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Preamble

Chinese books were among the Library's founding collections, the earliest known accession bearing an inscription in Thomas Bodley's hand dated 1604, so that the Bodleian probably has a longer history of continuous Chinese book collecting than any other library.

Such accessions are now special because of their age, but they were originally special because they were exotic. Now, as then, they are also rare. We currently define Chinese books as special if they meet any of the following criteria:

- works dated 1911 or earlier, or
- works produced by traditional methods, even if later than 1911, or
- works of exceptional rarity, or
- works of exceptional monetary value (which usually makes them rare).

These books are not on open access to readers. They are stored in the basement of the Weston Library and are read in the David Reading Room of that building, which is in Broad Street.

This paper describes what Chinese special collections we currently hold, and where they are found. It is not a straight history of our Chinese book collecting or a study of the provenance of what we hold, although inevitably these matters are touched on. Most of the materials were catalogued in a four-year project (2011-2015) funded by the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation in Singapore. The project's [website](#) has been designed to showcase these holdings, giving an overview of their extent and nature, and presenting the bibliographic data in a way that is readily comprehensible to Chinese readers. It also provides a classified list of all the Library's pre-modern Chinese works that have been digitised, and images of specimen pages (書影) are attached to many of the records.

In this survey, I provide only a small number of examples to give a hint of what the various parts of our collections contain.

Shelfmarks

Most of our Chinese special collections are contained in two collections with the shelfmarks *Sinica* and *Backhouse*; others are found in collections which for historic reasons must be kept together, for example Douce, Selden, and Bibles. I will list all the materials that are currently known to me, but in a library as large, old, and complex as the Bodleian, Chinese materials regularly (if infrequently) turn up in unexpected places; when discovered, where possible they are incorporated into the Sinica Collection.

Like the history of our Chinese book collecting and the provenance of what we hold, I will not examine how our Chinese materials have been shelfmarked over the past four centuries. All these things are interesting subjects in their own right which will be treated elsewhere – I have already touched on Chinese shelfmarking in a [blog entry](#).

Within each shelfmark sequence, the materials are numbered consecutively. They are not classified. Gaps in a sequence do not usually mean that an item is lost or unavailable for some other reason. Sometimes, an item is renumbered if it is found to be part of another item in the same collection, so that a gap is left (it is our longstanding practice never to use the same shelfmark twice; thus the shelfmark *Sinica 212* will remain permanently unused as it was found to be part of *Sinica 142* during the process of cataloguing, and has been re-united with it); and sometimes when a logically organised collection such as Sinica is being constructed, gaps are left so that stray items may be inserted at a later stage.

Sinica

I formed this collection at the beginning of 1980 in order to bring together in one place all the Chinese materials that we now call “special”. This obviously includes everything that was acquired from the time of the Library’s foundation in 1602 until the early twentieth century; but it also includes modern acquisitions of pre-modern works or other rarities. So far as it possible, within the *Sinica* sequence the books are numbered in order of acquisition; at least, an attempt has been made to keep books of the same provenance within the same block of numbering.

I will describe each of these blocks, and give examples of what they contain.

Sinica 1-35

This block comprises the 70 Chinese volumes that had been acquired before the end of the seventeenth century (other than those from the donors named below), as listed in the Bernard catalogue (see Bibliography). Only one of these volumes is missing, and it had been recorded as missing before 1810. Some of these 70 volumes were found to be parts of the same work, and have been brought together; this is why the final shelfmark in this block is *Sinica 35*.

These works are mostly popular commercial editions, often incomplete, produced in Jianyang 建陽 and Jinling 金陵 during the Wanli 萬曆 period of the Ming Dynasty. Some of them are unique surviving printed editions. They were mostly acquired by merchants of the Dutch East India Company from overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, who brought them back to Amsterdam, where they were split up and sold at auction.

Examples

翰林重考字義韻律大板海篇心經：殘三卷 / (明)劉孔當校
明萬曆二十四年[1596]建陽書林葉天熹刊黑口本
線裝 2 冊；27.2 公分
全書二十卷，殘卷二、三、十八
Sinica 14

鼎離趙狀元四書課兒提醒約解：殘二卷 / (明)趙秉忠撰
明萬曆四十一年[1613]建陽書林自新齋余泰垣刊本
線裝 1 冊；28 公分
全書六卷，殘卷五(有缺)、六
Sinica 25

新鐫梨園摘錦樂府菁華：十二卷 / (明)劉君錫輯
明萬曆庚子[1600]書林三槐堂王會雲刊本
線裝 1 冊：圖；27 公分
本書為海內外孤本
Sinica 27

Sinica 36-40: vacant

Sinica 41-46

Books given by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University, in the period 1635-1641.

The Chinese books in Laud's collection are similar in kind to those described above, and are also listed in Bernard's catalogue.

Examples

新刊二十四孝故事：卷一；新鐫重訂補遺音釋大字日記故事大成：卷二至八 / (明)佚名撰
明萬曆中鄭氏聚垣書舍刊本
線裝 2 冊：圖；28 公分
本書為海內外孤本
Sinica 41

新刊按鑑全像批評三國志傳：殘二卷 / (明)羅本撰
明萬曆二十年(1592)建陽書林雙峰堂余象斗刊本
洋裝 1 冊：圖；27 公分
全書二十卷，殘卷十一、十二(有缺)
Sinica 46

The oriental manuscripts given by William Laud are kept separately, and include only a single Chinese item, the well-known *Laud Rutter*.

順風相送：不分卷 / (明)佚名撰
明抄本
洋裝(原線裝)1 冊；26 公分
MS.Laud Or.145

Sinica 47-50: vacant

Sinica 51-54

Books given by John Selden in 1659, also of the same type as *Sinica 1-35*, and also listed in the Bernhard catalogue.

Like the oriental manuscripts in the Laud collection, those in the Selden collection are also kept separately. Again, only a single item is Chinese, the recently identified *Selden Map of China*:

東西洋航海圖
明末寫本
1 張; 154 x 96 公分
英文題名 《The Selden Map of China》
MS.Selden supra 105

Sinica 55-64

Books given by William Thurston in 1661, also listed in the Bernard catalogue. Thurston's Chinese books include some that were imported into Europe a little later in the seventeenth century, of a different sort from those listed above.

Examples

新刻官板周易本義：四卷首一卷 / (宋)朱熹撰
明嘉靖中建陽書林張閩嶽新賢堂刊本
洋裝 3 冊; 27 公分
Sinica 59

天主降生出像經解：一卷 / (明西洋)艾儒略撰
明崇禎十年[1637]晉江景教堂刊本
線裝 1 冊：圖; 27 公分
Sinica 60

Erroneously, two copies of the Southern Ming calendar for the year 1671 have historically been included in the Thurston donation; actually they were given by Robert Boyle (the scientist) and Henry Aldrich (Dean of Christchurch):

大明永曆二十五年歲次辛亥大統曆：一卷
南明永曆中刊藍印本
線裝 1 冊; 28 公分
Sinica 57 (Ms. note of donor: Robert Boyle, 1671)
Sinica 58 (Ms. note of donor: Henry Aldrich)

Sinica 65-81

Books formerly in the possession of the Dutch orientalist Golius (Jacob Gool, 1596-1667), and subsequently acquired by Archbishop Narcissus Marsh of Dublin. They were listed in the Bernhard catalogue while still in Marsh's possession; they were bequeathed to the Library and arrived here on 12 August 1714.

The books are for the most part of the same type and provenance as the seventeenth-century accessions, and in some cases are parts of the same copy.

Examples

天問略：一卷圖一卷 / (明西洋)陽瑪諾答；(明)周希令，(明)孔貞時，(明)王應熊全閱
明崇禎中刊《天學初函》本
線裝 1 冊：圖；27 公分
有《天球之圖》、《黃道之圖》
Sinica 66

新刻皇明正韻京本提章分節四書白文：殘一卷 / (明)蘇濬校；(明)李廷機訂
明末刊本
線裝 1 冊；25 公分
全書六卷，殘卷三上論
Sinica 81

I have made a study of the Bodleian Library's Chinese collection in the seventeenth century which has not yet been published (see Bibliography).

For several decades I have also been attempting to identify all the Chinese books that came to Europe in the seventeenth century, and have produced [a list of them](#) which is always being updated.

Sinica 82-84: vacant

Sinica 85

Chinese book found among the manuscripts collected by the eighteenth-century Venetian Jesuit Matteo Luigi Canonici and purchased by the Library from his heirs in 1817.

Sinica 86: vacant

Sinica 87-90

Chinese materials originally bound into a codex shelfmarked *MS Ashmole 1787*. All the books that the Ashmolean Museum had acquired since its foundation in 1683 were transferred to the Bodleian Library in 1860, and this codex was among them. Its contents have been separated out and restored. They include a unique surviving copy of the Southern Ming calendar for 1688, formerly in the possession of Elias Ashmole himself:

大明永曆三十一年歲次丁巳大統曆：一卷
南明永曆中刊藍印本
線裝 1 冊；30 公分
本書為海內外孤本
Sinica 88

Sinica 91-124

Miscellaneous Chinese books mostly acquired subsequently to those listed above, but before the inception of the unsized Chinese (*Chin.*) collection in the mid-nineteenth century (see below); very few Chinese books were acquired during the eighteenth century. Most of the books in this block are of unknown provenance, and some may prove to have been seventeenth-century accessions.

Examples

增訂本草原始：十二卷 / (明)李中立纂輯；(明)周亮登校訂
明崇禎癸酉年[1633]刊本醉耕堂藏板
線裝 6 冊；24 公分
Sinica 104

繡刻對相雜字：一卷 / 佚名撰
仙城翰聚堂刊本
毛裝 1 冊；22 公分
封面題名《繡刻圖像雜字全書》
Sinica 108

Sinica 125-130: vacant

Sinica 131-396

Works in the catalogue of Chinese books published by Joseph Edkins in 1876 (see Bibliography), mostly acquired during the nineteenth century, many having been purchased from Edwin Evans in 1856 and James Summers in 1858.

Edkins describes 299 works, which formed the first section of the unsized Chinese collection. These works were shelfmarked *Chin.* followed by a running number. The *Chin.* sequence included 21 books acquired in earlier times and listed above, as well as 4 of the Taiping publications listed below (*Sinica 1091-1105*).

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, there was an increasing knowledge of China in Oxford, for which Protestant missionaries were largely responsible. Edkins was a missionary as were both Alexander Wylie and James Legge who will be mentioned below, and Edwin Evans was the son of one. This awareness is reflected in the collections, which from this point onwards become increasingly focused. In this block are found several dozen works of popular fiction (in which Edwin Evans seems to have been particularly interested), but also the Library's first complete and respectable edition of the thirteen so-called "classics" of Confucianism.

Examples

說呼全傳：十二卷四十回 / 佚名撰
清嘉慶十年[1805]刊本文林堂藏板
線裝 6 冊；19 公分
Sinica 218

十三經注疏
清同治十年[1871]廣東書局重刊殿本
線裝 120 冊；29 公分
各卷附考證
Sinica 364

Sinica 397-400: vacant

Sinica 401-440

Books given by General Lawrence Shadwell in 1877. Shadwell had served in the 98th (Prince of Wales) Regiment of Foot which was sent to Hong Kong in 1842. His books are the first to be listed in [James Legge's continuation of the Edkins catalogue](#), a rather crude manuscript headed simply "Chinese books", which contains all the books now found in the block *Sinica 401-2109*.

Shadwell's collection contains many inferior printed editions, often incomplete, but showing occasional signs that someone who knew about Chinese books might have advised him from time to time, as in the examples below. Some of his books were later included in the Chinese manuscript sequence (*MS.Chin*), when it was decided to divide the manuscripts from printed books in imitation of western practice. These manuscripts include correspondence relating to the Opium War and two well-known volumes of miscellaneous correspondence between Chinese officers and English merchants and others for about a century down to 1832 (*MS.Chin.c.23*).

Examples

欽定戶部則例 一百二十六卷 / (清)于敏中等奉敕撰
清乾隆五十六年[1791]序刊本江蘇布政司衙門藏板
線裝 24 冊；26 公分
Sinica 412

陞官圖 / 舊題(明)倪元璐作
清道光庚子[1840]廣東刊本
1 張；82 x 75 公分
有「張隆盛製」朱文印記
本圖為海內外孤本
Sinica 440/2

Sinica 441: vacant

Sinica 442-453

Books acquired at the same time as Shadwell's donation.

Sinica 454-460: vacant

Sinica 461-515

Books given by Dr William Lockhart (medical missionary) in 1879. Lockhart also gave some of the Taiping publications listed below (*Sinica 1091-1105*), as well as some manuscripts (*MS.Chin.d.14-19, e.5*). Some of the books are similar in nature to Shadwell's but most are calligraphic albums (*fatie* 法帖) or ink-squeezes of inscriptions, the first of the two examples below being of unusual quality.

Examples

淳化閣帖：十卷
刊本
折裝 10 冊；39 公分
Sinica 465

五百羅漢像：殘五十尊
清嘉慶四年[1799]江蘇常州天寧寺刊拓本
折裝 1 冊：圖；31 公分
全書五百尊，殘尊第一百一至第一百五十
手寫書簽題名《毘陵石刻羅漢像》
Sinica 475

Sinica 521-1054

Books purchased from Alexander Wylie in 1881 and 1882. Wylie's personal collection was almost certainly used as the basis for his *Notes on Chinese literature* (see Bibliography), a remarkable treatise which even now has not been entirely superseded. The collection includes a number of manuscripts (with *MS.Chin.* shelfmarks), and I published a catalogue of it in 1985 (see Bibliography). At a stroke, this acquisition doubled the size of the Library's Chinese collection, and remains an important part of it to this day.

Examples

景德鎮陶錄：十卷 / (清)藍浦撰；(清)鄭廷桂補
清同治庚午[1870]重刊本昌南鄭氏藏板
線裝 4 冊：圖；27 公分
Sinica 626

抽燬書目：一卷；全燬書目：一卷 / 清乾隆中官撰
清刊本
線裝 1 冊；26 公分
Sinica 805

符籙秘訣：不分卷有缺 / 佚名撰
明嘉靖中內府朱絲欄抄本
線裝 1 冊：圖；32 公分
MS.Chin.c.24

Sinica 1055-1060: vacant

Sinica 1061-1082

Books presented by Bunyu Nanjio in 1884. These are Japanese editions of Chinese works (*kanseki wakokuhon* 漢籍和刻本), mostly Buddhist.

Examples

翻譯名義集：二十卷 / (宋釋)法雲撰
日本寬文九年[1669]京都八尾甚四郎友春等覆刊嘉興方冊藏經本
線裝 10 冊；28 公分
Sinica 1066

大明高僧傳：八卷 / (明釋)如惺撰
日本慶安辛卯[1651]京都西村又左衛門刊本
線裝 2 冊：像；29 公分
Sinica 1071

Sinica 1083-1090: vacant

Sinica 1091-1105

Taiping Tianguo publications. We have thirteen different editions, mostly in multiple copies, making 56 items altogether. These extremely rare materials are found only in Oxford, Cambridge, the British Library, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the National Library of Australia, and the Sinologisch Instituut (Leiden), and came to us through missionary and military agencies, most having been given by William Lockhart in 1879 (see above) or by Sir Rutherford Alcock, a diplomat who was serving in Shanghai at the time of the Taiping Rebellion (although he is better known for setting up the first British legation in Japan in 1858, and being the first foreigner to climb Mt Fuji, in 1860). Oxford has no Taiping Tianguo publications that are not also found in Cambridge or the British Library, but both these libraries have examples that are not found in Oxford. There are two manuscript copies of printed editions, presumably more or less contemporary with them, which were also given by Lockhart; these were given manuscript shelfmarks, perhaps in Nicholson's time (*MS.Chin.d. 15/1-2*).

Examples

太平軍目：一卷
太平天國二年[1852]刊本
毛裝 1 冊；27 公分
Sinica 1102/1

天父上帝言題皇詔：一卷
太平天國三年[1853]刊本
毛裝 1 冊；23 公分
Sinica 1091/1

Sinica 1106-1110: vacant

Sinica 1111-1953

Works in Chinese by western Protestant missionaries exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. These almost certainly came to us through the agency of Alexander Wylie, although it is not yet known exactly how.

This corpus, together with the exhibits at the International Health Exhibition in London in 1884 (see below) and a number of other missionary publications acquired earlier in the century as well as later – recently, even – constitute one of the most valuable parts of our pre-modern Chinese collection which is by far the biggest object of imaging requests. Many of the editions are seldom found elsewhere, and some are probably unique survivals.

In total we have at least 1300 different editions, in perhaps as many as 1700 copies, dating mostly from the period 1810-1880. Most are found in the Sinica Collection, but for historical reasons some have *Bib.* [Bible], *O.T.* [Old Testament], *N.T.* [New Testament], *Ps.* [Psalms], or *C.P.* [Common Prayer] shelfmarks.

I described these collections in a paper presented at the *International Conference on Resources for Chinese Studies*, Taipei, 30 November-3 December 1988 (See Bibliography).

Sinica 1954-1960: vacant

Sinica 1961-2098

Remaining Protestant missionary works in Legge's manuscript catalogue, possibly Philadelphia exhibits, but bearing no exhibition labels.

Sinica 2099, 2100: vacant

Sinica 2101-2111

Remaining works in Legge's manuscript catalogue not assignable to any previous category.

Sinica 2112-2120: vacant

Sinica 2121-2467

Works in Chinese by western Protestant missionaries exhibited at the International Health Exhibition in London in 1884 (see also above, *Sinica 1111-1953*).

Sinica 2468-2481: vacant

Sinica 2482-2498

Books received from the estate of Thomas Lowden Bullock (Oxford's second Professor of Chinese) in 1915. Although few in number, several of them are rather rare, and certainly of interest.

Examples

新譯英國政府刊布中國革命藍皮書 / (民國)陳國權譯述 ; (民國)鄧宗禹校勘
民國二年[1913]排印上海青嶸堂發行本
平裝 1 冊([6], 24, 196 頁) ; 23 公分
Sinica 2484

關釋氏諸妄 : 一卷 / (明)徐光啟撰
清刊本.- 線裝 1 冊 ; 23 公分
封面題名《關妄》
Sinica 2485

報風要則 / (清)上海徐家匯天文臺著
清光緒二十三年[1897]土山灣慈母堂鉛印本
線裝 1 冊 : 圖 ; 27 公分
卷端、版心題名《中國沿海颶風及風暴標號條例》
書皮有「I.H.S. / OBSERVATOIRE / METEOROL. ET MAGNETIQUE / DE ZI-KA-WEI / PRES SHANGHAI
CHINE / A.M.O.G.」浮雕字樣
Sinica 2490

Sinica 2499, 2500: vacant

Sinica 2501-2519

British Museum library duplicates transferred in 1914, some of them fragments. These include things which what has now become the British Library would most certainly not have let go, the most notable being a fascicle of the Ming Dynasty Fuchuntang edition of the *Bencao* which is not only part of the historic corpus of imports of the early seventeenth century described above at the beginning of the *Sinica* sequence, but also bears the inscription "Examined by Chetqua Decr.17.1770". Chetqua, or Tan-Che-Qua (the orthodox form of his name is not known), was a Chinese artist who visited England from 1769 to 1772. After the Christian convert Shen Fuzong in 1687 and the merchant Loum Kiqua (orthodox form again unknown) in 1756, he was one of the earliest Chinese known to have visited England.

Examples

重修政和經史證類備用本草 : 殘一卷 / (宋)唐慎微撰
明萬曆中金陵唐氏富春堂刊本
洋裝(原線裝)1 冊 ; 28 公分
全書三十卷, 殘卷二
Sinica 2503

五知齋琴譜 : 殘四卷 / (清)徐祺鑒定 ; (清)周魯封彙纂
清刊本
包背裝 2 冊 ; 25 公分
全書八卷, 殘卷二、三、六、七
Sinica 2508

Sinica 2520-2525: vacant

Sinica 2526-2624

Remaining works in the unsized Chinese Collection (see above, *Sinica* 131-396).

Sinica 2625-2640: vacant

Sinica 2641-4021

Miscellaneous gifts, purchases, and transfers from other Library collections from the year 1980 onwards.

The 2,500 or more items (of course, in many more volumes) listed above had all been contained in historic Bodleian collections from the time the Library opened in the early seventeenth century until the inception of the sized *Chin.* sequence in 1883; this system of sizing had been devised by E.W.B. Nicholson, Bodley's Librarian at the time, in order to make more economical use of space.

From 1883 onwards, although the unsized Chinese Collection was added to until 1936, many new Chinese accessions were given a Nicholson shelfmark, and were mostly of works that we would not consider "pre-modern" as defined at the beginning of this survey. However, many did fall into that category, and in the three subsequent decades I have transferred most of them into the Sinica Collection. Many pre-modern works have also been transferred from the Institute for Chinese Studies Library, mostly at the time when it was part of the Oriental Institute Library, and there are many more pre-modern books in the Institute library which will be transferred to the Sinica Collection before it moves to the new China Centre in two years' time. And of course, books that are not considered special now may well be so considered in future.

From time to time we receive gifts of pre-modern works, and we also buy pre-modern works when the opportunities arise.

Within the block of shelfmarks beginning *Sinica 2641* there are a number of significant corpora of materials that are special in one way or another, and which I have attempted to keep together. I will describe some of the more important ones.

Sinica 2911-3017

Chinese books from the collection of Solomon Caesar Malan, missionary to India, polyglot, and Rector of Broadwindsor. Malan donated some 4,000 volumes to the Indian Institute Library in 1885. The management of the Indian Institute Library was transferred to the Bodleian in 1927, and the non-Indian parts of the Malan collection were incorporated into the sized Nicholson language collections some time later.

The Malan Chinese materials were incorporated into the Sinica Collection in August 1989, and those which had not previously been given a *Chin.* shelfmark but had been left in boxes awaiting disposal as duplicates were all kept and given *Sinica* shelfmarks. They include some remarkable materials, many of them produced by missionaries.

Examples

經驗良方：一卷 / (清)周其芬撰；(清)梁玉成增
清咸豐辛亥[1851]刊本粵東省城五桂堂存板
線裝 1 冊；18 公分
封面題名《太上感應篇》
附朱印《陰騭文》、《感應篇》、《觀音經》三書
Sinica 2985

談天：十八卷附表一卷 / (英)侯失勒原本；(英)偉烈亞力口譯；(清)李善蘭刪述；(清)徐建寅續述
清咸豐己未[1859]上海墨海活字印本
洋裝 1 冊(原線裝 3 冊)：圖；28 公分
譯自《Outlines of astronomy》
Sinica 2913

Sinica 3241-3547

Daoist manuscripts of the Yao people in northern Thailand, purchased from R.W. Stolper in stages between autumn 1990 and spring 1993. These are currently the subject of intense interest by groups of scholars in Germany, China, and Japan.

Sinica 3773-3820

Given by Bernard Drake in 1995; see also *Sinica 3952-3970*.

Sinica 3861-3912

Democracy Wall (「民主牆」) publications, 1978-1980. These were collected on site in China by David Goodman, who used them as the basis of his book *Beijing street voices: the poetry and politics of China's Democracy Movement* (London, 1981), and are of exceptional rarity in library collections. The only other library I know with holdings of them is Stanford.

The collection comprises 48 different titles, of which 40 were published in Peking, 1 in Baoding, 3 in Hangzhou, 1 in Guiyang, 1 in Canton, 1 place not known but not Peking, 1 place not known. There are 146 separate items, of which 4 are duplicates, and 23 are photocopies of the original. Most are reproduced by a stencil process, but a few are typeset. There is a microfilm of the entire corpus (*Chin.films 238*).

Examples

北京之春 = The spring of Peking
油印本
[北京], 1979
冊；27 公分
本刊為「民主牆」(Democracy Wall) 刊物
存：1979:1(8:1:79), 1979:2(27:1:79), 1979:3(17:2:79), 1979:4(2:4:79), 1979:5(16:5:79), 1979:5
增刊(13:5:79), 1979:6(17:6:79), 1979:8(28:9:79)號
Sinica 3862

論人權 / 李家華
北京 ; 貴陽 : 啟蒙社, 1979
平裝 1 冊(22 頁); 25 公分
(啟蒙叢刊; 3)
本書為「民主牆」(Democracy Wall) 刊物
Sinica 3871/3

Sinica 3952-3970

Given by Bernard Drake in 1996 (*Sinica 3952-3969*) and 1998 (*Sinica 3970*);
see also *Sinica 3773-3820*.

Sinica 4022-5935

Books bequeathed by Piet van der Loon (1920-2002), Professor of Chinese from 1972 to 1987. The collection was received at the beginning of 2003. It occupied over 250 metres of shelving, and at the time was believed to be the largest collection of Chinese books in private ownership in Europe. It is of the highest quality, evidencing the scholarship of its owner, and the “special” parts of it (as defined at the beginning of my survey) amount to more than 1,900 separate editions.

The collection reflects the scholarly interests of Piet van der Loon at the various stages of his life, starting with his interest in early China and *Guoyu* studies as a doctoral student and his research into the transmission of the *Guanzi*, to his later interests in popular literature and religion; he was intensely interested in Chinese bibliography throughout.

Examples

秦漢瓦當文字：一卷續一卷 / (清)程敦編
清乾隆丁未[1787]續甲寅[1794]橫渠書院集拓本
線裝 3 冊 ; 30 公分
Sinica 4615

國語：二十一卷 / (吳)韋昭解
附 國語補音 三卷 / (宋)宋庠撰
明刊黑口本
線裝 12 冊 ; 31 公分
Sinica 4502

管子：二十四卷 / (周)管仲撰
明嘉靖十二年[1533]建陽書林劉宗器安正書堂刊本
線裝 4 冊 ; 27 公分
Sinica 4553

Some of the genres of popular literature in Van der Loon’s collection are kept together in the following numbered blocks:

Sinica 4028-4500

Popular songs from the Southern Min region (*minnan gequ* 閩南歌曲). Small editions of a highly ephemeral nature, mostly produced in Xiamen (Amoy), Shanghai, and Taiwan in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Examples

最新鄭元和三嬌會全歌
1900 或 1910 年代廈門會文堂書局石印本
毛裝 1 冊；16 公分
Sinica 4110

最新了錢失食歌 / (民國)許文華增譯
日本昭和七年[1932]排印本臺南州嘉義市捷發漢書部發行
毛裝 1 冊；16 公分
Sinica 4283

Sinica 4911-5234

So-called “wooden-fish books” (*muyushu* 木魚書) from the Hong Kong and Canton region. Another sizeable collection of these (*Sinica 6194-6295*) was transferred from the Chinese Studies Library in 2014, and more were also found (*Sinica 6751-6774*) among the books left by Glen Dudbridge in 2017.

Sinica 5235-5240: vacant

Sinica 5241-5700

Canton operas (*yueju* 粵劇), 459 editions dating from the first half of the twentieth century, all printed on brittle paper and very fragile.

Sinica 5806-5854

Canton dramas, genre unidentified.

Sinica 5855-5875

Hakka songbooks (*kejia gequ* 客家歌冊).

Sinica 5876-5899

Fuzhou stories (*fuzhou pinghua* 福州評話).

Sinica 5910-5935

Drum lyrics (*guci* 鼓詞).

Sinica 5937-5940: vacant

Sinica 5941-7005

Gifts, purchases, and transfers from other Library collections, 2013-2022.

Sinica 6194-6295

“Wooden-fish books” (*muyushu* 木魚書) transferred from the Chinese Studies Library in 2014 (see also *Sinica 4911-5234* above).

Sinica 6371-6568

Chinese books, mostly missionary publications, from the collection of Arthur Bonsey, a Congregational minister who worked with the London Missionary Society in Hankow from 1882 to 1923. Donated by his grandson Anthony Bradley in April 2105. There is some manuscript material in this collection shelfmarked *MS.Chin.a.24*, *MS.Chin.c.45*, *MS.Chin.d.77*, *MS.Chin.d.78*, and *MS.Chin.e.29*.

Sinica 6569, 6570: vacant

Sinica 6751-6774

"Wooden-fish books" (*muyushu* 木魚書) found among the books left by Glen Dudbridge in 2017 (see also *Sinica 4911-5234* above).

Sinica 6794-6822

Law books from the estate of Professor Anthony Dicks (1936-2018) received in February, 2019.

Sinica 6855-7005

Official publications of the Chinese National Government when it was based at Chungking in the 1940s. Presented by the National Library of Peiping in February, 1946.

MS.Chin.

This sequence was set up in Nicholson's time to contain Chinese manuscripts, and contains manuscripts from a variety of sources, some of which have already been documented above.

It is arranged by Nicholson size and running number, currently as follows: a.1-24; b.1-14; c.1-47; d.1-78; e.1-29; f.1-5.

Its content is very mixed, and ranges from valuable items such as fascicles of *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典, to dross such as "Someone's elementary exercises in learning Chinese characters" (*MS.Chin.d.12*), with much in between that will repay more detailed study.

Backhouse

The Backhouse Collection was received in stages between July 1913 and January 1922. It had been made in Peking by Sir Edmund Trelawny Backhouse, one of the more colourful figures in the Library's history, and the subject of a book by Hugh Trevor-Roper (see Bibliography).

The collection consists mostly of printed books, but there are also manuscripts, calligraphy and painting (the best of it mediocre), ink squeezes, fatie 法帖,

scrapbooks, and even a few pieces of bric-à-brac. It is described more fully in my catalogue of 1983, of which there is a copy in the National Library of China. The contents of this catalogue and the following volume (Alexander Wylie's books, 1985) are due to be transferred into our online catalogue and the Serica project database during the course of 2013.

Much of the catalogue is already online, and I have prepared a provisional list of the painting and calligraphy shelfmarked as Backhouse Rolls.

The Backhouse Collection contains 11 of the Library's 19 fascicles of the encyclopaedia Yongle dadian 永樂大典; the other 8 fascicles are in the MS.Chin. sequence.

At the time of its donation, the Backhouse Collection gave Oxford one of the finest collections of Chinese printed editions outside the Far East, but it was soon equalled and in some cases overtaken by the collections of national libraries such as the Bibliothèque Nationale, and of major American university libraries such as those of Harvard and Princeton. However, it still contains many editions that are unique in Europe.

Examples

韻書五種 / (明釋)真空編
明正德中金臺衍法寺釋覺恆刊本
線裝 12 冊 ; 39 公分
Backhouse 117

聽秋聲館鈔書 / (清)丁紹儀編
清中葉後期聽秋聲館烏絲欄抄本
線裝 48 冊 ; 26 公分
Backhouse 419

歷代君鑒: 五十卷 / (明)代宗撰
明景泰四年[1453]內府刊本
線裝 20 冊 ; 34 公分
Backhouse 393

御製漁樵二十詠: 不分卷 / (清)高宗撰
清乾隆中劉綸鈔本
折裝 1 冊 ; 10 公分
MS.Backhouse 11

Douce Chinese

There were some Chinese books among the huge collection (some 19,000 volumes) bequeathed to the Library by the antiquarian Frances Douce (1757-1834). The Douce collection is so important that its integrity has had to be preserved, but although it has not been possible to include them in the Sinica Collection, Douce's Chinese books are at least shelfmarked separately as *Douce Chin.*, using Nicholson sizes and running numbers. The contents are as follows: b.1-2; c.1; d.1-19; e.1-5.

The collection is small, but contains some items of outstanding interest and great rarity.

Examples

視學：不分卷 / (清)年希堯撰
清雍正十三年[1735]刊本
洋裝(原線裝)1冊：圖；39公分
Douce Chin.b.2

圍碁近譜：一卷 / (清)金樹志撰
清康熙丙申年[1716]序刊本
線裝1冊：圖；30公分
Douce Chin.d.2

Chinese materials in other collections

As indicated above, Chinese materials are occasionally found in other collections. When discovered, they are transferred to the Sinica Collection when possible. Sometimes it is necessary for them to stay in the collections where they are found. For example, there is a commercial document of some kind bound into an unrelated English poetical work, (*MS.Rawl.poet.64*). I think this is a petition to trade in cotton and other things at Xiamen (Amoy), and its date is the equivalent of 31 Aug 1713 in the western calendar. Another example is a sino-western edition, a copy of Matteo Ripa's *Thirty-six views of Jehol*, [1713?] (*Arch. B d.16*). I know of only five or six items in this category, but it is possible that more may be discovered in future.

The treatment of Bibles and other Christian texts has not been consistent. Many were originally given Chin. shelfmarks and are now in the Sinica Collection, but others were placed in collections which were designed to encompass the whole of Christian scripture in all languages, so that they now bear the shelfmarks Bib.Chin., O.T.Chin., Ps.Chin., N.T.Chin., C.P.Chin. (Bibles, Old Testaments, Psalms, New Testaments, and Common Prayer).

Deposited material

There are two college collections of Chinese materials which have been deposited permanently in the Bodleian, to be housed and made available to readers in the same way as our own collections. These are shelfmarked *St John's Coll. Chin.* (5 items) and *Magd.Coll. Chin.* (16 items). Both collections, although small, include some jewels – the Magdalen College collection contains the first issues of the first periodical ever printed in China, by the missionary Karl Friedrich August Güzloff.

Examples

新刊全本繡像花箋記：殘葉 / (明)佚名撰
明刊本
線裝1冊：圖；21公分
St John's Coll.Chin.4

東西洋考每月統記傳 / 愛漢者纂
[Canton]; [Singapore], 1833-1837
線裝6冊；25.3公分
存：道光癸巳年[1833-1834]:6-9月, 12月; 道光甲午年[1834-1835]:正月
Magd.Coll.Chin.8

Other pre-modern Chinese material in Oxford libraries

Our Chinese catalogue also contains materials which are not only owned by other libraries, but also kept on their premises, unlike the Chinese materials from St John's and Magdalen colleges referred to above.

I know of one or two pre-modern items in Corpus Christi College, New College, and Wadham College, as well as a small but valuable collection of Chinese Protestant missionary material in Regent's Park College.

It is likely that a few more items may be discovered in the colleges, but not in any quantity.

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