

This is a printed book not a manuscript, but historically has always been kept with the manuscripts as a curiosity, as in other comparable institutions.

*Meng zi* 孟子 ('Mencius'), printed fragment.

(fols. 1a–45b, foliating from the right to the left) 孟子曰離婁之明 — 則亦無有[[乎爾]],

The Chinese title of the work is *Juan ti zhang fen jie zou lu zheng yun si shu zheng wen* 鑄堤章分節鄒魯正韻四書正文 ('An edition of the standard text of the *Four Books* divided into sections and with the standard pronunciations of Zou and Lu'), and when complete would have comprised the *Da xue* 大學 ('Great learning'), *Zhong yong* 中庸 ('Doctrine of the mean'), *Lun yu* 論語 ('Analects'), and *Meng zi* 孟子 ('Mencius'), the *Four Books* of Confucianism. This fragment comprises the second section (of two) of *Mencius*, the start of Li Lou I to the end of Jin Xin II (final characters lost in tear), from an edition probably printed in Fujian the late sixteenth century. The edition was a popular one, and was probably made in Jianyang 建陽 in Fujian Province, the centre of commercial printing in the late Ming. This fragment is probably a unique survival. There is a loose insert by James Legge (1815–1897), first professor of Chinese at Oxford (from 1876), dated 30 May (corrected to June) 1876, identifying the text as the first chapter of the second part of Mencius.

fol. 45b, the last half-leaf, bears a full-page illustration.

Paper folio, 45 folios, folded at the fore-edges; most of the pages have been cut, in error. *Dimensions*: 240–50 × c. 135 mm. In original paper covers within later binding, the front cover imperfect through tear. Some further damage to pages, with page repairs.

*Binding*. Late nineteenth-century leather binding.

*Provenance*. Unknown, but almost certainly from the consignments of books acquired by merchants of the Dutch East India Company from overseas Chinese communities in Indonesia in the early seventeenth century. The books were split up and sold as curiosities in Amsterdam, and are widely distributed in European libraries, the largest portion being in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The back cover is inscribed in a mid-seventeenth-century hand: 'Mr Grimes. I haue sent y<sup>n</sup> a booke printed in [y]<sup>e</sup> languag[e] of Chyna to shew yow y<sup>e</sup> form of theyre print, w<sup>ch</sup> Language noe man cann vnderstand but them selues:'. As the New College section of *CMA* ends with MS 323, it must have entered the college library shortly after Edward Bernard's source-list for *CMA*, published in 1697–8, was compiled. (MS 325 was probably acquired in the 1670s; and MS 326 is listed in the Benefactors Register under 1714.)