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### TRANSLATION OF THE DOCUMENTS IN THE 'YING-YAI SHENG-LAN CHIAO-CHU,' 'THE OVERALL SURVEY OF THE OCEAN'S SHORES ANNOTATED' BY FENG CH'ENG-CHÜN

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EDITORIAL NOTES

I. GENERAL

Astronomy


Hua kai star. Perhaps 50 of Cassiopeia. Declination +72° 15’. The Chinese reckoned that when the altitude of Pei ch’en was 1 finger, that of Hua kai was 8 fingers; and the Arabs reckoned that when the altitude of al-Jah was 1 finger, that of al-Farqadan was 8 fingers; thus the altitude of Hua kai was the same as that of al-Farqadan (Beta of Ursa Minor, declination +74° 17’, and Gamma of Ursa Minor, declination +71° 57’). One finger (Chinese chih, Arab isha) represented an angle of 1° 36’ 25”. One chüeh (‘fraction’) probably represented an angle of 24’ 06”. To find the approximate latitude of a place, 3° 30’ must be added to the altitude of Polaris at that place in the fifteenth century.1

Capital

The capital of China was removed from Nanking to Peking in 1421.2

Compass

On the Chinese compass 24 named points were marked to divide the circle of 360° into 24 parts of 15° each; by combining the names of two contiguous points, the circle was further divided into 48 parts of 7½° each.3

Country of origin

All articles found in a country, irrespective of their real origin, are described by Chinese writers as products of that country.4


3 Ferrand, Instructions, vol. iii, pp. 44, n. 1 and 58, n. 1.

Dates

The period considered in this study is from 1403 to 1433. The dates given for the imperial reigns are those of the 'year-periods', unless otherwise stated. Frequently the 'year-period' began at the next New Year after accession; for individual cases see Philips.2

The emperors of China in this period were: Ch'eng-tsu (Yung-lo), 1403-24; Jen-tsung (Hung-hsi), 1425; Hsiian-tsung (Hsiian-te), 1426-35. Ma Huan accompanied Cheng Ho's fourth, sixth, and seventh expeditions.3 His observations are referred to the year 1433, unless otherwise indicated. His book was probably published in 1451.4

Apparent inconsistencies in dating a traveller's book may be due to the fact that reference is sometimes made to the date of observation, sometimes to the date of recording, and sometimes to the date of publication.5

Terminology

'Mile': sea-mile, and distances are measured along the course probably followed. 'Southern Asia': Asia south of latitude 27° 03' N (Hormuz). 'The Central Country': China.

Values

The present value of gold is taken as £12 10s. an ounce Troy. The present value of silver is taken as 9s. 4d. an ounce Troy.

Weights and measures

(The fractions are carried to the last appropriate figure; omission of later figures sometimes leads to apparent errors in calculation.)

Weight 6

\[ 10 \text{ hu} = 1 \text{ ssu} \quad (0.00037 \text{ gramme or 0.005 grain}) \]
\[ 10 \text{ ssu} = 1 \text{ hao} \quad (0.00037 \text{ gramme or 0.005 grain}) \]

1 See Rev. Père P. Hoang, Concordance des chronologies néoméniques Chinoise et Européenne. Variétés Sinologiques no. 29 (Shanghai, 1910).
3 P. Pelliot, 'Les grands voyages maritimes chinois au début du XVe siècle', T'oung Pao, vol. xxx (1933), p. 263. (Hereafter referred to as 'Voyages'.)
4 Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 264.
6 (Ming) 1 liang equalled 37.30 grammes (Wu Ch'eng-lo, p. 60). In full, 1 liang equalled 577.526655 grains or 1.90195 ounces troy or 1.315771 ounces avoirdupois. 1 gramme equals 15.43235 grains or 0.03215 ounce troy or 0.03527 ounce avoirdupois. A liang is sometimes called 'ounce', a chin is sometimes called 'catty' (kati), and 100 catties make 1 picul.
Editorial notes

10 hao = 1 li (0.037 gramme or 0.057 grain or 0.00119 ounce troy)
10 li = 1 fen (0.37 gramme or 5.75 grains or 0.0119 ounce troy)
10 fen = 1 ch'ien (3.73 grammes or 57.56 grains or 0.119 ounce troy)
10 ch'ien = 1 liang (37.30 grammes or 575.62 grains or 1.19 ounces troy or 1.31 ounces avoirdupois)
16 liang = 1 chin (596.80 grammes or 9210.02 grains or 19.18 ounces troy or 1.31 pounds avoirdupois)

Capacity

10 ko = 1 sheng (1.07 litres or 1.88 pints)
10 sheng = 1 tou (10.737 litres or 2.36 gallons)

Length

(a) 10 li = 1 fen (0.31 centimetre or 0.12 inch)
10 fen = 1 ts'un (3.11 centimetres or 1.22 inches)
10 ts'un = 1 ch'ih (31.1 centimetres or 12.24 inches)
10 ch'ih = 1 chang (3.11 metres or 10 feet 2 inches)
(b) 1 li in theory equalled 612.2 yards, but in practice varied at different times and places.

II. LINGUISTIC

Transliteration

The Wade-Giles system is used for transliterating Chinese words, except that chio is replaced by chüeh, ch'io by ch'üeh, hsio by hsüeh, yo by yüeh, and yi by i.

Nomenclature

The main rules of the P.C.G.N. (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) Principles employed in British Admiralty Hydrographic publications since 1954:

(a) The names of countries are spelled in accordance with English conventional usage;
(b) The approved names of places and administrative divisions in a state are those adopted by the supreme administering authority concerned with that state;

1 (Ming) 1 sheng equalled 1.0737 litres (Wu Ch'eng-lo, p. 58). In full, 1 sheng equalled 1.889.49726 pints. 1 litre equals 1.75980 pints. A sheng is sometimes called ‘pint’, a tou is sometimes called ‘peck’.
2 (Ming) 1 ch'ih equalled 31.1 centimetres (Wu Ch'eng-lo, p. 54). In full, 1 ch'ih equalled 12.24407 inches. 1 centimetre equals 0.3937 inch. A ts'un is sometimes called ‘inch’, a ch'ih is sometimes called ‘foot’.
3 1 li equalled 3,800 ch'ih (Giles, No. 6870).
Editorial notes

The official names of places in China are rendered in Roman letters in accordance with the Wade–Giles system subject to minor modifications.\(^1\)

Conventions used for the romanization of Chinese

(a) Book titles
Current academic convention is followed throughout. Capital letters are used only for the initial letter of the first word of the title, and for proper names. Hyphens are used to indicate word groupings containing single ideas.

(b) Names of persons
Again, current academic convention is followed throughout. Capitals are used for the initial letter of a patronym, and for the initial letter of the first syllable of a given name only. The syllables of a given name are linked by a hyphen. For example: Feng Ch’eng-chüin, Ma Huan, Wang Ta-yüan, and so on.

(c) Names of places and stars, of Chinese origin
Capitals are ordinarily used only for the initial letter of the first syllable. In order to indicate Chinese origin, hyphens are omitted throughout (a departure from current academic practice). Capitals are used for medial syllables when it is clear that these syllables are full proper names. For example: Chia Wu hsü.

(d) Place-names which are apparently Chinese transliterations of originals in other Asian languages
If the syllables cannot be understood with reasonable certainty, a capital is used only for the initial letter of the first syllable, and the syllables are not hyphenated. For example: Ya shu tsai chi. If the syllables can be understood with reasonable certainty, a capital is used for the initial letter of each name, and the syllables of each name are hyphenated. For example: P’ang-chia Shih-lan, ‘Panga Sinan’.

Glossaries

Geographical terms\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Thai</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bay</td>
<td>Wan</td>
<td>Vung</td>
<td>Ao</td>
<td>Telok</td>
<td>Ghubbat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Tsui</td>
<td>Mui</td>
<td>Hlaem, etc.</td>
<td>Tanjong</td>
<td>Ras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>Hsü</td>
<td>Hon,</td>
<td>Koh, etc.</td>
<td>Pulau</td>
<td>Gezira,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jazirat, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>Shan</td>
<td>Nui</td>
<td>Khao, etc.</td>
<td>Gunong</td>
<td>Jabal, Gebel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>Chiang</td>
<td>Song</td>
<td>Maenam</td>
<td>Sungei</td>
<td>Nahr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Editorial notes

Chinese territorial designations

Fu. Prefecture. The largest division of a province.
T'ing. Sub-prefecture. A sub-division of a prefecture.
Chou. Department. A division ranking below a sub-prefecture and above a district.
Hsien. District. The lowest sub-division of a province.
Wei. Military district (5,600 men).
So. Military station (1,120 men).

Chinese terms having no true English equivalent

Chiang chen aromatic. Laka-wood, the scented wood of Dalbergia parviflora Roxb.
Ko bean. An edible bean, Pachyrhizus Thunbergianus.
Lung yen fruit. Longan, Nephelium longana Camb.
Po-ho weight. Bahar, a weight of about 400 pounds avoirdupois, but varying at different times, in different places, and for different commodities.
Su lign-aloës. A fragrant wood yielded by several species of the genus Aquilaria.

3 Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 391.
4 Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 434.
6 Wheatley, 'Commodities', pp. 69, 71.
I once looked at [a book called] A Record of the Islands and their Barbarians,3 which recorded variations of season and of climate, and differences in topography and in peoples. I was surprised and said ‘How can there be such dissimilarities in the world?’

In the eleventh year of the Yung-lo [period],4 [the cyclic year] kuei-ssu,5 The Grand Exemplar The Cultured Emperor6 issued an imperial order that the principal envoy the grand eunuch Cheng Ho should take general command of the treasure-ships7 and go to the various foreign8 countries in the Western Ocean9 to read out the imperial commands and to bestow rewards.

I too was sent in a subordinate capacity as a translator of foreign documents.10 I followed the [mission] wherever it went,11 over vast expanses of huge waves for I do not know how many millions of li; I passed through the various countries, with their [different] seasons, climates, topography, and

1 This title does not appear in Feng’s book.
2 Literally, ‘Notice’. A rendering of this Foreword was published by Rockhill, Part II, p. 72. The Foreword is wanting in both the Paris example of S and in the Peking National Library example of K; Feng introduced some readings from his example of S and from an anonymous MS called ‘San pao cheng-i chi’, ‘Collected [Accounts] of San pao’s Conquests of the Barbarians’, now known only through a notice; see Pelliot, ‘Encore’, p. 211.
3 Tao-i chih; that is, the Tao-i chih-lüeh, ‘A Synoptical Account of the Islands and their Barbarians’ (1350) of Wang Ta-yiian; many extracts from this book were published by Rockhill, Part II, p. 61.
4 The ‘reign-title’ or ‘year-period’ of the emperor whose ‘temple-name’ T’ai-tsung was changed to Ch’eng-tsung in 1548.
5 1413.
6 T’ai-tsung Wen Huang-ti, the Yung-lo emperor’s posthumous title conferred on 2 October 1424; Ma Huan must have amended this Foreword which he originally wrote in 1416 (Pelliot, ‘Voyages’, p. 257).
7 A technical term for the ships of the imperial fleets despatched by the Yung-lo and Hsien-te emperors ‘(for fetching) precious stones from the western ocean’ (Pelliot, ‘Voyages’, p. 255, n. 1; Duyvendak, ‘Dates’, p. 388).
8 Ma Huan uses ‘foreign’ in three senses, (a) as here, non-Chinese, (b) pertaining to the country which he is describing, (c) pertaining to countries other than that which he is describing; but the context allows the sense to be understood without difficulty.
9 Here a vague description for what the Chinese then regarded as ‘The West’ in general, that is, the part of the world west of the South China Sea (Pao Tsen-peng, pp. 32–3).
10 Presumably Ma Huan had a knowledge of the Arabic script.
11 Thus Ma Huan’s first voyage was made with Cheng Ho’s fourth expedition of 1413–15.