



ABSTRACT

**A Little-known Bodleian Collection:
Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missionary Writings and Translations in Chinese**

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This paper introduces a little-known, but highly significant, collection housed in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which comprises some 1,600 rare books of nineteenth-century Protestant missionary writings and translations in Chinese. This constitutes most probably, the largest collection of its kind in the Anglo-European circles, if not globally.

The discussion commences by tracing the origin of the collection—stemming from the exhibits of the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia (1876) and the International Health Exhibition in London (1884). Subsequent sections describe the catalogue of the exhibitions and of the Bodleian Library, explaining the diversity of dialects found in these publications, as well as the different modes of text classification. The primary focus of the paper is given to an elaborate archival account of the Chinese translations of representative Christian books and tracts. In an attempt to review these works from a broader perspective, the major missionary publishers and sources of financial sponsorship will also be examined.

By making this neglected collection known to the academic world, this paper aims to highlight the paramount importance of literary endeavours, particularly the translation enterprise, among Protestant missionaries. This is explained and interpreted from both the missionary movement in general as well as the specific history of Christianity in late imperial China.

