A Sad Case of Neglect: The First **Chinesi** Book in New College Library

It is not really a book to linger over: it is rather scruffy, part of the cover is missing, ae3w0.50snJETQq26000886

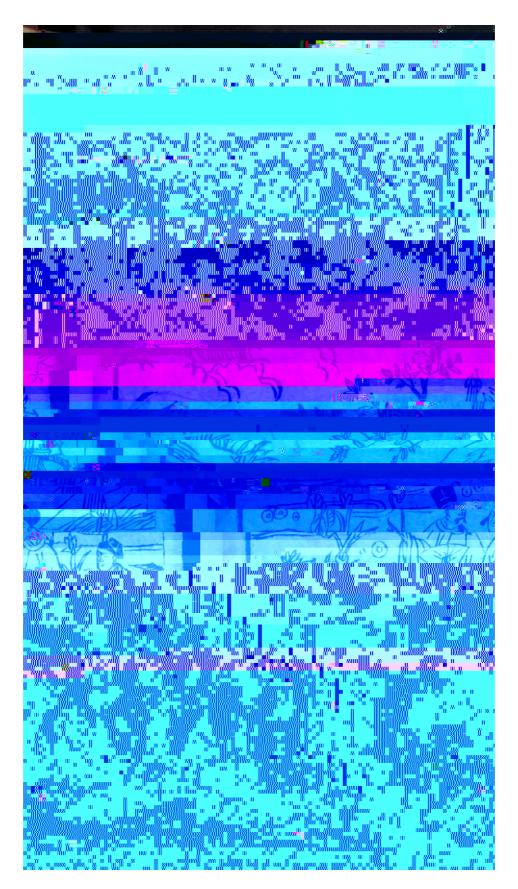
First page of text New College Library, Oxford, MS 324

When did it reach New College Library? In 1697, Edward Bernard (1638-1697), who was Savilian Professor of Astronomy, published a vast catalogue of books and manuscripts in the British Isles. The section on the holdings of New College ends with MS 323, so the book of Mencius, registered as MS 324, must have been acquired after Bernard had compiled the entry for New College (at some point before 1697). However, MS 324 presumably arrived before MS 325, which seems to have been bequeathed to the college in 1677. MS 324 probably arrived, then, at some time in the late seventeenth century.

After its arrival in New College Library, it seems to have been ignored for two centuries, and generations of fellows and students were unlikely to have been aware of its existence, let alone know anything about its subject matter. This poor, neglected book must have been grateful when, in 1876, James Legge (1815-1897) examined it and identified it.⁴ Legge grew up in Aberdeen and

New College Notes 10 (2018), no. 3 ISSN 2517-6935 First Chinese Book

thought that Grimes would be interested in the book, so Grimes was probably a bibliophile, perhaps with an interest in foreign languages.



Final page, illustration New College Library, Oxford, MS 324