Xian Di Pipa Pu 絃笛琵琶譜 1770
A Book of Chinese Instrumental Music
Found in Cambridge
A Preliminary Oral Presentation by
François Picard
Sorbonne, April 21, 2020
including works and reflections by David Badagnani and Gordon Lee

An ongoing work leading to a critical edition and musical rendition, for David Badagnani (Cleveland Chinese Music Ensemble) and Gordon Lee (Xie Tan 謝坦, director of the Aimusic School and Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra of San Jose, California)

“By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John’s College, Cambridge”

thanks to Kathryn McKee, David Badagnani and Gordon Lee
A printed and dated book of Chinese instrumental music

*Xian Di Pipa Pu* 絃笛琵琶譜 (Musical Notation for three strings lute, flute, and four-strings lute)

(Qianlong gengyin xin ke 乾隆庚寅新刻 (Newly engraved in 1770))

(Guangzhou)

Fu-Wen Tang 富文堂
Ancient Chinese Musical Notation Discovered in the Old Library of St John’s College, Cambridge

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Abstract

This article outlines the significance of a Chinese printed musical text entitled Xian di pipa pu, ‘Music score for Chinese flute and pipa’, which was recently discovered in the Library of St John’s College, Cambridge, by the author. It is one volume out of the six sets of books donated to the Library by the mathematician James Inman (1776–1859), who chanced to visit China in 1804.

Keywords

Chinese Music – Musical Notation

A small volume of ancient Chinese musical notation signed by James Inman in February 1804, was recently rediscovered after sleeping silently in the Old Library of St John’s College, Cambridge, for nearly 210 years. When I was an Overseas Visiting Scholar at St John’s,1 Dr Joseph McDermott (周绍明), a historian of China and a Fellow at St John’s, suggested that I examine ‘that odd little Chinese book’ in the Old Library whenever possible, and with great curiosity I did so the next day. When Ms. Kathryn McKee, the special collections librarian, carefully brought it to me, I realized almost immediately that it might be a very rare volume of Gongche notation printed in China around 1770. According to some specialists in Chinese music, including Professor Yingshi Chen and

1 I was also a visiting scholar at the University’s Faculty of Music; this visit was funded by the ‘Jiangsu Overseas Research & Training Program for University Prominent Young & Middle-aged Teachers and Presidents’.

Reverend James Inman (1776-1859), a mathematics graduate of St John’s College, during a brief stay in Guangzhou in 1803 on the way back to England on a Royal Navy voyage to the Antipodes

David Badagnani
http://earlychinesemusic.blogspot.pt/2017/03/early-chinese-music-resources-qing.html

“Odd little book” revealed to be Chinese musical gem mars 2014

Ancient Chinese musical notation discovered in Cambridge 2014

Thanks again to David Badagnani, some more about the discovery

“A small volume of ancient Chinese musical notation signed by James Inman in February 1804, was recently rediscovered after sleeping silently in the Old Library of St John’s College, Cambridge, for nearly 210 years. When I was an Overseas Visiting Scholar at St John’s, Dr Joseph McDermott (周绍明), a historian of China and a Fellow at St John’s, suggested that I examine ‘that odd little Chinese book’ in the Old Library whenever possible, and with great curiosity I did so the next day. When Ms. Kathryn McKee, the special collections librarian, carefully brought it to me, I realized almost immediately that it might be a very rare volume of Gongche notation printed in China around 1770. According to some specialists in Chinese music, including Professor Chen Yingshi and Professor Zhao Yuqing, it is possibly unique. Neither of them has ever seen any other copy of this book.”


David Badagnani
http://earlychinesemusic.blogspot.pt/2017/03/early-chinese-music-resources-qing.html
Ancient Chinese musical notation discovered in Cambridge 2014

Thanks again to David Badagnani, some more about the discovery

“The discovery of this rare volume of pre-modern Chinese musical notation might contribute a great deal to current research and performance of Chinese traditional music and some of the pieces included might be the earliest and only source available.”

Wu Zhiwu, Xinghai Conservatory of Music, Guangzhou

David Badagnani
http://earlychinesemusic.blogspot.pt/2017/03/early-chinese-music-resources-qing.html
A most recent finding by Badagnani: A letter from Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814)

David Badagnani

http://earlychinesemusic.blogspot.pt/2017/03/early-chinese-music-resources-qing.html

Fr. Alvaro Ribeiro S.J. (1947-2013) was a Jesuit priest and former warden of Ricci Hall at the University of Hong Kong


Xian Di Pipa Pu 絃笛琵琶譜, Guangdong, 1770

I only have a little musical talent, so I was not able to test the sound [of these pieces]; therefore I roughly wrote [them] down to the best of my ability, prepared by means of oral transmission.

Nanxi Zhuren 南溪主人鉴定
Master of Southern Creek
Sanxian lute [tuning and playing]
on little string, open string is gong / mi 3; first position is liu / sol 5; second position is wu / la 6; third position is fan / fa 4 [sic for yi / si 7].
on middle string, open string is si / la 6; first position is shang / do 1; second position is che / re 2.
on great string, open string is he / sol 5.
The repeats have been analyzed, and they are considered as mirror measures or variants, and somewhat unified. Beats x has been added where it was absent in some mirror measures.

The second note measure #20, 1/1 has been changed to 1/3, like in measure #18.

The two notes yi — and yi, which are the same an octave apart, are not written with consistency.

François Picard
The “Chant of the Water Dragon” “Shuilong yin” 水龍吟 is a variant of the most famous Chinese tune (before Moli Hua “Jasmine Flower”): the Air chinois sent by Du Halde en 1735, and copied by John Green, Prévost, Rousseau, after which C.M. von Weber and Hindemith, Goossens; also known as « Feuille de saule » “Liuye Jin” 柳葉 錦 sent in gongche pu and staff notation by Amiot in 1754 and 1779, then copied by Laborde, Ginguené; still played in Shanghai — under the alternate name “Liu Yao Jin” 柳播 金 — and in Yunnan, among the Naxi people, unique case where “Liuye Jin” is played under the name of “Shuilong yin”.

Shui Long Yin is a variant of the most famous Chinese tune (before Moli Hua): the Air chinois sent by Du Halde in 1735, and copied by John Green, Prévost, Rousseau, after which C.M. von Weber and Hindemith, Goossens; also under the name Feuille de saule Liuye Jin 柳葉 Jin sent in both gongche pu and staff notation by Amiot in 1754 and 1779, and copied by Laborde, Ginguené; still performed today from Shanghai under the name Liu Yao Jin 柳播 金 to Yunnan, among the Naxi people, the unique case where Liuye Jin has been found under the name Shui Long Yin.

rhythm after Du Halde

the fourth note in measure #9 is written gong /3, but usually it is yi —7, like in measure 20; therefore it has been rectified.

François Picard
Sorbonne Université 2020
John Barrow (1764-1848), *Travels in China*, 1804

Xian Di Pipa Pu. 9 « Xi diao »

四。上合、四上。工尺、尺。六六、
尺工、尺上、工。工四。尺上。合。
四 上。四。上合。四上。工。工。四。
尺、上。合四上。四上。四上上、四
合。六。六 工、工六。六尺。尺上。
合四上。工尺、。工。尺尺、工六。
六、五 仕。五 仕仕、五六。六。五六。
工尺。尺工六。六五六。工尺、尺、
六六、尺 工、尺上。四。上合。四上。
工尺。尺六六尺工、尺上。四。上上
、四 合。六六尺。五六工。尺、上。

Vincent Boucheau MeiDunhuang for Estelle Wang Weiping
fermatas (« point d’orgue ») indicate the first note of the melody, medium pause (« point d’arrêt ») indicate the last note. Slur above indicate a movement from lower to higher note.
Xian Di Pipa Pu Diagrams of melodic analysis (MeiDunhuang)

1 Si Da Jing Picard

2 Shui Long Yin Picard

3 Yin Xi Si Picard

4 Ku Huang Tian Picard

5 Xin Shui Ling Picard

6 Yi Zhi Hua Picard
Xian Di Pipa Pu Diagrams of melodic analysis (MeiDunhuang)

7 Dao Chui Lian Picard

8 Da Jin Dui Picard

9 Xidiao Picard

10 Xiao Baimen Picard

11 Qingjiang Yin Picard

12 Bai Bao Ta Picard

13 Ji Gongzai Picard
Xian Di Pipa Pu Histograms of the scales (Monika under MeiDunhuang)

1. Si Da Jing Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

2. Shui Long Yin Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

3. Yin Xi Si Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

4. Ku Huang Tian Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

5. Xin Shui Ling Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

6. Yi Zhi Hua Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

7. Dao Chui Lian Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

8. Da Jin Dui Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

9. Xidiaos Picard
   Pondered freq. of pitches

10. Xiao Baimen Picard
    Pondered freq. of pitches

11. Qingjiang Yin Picard
    Pondered freq. of pitches

12. Bai Bao Ta Picard
    Pondered freq. of pitches
Xian Di Pipa Pu Histograms of the scales (Monika under MeiDunhuang)
Names of the pieces

Xian di pipa pu 絃笛琵琶譜

[1] Si da jing 四大景 (Four Great Landscapes)
[2] Shuilong yin 水龍吟 (Chant of the Water Dragon)
[3] Yin xi si 銀細絲 (A Fine Silver Thread) alias
   Nao wu geng 又名 鬧五更 (Boisterousness at Midnight)
[4] Ku Huangtian 哭皇天 (Crying Out to the Heavens)
[5] Xin Shuiling 新水令 (New Water Order)
[6] Yizhi hua 一枝花 (A Stem of Flowers) alias
   Huagu ge 又名 花鼓歌 (Flower Drum Song)
[7] Dao chui lian 倒垂蓮 (Towards Spring)
[8] Da jin dui 大金對 (Great Pair)
[9] Xi diao 西調 (Melody from the West)
[10] Xiao Baimen 小拜門 (Small Prayers)
[12] Bai bao ta 拜寶塔 (Worshiping at the Pagoda)
[13] Jigong zai 雞公仔 (The Little Rooster)
Origin of the pieces

Xian di pipa pu 絃笛琵琶譜

[1] Si da jing 四大景 Jiang Huai xiaodiao 江淮小調
[2] Shuilong yin 水龍吟 = Air chinois, Du Halde, 1735 = Kunqu “Jie Jie Gao” 節節高
[3] Yin xi si 銀細絲 alias Nao wu geng 又名 鬧五更 Qingdai Gongting Yinyue 清代宮廷音樂
[5] Xin Shuiling 新水令 Kunqu chuida qupai 昆曲吹打曲牌
[6] Yizhi hua 一枝花 alias Huagu ge 又名 花鼓歌 Kunqu chuida qupai 昆曲吹打曲牌
[7] Dao chui lian 倒垂蓮 = Dao chun lai 倒春來 Amiot, Divertissements chinois 3 Fangju yinyue 群音芳聚音樂 (1779)
[8] Da jin dui 大金對 Chuanju chuida qupai 川劇吹打曲牌
[9] Xi diao 西調 Kunqu chuida qupai 昆曲吹打曲牌
[10] Xiao Baimen 小拜門 Kunqu chuida qupai 昆曲吹打曲牌
[11] Qingjiang yin 清江引 last tune of many suites, including Amiot, Divertissements chinois 1 Xi Shifan yinyue 細十番音樂 (1779)
[12] Bai bao ta 拜寶塔 Cantonese children song 廣州兒歌

* “origin” here means the type of repertoire where a given piece
Interpretation

Xian Di Pipa Pu 絃笛琵琶譜

Yi shang xiaoyin buju pipa sanxian erxian jian zheng xiao di sheng gexiang ju tongyong.

[Each piece] can be started with a xiao prelude; feel free [to add] pipa, sanxian, [and] erxian, as well as zheng, xiao, di, [and] sheng, all used together for each piece.

Guangzhou, c. 1780
John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, England
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