persian religion. Now proverbially antique China presented early modern Europeans with a conundrum: was this truly an ancient culture, as all writers affirmed, and if so, did its ancient values persist? And if they did, were they compatible or in collision with western, Christian values? China was in this way a radically exploitable site for the emerging 'ancients v. moderns' debate – for 'ancient' China could be represented as either inspiringly enlightened, or stubbornly atheist; and 'modern' China could correspondingly be celebrated or deplored for its preservation or loss of whichever ancient values or skills a given western commentator wished to praise or condemn. Now Bernard's own interest in ancient measures was, in the tradition of his predecessor John Greaves, at least partly practical: both Greaves and, I would argue, Bernard hoped that the establishment of ancient standards might be used to reform or even reverse the Babel of modern mensuration.³⁵ Likewise Hyde's *Historia religionis veterum Persarum eorumque Magorum* sought to place his studies of the ancient Persians within an apologetical context: the ancient Persians, Hyde, argued, were – exactly as the China Jesuits were claiming of the original Confucians – monotheists, and had worshipped the true God since the Flood, only lapsing into heresy after the coming of Christ.³⁶ The connection between Hyde's views on the ancient Persians and the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was not lost on contemporaries: as the reviser of Pierre Bayle's dictionary commented, the China Jesuits 'will find a very good assistant in this learned Oxford Professor'.³⁷

Hyde's interests in Chinese mensuration and in Chinese religion must surely be interpreted as participating in such discussions. And yet Hyde's interest in mensuration, as the letters below will demonstrate, was practical and contemporary: if Bernard was trying to establish the ancient measures of primarily the Jews, Arabs, Greeks, and Romans, Hyde was content to explore the situation as it currently obtained in China, perhaps because he assumed that this was the ancient system too, various as it was. But Hyde's discoveries concerning Chinese religion perhaps suggested to him a more complex situation, for Shen did not furnish any clear evidence that Chinese religion preserved any ancient (i.e. Christian-compatible) truth. Granted, Shen informed Hyde chiefly about Buddhist practice, which, as everyone in the West agreed, had been a late and idolatrous import to China from India, but Hyde's remark to James II on Chinese 'Divinity', quoted fully below in the commentary to Letter IV, that 'twas Idolatry, they being all heathens', is ambiguous. It might suggest that Hyde was sceptical about (any) Chinese wisdom; or that he considered the modern Chinese to have forgotten their true ancient ways. In any case, we know that Hyde was not especially impressed by Chinese medicine or philosophy, as he commented to Boyle, against the exaggerated sinophilia of the scholar Isaac Vossius, that Chinese medicine was the benighted product of 'a people wholly ignorant of anatomy', and that 'whatsoever empirics they are, I am sure they are no philosophers'.³⁸ It would appear, then, that Hyde may have been able to claim for the ancient Persians what the China Jesuits were claiming for the ancient Chinese; but, ironically, the Protestant librarian was perhaps less willing to share such an exalted apprehension of the ancient Chinese themselves.

³⁴ Thomas Smith, *Vita ... Edwardi Bernardi* (London, 1704), pp. 35-7. Hyde contributed the second essay to the appendix of Bernard's book; the first, on the 'brazen sea' or bronze seal of Solomon (I Kings 7.23-6), was provided by the Swiss mathematician Nicolas Fatio de Duillier, who had visited Oxford in the winter of 1687.

³⁵ For Greaves's metrology, see Zur Shalev, 'Measurer of All Things: John Greaves (1602-1652), the Great Pyramid, and Early Modern Metrology', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, lxiii (2002), pp. 555-75.

³⁶ There is as yet no adequate study of this complex work, but see G. G. Strousma, 'Thomas Hyde and the Birth of Zoroastrian Studies', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, xxvi (2002), pp. 216-30.

³⁷ Pierre Bayle, *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr Peter Bayle*, 2nd edn, 5 vols (London, 1734[-38]), vol. v, s.n. 'Zoroaster', at p. 638.

³⁸ *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. v, pp. 416-17, letter of Hyde to Boyle, 14 July 1683.

II. The Letters

Below is presented a coherent subsection of Hyde's sinological materials, the letters from Shen. Among the loose papers in Hyde's thesaurus of Chinese notes, now MS. Sloane Or. 853a, are six letters written to him by Shen, one written before and the rest following Shen's visit to Oxford. Hyde's letters to Shen are lost, but something of their sequence and content can be inferred from Shen's surviving responses. Hyde also preserved a seventh letter from Morten Reenberg, a visiting Danish scholar deputed by Hyde to question Shen in London after his departure from Oxford. The presence of seals and postmarks on the letters shows that these are the originals.³⁹ In some of the letters the Chinese characters are written with the same pen as the Latin text, yet in others there is a difference in nib and ink. Shen's repeated apology for his delays in writing 'because I can scarcely hold your European pen' might be read as an indication that the Latin text of the letters, at least, is scribal; but I suspect that this is rather the *diminutio* of a standard modesty topos, even with some wry humour in Shen's further remark that things would be easier if Hyde could read Chinese. Shen was shortly to be accepted into the Jesuit novitiate (where he added 'Alphonsus' to his names), rendering it most unlikely that he could not write Latin as competently as contemporary observers reported he spoke it. There are some examples of solecism, and perhaps too of Shen's accent ('sio' emended to 'scio'), and even an attempt at English ('At Mr Brunette house in yorck Beldings'). We know too from the notebooks of the Lancashire gentleman and Roman Catholic William Blundell, who was residing in London at the time, that Shen took Latin classes in London at 'the Latin school at the Savoy', where Blundell met with him 'sundry times' and spoke with him in Latin. Boyle, who had in 1671 donated a Chinese almanac to the Bodleian – and for whom a confident decipherment of it was prepared by the Savilian Professor of Geometry, John Wallis, although it was apparently unsent – was warned by Hyde that Shen's 'Latin is a little imperfect', although 'You may make a shift to understand him, though he speaks but imperfectly.'⁴⁰ It seems however that Boyle had by this point already interviewed Shen,

³⁹ Brook, *Mr Selden's Map*, p. 58, comments that the seal is of a ship with two masts, deeply appropriate for the long-voyaging Shen, if it was his.

⁴⁰ William Blundell, *A Cavalier's Note Book*, ed. T. Ellison Gibson (London, 1880), pp. 140-1. I am grateful to Scott Mandelbrote for this reference. *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. vi, p. 226, letter of 26 July 1687. Boyle's donation is now Bodleian Library, Sinica 57, a Chinese almanac, annotated by Hyde and Shen, who also annotated a duplicate together, Sinica 58, presented by Henry Aldrich of Christ Church. Sinica 89 (removed from Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 1787) is a further copy, which reached Ashmole through the astrologer Henry Coley. Of this almanac and its provenance, Helliwell, 'Chinese Books in Europe in the Seventeenth Century', states: 'Fifty copies of this calendar were presented by the "King of Formosa" (i.e. 鄭經 [Zheng Jing], 1642-1681, eldest son of Coxinga) to Ellis Crisp, who had been sent with the pink Bantam and the sloop Pearl from the East India Company factory in Bantam in May 1670 in order to establish a factory in Taiwan.' (Coxinga [Guoxingye] was the Ming loyalist warlord who resisted both the Qing ascendancy and the Dutch East India Company; for Coxinga and these calendars see also Batchelor, *London*, pp. 185-91.) There are thus several surviving copies in English libraries, including one that was owned by Hyde and annotated by Shen (BL, 15298.a.30.). There was probably a copy in the Merchant Taylor's School library too (*Librorum impressorum qui in bibliotheca Scholae Mercatorum Scissorum adservantur catalogus* (London, 1826), p. 6, 'Michael Davison gave a Chinese Kalendar', no date, but evidently Restoration). Again for Hyde, Shen annotated with better-drawn characters the sexagenary calendrical cycle in Andreas Müller's *Disquisitio ... de Chataja* (1671) (Royal MS. 16 B. XVIII = printed book 10055.ee.32), pp. 41-54. Wallis's report to Boyle on the almanac, enabled by the work of John Greaves and Jacob Golius, is printed in *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. iv, pp. 235-7, and in Philip Beeley and Christoph J. Scriba (eds.), *The Correspondence of John Wallis* (Oxford, 2003-), vol. iii, pp. 541-2, letter of Wallis to Boyle, 13 December 1671, never delivered. Wallis was able to distinguish between 'greater' and 'lesser' months, reproducing the appropriate characters 大 *da* and 小 *xiao*. Wallis had discussed Chinese language with Boyle before in connection with the real character: see *Boyle Correspondence*, vol. ii, p. 14 = *Wallis Correspondence*, vol. ii, pp. 54-5 (14 March 1662), and compare Wallis's remarks on his supposed study of Chinese books in the Bodleian in Birch, *History of the Royal Society of London*, vol. iv, p. 504. Boyle also donated to the Bodleian Athanasius Kircher's *China illustrata monumentis* (Amsterdam, 1667), now shelved at N 1.14 Jur; and in 1683 he sent Hyde a copy of Andreas Cleyer's edition of the Polish Jesuit Michel Boym's *Specimen medicinae Sinicae* (*Boyle Correspondence*, vol. v, pp. 416-17, letter of Hyde to Boyle, 14 July 1683). This is the same letter in which Hyde attacked Chinese medicine and philosophy.

who told Boyle, slightly improbably, that he knew ten to twelve thousand characters, if Boyle heard him correctly.⁴¹ Hyde possibly intended the letters he subsequently received from Shen to be included in the *Adversaria Chinensia*, as the stubs on the letters suggest that they were originally folded into this quarto-sized collection.

Shen writes very much as a trainee of the Jesuits, with his *vestra dominatio* and its attendant third-person address, and the carefully-turned compliments of the *ars dictaminis*; but his syntax can be rather rough. Shen was remarkably composed in the face of what evidently became somewhat of an epistolary onslaught from Hyde: we can infer from the final letters in the sequence that in this period Hyde wrote two letters, and then a further four to Shen, and all of these between late January and sometime in February, so Hyde was by this point pursuing Shen with letters at the rate of about two a week. But despite his promises, Shen appears not to have written to Hyde after his departure from England. Indeed, Shen arrived at Lisbon at a point where the political and religious window for continuing such a correspondence had closed: the brief rule of the Roman Catholic James II had collapsed by late 1688, and Shen's Jesuit masters may not have needed to point out that maintaining a correspondence with a heretic librarian and professor in Anglican orders was neither pious nor politic.

Presented below are texts and translations of these remarkable letters, with brief prefaces and explanatory notes. A bare Latin text was produced by Gregory Sharpe in 1767 in an appendix to the second volume of his edition of Hyde, *Syntagma Dissertationum*, following his useful sketch of sinological studies in the west to that date, but Sharpe's text is rather defective. He also ignored or edited headings and endorsements. He had no easy means to read Shen's Chinese characters. He failed to state clearly where he had found the letters and in what condition. More problematically, Sharpe misordered his manuscripts, producing a nonsensical sequence.⁴² I have freshly renumbered the letters in what I think is the correct order. I have expanded standard contractions; interlinear additions from above are enclosed between \ / virgules, and editorial interventions or confessions of current uncertainty in [] brackets. I have provided editorial indentations for the translations. I omit one potential letter among Hyde's papers, a very short and somewhat cancelled draft in Latin in Hyde's hand, inviting the recipient to return with the bearer or to join Hyde for dinner, as he has someone 'qui cupit conversationem tuam pro unâ horâ' ('who desires your company for an hour').⁴³ As for Chinese transliterations, in what follows I print Shen's romanizations followed by the modern *pinyin* equivalents placed in square brackets, but without tones. The different systems of transliteration witnessed in western documents of the time vary because of both the dialect being recorded and the language of the recorder, a vexation for European scholars then as now. Before his English visit, Shen, for instance, had just rehearsed the pronunciation of his own dialect to Claude Bernou in Paris to allow the latter to revise for a French audience the prevalent Portuguese-derived orthography in his translation of Gabriel de Magalhães's *Doze excelências da China*, a work that Couplet and Shen had themselves carried to the West, along with the manuscripts of the Latin *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* and Ferdinand Verbiest's *Elementa Linguae Tartaricae*.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Royal Society, Boyle Papers 21, p. 288, 4 May 1687.

⁴² 'Accepi binas litteras' (*Syntagma Dissertationum*, vol. ii, p. 517) is actually the start of a separate letter, but obscured by Sharpe's layout; splitting this into two letters and numbering all seven letters as Sharpe presented them, the correct chronological order is really 4, 3, 5, 1, 7, 2, 6.

⁴³ Sloane MS. Or. 853a, f. 31r.

⁴⁴ Gabriel de Magalhães, *A New History of China* (London, 1688), sigs a1r-[a2]r.

Letter I, 25 May 1687. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 29r = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, p. 519. Original letter. 29v-30r blank, with endorsement on 30v ‘Clarissimo et doctissimo domino Thomas Hyde S.P.D. In Bibliotheca publica Oxonij’, with remnants of seal, but no postmark. The two Chinese characters are not in the same pen as the Latin text.

This is the opening letter of the correspondence. Hyde had sent Shen a letter with two Chinese characters adjoined, which Shen here translates for him. It is no coincidence that the two characters, although very common, are also the names of two of the pieces used in Xiangqi or Chinese chess, upon which Hyde was later to write, reproducing the characters inscribed on the different pieces. This formed a chapter of the ‘Historia Shahiludii’, otherwise ‘Mandragorias’, the first part of his *De ludis orientalibus*, ‘the first really scientific contribution to the history of chess.’⁴⁵ When Shen arrived in Oxford, Hyde quizzed him closely about the game, and acknowledged his debt in *De ludis orientalibus*, where he sets down first what the Jesuits have imperfectly recorded of the game,⁴⁶ ‘and then exactly, as this game was accurately delineated and described for me by my friend, master *Shin Fo Çung*, a Chinese from Nanking.’⁴⁷ Hyde’s interest in the China Jesuits and possibly even in Chinese chess may have been stimulated by his London contacts in the Royal Society. In 1686, the French librarian Henri Justel in one of his regular letters to the astronomer Edmond Halley, for instance, eagerly reported on the progress across Europe of Couplet and his Chinese Jesuits; Justel had even obtained in Paris an account from the eastern visitors of the rules of Chinese chess.⁴⁸ At the same time Justel also wrote to Hyde’s old friend and correspondent Thomas Smith about the Parisian printing of Confucius.⁴⁹

Hyde’s account in *De ludis orientalibus* sheds some further light on his queries on the two characters, which were taken by him from actual pieces:

For in the study of Master [Jacobus] Golius, late professor at Leiden, among many other rare treasures received from Master [Martinus] Martini, who had lived for a long time in China, were Chinese chessmen, which were distinguished one from the other not by their differing forms but by their inscriptions alone. They were all alike little ivory disks, smooth on both sides,

⁴⁵ *De ludis orientalibus* (Oxford, 1694), first pagination, p. 167. ‘Mandragorias’ is Hyde’s coinage for chess, based on a false etymology from the mandrake root. For the pieces and the game of Xiangqi, see the magisterial H. J. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford, 1913), pp. 121-34, with his comment on Hyde quoted from p. 841. There is a partial modern edition of Hyde’s work: Victor Keats, *Chess, Its Origin: A Translation with Commentary of the Latin and Hebrew in Thomas Hyde’s ‘De ludis orientalibus’ (Oxford, 1694)* (Oxford, 1994). Hyde’s analysis of the game has now been excellently discussed by Batchelor, *London*, pp. 224-8.

⁴⁶ His sources were: Matthaeus Riccius, ed. Nicolaus Trigaltius, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* (Lyon, 1616), pp. 87-8; thence the derivative account in Alvaro Semedo, *Relatione della Grande Monarchia della Cina* (Rome, 1643), pp. 87-8, also consulted by Hyde in French (Paris, 1645); and the English account of Samuel Purchas in his *Pilgrimes* (London, 1625). For Japanese and Malay terms Hyde used Didacus Colladus, *Dictionarium sive thesauri linguae Japonicæ compendium* (Rome, 1632), and David Haex, *Dictionarium Malaico-Latinum et Latino-Malaicum* (Rome, 1631), but he was able to correct Colladus (e.g. *De ludis orientalibus*, 1st pag., p. 172, correcting Colladus, s.n. ‘equus’, from an unknown source). (These are the available editions as listed the 1674 Bodleian printed catalogue, prepared by Hyde himself; the Japanese and Malay dictionaries, to which Hyde usually refers together, but augmenting the romanized Malay with his own Arabic-script transliterations, are indeed bound back-to-back in the Bodleian volume.) Hyde also quoted the Chinese vocabulary he had acquired from Dacres.

⁴⁷ *De ludis orientalibus*, first pagination, p. 160: ‘... & deinde completè prout ab Amico nostro D. *Shin Fo Çung* nativo Chinensi Nankinensi hic Ludus pro me accuratè delineatus & descriptus est.’

⁴⁸ London, Royal Society, Early Letters I1/98 (Justel to Halley, read 28 April 1686). See also Early Letters I1/110, 114, 122, 130 for more sinological information passed from Justel to Halley, including on Couplet and the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. The book then was reviewed in the *Philosophical Transactions*, xvi (1686-92), pp. 376-8, possibly by Hooke.

⁴⁹ See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Smith 46, pp. 409-10 (8 September 1685), 423-4 (5 July 1686), 441-3 (n.d.), 455-6 (n.d.). For a very early English notice of the Jesuit Confucius, again in the context of James II’s visit to Oxford, see C. Cratford to Arthur Charlett of University College, Oxford, contrasting the philosophy of Hobbes with that of the Chinese sage (Bodleian Library, MS. Ballard 39, f. 106r (18 August [1687])).

about an inch in diameter and a quarter of that deep. These little disks, otherwise all alike, were distinguished by their inscribed Chinese names, the pronunciation and translation of which Master Golius, instructed by Master Martini, had written down on another sheet. And indeed these little disks together with their inscriptions matched those drawn up for me by my Chinese friend, as I see from two of them which were once procured for me by my singular friend, now residing in England, Master Jacobus Gronovius, with the help of his late father. Upon one of these was the character denoting *chariot*, and in the other the character for *horse*, pronounced 'Bà' or 'Bae', but which is the vicious pronunciation in the dialect of the Folkien [Fujian] province; for in the scholarly tongue it is 'Má'.⁵⁰

Hyde goes on to record further debts to Shen, who drew for him a diagram of the board, a table of the number and names of the pieces; and Hyde finally trumps all the Jesuit accounts by stating that Shen and he actually played the game together ('Chinensis noster ... quocum ludebam').⁵¹ Hyde therefore provides the first accurate western description of Xiangqi, noting that there are seven different pieces under ten different names, but no king or queen, and going most of the way towards explaining the rules for play. Hyde's understanding of the game differs very little from the modern rules, although Hyde seems to think that the soldiers (equivalent to pawns in western chess) can move backwards after they have crossed the river in the middle of the Xiangqi board, and not sideways; he may simply have misunderstood Shen on this matter.⁵²

Londini 25 May 1687.

Clarissime et doctissime domine, Litteras dominationis vestrae accepi et adiunctos caractheres, quorum explicatio est

qu [*che*] 車 *currus*
ma [*ma*] 馬 *equus*

Si *per* tempus licebit, veniam, ut fruar societate prestantissimi viri, cuius bibliotheca fons est doctrinae perennis, et uni quidem illa meritissimo contigit, qui veluti publicam habet, communemque doctorum omnium. *Caeterum*, si quid valeam, iubeat, et paratum ad uoluntatem, nutumque habebit.
Valeat.

Addictissimus Servus
Michael Shin fó cūm.

[London, 25 May 1687.

⁵⁰ *De ludis orientalibus*, first pagination, pp. 161-62: 'Nam in Musæo D. Golii Professoris Leydensis defuncti, inter alia multa rariora Κεμήλια à D. Martinio qui diu in Chinâ vixerat accepta, erant Scachi Chineses, qui non diversis Formis, sed solis Inscriptionibus à se invicem dignoscebantur. Erant enim omnes totidem parvi Orbiculi Eburnei ex utrâque parte plani, quorum Diameter ferè uncialis, & ejusmodi quarta pars crassitudo sive profunditas. Hosce itaque Orbiculos (aliàs sibi invicem similes,) distinguebant inscripta Nomina Chinensia, quorum Pronuntiationem & Interpretationem in altero Plano D. Golius à M. Martinio edoctus adscripserat: qui quidem Orbiculi unâ cum Inscriptionibus, cum eis à Chinensi nostro mihi paratis convenient, uti video ex illorum duobus, quos olim ope Parentis τοῦ μακαρίτου pro me procurabat Doctissimus D. Jacobus Gronovius Amicus noster singularis tunc in Angliâ agens. In horum altero erat Character *Currum* denotans, in altero Character *Equi* sonans *Bà* seu *Bae*, quæ quidem vitiosa Pronuntiatio est vernacula Provinciæ Fokiensis: nam in Dialecto erudite sonat *Má*.' Hyde also deployed and illustrated Persian-Indian chess paraphernalia given to him by John Fraunce of University College (B.A. 1669), East India Company chaplain at Bombay, where he drowned, and the East India merchant Daniel Sheldon, who sent Hyde chessmen from Surat (p. 134).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1st pag., p. 173.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1st pag., pp. 174-5.

Most distinguished and learned master, I received your honour's letter and the adjoined characters, of which the explication is *qu* [*che*] 車 'chariot', *ma* [*ma*] 馬 'horse'. If time will allow it, I shall visit, so that I might profit from the company of such a distinguished man, whose library is the fountain of enduring teaching, and who uniquely has this enormous merit, that he treats his library as the public and common possession of all scholars. As for the rest, if I prove able, let him command, and he will have his desire provided for, and his will. Fare him well,

His most devoted servant
Michael Shin fô çum]

Letter II, received 3 September 1687. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 30r = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, p. 518. Text on recto only, verso blank; but the letter is obviously the original as Hyde has noted his *accepi* date on the recto too, first in pencil and later overwritten in ink. Presumably the endorsement and associated postmarks have been cut away.

Shen has now visited and left Oxford. He sends an unidentified Chinese 'papyrus' or paper, brought from China by Shen's Jesuit superior Francesco Maria Spinola (1654-94). It is described in the next letter, but remains untraced. Hyde obviously used Shen as a courier to 'Fraser' and 'Rehge-man' in London. 'Rehge-man', possibly a mishearing, remains elusive, unless he is the Dane Reenberg, for whom see Letter V below; he cannot be the China Jesuit François de Rougemont (1624-76), who had died in China long before this. But 'Fraser' is surely James Fraser (1645-1731), book dealer and librarian, who mixed with various Royal Society circles, including those of Robert Hooke and Hans Sloane; he inspired Hooke to investigate how to make casts of coins.⁵³ Fraser was the Royal Librarian to James II, in which case these coins from Hyde may have been designed for the Royal Collection. He is mentioned frequently in Hooke's journal for 1689, after the fall of James: in December, for instance, Hooke borrowed a map and a relation of 'Tartary' from Fraser, returned the following January. Fraser also appears in the coffee house, alongside Hooke, the merchant and linguist Francis Lodwick, the famous East Indies traveller Captain Robert Knox, and others.⁵⁴

Excuset queso Dominatio Vestra negligentiam meam in scribendo, quia vix scio manibus tenere Calamum Europeum. benè valeo, et semper seruus addictissimus Dominationis vestræ. Mitto papyrum Sinicam, Dominus Spinola ipse defert.⁵⁵ Si aliud velit a me, poterit ipsi dicere, et ego inservium⁵⁶ Dominationi Vestræ.

dedi Domino Fraser epistolam cum nummis accepit, et gratias agit. Nondum dedi aliam domino Rehge-man, quia non potui invenire, queram iterum et tandem dabo. Valeat longum valeat.

adictissimus servus
Michael Xin fô çum]

hospitium meum
At M^r Brunette house
in york Beldings

Accepi Sept. 3. 1687.

⁵³ *ODNB*; William Derham (ed.), *Philosophical Collections* (London, 1726), pp. 111-12. Fraser's own voluminous correspondence is today chiefly held in Aberdeen University Library. I am grateful to Giles Mandelbrote for this suggestion.

⁵⁴ See Hooke's journal for 5, 28, 29 December 1689, and 27 January 1690; other entries mentioning Fraser include 30 April, 12 August, 10 September 1689. For Francis Lodwick's interest in Chinese matters, see Felicity Henderson and William Poole (eds.), *Francis Lodwick: Writings on Language, Theology, and Utopia* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 17, 22, 23, 26.

⁵⁵ If Shen's tense is to be taken literally, then Spinola was the bearer of this letter. The 'papyrus' may simply be 'Chinese paper', but given the discussion of an illustrated 'chartam' in the next letter, it is more likely that these are the same document, and 'papyrus' here is 'a Chinese document'. For Spinola, see Joseph Dehergne, *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine* (Rome, 1973), p. 260.

⁵⁶ Sic; a solecism for 'inserviam'.

[May your honour pardon, I beg, my negligence in writing, for I scarcely know how to hold your European pen in my hands. I am well, and always your honour's most bounden servant. I send you a Chinese paper, Master Spinola himself bears it. If you desire anything else from me, you may tell him, and I shall obey your honour.

I delivered the letter to Master Fraser with the coins; he has received it, and sends thanks. I have not yet delivered the other to Master Rehgehan, because I was not able to find him; I shall seek him again, and deliver it in the end. Fare him well, long fare him well,

Your most bounden servant,
Michael Xin fó cúm

from my hospice
At M^r Brunette house
in York Buildings

I [i.e. Hyde] received this 3 September 1687]

Letter III, 29 December 1687. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 28r = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, p. 519; f. 28 is a single leaf, the verso endorsed 'Reverendo D^{no} doctori n: [*sic*] hyde' in Shen's hand, with 'Oxonii' on a projecting tab at the bottom; now mounted on a modern stub, it is likely that the letter text has been cut from the original letter, as there are no postmarks, although the remnants of the seal lie under a clumsy paper repair to the bottom right corner. Shen's Chinese signature is in a different pen and ink from his Latin text.

This letter answers Hyde's queries about a 'charta', probably the Spinola 'papyrus' mentioned in the previous letter. As Shen mentions 'my emperor', we may suppose that the illustration was a contemporary one, from the time of Kanxi (1654-1722, reigned from 1661), the second Qing emperor. Shen refers to the mythological 鳳 *feng* or phoenix (which Shen calls an 'aquila' or eagle); on the 鳳 *feng* and 凰 *huang* birds see further below.

Excuset queso, si non scribo, quia vix s/c/ío tractare calamum Europeum. Si Dominatio Vestra posset legere Sinicè, ego non deessem officio meo. Charta[m] quam misi non continet comoediam, nec aliquid notatu dignum. In ipsa Sunt Legati ex diuersis Regnis qui deferunt munera, et tributum variarum rerum curiosarum meo Imperatori. qui sedet in illa pictura, non est Imperator, sed gerit vices Imperatoris. In angulo ejusdem est figura avis, quæ dicitur Sinice fum, id est aquila.

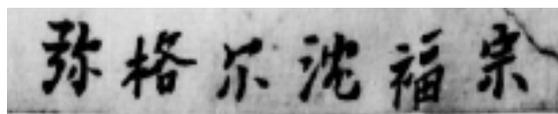
Discessus meus ex anglia instat.⁵⁷ Si uis mittere aliquos libros mathematicos et instrumenta, mitte quamprimum et servabo tanquam pignus nostre Amicitiaë. Sericum nec medicamenta possum modo invenire, fortasse inveniam Ulyssipone, et illinc mittam ad te. Valeat

humillimus servus

Decembris 29. 1687.

Michael chin fo ç[u]m

弥 [mi] 格 [ge] 尔 [er] 沈 [shen] 福 [fu] 宗 [zong]⁵⁸



Shen's signature from MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 28r: 'Michael Shen Fuzong'.

⁵⁷ The National Archives, PRO, SP 44/337, p. 345 is a pass for 'Michaell Chinfocum Chinensis' to return to China, dated 19 October 1687. A further pass dated 10 December of that year was granted to the Jesuit fathers Barnabé and Davril (i.e. Louis Barnabé and Philippe Avril) to go to China too (SP 44/337, pp. 366-7); Spinola himself had been given a pass in June of that year to go to China 'for the conversion of Infidells' (SP 44/337, p. 290).

⁵⁸ Note that Shen supplies his Christian name here, followed by his Chinese name, written in the Western direction, left to right. He spells 'Michael' phonetically using characters pronounced *mí-gé-ěr*. For the first syllable of his Christian names, Shen uses the simplified form (弥 for 彌). Shen demonstrated his signature with various toponymic adjuncts several times for Hyde in their working papers, e.g. f. 18r.

[Forgive me, I beg, if I do not write, but I scarcely know how to hold a European pen. If your honour were able to read in Chinese, I would not be in dereliction of my duty. The document I sent contains neither a comedy nor anything worthy of note. In it there are ambassadors from different kingdoms who bear gifts and a tribute of various curiosities for my Emperor. The man who sits in the picture is not the Emperor himself but stands in his stead. In the corner of the same is the image of the bird that is called in Chinese *fum*, that is, 'eagle'.

My departure from England is imminent. If you would be pleased to send various mathematical books and instruments, send them as soon as possible, and I shall preserve them as a testament to our friendship. Just now I am unable to locate either silk or medicines, but perhaps I shall find them in Lisbon, and send them thence to you. Fare him well,

Your most humble servant

Michael Shen Fuzong

弥 格 尔 沈 福 宗
Michael Shen Fuzong]

Letter IV, 25 January 1687/[68]. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 40r = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, pp. 516-17, endorsed 'For Dr Hyde chief Library Keeper of the Vniuersity of Oxford to be found at queens College Oxon'. The recto also bears the remains of a seal and a postmark for January 26. The left-hand margin is affixed to a later stub, and the bottom section of the letter was evidently folded up into it. The interlinear additions are in a different ink. The Chinese characters are written using a different pen and ink.

This letter answers two lost letters from Hyde, sent earlier in January. Hyde evidently made enquiries and asked for clarifications concerning Chinese weights and measures, Buddhist belief and practice, and a bird which Hyde will have read about in the books of Martino Martini, Michal Boym, and Athanasius Kircher. These are the mythological 鳳 *feng* and 凰 *huang* phoenix birds, the male and female usually combined today as the *fenghuang*, a single female bird.⁵⁹ Shen supplied answers to these questions where he could, providing Hyde with some Chinese characters for temples, as well as the Buddhist 'amitufo' chant, which he likens to Christian psalmody. Interestingly, a parallel observation on the chant was made in one of the earliest of all accounts of China available in English, translated from the Italian of Galeotto Perera by Richard Willes, and published as part of Willes's *History of Trauayle* (London, 1577):

They haue moreouer an other sorte of temples, wherein both vppon the altars and also on the walles do stande many Idoles well proportioned, but bare headed: These beare name *Omithofon*, accompted of them spirites, but suche as in heauen do nether good nor euyll, thought to be suche

⁵⁹ They had been discussed in detail by Martini in the *Atlas Sinensis* (pp. 46-7, 160), and Hyde would also have recalled one of the plates to Kircher's *China monumentis ... illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667), Pars IV, cap. VIII, 'De certis quibusdam Volucris extrà Chinam invisit' ('On certain kinds of birds unknown outside China'), which illustrates a bird with a variegated tail, marked 'Avis Regia' (p. 196). Kircher's source was the Polish Jesuit Michael Boym 'in sua Flora', whom he quotes: 'Avis est extremæ pulchritudinis, quæ si quandoque humano sese conspectui subduxerit, sinistri id in Regia familia alicuius eventus omen habetur. Mas *Fam*, fœmina *Hoam* vocatur' (p. 195; 'a bird of great beauty, which when it is sighted is held as portent of some sinister occurrence to the Royal Family. The male is called *Fam*, the female *Hoam*'). Boym considered it a type of peacock. The original text and illustration is from Boym, *Flora Sinensis* (Vienna, 1656), sigs K1v-K2r. Shen also drew the character for Hyde into the latter's copy, once again, of Müller's *Disquisitio*, where it had been badly represented in wood-cut, and glossed as a phoenix (p. 41). The word *fenghuang* was in origin probably a binomial compound, at some later point opportunistically split into two monosyllables, one for each bird.

men and women, as haue chastlye lyued in this worlde in abstinence from fyshe and fleshe, fedde only with ryse & salates.⁶⁰

These are clearly accounts of the same chant, the ‘amitufo’, which is the name of Amitabha Buddha in Chinese, and Hyde will also have read with care the very recent discussion in the Parisian 1687 Jesuit *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* – the book to which James II refers below – where the sects of the Chinese are discussed in detail, and the fanciful Jesuit etymology of *fo* 佛 is proposed, consisting as it does of a combination of the radical for ‘man’ followed by the negative particle for verbal phrases (hence, on this argument, ‘inhuman’).⁶¹ For Shen’s comment on the transmigration of souls, compare the famous encounter in the Bodleian between Hyde and James II in late 1687:

... well D^r Hyde [said the King] was ye chinese here? to wch he answered yes if it may please y^r maj. & I learnd many things of him. Then said 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 yt he had his picture to ye life hanging in his roome next to y^e bed-chamber.

Then his maj. told D^r Hyde of a book of Confucius translated from 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 – & yt it treated of philosophy, but not so as y^t of European philosophy – whereupon his majest. asked whether y^e Chinee 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 statues representing the Trinity, & other pictures w^{ch} shew y^t antient Xtianity had been amongst them – to which he assented by a nod.⁶²

Hyde here accepts the thesis that the modern Chinese are idolaters, but that they had once known Christianity. He does not exclude Confucianism from the general charge of idolatry, the position that many, but not all, Jesuits were keen to promote, as Leibniz would do too. But the references in the correspondence are strictly to Buddhist (‘Bonziorium’)⁶³ devotional practices. We cannot say whether Shen, a Christian, considered himself to have renounced Confucian rites, but a hint is provided by Hyde’s comment to Boyle that Shen ‘doth not praise’ *Confucius’s* philosophy.⁶⁴ Shen of course refers to ‘our’ (Christian) psalmody when discussing Buddhist chant, and also ‘my’ China, just as he had referred to ‘my’ emperor above. He treats as directly translatable Buddhist prayer beads and (Roman Catholic) Christian rosary beads. As Golvers comments, Shen’s valediction ‘sounds like a farewell letter’, although Hyde was, as Shen’s subsequent replies demonstrate, unwilling to cease questioning his visitor.⁶⁵ Finally, Shen’s postscript shows that while in Oxford he met the Vice-chancellor, Gilbert Ironside, who was also the Warden of Wadham College.

⁶⁰ Richard Willes, *History of Trauayle* (London, 1577), f. 241v. Compare the accounts of Japanese Buddhist chants in Arnoldus Montanus, *Atlas Japannensis*, tr. John Ogilby (London, 1670), pp. 100, 291-2. The Perera/Willes account is misleading in thinking the chant addresses a class of the enlightened; Shen correctly says that the phrase is just one of the names of the Buddha himself. Ricci/Trigault had named the second, Buddhist sect of the Chinese as ‘Sciequia or Omitose’ or in Japanese ‘Sciacca and Amidabu’ (Louis J. Gallagher (ed.), *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610* (New York, 1953), p. 98).

⁶¹ Thierry Meynard, S.J. (ed.), *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687): The First Translation of the Confucian Classics* (Rome, 2011), p. 118. For more western misinterpretations of *Fo*, see Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 232. The radical-phonetic nature of most of the characters was entirely missed by western commentators in this period.

⁶² Bodleian Library, MS. Wood D 19(3), ff. 87v-88r. I cite directly from Wood’s autograph manuscript; slightly differing transcripts are offered in Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. Bliss, vol. i, p. cxi; and *Wood’s Life and Times*, ed. Clark, vol. ii, 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. The encounter was recorded in the first western history of Sinology, T. S. Bayer’s *Museum Sinicum* (St Petersburg, 1730), pp. 66-8, and frequently thereafter; the historical part of Bayer’s *Praefatio* is also translated in Lundbæk, *T. S. Bayer*, pp. 39-97. The encounter has recently been well treated by Nicholas Dew in his *Orientalism in Louis XIV’s France* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 205-8.

⁶³ *Bonze/bonz(i)us* were the English/Latin terms for a Buddhist priest, in use from the later sixteenth century, and borrowed from the Japanese word. See *OED*.

⁶⁴ Boyle, *Correspondence*, vol. vi, p. 226, letter of 26 July 1687.

⁶⁵ Golvers, ‘Chinese Assistants’, p. 141.

ignoscat D. t.⁶⁶ quod serius, quam par erat, respondeam, in causâ fuerunt occupationes, et adventus D. Couplet⁶⁷ ex Galliâ quocum propediem cogito Deo favente petere ulyssiponem et deinde chinam meam.

ad binas quas accepi Literas Unicâ hâc respondeo.

imprimis mitto quas potui comperire mensurarum Sinicarum regulas ex ipsorum libris depromptas.⁶⁸ neque enim omnium recordari possum nec ad amussim singula, prout optarem \perscribere/ eruditæ curiositati Vestræ. \fortè ex Lusitaniâ id potero/ ubi scilicet libros Sinicos & vocabularia inveniam. quod dixi Dⁱ. tuæ quod Gentiles habeant imagines de resurrectione, nolim id intelligi de corporum resurrectione Sed potius de animarum transmigratione ab uno corpore in alia corpora de parietum ornamentis in templis idolorum sunt equidem et e floribus, sed præcipue ex historijs seu fabulis ipsorum deprompta.

habeo gratias Di. tuæ pro omni affectu et honore quo me prosecuta semper fuit et pro oblatis toties muneribus mathematicis quibus promerendo nihil dignum contuli si quid tamen vitri curiosi ut sunt microscopia aut tubuli optici etc mittere optaret ea et sinis gratissima et mihi forent benevolentia vestræ æterna monumenta Vale mei memor eruditissime domine cuius semper memor vivam etiam in china.

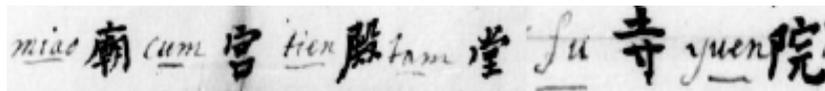
Januarii 25. 1687

humillimus et obstrictissimus servus

Michael Xin.

quæso ut meo nomine salutet Admodum uenerando Domino vicecancellario⁶⁹

templa et fana idolorum vocantur *miao* [*miao*] 廟 *cum* [*gong*] 宮 *tien* [*dian*] 殿 *tam* [*tang*] 堂 *su* [*si*] 寺 *yuen* [*yuan*] 院⁷⁰



Detail from MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 40r.

de domo vernante nil unquam vidi vel audivi.⁷¹

idolum colendum semper est in medio templi conspiciendum ilico ingredienti portam mediam maiorem: reliqua idola sunt ad latera utrinque quasi per circuitum.

⁶⁶ I.e. 'Dominatio tua'.

⁶⁷ For Couplet see Dehergne, *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine*, pp. 66-7, and the essays in Heyndrickx (ed.), *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623–1693)*. Seven important letters on sinological matters and the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* from Couplet to Christian Mentzel, written between 26 April and 26 June 1687, survive in Bayer's copies (Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, MS. Hunter 299, pp. 175-93); these contain many mentions of Shen, whom Couplet calls his amanuensis, and on whom Couplet relied for material on or in Chinese, which Couplet could not write.

⁶⁸ Hyde and Shen's letters (see especially Letters VI, VII below) (as also their notes among Hyde's papers) frequently address mensuration; Hyde, as subsequent notes will show, incorporated these replies into his 1688 *Epistola*.

⁶⁹ This is set in the margin against the following postscript. Gilbert Ironside (1631/2-1701), Warden of Wadham College, and Vice Chancellor of Oxford, 1678-79, was at this very time in increasing conflict with pro-Roman Catholic crown policy. By the end of the year he would welcome the Williamite revolution (*ODNB*; Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. iv: *The Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 918, 949).

⁷⁰ On Chinese temples, see Martini, *Atlas*, pp. 12-13; Semedo, *Kingdom of China*, p. 86; and Magalhães, *New History of China*, pp. 281-340. The last two examples given by Shen (堂 *si*, and 寺 *yuan*) are usually applied to specifically Buddhist buildings.

⁷¹ Hyde's 'Verdant House' mystified Shen, and remains mysterious. Given Hyde's interests it may be a supposed board game; or it may be the name of a palace or temple, but if so then not one obviously named thus in the discussions referenced in the previous note; Magalhães's 'Palace of Union and Flourishing' is the closest. Did Hyde perhaps mean 'Summer Palace'?

formæ verborum seu precum ad idola sunt pro diversitate materiæ, differentes. habent bonzij suas quasi psalmodias more fere nostro quotidie cantant. Verba quibus utuntur omnes ad corollas recitandas, sunt *o 阿 mi 弥 to 陀 fo 佛* quæ verba nomen idoli significant quod ad singula grana repetuntur: mas avis fum⁷² dicta hoam, longiorem et magis variegatam caudam et plumas habet et cristam quam avis femella. 16 Vnciæ faciunt libram ordinariam quæ libra paulo major est vestræ.⁷³ fenestræ in templis bonziorum paucae sunt et si quæ sunt aperiuntur aut clauduntur prout libuerit. in fenestris non est usus vitrorum sed utuntur conchis veluti ostrearum quas tenuissime aptant in forma quadrata vel rotunda suntque satis pellucidæ.

[May your honour pardon me if I reply later than is polite, but it has been busy, and there has arrived from France Master Couplet, with whom, God willing, very soon I shall journey to Lisbon, and thence to my China.

To your two letters which I have received, I make this one reply.

First, I send you what I was able to find out about the rules of Chinese measures taken from their books; but I am unable to recall everything, nor to the letter, as much as I should like to note down for your learned curiosity. Perhaps I shall be able to do that from Portugal, where doubtless I shall find Chinese books and vocabularies.

When I told your honour that the Gentiles had depictions of the resurrection, I should not wish that to be understood of the resurrection of bodies, but rather of the transmigration of souls from one body into other bodies.

Concerning the wall decorations in the temples of the Idols, they can indeed be floral, but are chiefly derived from their histories or myths.

I am very grateful to your honour for all the affection and respect which was always shown towards me, and for the mathematical gifts so frequently offered to me, for which I could return nothing to the one deserving. If however you would be pleased to send curious glasses such as microscopes or optic tubes, and the like, things both most pleasing to the Chinese, and also to me 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.

Your most humble and most bounden servant

25 January 1687

Michael Xin

Please greet the reverend master Vice-chancellor in my name.

The temples and sanctuaries of the Idols are called *miao* [*miao*, 'temple', 'shrine'] 廟, *cum* [*gong*, 'palace', 'temple'] 宮, *tien* [*dian*, 'temple', 'palace', 'hall'] 殿, *tam* [*tang*, 'hall', 'court'] 堂, *su* [*si*, 'hall', 'court', 'monastery'] 寺, *yuen* [*yuan*, 'courtyard', 'hall', 'Buddhist dormitory/college'] 院.

Concerning the Verdant House I have seen or heard nothing.

The idol worshipped is always in the middle of the temple, immediately visible to someone entering through the middle great door: the other idols are against the walls on both sides, as if in a circuit.

The forms of words or prayers to the idols differ as the subject differs.

The Bonzes have their own kind of Psalms, which they sing daily, almost in our fashion. The words which all recite to their strings of beads are *o 阿 mi 弥 to 陀 fo 佛* which words signify the name of the idol, which they repeat to each bead.

The male *fum* bird, called *hoam*, has a longer and more variegated tail, feathers, and crest than the female bird.

⁷² There is a space after 'fum' for the character (which is 鳳, *feng*), but it was not filled in.

⁷³ Repeated by Hyde in the corrected text of his *Epistola*, sig. [C3]r.

Sixteen ounces make a common pound, which is a little greater than yours.

The windows in the temples of the Bonzes are few, and if they are present, they are opened and closed at will. Glass is not used in these windows but shell, like oyster-shell, which they fashion extremely thinly, squared or rounded, and these are adequately translucent.]

Letter V, Reenberg to Hyde, 1 February 1688. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 27r-28v = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, pp. 520-21, clumsily mounted on a modern stub, text on 27r, 28r (27v blank), 28v endorsed ‘for the Reverend Doctor Thomas Hyde of Queens Colledge in Oxford’, with a postmark of 2 February, and wax seal.

This letter was written by the Danish priest Morten Clausen Reenberg (1660-1736), an Anglophile and theologian from Viborg (*teologisk attestats*, 1682) who was visiting Oxford and Cambridge in these years. Reenberg signed the Bodleian’s register for visiting readers some months previously, as ‘Martinus Reenberg Danus. 1687. die. 17 Octob.’.⁷⁴ Reenberg reports back to Hyde on matters chiefly mensural; Hyde would soon present his findings on ‘greater’ and ‘lesser’ Chinese measures in his *Epistola de ponderibus et mensuris Serum seu Sinensium*, integrating these, and all Shen’s other comments. Reenberg’s letter is however difficult to make final sense of, because he refers to a now lost list of figures.

Londini, die. Kal: Feb: A° 87/88

Vir Doctissime,

Susplicari noli me meo defuisse officio in obeundis apud Chinensem tuis negotiis; primo die ex quo Oxonio huc adveni, prima mihi cura fuit hominem videndi, sed in quo hospitio frustra quæsitum heri tandem inveni. Intra octiduum credit se hinc navigaturum, navis enim quæ vehatur, in anchoris flante secundo solvit. Ad quæsitæ tuæ vides hic quid reposuit: Prima scilicet figura æquivalet voci iò Integræ et sonat Cien; secunda lectu satis facilis, tertia alicujus et sonat Xui quasi nostrum Svi scilicet cum V consonante, quarta comœdiæ et sonat hú. Quinta⁷⁵ figura scilicet 卅⁷⁶ significat numerum 21, et numerus quidem 20 sonat nien [nian] et notatur figura 卅 unitas autem sonat Ye [yi] et notatur⁷⁷ linea illâ transversa subjecta —.⁷⁸ Sexta figura 𠄎 volumine sonat qvon [gong].⁷⁹

⁷⁴ For Reenberg, see the *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, s.n.; the admissions register is Bodleian Library, Lib. recs. e. 534, with Reenberg’s signature at f. 17r. Shen has not signed this register, presumably because he was not strictly a reader, and indeed the library paid Shen for his services.

⁷⁵ The following explanation of numerals may be compared to various other samples Shen drew up for Hyde – one in particular sets down the numerals in their common forms, but pairs them with what are the large-style equivalents, designed to avoid fraud (f. 14r), on which Shen also wrote down some hexagrams, which Hyde then annotated in Latin with Shen’s explanation that ‘Fohi’ (i.e. the legendary king Fu Xi) first devised and Confucius later elucidated these hexagrams, an explanation also available in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Meynard (ed.), *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687): The First Translation of the Confucian Classics*, p. 101). Hyde later had these lists of numbers engraved (see n. 21 above). Compare Hyde’s quoted comment on British Library, 15298.a.32: ‘Chinensis liber seu Comment. in Lineolas Fokianas, sc. quas posuit Imperator Foki’ (‘A Chinese book or commentary on the diagrams of Foki [i.e. Fu Xi/‘Fohi’; Hyde evidently copied Shen in pronouncing the ‘h’ as a fricative], being those which the Emperor Foki established’).

⁷⁶ Reenberg actually places the unit character below that for twenty, as his following ‘subjecta’ implies; here I have followed a horizontal plane.

⁷⁷ ‘notatur’ is my emendation; the MS. reads ‘sonatur’.

⁷⁸ 卅 is a variant of the more common 卅; they are written alongside one another on f. 14r with the pronunciation ‘nien’ and the value ‘20’ repeated for both.

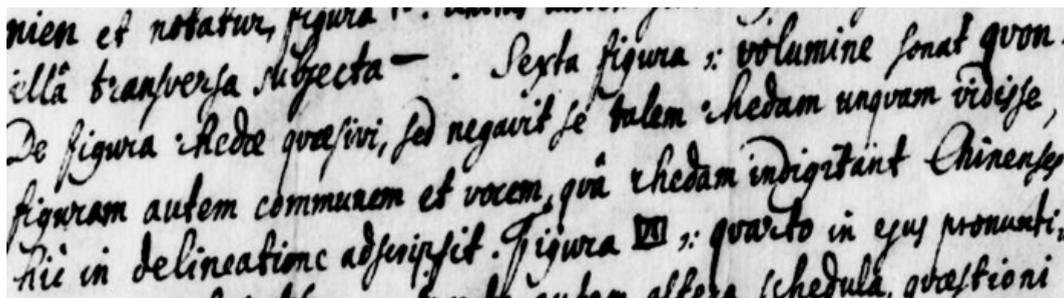
⁷⁹ The character Reenberg produces is a very small character comprised of three strokes, a downwards minim with a head, followed by two small dots arranged vertically. Reenberg was copying what he could not understand, and the character is not readily identifiable, and may either be a merchant’s mark, or, given the pronunciation ‘qvon’, it may be equivalent to the measure-word 公 *gong*, skewed ninety degrees, which stands for ‘common’ or ‘standard’. I have transcribed it tentatively as 𠄎, but have also supplied an image from the original letter.

De figura rhedæ quæsiui, sed negavit se talem rhedam unquam vidisse, figuram autem communem et vocem quâ rhedam indigitant Chineses hîc in delineatione adscripsit.⁸⁰ Figura 四公 quarto in ejus pronunciatione sonabat *tsu* [*si*]. Inserta autem altera schedula,⁸¹ quæstioni quæ in limine chartulæ tuæ habetur, respondet,⁸² extensionem mensuræ tum majoris, tum minoris rogavi, mihi monstraret, sed negavit se talem ad manus habere. Hæc sunt, vir doctissime, quibus satisfacere conatus sum tuis jussis, si quædam adhuc desideras, oro tenuitati meæ des veniam, et ulteriora jussa mittas. Vir Doctissime,

R. T. Devotissimo

M. Reenberg.

[London, 1 February, 1688.



Detail from MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 27r.

Most learned sir,

Do not suspect me of shirking my duty in undertaking your affairs with the Chinese; the first day I arrived here from Oxford my first concern was to see the man, but I sought in vain where he was staying. But yesterday at last I found him. He thinks he will sail from here within eight days, as the boat in which he travels weighs anchor with the next wind. To your questions you can see here what he has answered.

The first figure is equivalent to the complete word *iò*, and is pronounced *cien*; the second is easy enough to read; the third, ‘anyone/thing’, is pronounced *xui*, like our *svi*, that is with consonantal ‘v’; the fourth is ‘comedy’, and is pronounced *hi*;⁸³ the fifth figure being 廿一 signifies the number 21, and the number 20 is pronounced *nien* [*nian*] and written with the character 廿 and 1 is pronounced *ye* [*yi*] and written with that transverse subscript 一 The sixth character, for volume, 公 is pronounced *quon* [*gong*]. I enquired about the character for ‘wagon’, but he said he had never seen such a character for ‘wagon’, although he has drawn here in outline the usual character and pronunciation by which the Chinese represent a wagon. The character 四公 ‘four’ in its pronunciation is sounded *tsu* [*si*].⁸⁴ There is another leaf inserted, moreover, which responds to the question placed in the margin of your paper. The extent of both the greater and lesser measures

⁸⁰ Possibly, once again, *che* 車, as in Letter I. Again, the interest in a ‘chariot’ or ‘wagon’ character suggests that Hyde had gaming terms in mind.

⁸¹ This insert may survive among Hyde’s Chinese papers, but I have not identified it.

⁸² Sharpe in his transcript of this letter (*Syntagma dissertationum*, vol. ii, p. 521) followed ‘respondet’ with an editorial ellipse, as the grammar indeed suggests that a response is missing here.

⁸³ The characters corresponding to *alicuius* and *comediæ* are not drawn. The first meant was probably *shei* 誰, ‘someone, anyone’; the second is debatable.

⁸⁴ Reenberg sounds only the first of the two characters he has reproduced.

I enquired after, and he showed them to me, but he denied that he had such to hand. These are the things, most learned sir, with which I tried to satisfy your commands; if you still require information, I beg you to overlook my weakness, and send your further commands, most learned sir, to your honour's most devoted

M. Reenberg.]

Letter VI [6 or 7 February 1688]. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 43r = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, pp. 517-18.⁸⁵ The text is on the recto, with the verso endorsed 'For mr. D^r Hyde chief Library Keeper of the Uniuersity of Oxford at Oxon', with seal and postmark of 7 February. The upper edge, slightly damaged in the salutation line, is attached to a modern stub. The Chinese characters are here written in the same pen as the Latin text.

In this letter Shen replies to two missives from Hyde at once. His opening remarks address Chinese (Buddhist) temples, and also Chinese New Year, a festival Hyde would discuss in his soon-to-be-published *Epistola*. Shen then turns to Chinese grammar, making a series of fundamental points that would nevertheless be difficult for a western linguist to understand properly.

There were several accounts of Chinese language available to Hyde, most recently among the Jesuits those of Athanasius Kircher, Alvaro Semedo, and Gabriel Magalhães. Kircher's comments were derivative and in places fantastical; but the China Jesuits Semedo and Magalhães wrote from experience.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, neither of these men acknowledged that Chinese characters frequently contain a phonetic element, promoting instead a 'hieroglyphic' interpretation of the characters that was to have profound influence over both western perceptions of certain eastern languages and on western schemes for devising artificial languages. Hyde, for one, seems to have accepted this ideographic interpretation of Chinese script, or at least of its origin. It is difficult to say whether the Jesuits misrepresented or misunderstood this fundamental aspect of written Chinese, but the rise of the Rites Controversy furnishes one reason why sinophiles might entrench in their insistence upon a lofty, idealistic origin for the characters. Secondly, although all three writers discussed with varying degrees of accuracy the radical system of the script and the tonal nature of the spoken language, none made any significant comments on grammar, other than to observe that Chinese is not an inflected language. Indeed, the only attempt at an organized description of Chinese grammar in print at this time was probably the brief chapter of the Cistercian Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz in his *Apparatus Philosophicus* of 1665, a discussion which derives from his receipt as a gift probably in 1654 of Martino Martini's manuscript 'Grammatica Sinica', and from discussions at the same time with Martini's Chinese companion Dominicus.⁸⁷ Martini's grammar, compiled probably in the early 1650s, may have been commenced as a Jesuit teaching tool, and was not printed, although Martini gave copies to Caramuel and indeed to Jacobus Golius, from which other copies were subsequently taken. Martini's fascinating text is most obviously noteworthy for its attempt to force Chinese into a traditional Latin system of nouns, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adverbs, interjections and so forth, and it is not

⁸⁵ The sequencing of the undated letters VI and VII is conjectural. VI refers to letters of 22 and 29 January, and is postmarked 7 February 1688. VII must be later than IV, because Shen has received the mathematical instruments he desired. I place letter VII after VI because the metrological discussions in VII have clearly been going on for some time, and because there too Shen explains the 'aliud' or 'other' *pu* (*bu*, 舖), which suggests the priority of the discussion in letter VI of the different *pu* (*bu*, 步).

⁸⁶ For an exposition and assessment of these three scholars on Chinese language, see Mungello, *Curious Land*, pp. 76-9 (Semedo), 96-102 (Magalhães), 143-57 (Kircher). Kircher's illustrations of mythical Chinese scripts were in fact taken from a real Chinese popular encyclopedia: see Knud Lundbæk, 'Imaginary Ancient Chinese Characters', *China Mission Studies (1550-1800)*, v (1983), pp. 5-23. A handy compendium from the time of theories on Chinese is that of the Augsburg Lutheran Theophilus Spizelius, *De re literaria Sinensium commentarius* (Leiden, 1660), employed by, e.g., John Wilkins, *An Essay concerning a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language* (London, 1668), p. 452. The Bodleian copy of Spizelius (8° F 63 Linc), in passing, was purchased in the year of its publication by Thomas Clutterbuck, possibly the FRS and merchant of that name – but it was not in the library in Hyde's time.

⁸⁷ Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz, *Apparatus Philosophicus, quatuor libris distinctus* (Cologne, 1665), §§224-25, pp. 123-24. The discussion takes place in Caramuel's second book, on the scripts of all (exotic) nations.

surprising that a Jesuit would frame an exotic language so.⁸⁸ Caramuel's derivative remarks go even further, identifying eight parts of speech, two numbers, three cases, and no genders, although he does understand that 'case' is notated by particle rather than any kind of inflection. There is no evidence Hyde knew of either Martini's or Caramuel's attempts.⁸⁹

Other scholars were much exercised by the tonal, uninflected character of Chinese, and this encouraged Golius, for one, to take the next step and conjecture that such a language was artificially constructed. Pondering no fewer than ten different supposed pronunciations of one syllable, each producing a different meaning, and yet scarcely perceptible to non-Chinese ears, Golius concluded: 'such it is that one might say that this language was born not out of the necessity of things just happening thus, but rather devised and imposed by premeditated design.'⁹⁰ The discussion in the prolegomena to the London Polyglot Bible (1654-57) concurred – the Chinese written language suggests that another such *character communis* or international script might be promulgated.⁹¹

Hyde evidently pressed Shen on the question of grammar, and Shen attempted to explain some Chinese grammar by means of western grammatical terminology. It is notable, too, that Shen distinguishes the usage of the literati from the common language, something he had done above when noting the varying pronunciations of 馬, for horse. Chinese, Shen observes, lacks conjugations and declensions, but instead employs grammatical particles. Shen, describing Chinese using western grammatical categories acquired from his Jesuit teachers, explains the characters that mark the genitive, the dative, and the ablative, and says that there is no marker for accusative, which is determined by position. Shen observes that the particles *de* (modern Mandarin) and *zhi* (literary Chinese) act as a genitive marker, but one that can be omitted when it is obvious that the implied construction is genitive, as is true also of the dative *yu*, which Shen comments is dropped in literary Chinese, with its marked tendency to omit particles inferrable by context. Shen's distinction between the 'Lord of Heaven' and 'the one ruling over heaven' is a subtle grammatical one: the former is a conventional phrase ('Heaven-Lord'), where 'Lord' is a noun, 'heaven' its adjunct. (To be precise, 'heaven' is not formally an adjective; but were this not a binome or standard phrase, one could place the genitive marker *zhi* between the two to render the grammatical relation explicit.) The second occurrence of the characters is as a nominalized verb followed by its object ('the-one-ruling heaven'). It would be hard for a western scholar to grasp the difference immediately, but what Shen is trying to say is that one character can function as a noun in one construction and as a verb in another ('Ruler'/ruling'), or as an adjunct in one and an object in another ('heavenly'/heaven'), but that these grammatical identities can only be determined by position and context. The particle *yu* is not purely a dative; this character is rather what modern grammarians class as a coverb, usually meaning 'together with, and'. (It also serves as an interrogative particle, but with a different tone (*yu*); perhaps understandably, Shen does not comment that the same characters can serve different grammatical functions.) Again, the particle *yu*, 'exist in relation to', is only analogous to the Latin ablative, and is translated varyingly according to context by 'in, at, to, from, than'. (Hyde did not find an opportunity to print these observations on grammar, but these

⁸⁸ It has now been edited by Giuliano Bertuccioli in Martini, *Opera Omnia*, vol. ii, pp. 349-481. For some remarks on its circulation, see Mungello, *Curious Land*, pp. 203, 238, and especially Paternicò, 'Martino Martini e Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz', who has traced evidence of several further copies. The source of the belief that Golius received a copy from Martini is T. S. Bayer, *Museum Sinicum*, pp. 23, 88, also in Lundbæk, *T. S. Bayer*, pp. 54, 93-4; it was from Golius's copy that Bayer made his own, which is the basis of the modern edition. The latter mention in Bayer shows that Philippe Couplet prepared a description of the language too, possibly based on Martini's grammar. For Jesuit attitudes to teaching and learning Chinese, see Liam Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), pp. 243-86.

⁸⁹ The Bodleian did not (and still does not) possess Caramuel's book; and no manuscript of Martini was present in the British Isles until in the eighteenth century Heinrich Walter Gerdes in London, and through him William Hunter in Glasgow, acquired T. S. Bayer's papers, including Bayer's copy of the Martini grammar that had once been in Golius's hands. It is therefore now, along with the rest of Bayer's papers, in the Hunterian Collection in Glasgow University Library.

⁹⁰ Golius, *Additamentum*, p. vj: 'Ita ut linguam hanc non tam ex incidentium rerum necessitate natam, quam præmeditata arte effectam atque institutam quis dixerit.' Hyde's own manuscript merchant vocabularies would have highlighted for him the practical difficulty of the tones for merchants: one entry, for instance, translates 'ya' as either 'God', 'excellent', 'a Wall', or 'Dumbness' (Bodleian Library, MS. Hyde 7, f. [3]v).

⁹¹ Brian Walton (ed.), *Biblia sacra polyglotta*, 6 vols (London, 1654-1657), I, Prolegomenon II, pp. 9-10.

would presumably have become part of his promised *Adversaria Chinensia*, for which other intended sections do indeed survive.)⁹² Shen's understandably faltering introduction to these grammatical particles is possibly the earliest written attempt to do so by a native strictly for the benefit of a western observer; the Chinese themselves were slow to attempt grammatical analysis of their own language(s), and it has been argued that the first full attempt was produced in only 1898, and even then was heavily influenced by Greco-Roman grammatical categories.⁹³

Shen finally turns once more to weights and measures, further material for Hyde's *Epistola*, but with a confession that he is not able to satisfy all Hyde's exacting queries. He also comments that most Chinese believe in the transmigration of souls, a Buddhist doctrine inevitably attributed by most contemporary western commentators to Pythagorean influence.

Amplissime [D]omine

Accepi binas Litteras ab A. t.⁹⁴ alteras 22 januarij datas alteras 29. puto ad primas responsum fuisse ad plerasque quæstiones; ad quasdam, quas adjunxit, breviter hæc habeto. forma templorum idolatricorum est quadrata et latior multò quàm longior. orationes seu preces fundunt rectà ad idola, quamcumque plagam coeli respiciant. dies quibus templa adeunt, non sunt determinati. itur⁹⁵ quando lubet: neque permittuntur concursus magni in templo uti apud nostrates. plerumque tamen diebus natalitijs suorum idolorum, aut anno novo quo ad 15 dies celebratur,⁹⁶ plures adeunt dicta templa, alij kalendis cuiusque mensis⁹⁷

Sinenses carent conjugationibus et declinationibus. addunt tamen genitivis tiě [*de*] 的 et in stylo litteratorum chi [*zhi*] 之 quæ particulæ semper præponuntur substantivo uti et ipsum substantivum præponitur ordinariè alteri substantivo, quando non ponitur particula genitiui.

v. g. tien [*tian*] 天 chù [*zhu*] 主 significat cœli Dominus, quod si dicas chù [*zhu*] 主 tien [*tian*] 天 significabit dominantem cœlo.

⁹² Compare Magalhães, *History of China*, p. 83, where the opening of the Confucian *Daxue* (大學) is given, with a gloss (here English), illustrating in passing the use of *zhi* as a possessive. Some of the opening section of the *Daxue* first appeared in a western book, in Latin, in Antonius Possevinus, *Bibliotheca selecta* (Rome, 1593), pp. 581-6, on which see Knud Lundbæk, 'The First Translation from a Confucian Classic in Europe', *China Mission Studies (1550-1800) Bulletin*, i (1979), pp. 1-11; its first partial appearance in English came appended to a 1685 sermon by Nathaniel Vincent, *The Right Notion of Honour* (London, 1685), probably via Robert Hooke and Francis Lodwick, on which see Matthew Jenkinson, 'Nathaniel Vincent and Confucius's "Great Learning" in Restoration England', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, lx (2006), pp. 35-47.

⁹³ Brook, *Mr Selden's Map*, p. 61, is therefore perhaps too quick to assert that 'there is nothing whatsoever about how the language works grammatically' among the Hyde/Shen papers. For the history of Chinese grammars, see Victor Mair, 'Ma Jianzhong and the Invention of Chinese Grammar', *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, x (1997), pp. 5-26. My thanks to Noel Malcolm for this reference.

⁹⁴ I.e. 'Altitudine tua'.

⁹⁵ 'itur' an interlinear addition over deleted word.

⁹⁶ Hyde was to discuss Chinese New Year in his *Epistola*, although here Hyde drew once again on his merchant handbooks from John Dacres: 'Restat ut curiositatis gratia (quia nemo hactenus hæc scriptio prodidit,) pro Colophone addam, ex supra laudato MS Libro D. Dacres ad Sinas Mercatoris, primum τοῦ *Sin nien* seu *Novi anni* diem semper esse in *Sin yue* seu *Novilunio* quod est (sive ante sive post) Quintæ diei Februarii proximus. Ex gr. Annus 1673 inchoatus est Septimo die Februarii. Sic ille. Is quidem heic in Europa erat dies Sextus. Anno autem utuntur Lunari' ('It remains that, for the sake of curiosity (because no-one up until now has put down such things in writing) that I add a colophon from the above cited book of Master Dacres, merchant to the Chinese, first of all concerning the *Sin nien* or New Year's Day, which is always in the *Sin yue* or New Moon that is closest (either before or afterwards) to 5 February. As an example: the year 1673 began on 7 February. Thus he. But in Europe it was the sixth day. They employ the lunar year') (sig. D4rv). Hyde was indeed translating into Latin directly from Dacres's manuscript.

⁹⁷ 'mensis' is followed by a deleted word.

Dativo præponunt sæpe yu [yu] 與 etsi sæpe sine illis particulis intelligant saltem litterati. Accusatiuus ordinarie postponitur verbo a quo regitur absque ullo addito⁹⁸ ablativo præponitur sæpe particula yu [yu] 於

non possum exacte dicere quantum mensura *ta che* [da chi] excedat mensuram *siao che* [xiao chi]. ego puto *siao che* [xiao chi] sinicum accedere proxime ad ulnam vestram Europaeam.⁹⁹ examinabo rem cum fuero ulyssipone. ad alteras literas 29 januarij datas Respondeo, majorem partem sinensium idolatrarum credere transmigrationem animarum. *pu* [bu] seu passus sinicus continet 5 *ta che* [da chi] seu ulnas magnas.¹⁰⁰ nec ego nec D. Couplet exacte meminimus differentias Librarum sinicarum. Si haberemus balances sinicas, quas omnes dono dedimus possemus ad admussim satisfacere curiositati vestræ. cæterum sciat A. tua vnum pataconem hispanicum¹⁰¹ ad bilancem sinicam ponderatum continere septem scrupulos et tria minuta adeoque deesse adhuc septem minuta ut fit præcise una Vncia sinica. Sedecim autem Vnciæ faciunt sinicam libram ordinariam, et communissimam. sunt item libræ majores quæ constant 18 Vncijs, sunt quæ 20 aut 24 Vncijs constant.¹⁰² Vale

Amplissime Domine mei semper memor uti et ero ego

humillimus et obstrictissimus
servus michael Xin.

[I received your honour's two letters, one dated 22 January, the other 29 January. As for the first, I think I have already replied to many of your questions; to these which you have added I respond briefly. The shape of the idolaters' temples is oblong and much broader than deep. They utter their speeches or prayers directly to the idols, which all face the region of heaven. The days on which they go to the temple are not fixed: they go when they want, nor are large gatherings permitted in the temples as they are with us. But often people go to these temples on the birthdays of their idols; many people go at the New Year, which is celebrated for fifteen days; others go at the kalends of each month, &c.

The Chinese lack conjugations and declensions: but for the genitive they add *tiě* [de] 的 and in the style of the literati *chi* [zhi] 之, which particles they always place before the substantive, and that substantive is usually placed before the other substantive, when the particle for the genitive is not used; for example *tien chù* signifies 'the Lord of Heaven', but if you say *chù tien* it will signify 'the one ruling over heaven'. For the dative they often prefix yu [yu] 與 even if often the literati at least can understand this without these particles. The accusative is ordinarily postfixed to the word which governs it, and without any further sign; for the ablative often the particle yu [yu] 於 is prefixed.

⁹⁸ We are to understand a colon or stop after 'addito'; 'ablativo' commences a new sentence.

⁹⁹ Compare Hyde, *Epistola*, sig. B2v, where he explains that Shen had set out in person for him three different Chinese cubits, first the *Ta che* [da chi] (i.e. 大尺) or Great Measure, secondly the lesser measure *Quon che* [guan chi] (i.e. 官尺), or Mandarin's Measure, for courtiers and merchants; and finally the *Siao che* [xiao chi] (i.e. 小尺) or Small Measure. The original paper is Sloane MS. Or. 853a, f. 6r.

¹⁰⁰ Compare Hyde, *Epistola*, sigs B2v-B3r, where Hyde explains that the Chinese wooden geodesic or land-surveying instrument, in the form of a divided pair of compasses, is called a *pu* [bu], the same word being used for the Chinese geometrical foot itself, containing not (as Martini and Semedo claimed) 6 *che* [chi] or Chinese cubits; but five feet or cubits, according to Shen.

¹⁰¹ The Spanish *pataco* or *pataca* was a coin in use in Malaysia.

¹⁰² Shen employs the 'apothecaries' system', in which an ounce is eight drachms, a drachm three scruples, and a scruple twenty grains. All this material is reported by Hyde, *Epistola*, sig. [C3]r, but where he misreports Shen slightly, stating that a Chinese ounce is exactly equal to the weight of a *pataco* (7 scruples and 3 grains), whereas Shen had continued '... whence seven grains are still wanting in order to make exactly one Chinese ounce'; so the western coin and the Chinese ounce were not in fact equivalent, and this important co-ordination proposed by Hyde between a known western weight and the unknown Chinese one is false.

I am unable to say exactly by how much the measure *ta che* [*da chi*] exceeds the measure *siao che* [*xiao chi*]. I think the Chinese *siao che* [*xiao chi*] corresponds approximately to your European ell. I shall investigate the matter when I arrive at Lisbon.

To your other letter of 29 January I reply that the greater part of the Chinese idolaters believe in the transmigration of souls. *Pu* [*bu*] or the Chinese foot contains five *ta che* [*da chi*] or great ells. Neither I nor Master Couplet can recall exactly the diversity of Chinese pounds. If we had Chinese balances – all of which we gave away as presents – we would be able to satisfy your curiosity to the letter. For the rest, you know that one Spanish pataco coin weighed in a Chinese balance contains seven scruples and three grains, whence seven grains are still wanting in order to make exactly one Chinese ounce: and seventeen ounces make the ordinary and most common Chinese pound. Again, there are greater pounds that contain eighteen ounces, and there are those that contain twenty or twenty-four ounces. Farewell, most distinguished master, always mindful of me so that also I shall be

your most humble and most bounden servant Michael Xin]

Letter VII, [February 1688]. MS. Sloane Or. 853a, f. 46r or 25r, both foliations present = *Syntagma*, vol. ii, p. 520. Mounted on modern stub. Shen's text is on the recto alone, with an extra tab pasted to the bottom, on the verso of which is the endorsement 'for D^r hyde chief Library Keeper of the uniuersity of oxford at Oxon', remains of original seal. The sole Chinese character is in the same pen as the Latin text.

Shen's final surviving letter to Hyde chiefly concerns, once again, mensuration. He has in the meantime received no fewer than four letters from Hyde. But Shen also acknowledges receipt from Hyde of 'munera', presumably the *munera mathematica* mentioned in his letter of 25 January above, where he had hoped for microscopes and telescopes from Hyde; Shen is vague about what was actually received, but these Oxford instruments will have travelled on with him, and, unlike Shen, possibly did reach China.¹⁰³ Shen closes his letter by responding to a query concerning the 'Tartar' (i.e. Manchu) grammar in the hands of the Parisian scholar, editor, and librarian Melchisédech Thévenot (c. 1622-92), which in the event finally appeared in the posthumous 1696 edition of Thévenot's fifth *Recueil de voyages* (vol. i, item 27, 34 pp., separately paginated and printed).¹⁰⁴ Shen correctly informs Hyde that the author was the China Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest; this first-hand knowledge, although in fact reported from Hyde by his editor Sharpe, was then lost until a 1922 notice by the sinologist Paul Pelliot.¹⁰⁵ Thévenot printed his one thousand exemplars at some point in late 1686, as Noël Golvers has demonstrated, and on Shen's testimony, he hoarded them for the next edition of the *Recueil*, but died before he could publish the grammar himself. The 1696 text is regarded as a separate, second edition, as there is no sign of the Manchu script supposed to be present in the first, wholly lost, edition.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Noël Golvers, private communication, comments: "the first references to "microscopia" in the context of the China mission [occur] in the Account Book of François de Rougemont (spanning the period 1674-1676): on 15 January 1675 de Rougemont bought an "egregium microscopium" in Suzhou, in the shop of "Yao Ciam fu": is it possible that this kind of Western instruments had been imported already so early through the international port of Suzhou in China?" For this account book, see Golvers's *François de Rougemont, S.J., Missionary in Ch'ang-shu (Chiang-nan): A Study of the Account Book (1674-1676) and the Elogium* (Leuven, 1999), pp. 544-5, where several optical instruments mentioned by de Rougement in his accounts are listed, including 'specula', a 'perspicillum', the 'microscopium', and a 'hum oculo', which Golvers glosses as a spy-glass.

¹⁰⁴ For Thévenot's work, see Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV's France*, pp. 81-130.

¹⁰⁵ Sharpe, *Syntagma dissertationum*, vol. ii, p. 509, copied from Hyde's note on the front page of Thevenot's grammar, of which Hyde held only that page; see Paul Pelliot, 'Le véritable auteur des "Elementa Linguae Tartaricae"', *T'oung Pao* (2nd ser.), xxi (1922), pp. 367-86.

¹⁰⁶ Noël Golvers, 'The *Elementa Linguae Tartaricae* by Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (1623-1688): Some New Evidence', in Mirko Tavoni (ed.), *Italia ed Europa nella linguistica del Rinascimento*, 2 vols (Modena, 1996), vol. ii, pp. 581-93.

Amplissime Domine

Accepi 4 hujus datas ab A. t. ac deinde munera mihi nil tale merenti oblata pro quibus gratias habeo immortales. Vtinam aliquid seu ulyssipone seu in chinâ reperiam quo tantæ beneficentiæ pro modulo meo queam respondere.¹⁰⁷

nunc respondeo breviter ad quæstiones etsi ad plerasque responsum utcunque sit circa che [*chi*] vel cubitum sinicum standum potius iudicio martinij qui rem examinavit, quam meo,¹⁰⁸ adeoque si dixerim ta che [*da chi*] continere 15 non uncias sed c'un [*cun*] seu mensuras digitales, libenter revoco

aliud p'û [*pu*]¹⁰⁹ p. martinij qui continet 10 *Li* [*li*] seu stadia scribitur hoc modo 舖
passus sinicus continet 5 cubitos non sex.¹¹⁰ Alphabetum et grammatica tartarica parisijs impressa sunt a D. thevenot bibliothecario Regio qui omnia hoc est mille exemplaria sibi accepit, neque vnicum obtulit D.^{no} couplet, qui ea secum tulerat e chinâ composita a ferd. Verbiest. Vale.

Servus humillimus
michael xin fo cum

[Most Esteemed Master,

I received four letters sent from your honour and then the gifts sent to (altogether undeserving) me, for which I am eternally grateful. Would that I might find something in Lisbon or in China that I might in some small measure return such beneficence!

Now I reply briefly to your questions, even though the answer to many matters, whatsoever it be, as concerning *che* [*chi*] or the standard Chinese cubit, stands rather in Martini's area of expertise, who has researched the subject, than in mine. What is more, if I said that *ta che* [*da chi*] contained not fifteen inches but *c'un* [*cun*] or finger-measures then I freely retract it. The other *Pu* [*bu*] of Father Martini which contains 10 *Li* [*li*] or stadia is written like this: 舖. The Chinese foot contains five cubits, not six.

An Alphabet and Tartar Grammar have been printed in Paris by Master Thévenot, the Royal Librarian, who reserves for himself all the one thousand copies printed, nor could master Couplet obtain a single one – he who had brought them with him from China, written by Ferdinand Verbiest. Farewell.

Your most devoted servant,

Michael Xin Fò Çum.]

¹⁰⁷ Shen apparently received some mathematical instruments from Hyde, but not the especially desired telescopes and microscopes; as suggested above it is also likely that Shen's acceptance into the Jesuit novitiate and James II's vacation of the English throne rendered further communication between the Roman Catholic novice and the Protestant librarian with evangelizing tendencies difficult, if not impossible.

¹⁰⁸ Hyde in the *Epistola* chose rather to contest Martino Martini, preferring instead the (Protestant) English merchant vocabularies he had acquired from Dacres. Merchants, Hyde said, were to be trusted more than scholars in matters of weights and measures (sig. B2r).

¹⁰⁹ There were two *bu*: the other (步) is a subdivision of the *li*.

¹¹⁰ 'Instrumentum ligneum Geodæticum seu Agrimensorium apud Chineses forma deducti Circini, vocatur *Pu*, id est, *Passus* Sinicus Geometricus, continens (ut D. Martinus & D. Semedo asserunt,) 6 *Che* seu *Cubitus* Sinicos, ut supra dictum. Chinensis autem meus quinque Pedes seu Cubitos continere scripsit.' (*Epistola*, sigs B2v-B3r: 'The Chinese wooden geodesic or land-surveying instrument, in the form of a divided pair of compasses, is called a *Pu* [*bu*], that is, the Chinese geometrical foot, containing (as Masters Martini and Semedo claim) 6 *Che* [*chi*] or Chinese cubits, as said above. However my Chinese wrote that it contains five feet or cubits.')'