Imagined Confucian Legacy

Manufacturing “Chinese” Civilizational Consciousness in Pre-Tang China

by

Hin Ming Frankie Chik

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, Chair
Young Kyun Oh
Huaiyu Chen
Stephen H. West
Nicholas Morrow Williams

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation discusses how Confucianism was invented as the basis for cultural identity of East Asia and how the "Confucian" Classics were circulated and translated in and beyond China proper. Penetrating the compelling forces behind four well-known and widely used texts—the *Shijing*, the *Hanshu*, the *Shuowen jiezi*, and the *Erya*—in relation to the power dynamics and negotiations among their writers and others in their times, this dissertation follows two tracks. The first investigates how the Classics—which were shared heritages in the pre-Han period (<202 B.C.E.)—became Confucian cultural capital, on the one hand, and how Confucius and his followers were described as authoritative transmitters of ancient culture and martyrs on orders from "anti-traditional" emperors (such as the China's first Emperor, Qin Shihuangdi), on the other hand. These four early texts, therefore, set forth the framework within which later Confucian intellectuals studied the Classics and the ancient knowledge therein, and also understood their relationship with state power. The second track explores these texts' Sinocentric and pedantic attitude toward the circulation of the Confucian Classics among people and cultural "Others" who lacked training in the archaic language of the Classics. Nowadays, in light of the fact that the Confucian Classics have become required texts in the curriculum of national learning in the People's Republic of China (PRC), this dissertation provides a lens through which one can see more clearly how Confucianism becomes part of nation building, even in the contemporary world.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Formation of *Ruiia* (Confucianism?)

This dissertation is a reflective and deconstructive study of how Confucianism (a problematic English translation of the Chinese word *rujia* 儒家) as an intellectual tradition was formed and circulated as the foundation of Chinese civilization and the basis for the cultural identity of East Asia. Focusing on texts composed in the period between the 2nd century B.C.E and the 8th century C.E., this dissertation aims to examine the hidden agenda behind the texts that we use to reconstruct and study the Confucian classical tradition. The investigation of this dissertation will shed light on the issue of how Confucianism should be defined.

But what is Confucianism? In short, this term has conventionally been used in the English-speaking world to refer to a school of thought starting from Confucius (in Chinese Kongzi 孔子). However, why has this school of thought been called Confucianism? In *Manufacturing Confucianism*, Lionel M. Jensen agrees with Robert Eno's earlier arguments and maintains that "Confucianism" is largely a Western invention.[1] Although Nicolas Standaert makes a case that Jensen is mostly wrong and overreads his sources,[2]

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[1] Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

[2] Nicolas Standaert, "The Jesuits Did NOT Manufacture 'Confucianism'," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 16 (1999): 115-32.

Jensen is still correct in arguing that "Confucianism" and "Confucians" are not equivalent to *rujia* and *ru* in Chinese indicates that both words, as derivatives of Kongzi's 孔子 Latinized name Confucius, cannot cover the entire semantic scope of their alleged Chinese counterparts.[3] In the early twentieth-century, Chinese scholars devoted much of their effort to trace the original meaning of *ru* in ancient texts and the *ru* before Confucius. Among them, Zhang Taiyan's 章太炎 (1869-1936) "Yuan *ru*" 原儒 (The Original *Ru*) and Hu Shi's 胡適 (1891-1962) "Shuoru" 說儒 (On the Meanings of *Ru*) were the most influential pieces.[4] Despite their divergence of opinion, they both agreed that *ru* as an identification

[3] Similar problem also happens to the term *fajia* 法家, which has been glossed as "Legalism" in English. As scholars have already argued, the semantic spectrum of the Chinese word *fa* is much broader than law. In Chinese, *fa* can also mean methods, standards, and regulations, which the texts classified under *fajia* also encompassed. See Herrlee G. Creel, *Shen Pu-hai: A Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1974), 147-49; and Paul R. Goldin, "Persistent Misconceptions about Chinese 'Legalism'," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38.1 (2011): 64-80.

[4] In the composed in 1909, Zhang Taiyan summarized three layers of the meaning of *ru* in ancient texts: *ru* as a universal name (*daming zhi ru* 達名之儒), *ru* as a categorizing name (*leiming zhi ru* 類名之儒), and *ru* as a private name (*siming zhi ru* 私名之儒). As a universal name, *ru* referred to experts in all techniques. As a categorizing name, *ru* referred to experts who educated people through the Six Arts. As a private name, *ru* referred to those who were roughly able to practice education but unable to comprehend the Six Classics. For discussions about Zhang Taiyan's study of the original meaning of *ru*, see, for example Zhu Hao 朱浩, "Lun 'Yuanru' pian yu Zhang Taiyan zhi 'ruzhe' guan" 論《原儒》篇與章太炎之「儒者」觀, *Zhengzhi sixiang shi* 政治思想史 7.3 (2016): 12-28; and Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization*, 151-216.

Being dissatisfied with Zhang Taiyan's rely on Liu Xiang's 劉向 (79 B.C.E.-8 B.C.E.) and Liu Xin's 劉歆 (50 B.C.E.-23) reconstruction of the intellectual history of the pre-imperial era, Hu Shih argued instead that *ru*, given their weakness and mildness (*rou* 柔), were originally the wizards of the Shang dynasty and were knowledge of practicing funerals. For a recent comprehensive study of Hu Shih's "Shuoru," see You Xiaoli 尤小立, *Hu Shizhi "Shuo ru" neiwai: Xueshushi he sixiangshi de yanjiu* 胡適之《說儒》內外：學術史和思想史的研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018). For a study of how Hu Shih's theory was challenged, see Cui Qinghe 崔慶賀, "Sixiangshi yu xueshushi jiaocuo xia de "shuoru" zhizheng: Yi Hu Shi, Guo Moruo, Qian Mu weili" 思想史與學術史交錯下的「說儒」之爭——以胡適、郭沫若、錢穆為例, *Guo Moruo xuekan* 郭沫若學刊 3 (2017): 35-42.

of a group of scholars with specialties or techniques had already existed before Confucius got onto the stage in history.

Inspired by early twentieth-century scholars' research on the original meaning of *ru*, Nicolas Zufferey argued: "Despite various ideas on the history or nature of the *ru*, most 'specialists' claim that there had been *ru* before Confucius, and, as a consequence, most of them would agree that there is no causal relationship between 'Confucianism' and the *ru*; to be more precise: the *ru* were the ancestors of Confucius, not the other way round."[5] Although in the Warring States Period, the word *ru* had already been used to refer to followers of Confucius, as we can see from the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (Master Han Fei),[6] translating the word *ru* in all ancient Chinese texts into Confucian, therefore, will be an anachronism.[7]

Even in the Han dynasty, the word *ru* was still not an unequivocal term. Already in 1996, through her study of the writings of Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53-18 B.C.E.), Wang Chung 王充 (27-c.97), and Ying Shao 應劭 (c.153-196), Michael Nylan emphasized the diversity among the group labeled as *ru*, and exploring how some of the *ru* should not be treated as Confucian. With the use of the dialogue form, these three scholars criticized contemporary

[5] Nicolas Zufferey, *To the Origins of Confucianism: The Ru in Pre-Qin Times and during the Early Han Dynasty* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), 148.

[6] Han Fei 韓非, *Han Feizi ji jie* 韓非子集解, annotated by Wang Xianshen 王先慎 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003),

[7] Although translating *ru* consistently into Confucian is not recommended when reading pre-Han Chinese texts, Mark Csikszentmihalyi reminds us that having the word *ru* remain untranslated is to cure the symptoms but not the disease itself, "While the term 'Ru' is less misleading than 'Confucian,' what it actually connotes is far from clear." Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 17.

classicists who did not epitomize the true values recorded in the Classics.[8] This argument was advanced further three years later in Nylan's "A Problematic Model: The Han 'Orthodox Synthesis,' Then and Now," where she divided the *ru* in Han texts into three groups. Her first group of *ru* is "Classicists," called *jingsheng* 經生 in later texts,[9] meaning one who has mastered the classical precedents stored in ancient texts, along with the performance of antique rites and music. The second is "Confucians," whom Nylan defines as "committed adherent of Confucius's Way of *ren* and the Five Relations"; they were typically distinguished by their opposition to other stances. The third group is "government officials," who were actual or potential *shi* 士.[10] In contrast to a Confucian, a Classicist did not necessarily dedicate himself to the teachings and moral values promoted by Confucius. Rather, being preoccupied with practical, sometimes even careerist concerns, certain classicists paid more attention to their career goals by simply memorizing the classical texts and mining them for literary flourishes, but not ethical values recorded in the corpus of the Five Classics.[11] The studies of the Classics, in this vein, was to them only a means to a career. Although Nylan's classification summarizes the major characteristics of being a *ru* in the Han, it is still hard to apply her classification to categorize all known *ru* in the Han

[8] Michael Nylan, "Han Classicists Writing in Dialogue about their own Tradition," *Philosophy East and West* 47:2 (1996), 133-88.

[9] For the occurrence of the phrase *jingsheng*, see, for example, Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 79b.2588.

[10] Michael Nylan, "A Problematic Model: Than Han 'Orthodox Synthesis,' Then and Now," in Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng and John B. Henderson eds., *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 18-19.

[11] Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions in the *Shiji*," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 79.

dynasty, especially when a *ru* manifested more than one characteristic enumerated above. In fact, we can raise the following questions to challenge the applicability of Nylan's classification: How could one determine whether a classicist or an official was not an adherent of Confucius's teachings? What "Confucius" did the Confucians in her classification follow? How could we know a *ru* was or was not a real adherent of Confucius's teachings? Could a *ru* follow Confucius's teachings and became a Confucian simply because of the career prospects he foresaw? In the case of Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c.198-c.107 B.C.E.), under which category should he fall? These questions further indicate the complexity and ambiguity of the word *ru* in our early materials, and it is hard to apply only one category in a specific case like that of Dong Zhongshu.

As a complement to Nylan's research, Anne Cheng explores the similarity among *ru* and other categories (especially the technicians, *fangshi* 方士) as well as the diversity within the *ru*. Cheng asks, if there was no clear-cut definition of "Confucianism" to speak of in the Western Han, how did the *ru* in the Han dynasty get the sense of identity, which they used to distinguish themselves from other categories (if there was any)? As the examples Cheng cites indicate, the distinction between *ru* and *fangshi* was so blurred that *ru* who served in the imperial government advised or even conducted official rain-inducing sacrifices, which were among the techniques of *fangshi* experts, while *fangshi* also showed their knowledge of the classics; moreover, both groups had relationship with governmental power. It was in their direct competition with the *fangshi* for the support of the state power that *ru*'s identity was established, so *ru* began to find it necessary to draw a line between

themselves and the *fangshi*.[12] However, as will be shown in Chapter One, both terms were interchangeable, even in the *Shiji*, or even referred to the same group of scholars. How, then, did the second meaning of the word *ru* as Nylan laid out become the mainstream meaning of this word?

Another relevant issue is when did the concept of *rujia* as a school of thought, or the so-called "Confucianism," begin to appear? There is no evidence that Confucius had an idea to create a philosophical lineage that could last for multiple generations. Although there was a mentorship relationship between him and his disciples (*dizi* 弟子 or *menren* 門人), this relationship did not constitute a scholastic lineage—with multi-generational scholars—resembling those in China's imperial history.[13] A. C. Graham remarked that a firm classification of the pre-Han schools begins with Sima Tan's 司馬談 "Lun liujia yaozhi" 論六家要旨 (On the essential points of the six experts).[14] Although the word *jia* has been used to mean philosophical schools or lines of transmission in Chinese, Graham understood the word in Sima Tan's writing to mean "schools" in the sense that this word referred to scholarly and philosophical lineages of each particular ideology that distinguished one from another. In contrast, Kidder Smith argued that the word *jia* in Sima Tan's only surviving treatise meant "people with expertise in something."[15] Smith

[12] Anne Cheng, "What Did It Mean to Be a Ru in Han Times?" *Asia Major*, 3rd Series, 14.2(2003): 101-18.

[13] Sarah Allan, *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip Manuscripts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 145.

[14] A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 337.

[15] Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and Invention of Daoism, Legalism, et cetera," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61.1 (2003): 130. See also Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On

maintained that ideas under the rubrics of each of the six configurations were not properties of these specific six groups, but ideas or teachings that were commonplace in Han social-political life. It was only in the bibliographical treatise ("Yi wen zhi" 藝文志) of the *Hanshu* that the concept of philosophical schools, an anachronistic framework to understand the intellectual history of the pre-imperial period, was born.

Smith's argument is supported by Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, who suggested that the term *jia* in Sima Tan's writing was used to refer to individual experts and their methods but not any continuous text-based transmissions.[16] The concept of philosophical lineages or schools, Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan argued, began no later than the end of the Western Han. Because early emperors of the Eastern Han had to depend on their sponsorship of the Five Classics and the textual traditions associated with them to legitimize their political authority, the imperial court reinforced the parallel between faithful service to the dynasty and faithful interpretive lines of transmission of the canonical traditions.[17] It is in this political context that the concept of lineages and lines of transmission became increasingly important and central in the official histories of both Former and Later Han. However, why was it the Five Classics, but not other texts, that connected those whom we call Confucians or *ru*? Why were scholars excluded from what we may call Confucian lineages, especially when the Classics, or their textual parallels,

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The Meaning of Pai Chia Early Chinese Sources," *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995): 1-52.

[16] Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions in the *Shiji*," 65.

[17] Ibid, 87.

had already been cited by texts that later classifications did not categorize under "Confucianism"?

1.2 What are the Confucian Classics? And why are the Classics "Confucian"

To answer the questions the previous section raised, we should look at two questions: What are the Confucian Classics? What are the characteristics the Confucian Classics supposed to possess? In general, the Confucian Classics refer to a corpus of authoritative texts which have been highly esteemed and extensively studied in East Asia. The number of classical texts within this corpus varied in history, from the original five (or six) to the thirteen since the Song dynasty (960-1279) onward.[18] As the Chinese equivalent of the English word "classic," the word *jing* 經 reflects an idea that these authoritative texts embody the timeless universal principles which people from every generation should know. As Michael Nylan demonstrates, the word *jing* conveys four other meanings besides that of authoritative texts: "(1) a 'constant' (*chang* 常) that is regular and predictable; (2) the 'main thread' or 'warp' in a fabric, in contrast to 'secondary threads' or 'woof' (*wei* 緯; *ji* 紀); (3) 'to manage,' 'to arrange' or 'to rule'; and (4) 'to pass through.'"[19] The five

[18] For a comprehensive study of the changes of the number of the Confucian Classics, see Cheng Sudong 程蘇東, *Cong liuyi dao shisan jing: Yi jingmu yanbian wei zhongxin* 從六藝到十三經：以經目演變為中心 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018). Certain commentaries (*zhuan* 傳) on the Classics also underwent the process of canonization and became members of the corpus. An Example of these rising commentaries is the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Commentary*), a commentary used to complement the historical records of the concise *Chunqiu*. For the history of how the *Zuozhuan* became a classic, see Pauli Wai Tashima, "Merging Horizons: Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Zuo Tradition from Western Han to Western Jin (2nd c. BCE-3rd c. CE)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2013).

[19] Michael Nylan, "Classics without Canonization, Reflections on Classical Learning and Authority in Qin (221-210 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220)," in John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, eds., *Early Chinese*

meanings of *jing*, however, are complementary. Being constant, a Classic can provide people with reliable and major pathways to assess the principles and universal lessons which help people manage various affairs in the world.

The constancy and universality of the Confucian Classics are further elaborated in John B. Henderson's comparative study of the world's commentarial traditions. Putting the Confucian tradition into a larger context of other commentarial traditions, Henderson summarizes six characteristics that defined the Confucian Classics and the classics in other traditions: (1) their comprehensiveness; (2) their coherency; (3) their inner consistency; (4) their moral vision; (5) their profundity; and (6) their simplicity yet mystery.[20] The Confucian Classics were not the only authoritative texts in ancient China that qualified for being *jing*. We can find many pre-modern Chinese texts with the word *jing* as part of their titles. A well-known example is the *Dao de jing* 道德經, the fundamental text of Daoism. As Nylan argues, texts like technical manuals were also seen as *jing* in the Qin-Han period (221 B.C.E.-220), so "the *jing* appellation need not imply an ethical orientation or a dedication to restore a classical past."[21] Having moral vision, in this sense, seems to be one of the major, if not absolute, criterion that distinguished the Confucian Classics from the *jing* or classics in other traditions.

Religion, Part One, Shang through Han (1250 BC - AD 220) (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 726.

[20] John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991),

[21] Nylan, "Classics without Canonization, Reflections on Classical Learning and Authority in Qin (221-210 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220)," 727.

Why did the Confucian Classics have such a universal moral power and the characteristics Henderson highlights? Some Confucian Classics in the current corpus have a strong moral flavor. For instance, the *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*) has such a strong moral orientation that it has long been treated as the most authoritative text of Confucius's moral teachings.[22] However, not all Classics were as morally oriented as the *Analects*. The original Five Classics—*Yi* 易 (*I Ching*), *Shu* 書 (*Documents*), *Shi* 詩 (*Odes*), *Li* 禮 (*Rites*), and *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*)—as Hao Jing 郝經 (1223-1275) and Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738-1801) argued respectively in later generations, were historical records of the ancient past; thus, they implied the Classics' moral coloration was invisible when read without the larger Confucian context.[23] The Qian 乾 and Kun 坤 hexagrams of the *Yijing*, for example, were astronomical records according to Edward Shaughnessy's earlier hypothesis.[24] However, as we can see in the *Analects*, the *Mengzi* 孟子 (*The Mencius*), and other ancient Chinese texts regardless of their philosophical attributions in later classifications, the Five Classics, particularly the *Shi* and the *Shu*, were

[22] That the *Analects* is the most authoritative texts representing the teachings of Confucius has been challenged recently by Michael Hunter. Due to the divergence of Confucius's images in various pre-Han texts and the political needs in Western Han, Hunter argues that the *Analects* marks a stabilization of the development of the "Kongzi" phenomenon by the Western Han dynasty. See Michael Hunter, *Confucius beyond the* Analects (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[23] For Hao Jing's and Zhang Xuecheng's idea that the Classics were historical materials in their nature, see Christian Soffel and Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Cultural Authority and Political Culture in China: Exploring Issues with the* Zhongyong *and the Daotong during the Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012); David S. Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, (1738-1801)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

[24] Edward B. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 197-220. However, as will be shown in Chapter Two, in the imperial period, this Classic was understood from two different approaches—either from a perspective of Divination and Mathematics (*shushu* 術數) or from that of meaning and principle (*yili* 義理).

frequently cited to foster another text's moral stance.[25] The widespread citations of these authoritative texts in ancient China implies that it was generally agreed among early Chinese thinkers and cultural elites that these Classics, despite the fluidity of their textual forms, provided scholars with the wisdom and inspirations needed to encounter contemporary circumstances.

However, the Classics' profundity and moral visions hinged primarily on scholars' interpretations of given passages from these authoritative texts. The reason why the Five Classics, which were shared heritages before the Qin unification, became "Confucian" Classics was that the current Five Classics were said in the *Shiji* narrative to be edited and authored by Confucius himself after his wandering.[26] Confucius's authorship provided later commentators with direction and guidelines for interpretations that restricted possible proliferation of uncontrolled interpretations that were contradictory to those based on Confucius's authorship. For instance, the *Chunqiu* annals could deliver Confucius's moral evaluations to the political world in the 241-year period the Classic covered because the so-call *Chunqiu* writing style (*Chunqiu bifa* 春秋筆法) assumed that the cryptic words in this Classic were infused with profound meaning (*weiyan dayi* 微言大義). However, as

[25] As Mark Edward Lewis argues, the reasons for ancient scholars to make frequent quotations of the authoritative were as follow:

> The citation of known verse performed several functions. First, it certified the speaker as an educated man and a member of a cultured nobility... Second, it claimed kinship of spirit in the assumption that the listener would recognize the ode and understand its import. Third, since the ode was applied to a situation other than that which had inspired it, the meaning imparted to it in the scene of presentation often differed from a presumptive original meaning.

See Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 158.

[26] Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 47.1935-37.

Chapter Two will demonstrate, the early legends about Confucius's editorship and authorship were ambiguous, and it was not until the *Shiji* that we have a more affirmative account of his editorship and authorship. Why was Confucius privileged and competent to edit and author the Classics? Why were Confucius's editorship and authorship, but not others', widely accepted? How could later scholars justify Confucius's authority? Chapter Three of this dissertation attempts to provide answer to these questions.

Important as the Confucian Classics were in pre-modern China's history, an enduring question is how to popularize the Classics or to use the Classics to educate people from diverse backgrounds in order to continue the culture the Classics represented. A well-known passage from the *Analects* 9.5 read:

> Confucius was threatened in Kuang. [Confucius] said, "After the death of King Wen, isn't *wen* been preserved by me? If Heaven is about to eliminate this *wen*, this man who will die so long after [King Wen] should never been given this *wen*. If Heaven is not about to eliminate this *wen*, what things the people of Kuang can do to me?"
>
> 子畏於匡。曰：「文王既沒，文不在茲乎？天之將喪斯文也，後死者不得與於斯文也；天之未喪斯文也，匡人其如予何？」[27]

The passage was regarded as evidence to show how the dying ancient culture could survive and be transmitted because of the presence of Confucius. However, as we will see in the following chapters, the ancient culture restored in the Classics and the moral message Confucius was said to encode in the Classics were distorted or even on the brink of destruction after Confucius's death. The issue of how the classical tradition could remain

[27] Xing Bing 邢昺, ed., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 9.78a.

intact became not only the top priority but also a headache to many scholars who dedicated themselves to the study of the Confucian Classics.

As will be shown in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, one of the difficulties of reading the Classics and extracting from the texts the moral messages lay in the linguistic challenge the Classics may cause. Because the Classics were written in archaic language style, the low level of literacy in China meant that not even all speakers of Sinitic language had the ability to read and understand the Classics and their moral teachings. Needless to say, the Classics were not accessible to different peoples, including those cultural "Others" who spoke and wrote languages differing from Sinitic language. In examining the formation of modern nationalism, Benedict Anderson suggested that national print-languages or vernaculars allowed people in different areas to understand the message and information from others whom they never met before. It was this process that people imagined themselves belonging to a community in which members know the unified national language other also speak.[28] Although Anderson's theory was meant to address the very later stage of early modern, and the formation of Confucian doctrine happened way before early modern and far before the introduction of print technology, the circulation of the Confucian Classics among lower-ranking officials who only had limited literacy in the Han and cultural Others implied that Confucian doctrine became pivot that connected members from different statuses and backgrounds. However, as chapters of my dissertation indicate, scholars like Xu Shen 許慎 (c.58-c.148) argued that vernacularizing the archaic Sinitic

[28] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

language of the Classics would corrupt the correctness the Classics and thus prevent people from understanding the correct moral messages of the Classics.

1.3 The Uncertainty of the Rise of "Victory" of Confucianism

It was traditionally assumed that it was during the reign of Emperor Wu (141-87 B.C.E.) of the Han dynasty onward that Confucianism became the state ideology of imperial China. Modern scholarship in Han intellectual history has commonly cited the phrase, "to dismiss the hundred schools and respect only Confucian techniques" 罷黜百家, 獨尊儒術, which was indeed Yi Baisha's 易白沙 (1886-1921) rephrasing of a *Hanshu*'s statement about the emperor's notable esteem for the Six Classics.[29] According to the traditional narrative, Dong Zhongshu influenced Emperor Wu to promote Confucianism.[30] In his three famous responses to the young emperor's inquiries about government, Dong urged his majesty: "Eliminate the ways of those beyond the disciplines of the Six Arts and the techniques of Confucius and never allow them to advance together. Once the wicked and perverse speeches are wiped out, orders and principles can be unified

[29] This phrase was first used by Yi Baisha in 1916 to criticize Emperor Wu for utilizing Confucius as a figurehead to control his people. See Yi Baisha 易白沙, "Kongzi pingyi shang" 孔子平議上, *Qingnian zazhi* 青年雜誌 (1916): 15.

[30] For the discussions on the purported role Dong Zhongshu played in the rise of Confucianism in the reign of Emperor Wu, see Li Weixiong 李威熊, *Dong Zhongshu yu Xi Han xueshu* 董仲舒與西漢學術 (Taipei: Wenshezhi chubanshe, 1978); Wang Yongxiang 王永祥, *Dong Zhongshu pingzhuan* 董仲舒評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1995); and Zhou Guidian 周桂鈿, *Dongxue tanwei* 董學探微 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008).

while laws and institutions can be illustrated" 諸不在六藝之科孔子之術者，皆絕其道，勿使並進。邪辟之說滅息，然後統紀可一而法度可明.[31]

The narrative that the reign of Emperor Wu marked the rise or "victory" of Confucianism has been doubted and challenged since the last century. Homer H. Dubs (1892-1969), for example, argued instead that the reign of Emperor Wu did not symbolize the victory of Confucianism, but was only one stage of the gradual process that led to the victory of Confucianism over other schools of thought in the ensuing reign of Emperor Yuan (r. 48-33).[32] Assuming that emperors possessed absolute power to determine what should be the state ideology, Dubs put particular emphasis on the role played by the Han emperors. However, Michael Nylan offers five challenges to these assumptions of the victory of Han Confucianism: (1) it is hard to identify Confucians as a distinct group with a distinct ideology in the Han; (2) whether the empire presumed an absolute need for a single ruling orthodoxy is unfortunately uncertain; (3) state sponsorship of Confucian activities was not as consistent as the advocates expected; (4) a markedly greater uniformity in thought and practice because of the efficiency of the state sponsorship of Confucian activities was not guaranteed; and (5) we do not know whether this unguaranteed uniformity represented something quite distinct from what had existed in the pre-Han

[31] Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 56.2523.

[32] Homer H. Dubs, "The Victory of Han Confucianism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 58.3 (1938), 435-449. Similar challenges can also be seen in Japanese scholarship. For example, Watanabe Yoshihiro 渡邊義浩, *Gokan kokka no shihai to Jukyō* 後漢国家の支配と儒教 (Tōkyō: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1995); and Fukui Shigemasa 福井重雅, *Kandai jukyō no shiteki kenkyū : Jukyō no kangakuka o meguru teisetsu no saikentō* 漢代儒教の史的研究 : 儒教の官學化をめぐる定說の再檢討 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2005). See also Zhu Ziyan 朱子彥, "Han Wudi 'bachu baijia, duzun rushu' zhiyi" 漢武帝「罷黜百家，獨尊儒術」質疑, *Shanghai daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 上海大學學報(社會科學版) 11.6 (2004): 91-94 for scholarly challenge to the traditional narrative in the Chinese speaking world.

period.[33] Indeed, as above mentioned, it was not until the end of the Western Han that the concept of philosophical schools was established. The official sacrifices conducted by the Han court also expanded the diversity of the state ideology, and therefore implies that Nylan's critique is not without grounds.

Another problem of the traditional narrative is its emphasis on Dong Zhongshu's role in the rise of Confucianism as state ideology. However, was the rise of Confucianism merely Dong's contribution? Was Dong Zhongshu as influential in his time as the traditional narrative suggested? Through his detailed investigation of the pre-modern materials dated back to the Han Dynasty, Michael Loewe argues that Dong Zhongshu's importance in Han intellectual history has been overemphasized in previous scholarship.[34] Not only were his three responses only preserved in his official biography in the *Hanshu* by Ban Gu's editorship, but extant Han materials also cannot prove Dong Zhongshu's influence on the political and intellectual worlds at that time.[35] Loewe suggests instead that Dong Zhongshu's voice was not highly valued while he was alive and even during the entire Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.-9); thus Loewe denies Dong's decisive role.

Liang Cai dates the rise of Confucianism to the reign of Emperor Xuan (r. 74-48 B.C.E.) in the wake a plague of witchcraft in the last years of Emperor Wu's reign. Based on the statistical data from both *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, Cai argues that the aftermath of the witchcraft created a power vacuum in the Han official system, which *ru* scholars with

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[33] Nylan, "A Problematic Model: Than Han 'Orthodox Synthesis,' Then and Now," 17-56.

[34] Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[35] For Loewe's discussion on Dong's three responses to Emperor Wu and Dong's influences, see Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu*, especially Chapter Three and Chapter Four.

obscure backgrounds could quickly fill.[36] However, as Liang Cai has already noticed, the biographies included in the *ru* forest (*rulin* 儒林) in both *Shiji* and *Hanshu* were the product of historians' "imaginative refashioning" the past.[37] For instance, as she argues, in the *Shiji*'s biographies of *ru,* Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c.139-c.86 B.C.E.) created a utopia where learned men could enter officialdom and be promoted successfully within the bureaucratic system thanks to their expertise in any of the Five Classics. This utopia, in the end, aimed to criticize the official system in the real world in which one's family assets and social networking were most important in determining his career path.[38] Despite her awareness of the historians' tailoring of the materials, her research still relies heavily on both histories to trace the rise of Han Confucianism. However, because of the dearth of available Han sources, both histories were among the few texts that we can utilize to reconstruct the intellectual history of the Han. If our evidence imaginatively refashioned the past, our efforts to locate the point in time when Confucianism became dominant or "won over" other schools of thought as state ideology is nothing more than trying to get blood from a stone. Instead, this dissertation attempts to examine how these available materials—which tailored history—shaped our prevalent and general understanding of the history of Confucianism.

[36] Liang Cai, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014).

[37] Ibid, 5.

[38] As Cai argues, this is the hidden agenda of the biography of *ru* of the *Shiji*. Ibid, 45-76.

1.4 Structure of this Project

The organization of this dissertation is principally thematic. Besides the Introduction and Conclusion, each chapter uses a case study to examine how Confucianism and the textual tradition it represented were invented and developed in the period under scrutiny in that chapter. The texts each chapter focuses on are widely known and instrumental in nature, such as dictionaries and bibliographies. The entire dissertation seeks to show that these materials were compiled with different underlying compelling forces, but they are still the materials that have largely shaped our understanding of Confucianism and its influence on Chinese civilization. Chapter Two discusses how the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Scribe*) used its record of the Qin bibliocaust to construct a *ru* community whose members were mostly from the Qi-Lu area where Confucius's home was located. The burning of books and burying *ru* scholars was a notorious catastrophe in traditional Chinese historiography because of its tremendous destruction to the ancient *wen*. However, in reassessments already made in modern scholarship, it is argued that the scale and destructive power of the Qin bibliocaust was not as vast as later generations assumed. The chapter will demonstrate how Sima Qian's narrative about this cultural catastrophe served his purpose in constructing a *ru* community with Confucius its ancestor.

Through an investigation of the "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Writing) of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han*), Chapter Three examines how the Classics became Confucian cultural capital. Before Liu Xiang and his son Liu Xin collated the imperial collection at the turn of the Common Era, the Classics had been widely cited in different pre-imperial Chinese texts, as attested in both transmitted and excavated texts,

regardless of what traditions they belonged to in later classifications. How did particular texts become the "Confucian" Classics? Exploring the "Yi wen zhi," we will see how the Lius imagined the history of each school of thought. Arguing that all masters in later generations were the descendants of ancient royal officials, the Lius attempted to draw links between the Classics and the masters as they recognized. Unlike other masters whose ancestors were the creators of specific Classics, the ancestor of Confucians was projected to be the transmitter of the Classics and thus possessed omniscient understanding which other masters' ancestors lacked. It was because of this omniscience that Confucians could successfully claim their authority over the Classics.

Chapter Four studies how the Confucian Classics were popularized among Han officials who did not have the literacy skills to read texts written in ancient scripts (*guowen* 古文) and how Xu Shen, the author of the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, responded to this situation. Understanding that the Classics were originally written in the ancient scripts which visualized the hidden patterns of the world thanks to their pictoriality, Xu Shen urged all Han officials to acquire cultural literacy but not merely administrative literacy, i.e., the ability to process administrative documents. Officials' acquisition of administrative literacy enabled them to read the Classics rewritten in clerical scripts (*lishu* 隸書), which was a simplified form of administrative writing that lacked the hidden patterns of meaning that were embedded in ancient scripts; therefore, Xu Shen claimed that officials who were dependent on clerical scripts to read the Classics could not properly understand Confucius's moral messages. The *Shuowen jiezi*, therefore, was compiled in this historical context. In this light, Xu Shen provides us with an example to explore how the Confucian Classics were circulated and popularized in early imperial history.

Chapter Five analyzes the standard for elegance the Classics were thought to embody and how the ideal *jiaohua* 教化, or transformation through education, should be practiced in Confucian discourse. Concentrating on the significance of the *Erya* 爾雅 in China's imperial history, this chapter aims to explain why traditional Chinese historiography mentioned only a few non-Chinese translations of the Classics. Written in the elegant language which was considered to be the official language of the Zhou court, the Classics paved the way through which ethnic and cultural "others" could be transformed and assimilated into the culture defined by the Confucian classical tradition. Translating the elegant Classics into other languages was considered a process of degeneration that obscured the correct meanings of the Classics due to the use of inelegant and incorrect language to study the Classics. The concept of "approaching correctness" which the *Erya* embodied specified the ideal way of transforming those ethnic and cultural others who spoke no classical Chinese language. Others were supposed to take the initiative to assimilate themselves into the civilizational tradition.

CHAPTER 2

THE "LEGACY" OF BOOKS BURNING AND EXECUTING OF SCHOLARS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE QI-LU CENTRIC {RU} COMMUNITY IN THE {SHIJI}

> In the past, the Qin cut off the sagely way, murdered scholars of technique, burned the *Shi* and the *Shu*, abandoned rituals and decorum, valued deceit and violence, and utilized punishments and penalties.
>
> 昔秦絕聖人之道，殺術士，燔詩書，棄禮義，尚詐力，任刑罰。[39]

2.1 Introduction

In contrast to its historical importance as the first imperial dynasty in China, the Qin (221-206 B.C.E.) received only a few commendations in traditional scholarship.[40] The phrase "brutal Qin" (*Bao Qin* 暴秦) appears frequently in numerous pre-modern materials, indicating not only the Qin's ruthlessness to common people, but also its disregard of traditional moral and ethical culture.[41] Among the crimes the Qin has been said to commit, incidents of burning texts and burying/executing *ru* 儒 scholars were presented in traditional scholarship as cultural disasters which severed the imperial era from China's high antiquity. Although the Qin was occasionally vindicated by scholars, many blamed

[39] Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1959), 118.3086.

[40] Michael Loewe, "The Concept of Sovereignty," in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 BC-AD 220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 740.

[41] This phrase appears frequently in both the *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Scribe)* and the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han*). See Sima, *Shiji*, 48.1952; 86.2538; 89.2573; 97.2698; 127.3222. Also see Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1962), 1B.53; 22.1034; 23.1112; 31.1788; 32.1830; 36.1956, 1964, 1968; 43.2112; 67.2920; 100B.4252.

the Qin for the dearth of ancient texts and their consequent inadequate understanding of the pre-imperial texts, particularly the Classics attributed to Confucius.[42] A group of modern scholars have claimed that these cultural disasters were caused by the First Emperor's pursuit of a unified *fajia* 法家 (Legalist)[43] empire and the struggle between Legalism and Confucianism (*rujia* 儒家).[44] By contrast, Western sinologists have recently argued that the imperial Qin was not hostile to *ru* scholars, for our available materials have provided a list of names of the surviving *ru* scholars from the Qin who later served the newly founded Han empire.[45] Moreover, ancient practices and rituals were preserved in the

[42] Zheng Qiao's 鄭樵 (1104–1162) "On the Qin did not Wipe out Confucian Teaching" (Qin bujue ruxue lun 秦不絕儒學論) is an essay frequently cited by modern scholars to redefine both incidents. In this revolutionary essay, Zheng Qiao emphatically declared:

> In the times of Qin, [the imperial government] did not abandon the use of *ru* scholars and Classical learning. Furthermore, when Shusun Tong surrendered to the Han, he himself had about a hundred disciples. The custom in the Qi-Lu area was also not replaced. Therefore, after the death of Xiang Yu, Lu was a state which preserved the moral principles and rituals. We then know the in the times of the Qin, [the imperial government] did not abandon *ru* scholars, and probably those the First Emperor buried were the ones whose arguments conflicted with [that of the First Emperor] for a short while.
>
> 秦時未嘗不用儒生與經學也。況叔孫通降漢時，自有弟子百餘人。齊魯之風亦未嘗替。故項羽既亡之後，而魯為守節禮義之國。則知秦時未嘗廢儒，而始皇所阬者，蓋一時議論不合者耳。

See Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, "Qin bujue ruxue lun" 秦不絕儒學論, in *Tongzhi ershi lue* 通志二十略 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1995),71: 1803.

[43] Translating the Chinese word *fajia* into "Legalism" in English is problematic. See Introduction n.3.

[44] See, for instance, Xu Lingyun 許凌雲 and Xu Qiang 許強, *Zhongguo ruxue tonglun* 中國儒學通論 (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 80; Fan Wenlan 范文瀾, *Zhongguo tong shi jian bian: Xiuding ben* 中國通史簡編：修訂本 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1964); Han Xing 韓星, *Ru Fa zhenghe: Qin Han zhengzhi wenhua lun* 儒法整合：秦漢政治文化論 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 104-13.

[45] See Ma Feibai 馬非百, *Qin ji shi* 秦集史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), vol. 1, 337-41 the names of 12 *ru* scholars who lived in the Qin-Han transition period.

imperial Qin, and China's first empire was thus never an anti-traditional dynasty.[46] They further suggest that the incidents were merely the First Emperor's censorship, but not extermination, of academia; moreover, the impact was not as permanent, systematic, and catastrophic as Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145 or 135 B.C.E – ?) *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Historian*) and the majority of imperial materials sought to demonstrate.[47]

In additional to modern scholars' discussions of the emperor's motivation behind the incidents, pre-modern and modern scholars have doubted the authenticity of the narrative about both incidents, particularly about executing scholars alive.[48] As a record of both incidents, the *Shiji* is probably, among all available Western Han sources, the most thorough narrative about burning texts and executing scholars.[49] Nevertheless, the *Shiji*'s

[46] The introduction to the recent volume on the Qin empire emphasized the hybridity and complexity of the Qin's cultural dynamics that "the Qin was both innovative and traditionalist; 'barbarian-looking' and 'Zhou-oriented'; 'Legalist' and 'Confucian.'" Thus, a generalization would only offer an inadequate summary of its culture. See Yuri Pines, Lothar von Falkenhausen, Gideon Shelach, and Robin D. S. Yates "General Introduction: Qin History Revisited," in Yuri Pines, Gideon Shelach-Lavi, Lothar von Falkenhausen, and Robin D. S Yates, eds., *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 31. Martin Kern had also argued in his earlier monograph that the continuity between the Qin and Zhou culture was obvious, and that the First Emperor did not suppress the *ru*; rather, the Qin played an important role in the canonization of the Classics in early history. See Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2000), especially Chapter Five.

[47] Derk Bodde, "The State and Empire of Ch'in," in Twitchett and Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 BC-AD 220*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 71.

[48] This doubt was first expressed by Wang Chong 王充 (27-97). See Wang Chong 王充, *Lunheng jiao shi* 論衡校釋, collated and annotated by Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1990), 7.355-57.

[49] Prior to the grand historian, only Jia Yi 賈誼 (200 – 168 B.C.E.) mentioned the Qin bibliocaust—but had no mention of the execution of scholars—in his "On Surpassing the Qin" (Guo Qin lun 過秦論), which was included in the "Basic Annals." However, he only said that "[the Qin] abandoned the way of the former kings and burned the speeches of the hundred experts" 廢先王之道，燔百家之言, and "[the Qin] banned texts and documents" (禁文書) without any elaboration and further details. See Sima, *Shiji*, 6: 280, 283. In comparison with other misdeeds of the Qin imperial government according to Jia Yi's essay, the bibliocaust of burning books was not even the fault leading to the demise of the Qin. Thus, up to this point, one has no alternative but to rely on the account in the *Records of the Grand Scribe* to reconstruct both incidents. Elisa Levi Sabattini translated the phrase *fen wenshu* 焚文書 as "he burned literary writings." See Elisa Levi

narrative is by no means clear and is full of Sima Qian's bias and exaggeration. As other scholars have already noted, the "Basic Annals of the First Emperor of Qin"[50] (Qin Shi Huang Benji 秦始皇本紀, hereafter the "Benji"), in which the principal account of both incidents is found, was written to emphasize the importance of heavenly mandates, on the one hand,[51] and to criticize the contemporaneous Han Emperor Wu (Liu Che 劉徹, r. 141-87 B.C.E.), on the other hand.[52] Therefore, the records in the "Benji" are not irrefutable evidence. Although there is almost a consensus that the Qin bibliocaust happened to a less serious degree than what the *Shiji* claimed, Ulrich Neininger and Li Kaiyuan 李開元 take a bold and controversial step. Since it was not until the *Shiji* that the suspicious narrative

Sabattini, "How to Surpass the Qin: On Jia Yi's Intentions in the Guo Qin lun," *Monumenta Serica* 65.2 (2017): 272. However, no valid evidence is available to conclude that in Jia Yi's statement, the scope of the bibliocaust was limited only to literary writings. Before Jia Yi, Lu Jia 陸賈 (240-170 B.C.E.) had also criticized the imperial Qin in his *New Discourses* (*Xinyu* 新語). See Lu Jia 陸賈, *Xinyu jiaozhu* 新語校注, collated and annotated by Wang Liqi 王利器 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 51, 62. However, this anthology left no trace of either incident. Interestingly, Lu Jia a person from Chu people; the *Shiji* claimed that the Chu had the most enmity against the Qin and were foreseen by Nangong 南公 as the ones who would destroy the imperial Qin. See Sima, *Shiji*, 7.300. Lu Jia's criticism may be understood as embodying such enmity.

[50] I adopt conventional translation of Shi Huangdi 始皇帝 as the "First Emperor." However, this translation is literally inaccurate. John Major translated *di* as "thearch," since he believes this translation could capture the divine implication of the word *di* 帝 in its original religious context. See John Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought: Chapters Three, Four, and. Five of the "Huainanzi"* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 18.

[51] Fujita Katsuhisa 藤田勝久 argues that although Sima Qian conceded that the Qin unification was primarily attributed to the potency accumulated by the rulers of the state of Qin, the cruelty of imperial Qin emperors, exemplified by both incidents, was the crucial reason for its short-lived governance. See Fujita Katsuhisa 藤田勝久, *Shiki shinkanshi no kenkyu* 史記秦漢史の研究 (Tokyo: Kyukoshoin, 2015), especially Chapter Three.

[52] Many scholars have been aware of this rhetorical strategy in Sima Qian's writing. To name but a few, see Stephen Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 29-30; Hans van Ess, "Emperor Wu of the Han and the First August Emperor of Qin in Sima Qian's *Shiji*," in Pines, Shelach-Lavi, von Falkenhausen, and Yates, eds., *Birth of an Empire*, 238-58.

about the execution of scholars come to light,[53] Neininger and Li infer that the second incident was no more than a Han invention of a legend of "Confucian" martyrdom to celebrate Confucian scholars' valiant resistance to the First Emperor's tyranny.[54]

There is no valid reason to totally repudiate all aspects of both incidents. However, given the ambiguity and uncertainty about the accounts of the "Benji" and the entire *Shiji* regarding both incidents, the exclusive use of Sima Qian's accounts to examine what and who were actually burned and buried is hazardous. What should be suspected is not the occurrence of the incidents *per se*, but the authenticity of the *Shiji*'s account. This chapter will seek to show that Sima Qian filtered and tailored the materials in his possession to

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[53] According to the Hanshu, Sima Qian studied certain chapters of the *Shu* from Kong Anguo 孔安國 (c. 156 – c. 74 B.C.E.), the author of the "Shangshu xu" 尚書序 (Preface to the *Documents*). In this preface, we see the proverb *fenshu kengru* 焚書坑儒 that explicitly stated that the *ru* scholars were the actual victims of the second incident:

> When times came to [the reign of] the First Emperor of Qin, [the emperor] extinguished the texts from previous generations, burned books and executed *ru* scholars. Learned men in the world under Heaven fled from the calamity and were dispersed. My ancestor hid his books in wall of his residence.
>
> 及秦始皇滅先代典籍，焚書坑儒，天下學士，逃難解散，我先人用藏其家書於屋壁。

See Kong Yunda 孔穎達, *Shangshu zhushu* 尚書注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhu shu* 十三經注疏 (1816; reprint, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1960), 1: 9a-b. However, Kong Anguo's authorship was questioned by scholars like Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), who argued, "[It] does not resemble the writing style of the western capital and is not necessarily the work truly authored by Anguo" 不類西京文字氣象，未必真安國所作. See Zhu Xi 朱熹, "Ji *Shangshu* san yi" 記尚書三義, in Zhu Jieren 朱傑人 et al., *Zhuzi quan shu* 朱子全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 24: 3425. Thus, Sima Qian's *Shiji* is thus far the earliest record of both incidents. For the approximate date of Kong Anguo, see Dominik Declercq, *Writing Against the State: Political Rhetorics in Third and Fourth Century China* (Leiden: Boston, 1998), 169. For Sima Qian's alleged apprenticeship with Kong Auguo, see Ban, *Hanshu*, 88.3607.

[54] Ulrich Neininger, "Burying the Scholars Alive: On the Origin of a Confucian Martyrs' Legend," in Wolfram Eberhard and Krzysztof Gawlikowski, eds., *Nation and Mythology* (München: Simon & Magiera, 1983), 121-36; Li Kaiyuan 李開元, "Fenshu kengru de zhenwei xushi—Banzhuang weizao de lishi" 焚書坑儒的真偽虛實——半椿偽造的歷史, *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊 6 (2010): 36-47. As will be explained in the following section, this chapter uses *ru* instead of Confucians, because the latter conveys only one of the semantic aspects of the Chinese term.

serve his agenda for constructing his ideal *ru* community. His narrative about both incidents, as well as similar accounts in the imperial Qin history, should be understood in this context.[55] To portray the First Emperor as an arrogant destroyer of ancient culture who was recklessly hostile to the *ru* scholars, Sima Qian demonstrated that the imperial Qin marked the climax of the suffering of the pre-Han *ru* scholars whose lives were briefly presented in the "Rulin liezhuan" 儒林列傳 (Collective Biographies of Ru, hereafter "Rulin").[56]

What is also of significance is that there was a strong regional perspective behind Sima Qian's construction of the *ru* community. As will be discussed in depth below, Lu and Qi—the area corresponding to modern-day Shandong province—produced the majority of *ru* members in the *Shiji* who crowned Confucius (Kongzi 孔子, 551-479 B.C.E.) their patriarch and promoted the revival of appropriate ancient practices. However, *Shiji*'s narrative about the history of *ru* , especially that in the "Rulin" and "Zhongni zidi liezhuan" 仲尼弟子列傳 (Collective Biographies of Confucius's Disciples; hereafter "Zhongni zidi") is only a tip of an iceberg. Through scrutiny of the grand historian's accounts of both incidents, as well as other records of Qin history throughout his *Shiji*,[57] this chapter will

[55] For a summary of scholarly doubts on the authenticity of Sima Qian's accounts of the history of Qin, see Bodde, "The State and Empire of Ch'in," 90-94.

[56] It is a general principle of Sima Qian's *Shiji* that one person's biography would not be listed in more than one category, although the person would appear again elsewhere in the history as the narrative needed. However, this method of categorization is too exclusive that it does not reflect a historical figure's multiple identities. This categorization could only highlight a historical figure's one of his many identities which the grand historian thought to be most important.

[57] It is indeed very common among scholars to combine Sima Qian's narratives about a single historical event or historical person appearing in different chapters of the *Shiji* to examine the whole picture Sima Qian provided. This "method of mutual illumination" (*hujianfa* 互見法) has been considered a major method Sima Qian used in his historical writing. Scholars argue that by scattering his account over different

reveal that Sima Qian whittled away Qin's ancient elements to highlight continuous tensions between the First Emperor and *ru* scholars from the Qi-Lu region (particularly Lu), whom Sima portrayed as the guardian of the ancient culture. Claiming that the *ru* scholars from Qi and Lu were persecuted by the First Emperor in both incidents,[58] Sima Qian attempted to legitimize the rise of the Qi-Lu centric *ru* members as the authoritative transmitters of ancient culture. Thus, both incidents did not *devastate* the *ru* community and their teachings as the *Shiji* claimed; rather, the *ru* community which Sima Qian constructed *needed* such manufactured cultural catastrophes to establish its interpretative authority over the classical texts.

2.2 From *Ru* to "Confucians:" The *Shiji*'s Construction of the *Ru* Circle

The Chinese words *ru* and *rujia* in texts since the times of Confucius onwards have been translated by many Western sinologists as "Confucian" and "Confucianism" respectively since the encounter of the East and the West in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).[59] "Confucianism" refers to an intellectual tradition esteeming Confucius as its *de*

parts of his *Shiji*, Sima Qian aimed to provide different angles to view one event or person in order to emphasize their complexity. See, for example, Liu Songlai 劉松來, "*Shiji* hujianfa chutan" 《史記》「互見法」初探, *Jiangxi shifan daxue xuebao* 江西師範大學學報 4 (1984): 92-97; and Sun Yizhao 孫以昭, "Sima Qian de 'hujianfa' ji qi yuanyuan" 司馬遷的「互見法」及其淵源, *Anhui daxue xuebao* 安徽大學學報 6 (1995): 9-13.

[58] In the 1970s, several Chinese scholars used the term *fandong* 反動 (reactionary) to characterize the *ru* scholars persecuted by the First Emperor. Although the term is reminiscent of the political climate and campaigns in PRC in that decade and is associated with the historical determinism which communists promoted, it is used in this chapter to characterize the *ru* scholars' objection to the First Emperor's radical innovations.

[59] See my Introduction for Lionel M. Jensen's discussion on the term "Confucianism" as a Western invention.

facto patriarch, while its members, who were called *ru*, *rusheng* 儒生, or *ruzhe* 儒者, were followers of Confucius. However, the fact that the word *ru* and its variants had already appeared in available materials dated long before the purported birth of Confucius implies the inequivalence between the Chinese terms and their Latin gloss.[60] Driven by their concern over Chinese nationality in the first half of the twentieth century, Chinese scholars researched the original meaning of the word *ru*. Although the original meaning of this term is still uncertain, they argued that *ru* as a word referring to an adherent of Confucius was actually a later neologism.[61] In light of their analyses, Nicholas Zufferey proclaims, "There was no causal relationship between 'Confucianism' and the *ru*…… *ru* were the ancestors of Confucius, not the other way round."[62]

Despite the complicity and ambiguity of the term *ru* in early texts, Sima Qian endeavored to narrow down the semantic scope of the term to scholars who were in various forms—among which studying Confucius's Classics was crucial—genealogically related

[60] For scholarship on the character *ru* and its variants in time before Confucius, see, for example, Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒, "Jiagu wen zhong suojian de *ru*" 甲骨文中所見的儒, *Sichuan daxue xuebao* 四川大學學報 4 (1975): 70-74; Xu Shan 徐山, "*Ru* de qiyuan" 儒的起源, *Jianghai xuekan* 江海學刊 4 (1988): 99-101.

[61] In the first half of the twentieth century, with enthusiasm for rearranging national heritages (*guogu* 國故) and searching for cultural roots, scholars like Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936) and Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) suggested that the original and earliest *ru* were those with expertise in divination and rituals. For a summary of the discussion on the original meaning of *ru* in the twentieth century, see Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, esp. 152-265. The major methodological problem of their studies, as Jensen has indicated, is that they relied basically on Han materials to get to the earliest meaning of the term *ru*. See also Nicholas Zufferey, *To the Origins of Confucianism: The Ru in Pre-Qin Times and during the Early Han Dynasty* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003). Mark Csikszentmihalyi, although stressing the problem of translating *ru* into Confucian, concedes that "while the term 'Ru' is less misleading than 'Confucian,' what it actually connotes is far from clear." See Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 17.

[62] Zufferey, *To the Origins of Confucianism*, 3.

to Confucius and his *magnum opus*. Nevertheless, the genealogies Sima Qian articulated were by no means clear and definitive. If traditional dating and attribution are trustworthy, Han Fei 韓非 (c. 280-233 B.C.E.) had already claimed in one of his early argumentative essays, "Eminent Teachings" (Xian xue 顯學), that Confucius was the ancestor of eight branches of *ru* in Han Fei's time and was successively imitated by the *ru*: "Confucius is the utmost goal which *ru* aim to achieve" 儒之所至，孔丘也.[63] In the "Zhongni zidi" and the "Rulin," Sima Qian appears to have developed the history of *ru* presented in the "Eminent Teachings." Both biographies are the most important resources to penetrate Sima Qian's construction of the early history of the *ru* community beginning with the time Confucius authored and edited the Classics.[64] Sima Qian actually never discussed the history of *ru* before Confucius and artfully shunned the "headachy" problem of the origin of *ru* that perplexed early twentieth century scholars.

Nevertheless, the *Shiji* oversimplifies the matter when it called the *ru* "Confucian," understood here as Confucius's followers and the transmitters of his legacy. This English term refers only to one aspect of the Chinese term *ru*, even though that aspect is the crucial and necessary one in the *Shiji*.[65] Whereas the *ru* scholars mentioned in the "Rulin" entered

[63] Han Fei 韓非, *Han Feizi ji jie* 韓非子集解, annotated by Wang Xianshen 王先慎 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 19.456.

[64] Other *ru* members, such as Mengzi 孟子 (also known as Mencius in the English world), Xunzi 荀子, and Shusun Tong 叔孫通 (see below), who will be discussed soon in this chapter, were recorded in other biographies.

[65] As my Introduction showed, Michael Nylan has enumerated three layers of meaning of the term *ru* in Han context. Liang Cai has recently challenged Nylan's division. After calculating that only few Western Han officials were trained in the Five Classics, Cai argued that not all officials in the Han were designated as *ru* by their contemporaries. See Liang Cai, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 212, n. 89. The social class of *shi*, as their English term scholar-officials may suggest, had borne dual roles as intellectual leaders and governmental officials since the Eastern

officialdom because of their professional knowledge of at least one of the Five Classics, they at least fell into the first and third categories in Nylan's classification.[66] The biography took six major *ru* scholars in the Western Han who were expert in certain Classics—Shen Gong 申公 (? – ?), Yuangu Sheng 轅固生 (fl. 2nd century B.C.E.), Han Sheng 韓生 (? – ?), Fu Sheng 伏生 (fl. 2nd-3rd centuries B.C.E.), Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 198 – c. 107 B.C.E),[67] and Huwu Sheng 胡毋生 (fl. 2nd century B.C.E.)—as the strings to construct several interpretative lineages and group other *ru* scholars together. As Liang Cai suggests, Sima Qian imagined *ru* scholars as a utopian community that could be successful in officialdom not through their prestigious family backgrounds but through their knowledge of at least one of the Five Classics.[68] In fact, the *ru* scholars included in this biography had already entered officialdom and achieved fame before the composition of this biography.[69] However, probably due to the lack of conclusive evidence, Sima Qian did not specifically link the genealogies of the *ru* members in the "Rulin" and the 77 eminent disciples of

Zhou dynasty. For the discussion on the rise of the class of *shi*, see Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 44-45. The knowledge of the *ru* who were also *shi* in the *Shiji*, as will be shown, originated from the Classics Confucius authored and edited, and it was their specialization in Confucius's Classics that warranted them to enter the official system of the Han dynasty.

[66] Lionel M. Jensen has also argued that the *ru* members in "Rulin" were more scholars (*shi* 士) or powerful officials than Confucius's adherents. See Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 166. However, as being demonstrate here, Sima Qian's standard for Confucius's adherents was not limited to adherents of Confucius's moral teachings.

[67] For the given date of Dong Zhongshu, see Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 335.

[68] Cai, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire*, 75.

[69] Michael Nylan, "Toward an Archaeology of Writing: Text, Ritual, and the Culture of Public Display in the Classical Period (475 B.C.E.-220 C.E.)," in Martin Kern, ed., *Text and Ritual in Early China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 13.

Confucius recorded in the "Zhongni zidi,"[70] who comprehended Confucius's teachings and the Six Arts preserved in the Classics (*shouye shentong zhe* 受業身通者).[71]

Although were not explicitly called *ru* in the *Shiji*, Confucius's 77 disciples were assumed to be within the scope the term *ru*. Drawing upon Confucius's admonition to Zixia 子夏 not to be a petty *ru* but to be a virtuous gentlemanly *ru* (*Analects* 6.13),[72] Sima Qian projected the 77 disciples as qualified for the title *ru*. The *Shiji*'s depiction of how Zilu 子路 became Confucius's apprentice further confirmed that consciousness of becoming a *ru* was a prerequisite to becoming Confucius's disciple. According to the *Shiji*, Confucius had taught Zilu ritual proprieties before Zilu dressed in a *ru* robe (*rufu* 儒服)—an indicator of *ru* as an occupation—to ask to be accepted as a disciple.[73] The *ru* robe which Zilu wore implied that Sima Qian was well-aware of the existence of *ru* prior to Confucius. However, since there were no recorded *ru* before Confucius in the *Shiji* and the *Shiji*'s narrative about *ru* began with Confucius, Sima Qian obviously drew a connection between *ru* and Confucius. Therefore, at least in Sima's usage, *ru* was no longer a term referring to an occupation which already existed before Confucius, but rather the term for Confucius's

[70] Liang Cai, "Excavating the Genealogy of Classical Studies in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE–8 CE)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131.3 (2011): 371-94.

[71] Sima, *Shiji*, 67.2185.

[72] Xing Bing 邢昺, ed., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 6.53a; Sima, *Shiji*, 67.2203. For the discussion on junzi as virtuous official, see Chow Kwok-ching 周國正, "Kongzi dui junzi yu xiaoren de jieding--Cong *Lunyu* 'weiyou xiaoren er renzhe ye' de jiedu shuoqi" 孔子對君子與小人的界定——從《論語》「未有小人而仁者也」的解讀說起, *Beijing daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 北京大學學報（哲學社會科學版）48. 2 (2011): 115-21.

[73] Sima, *Shiji*, 67.2191.

followers and the transmitters who served as officials or had ambition to develop political careers. As the "Rulin" suggested, many of Confucius's disciples served as officials of different territorial states, but some lived in reclusion.[74]

Although "Confucian" is a necessary meaning of the term *ru* for Sima Qian, not all *ru* mentioned in the *Shiji* devoted themselves to Confucius's teachings. When Nylan says that "Confucians" in Han discourse referred to those who followed Confucius's moral principles, she apparently assumes that there was a consensus among Han materials about the standard of determining whether one was a faithful adherent of Confucius's teachings. However, did one have to be a dogmatist of Confucius's way to be considered as a Confucian? Using this criterion to examine the members included in the "Rulin" would unfortunately yield a frustrating result. As Nylan has discussed elsewhere, the utopian *ru* community in this biography was Sima Qian's rhetorical strategy to criticize the new *ru* scholars in his day who were struggling for their self-interests through flattering superiors.[75] An example of the *ru* scholars driven by their pursuits of self-interests was the

[74] Ibid, 121.3116.

[75] See Nylan, "Toward an Archaeology of Writing," 14. In an article she coauthored with Mark Csikszentmihalyi, Nylan had earlier argued that in the *Shiji*'s description, the members in the "Collective Biographies of Ru," whom they called classicists, were preoccupied with practical and careerist concerns, but not with reverence for the intact transmission of old writings. Nylan and Csikszentmihalyi maintained that this was Sima Qian's compliant about the imperial sponsorship of academia because the decline in ethical standards in a newer generation was due to recent institutional changes, which forced the candidates to pay more attention to their career goals by simply memorizing the texts and mining them for literary flourishes, rather than ethical values recorded in the Five Classics. See Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions in the *Shiji*," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 72-79.

attacks on Dong Zhongshu by Zhufu Yan 主父偃 (d. 126 B.C.E.) and Gongsun Hong 公孫弘 (199-121 B.C.E.) who were jealous of Dong.[76]

Although Sima Qian esteemed the morality of Confucius,[77] he did not promote unswerving compliance with Confucius's moral principles as the decisive and unalterable criterion for qualifying to be identified as a Confucian. Thus, the criteria that qualified one to be a Confucian in the *Shiji* were looser than what Nylan suggested. The disciples included in the "Zhongni zidi" further verifies this point. By citing the *Analects* 11.3,[78] the grand historian accepted its division of Confucius's ten immediate disciples into four groups in light of their specialties: Virtuous Practices (*Dehang* 德行), Political Affairs (*Zhengshi* 政事), Speeches and Language (*Yanyu* 言語), and learning of writing (*Wenxue* 文學).[79] In spite of their proximity to the Master, not every one of them was a faithful or even a dogmatic adherent of Confucius's moral teachings. Zai Wo 宰我 was a noteworthy disciple. In the *Analects* 5.10 and 17.21, also quoted in the "Zhongni zidi," Confucius harshly criticized Zai Wo as a person who could not cultivate himself because he was like a piece of rotten wood (*xiumu* 朽木) and a person with no benevolence (*buren* 不仁) due to his reluctance to follow Confucius's rule of three-year mourning.[80] However, Zai Wo

[76] See Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3128.

[77] See Li Changzhi 李長之, *Sima Qian zhi renge yu fengge* 司馬遷之人格與風格 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2018), 43-51.

[78] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 11.96a.

[79] Sima, *Shiji*, 67.2185.

[80] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 5.43a, 17.157b-158a; Sima, *Shiji*, 67.2194, 2195.

still stood out among other disciples thanks to his skill in speeches and language. Therefore, the scope of "Confucians," in Sima Qian perspective, was much broader than what Michael Nylan has asserted. Although one's selfishness and immorality were criticized, one could be eligible to be a "Confucian" in the *Shiji* if one studied and transmitted the Classics of Confucius.

What is of equal importance is the constitution of the *ru* /Confucian community in the *Shiji*. Of the 39 *ru* scholars in the "Rulin," 28 (around 71%) were from the Qi-Lu area of modern Shandong province.[81] This distribution of the early Han *ru* scholars also echoed the origins of Confucius's major disciples recorded in the "Zhongni zidi," where 45 out of 77 recorded disciples (around 58%) were natives of the Qi-Lu region.[82] The reason Sima Qian gave for their predominance was that only scholars from the Qi-Lu area in the Warring States Period did not abandon *ru* technique (*rushu* 儒術), i.e., studies of Confucius's Classics. The predominance the *ru* scholars from Qi and Lu enjoyed over scholars from other areas in both biographies did not reflect the actual cultural hierarchy among different regions of the Han empire; rather, it revealed Sima Qian's favoritism toward scholars from this area.[83]

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[81] Wang Zijin 王子今, "Qin Han shiqi Qi Lu wenhua de fengge yu ruxue de xijian" 秦漢時期齊魯文化的風格與儒學的西漸, *Qi Lu xuekan* 齊魯學刊 1 (1998): 53.

[82] Ibid, 52.

[83] Lu was the hometown of Confucius, while the Jixia 稷下 academy in the capital of Qi, i.e., Linzi 臨淄, was one of the most influential academic centers in the pre-imperial era. However, it was never the only academic center in the Warring States Period. The enormous manuscripts excavated from the Guodian cache and other unknown archaeological sites located in the original area of the territorial state of Chu imply that the academic activities in this semi-barbarian state were as flourishing as those in Qi and Lu. For a summary of the Chu manuscripts from the Warring States Period, see, for example, Sarah Allan, *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-slip Manuscripts* (Albany: State University

Nevertheless, the combination of Qi and Lu does not necessarily drown out and erase their heterogeneity in the *Shiji*. In the "Huozhi liechuan" 貨殖列傳 (Biography of the Money-Makers), Sima Qian portrayed the customs of both areas differently, and thus indicates his awareness of their distinction.[84] Indeed, in his narratives about the early imperial *ru*, Sima Qian paid more attention to the *ru* scholars from Lu than those from adjacent Qi, since he mentioned only the *ru* scholars from Lu on several occasions. For instance, in the introduction of the "Rulin," we read:

> After he executed Xiang Ji, Emperor Gao raised his troops to siege the Lu area. All *ru* scholars lived in the Lu revered teaching, reciting, and practicing rites and music. Their sounds of stringed instruments and singing did not cease. Isn't it the transformations left behind [by previous sages]? Isn't it a state favoring rites and music? As a result, Confucius said when he was staying in Chen, "Let me return! Let me return! The little men in my party are ambitious while reckless. They can write brilliantly but do not know how to tailor their writings."
>
> 及高皇帝誅項籍，舉兵圍魯，魯中諸儒尚講誦習禮樂，弦歌之音不絕，豈非聖人之遺化，好禮樂之國哉？故孔子在陳曰：「歸與！歸與！吾黨之小子狂簡，斐然成章，不知所以裁之。」[85]

Sima Qian put more emphasis on the *ru* scholars from Lu than those from Qi perhaps because Lu was the motherland of Confucius, and the courage of the besieged *ru* scholars in Lu was the result of previous sages' (Confucius and Duke of Zhou) permanent educational transformation. The "Kongzi shijia" 孔子世家 (Hereditary House of Confucius) recorded that their transformation was so enduring that in the time of Sima

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of New York Press., 2015), 25-78.

[84] Sima, *Shiji*, 129.3265-66.

[85] Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3117. As Lionel M. Jensen has concluded, this passage as well as the introduction of the "Rulin" highlighted the predicaments of the *ru* before the founding of the Han to contrast with their rising in power in the Han. See Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 165.

Qian, *ru* scholars in Lu still worshipped Confucius and practiced various rituals at Confucius's tomb and in his temple.[86]

However, after celebrating the courage of the besieged *ru* scholars in Lu in the previous excerpt, Sima Qian immediately switched his focus to *ru* scholars from both Qi and Lu and offered an ethnographic explanation for the survival of moribund *ru* techniques:

> It is due to their instinct that people in the Qi-Lu region have engaged in the learning of writing since ancient times. Therefore, only after the founding of the Han could various *ru* scholars begin again to study the Classics and Arts as well as discuss and practice the rites of great archery and drinking in the districts. Shusun Tong created Han rituals and decorum and was appointed Grand Minister of Ceremonies as a result. What various scholars and their disciples collaboratively established were all seen as the best. Accordingly, [people] sighed and became interested in studying.
>
> 夫齊魯之閒於文學，自古以來，其天性也。故漢興，然後諸儒始得修其經藝，講習大射鄉飲之禮。叔孫通作漢禮儀，因為太常，諸生弟子共定者，咸為選首，於是喟然嘆興於學。[87]

As this excerpt suggested, Qi-Lu people had an instinct (*tianxing* 天性) to engage in the learning of writing. Their shared instinct was due to their founders and previous sages who had passed down their transformation to the later generations. Just as Lu had the Duke of Zhou and Confucius, Qi earlier had the sage Duke Tai who had been the teacher of Kings Wen and Wu of Zhou and provided the state of Qi with a strong foundation.[88] Although Sima Qian did not clearly state the hierarchy between Lu and Qi (i.e., *Analects* 6.24 suggested that Lu was closer to the Way),[89] *ru* scholars from Lu alone appeared on several

[86] Sima, *Shiji*, 47.1945, 1947.

[87] Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3117.

[88] Sima, *Shiji*, 32.1513.

[89] "Qi gets to Lu by one transformation. Lu gets to the Way by one transformation" 齊一變，至於魯；

occasions in the Qin. We will soon see that Sima Qian presented Lu scholars as more active in promoting the ancient practices than those from Qi were.

Despite the difference in the degree of their activity, the demographic structure of the *ru* scholars enumerated in the "Rulin," as well as that in the "Zhongni zidi," further reinforces, in Sima Qian's narrative, the advantage of the Qi-Lu people over others in terms of studying and transmitting the Classics and the ancient practices preserved therein. Their instinct for learning of writing and courage destined them for conflicts with the First Emperor, whose image as an emperor who despised ancient culture, burned books, and buried scholars alive was created by Sima Qian.

It should also be noted that the demographic structure in both biographies of the *Shiji* reflected more of Sima Qian's partiality for the *ru* scholars from the Qi-Lu area than what actually existed in an earlier era. No valid evidence is available to conclude that the "Rulin" and the whole *Shiji* included all known *ru* scholars in the early Western Han.[90] In fact, doubts about the inclusiveness of Sima Qian's account are enhanced when we consider the case of Wen Weng 文翁 (187-110 B.C.E.), whose biography is only found in the "Xunli zhuan" 循吏傳 (Biographies of Reasonable Officials) of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the*

魯一變，至於道. Bing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 6.54b.

[90] In her recent study, Liang Cai has employed digital tools to examine how scholars from Donghai 東海, a commandery in the Lu region, formed a firm social network through which members from this area could win political power. See Liang Cai, "Confucians, Social Networks, and Bureaucracy: Donghai 東海 Men and Models for Success in the Western Han China (206 BCE–9 CE)," *Early China* 42 (2019): 1-35. However, I am not as confident as she was in the records from both histories. One problem of her statistical approach is that we have no reason to assume that what both histories presented was the whole picture of the Han political history. A danger of heavily relying on their records is therefore that we can only reconstruct a spot on a leopard but not an entire leopard.

Former Han). According to the *Hanshu*, Wen Weng "was a native of the Shu Prefecture of Lujiang County. He was eager to learn ever since he was young and thoroughly understood the *Chunqiu*. He was assessed and recommended by officials in counties and prefectures. At the end of the reign of Emperor Jing, [Wen Weng] was appointed as the commandery governor of Shu. He was benevolent and keen on educational transformations" 廬江舒人也。少好學，通春秋，以郡縣吏察舉。景帝末，為蜀郡守，仁愛好教化.[91] Thanks to his efforts to promote educational transformations in the Ba-Shu area, the number of Shu people who studied in the capital was equal to that of the Qi-Lu people, and people in the Ba-Shu area were fond of culture and elegance (*hao wen ya* 好文雅) at least until the time when the biography was composed.[92] Wen Weng's profound knowledge of the *Chunqiu* ought to merit a place in Sima Qian's "Rulin." Not only did his name not appear in the *Shiji*'s biography, but we are unable to find any trace of him in the entire *Shiji*. In Ban Gu's history, his biography was also not included in the biography dedicated to the *ru* scholars in the Western Han, but rather in the biography of Western Han reasonable officials.[93] Wen Weng's exclusion from the *Shiji* even makes the following hypothesis thought-provoking: The contribution of Wen Weng—through which the semi-uncivilized people in the Ba-Shu area became competitive with the Qi-Lu scholars in the studies of

[91] Ban, *Hanshu*, 89.3625.

[92] Ibid, 3626-7. For Wen Weng's educational transformation of the Sichuan area, see Steven F. Sage, *Ancient Sichuan and the Unification of China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 171-74.

[93] Wen Weng's position in the *Hanshu* indicated that in the mind of the *Hanshu*'s writers, Wen Weng's political achievements as an official was more important than his knowledge of the *Chunqiu*.

Classics—was great enough to threaten Sima Qian's ethnographic theory of the cultural advantage of the Qi-Lu people over others in classical learning.[94]

2.3 The *Shiji*'s Narratives about the Incidents

Building on the analysis of Sima Qian's conscious creation of a *ru* community, we will now explore how the grand historian's narratives about the two incidents—burning the texts and executing the scholars—served his construction of this imagined *ru* community. It might prove useful to review Sima Qian's narrative of both incidents, which is by no means unambiguous and therefore requires further annotations. Given its length, the following will only summarize and excerpt the story presented in the "Benji," complemented by the record in the biography of Li Si 李斯 (280? – 208 B.C.E), with its parallel to the first incident in the account of the "Benji."[95] According to the "Benji," the Qin bibliocaust was started by an admonition by Chunyu Yue 淳于越 (fl. 213 B.C.E.), an erudite (*boshi* 博士) from the Qi region. While the First Emperor was hosting a banquet in the Xianyang Palace in 213 B.C.E., the sycophant Zhou Qingchen 周青臣 (fl. 213 B.C.E.) and other officials flattered the First Emperor for his unprecedented political achievements in replacing the tributary states with counties (*jun* 郡) and prefectures (*xian* 縣) and

[94] It is hard to believe that Sima Qian had not heard about Wen Weng, especially given the fact that he had been appointed to conquer the southern part of the Bashu area. Meanwhile, in the "Huozhi liechuan," Sima Qian also described the folks of the Bashu region in detail, implying that he must have had certain understanding of the history of this area. See Sima, *Shiji*, 130.3293, 129.3261.

[95] See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.254-58 for the record of both incidents. The biography of Li Si, on the other hand, only includes the first incident. See Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2546-47.

restoring peace in the world; therefore, no ancient kings could be comparable to the First Emperor. In contrast, Chunyu Yue urged his majesty to imitate the Qin's predecessors—the Shang and the Zhou dynasties—and to restore the system of enfeoffment so that the tributary states could rescue one another and therefore ensured the longevity of the Qin empire. He warned, "I have never heard of one being long-lasting without imitating the past" 事不師古而能長久者，非所聞也. As Michael Puett suggested, this remonstration foresaw the destruction of the First Emperor's governance.[96]

The emperor, who seems to have relied heavily on his ministers after the unification,[97] asked for advice from his prime minister Li Si. In response to his majesty's inquiry, Li Si argued that the times in the Qin were radically different from the past and that even the Three Dynasties (*sandai* 三代), a supposed golden age for which Li Si assumed Chunyu Yue was yearning, actually employed disparate institutions. Li Si criticized the stupid *ru* (*yuru* 愚儒) Chunyu Yue for his blind fervor for the past and rampant private learnings (*sixue* 私學) that jeopardized laws and monarchical authority. Since Chunyu Yue advocated the teachings which praised only the past, but blamed the present, and were too widespread to control, Li Si ultimately convinced the bewildered emperor to burn the *Shi* 詩 and *Shu* 書, the speeches of the hundred experts (*baijia yu* 百家語), and the historical

[96] Michael Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 190.

[97] For the change in the First Emperor's image in the annals, see Stephen Durrant, "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Portrayal of the First Ch'in Emperor," in Frederick Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang, eds., *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 28-50. Durrant argues that in the second half of the "Benji," which were focused on affairs after the unification, the First Emperor relied more on his ministers than the time before the unification.

records of all previous territorial states except the Qin. The only exceptions were medical, divination, and agricultural texts. With the exception of the erudites in the imperial court, all scholars should be either exiled or executed if they secretly kept banned texts and commented on contemporary affairs by citing the historical anecdotes in those texts, or made arguments by citing (*ouyu* 偶語) the *Shi* and the *Shu*.[98] Officials who failed to report any abovementioned cases would also be judged as accomplices. The emperor simply said, "Approved" (*ke* 可) to empower Li Si's proposal. As Sima Qian commented in Li Si's biography, this policy kept common people ignorant (*yu* 愚) and forbade people to criticize the present by means of the ancient times (*yi gu fei jin* 以古非今).

The proverb, *fenshu kengru* 焚書坑儒, had a propensity to combine both incidents largely due to Sima Qian's portrayal, in which the second incident was said to follow upon the first. A year after the Qin bibliocaust, in the thirty-fifth year of the First Emperor's reign, i.e., 212 B.C.E., the First Emperor was criticized by a Mr. Lu (Lusheng 盧生) and a Mr. Hou (Housheng 侯生), esoteric experts (*fangshi* 方士) who were helping the First Emperor search for an elixir for immortality. Describing the emperor as an arrogant, obstinate, and self-opinionated ruler who welcomed no critiques and appointed seventy erudites (*boshi* 博士) who were only expedients and were never used (*te beiyuan fuyong*

[98] In the commentary on the phrase *ouyu* 偶語 in the *Shiji*, Pei Yin 裴駰 (fl. 5th century) cited an annotation by Ying Shao 應劭 (d. c. 203) that the word *ou* means "to assemble;" thus *ouyu Shi Shu* 偶語詩書 should be understood as "discussing the *Shi* and *Shu* jointly." See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.255. However, Xin Deyong 辛德勇 recently suggests that the phrase *ouyu Shi Shu* is better understood as citing the *Shi* and the *Shu* to make arguments, see Xin Deyong 辛德勇, *Sheng si Qin shi huang* 生死秦始皇 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), 138-53.

特備員弗用), both esoteric experts decided to escape and to cease helping him search for an elixir. Feeling betrayed, the First Emperor erupted in anger; furthermore, he acknowledged the failure of his previous bibliocaust, which had destroyed all useless and inappropriate texts (*buzhongyong zhe* 不中用者), and his recruitment of scholars who were experts in literature and in methods and techniques (*wenxue fangshushi* 文學方術士) for achieving grand peace. Barking that the masters of methods that he had summoned were using fallacies to confuse common people and snipe at him, he took his revenge by appointing censors to interrogate various scholars (*zhusheng* 諸生) assembled in the capital. Based on these investigations, around 460 scholars were executed in public. In protesting against his father's execution of scholars, Fusu 扶蘇 (d. 210 B.C.E.) mentioned that the executed scholars "all praised and follow the example of Confucius" 諸生皆誦法孔子.[99] The interpolation of Fusu's admonition led Ulrich Neininger to doubt the authenticity of the second incident.[100] Whether or not the second incident happened, Sima Qian's account claimed that Fu Su's admonition led the emperor to banish this eldest son to the Shang 上 Commandery, located in modern-day northern Shaanxi, to supervise Meng Tian 蒙恬 (d. 210 B.C.E.).

Elsewhere in the *Shiji*, Sima Qian indicated the catastrophic impacts of both incidents on the transmission of the Classics and historical records. In the "Liu guo nianbiao" 六國

[99] Sima, *Shiji*, 6.258.

[100] Neininger, "Burying the Scholars Alive: On the Origin of a Confucian Martyrs' Legend," 132-33.

年表 (Table by Years of the Six States), the grand historian lamented the loss of historical records in the first incident:

> Since the Qin [emperor] was pleased, [the court] burned the *Poetry* and *Documents*. [Among the burned texts,] most of the historical records of the vassal states were burned, because they provided targets with which to criticize and satirize [the Qin]. The reason that the *Shi* and *Shu* still survived is that they were often preserved by households. However, since historical records were stored only in the Zhou archive, they were all destroyed. How regretful it is! How regretful it is! We only have the records of the state of Qin. However, they do not record the days and months, and their words are also brief and unspecific.
>
> 秦既得意，燒天下詩書，諸侯史記尤甚，為其有所刺譏也。詩書所以復見者，多藏人家，而史記獨藏周室，以故滅。惜哉，惜哉！獨有秦記，又不載日月，其文略不具。[101]

Although the recovery of the *Shi* and the *Shu* was possible due to private conservation, Sima Qian still reiterated in the "Rulin" that the Classics were on the verge of extinction because of both incidents, "When time came to the last phrase of the Qin, [the imperial government] burned the *Shi* and *Shu* and executed masters of technique; the Six Arts fell into decay thereafter" 及至秦之季世，焚詩書，阬術士，六藝從此缺焉.[102]

However, was the destruction of the ancient texts what the First Emperor aimed for through both incidents?[103] Or, were both incidents, as some modern scholars like Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) have maintained, part of the First Emperor's agenda of unification?[104] The above summary of the *Shiji*'s account of both burning the texts and

[101] Sima, *Shiji*, 15.686.

[102] Ibid, 121.3116.

[103] Hsiao Kung-ch'uan 蕭公權 argued that the books burning policy did not eliminate *ru* techniques, see Kung-ch'uan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought, Volume 1: From the beginnings to the sixth century A.D.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 470.

[104] Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, *Qin Han de fangshi yu rusheng* 秦漢的方士與儒生 (Shanghai: Shanghai tushu

executing the scholars seems to suggest that they were not the First Emperor's purposeful and deliberate actions to destroy ancient knowledge and tradition. Rather, they were more of the emperor's impromptu and emotional reactions to the behavior of contemporaneous scholars. The *Shiji* recorded that the burning of books, which was a subsequent result of Li Si's rejection of Chunyu Yue's proposal, actually happened in the thirty-fourth year of the First Emperor's reign (213 B.C.E.), about eight years after the Qin unification in 221 B.C.E. This eight-year interval implies that the book burning might not have even been on his unification agenda. As a matter of fact, the issue of enfeoffment versus the system of counties and prefectures had already been brought up at the Qin court by Wang Wan 王綰 (fl. 215 B.C.E.) and others two years before the bibliocaust in 215 B.C.E.[105] Why did the First Emperor wait until 213 B.C.E. to implement the book burning policy? As the *Shiji* shows, private teachings which used the past to criticize the Qin were what Li Si and the First Emperor intended to suppress. Why were the *ru* revivalists from the Qi-Lu area the most enthusiastic advocators of such private learning? Can we solely attribute this incident to the emperor's or Li Si's dissatisfaction with the proposal of Chunyu Yue, who was also a member of the *ru* revivalists? In 212 B.C.E., the First Emperor claimed that all of the texts he had ordered to be buried a year earlier were useless. In what sense were those texts useless? Was it because of their revivalism? The scholars who were said to be executed in 212 B.C.E. were generally referred to *zhusheng* in the *Shiji*. Were they a hybrid group that included scholars with different expertise and dedicated different doctrines? Or, were the

fahang gongsi, 1955), 12.

[105] Sima, *Shiji*, 6.239.

executed scholars the Confucians who respected Confucius or were adherents of Confucius, as Fusu mentioned in remonstrating his father's decision? If so, why were the esoteric experts, like Mr. Lu and Mr. Hou who triggered the second incident, not implicated in the incident? What was the First Emperor's core reason to enact both policies, which purportedly aimed to stop anyone from criticizing the present by referencing the past and were vigorously condemned in later histories?

Sima Qian gave a definite answer to this series of questions: not only were both incidents the measures by the First Emperor, a brutal ruler who despised ancient tradition, to eliminate ancient culture, but they also precisely targeted the *ru* scholars, mainly from the Qi-Lu region, who transmitted ancient culture through their expertise in the Classics attributed to Confucius. Michael Puett understands the *Shiji*'s account of both incidents as part of the grand historian's larger theme in the "Benji" about the radical innovations arising from the First Emperor's hubris and arrogance.[106] Puett's observation is a reasonable projection of Sima Qian's intention. Modern scholarship has reached a near consensus that the portrayal of the Qin as a Legalist, anti-moral, and iconoclastic empire, and a symbol of cultural rupture in early Chinese history is an anachronism and basically a Han neologism. In contrast to the *Shiji*'s narratives, many available materials, both transmitted and excavated, suggest that this "notorious" empire had strong connections and continuities with ancient Zhou culture and put particular emphasis on the moral training of its officials.[107] As Jia Yi in the early Western Han commented, the reason for the Qin's

[106] Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*, 189-91.

[107] As a proof of the Qin's nostalgia, the highly ceremonial and formulaic stele inscriptions the First Emperor erected after the political unification in 221 B.C.E. had a strong parallel with the Five Classics receptus, as Martin Kern has demonstrated. See Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang:*

demise was not its complete discard of morality, but its priority for violence over morality: "[The Qin] made deceit and violence a priority over benevolence and rightfulness" 先詐力而後仁義.[108]

Although the extensive harsh criticism of the imperial Qin started only in the last five decades of the Western Han,[109] Sima Qian's condemnation of the Qin's anti-traditionalism and anti-*ru* stance was the harbinger of the systematic criticisms in later generations. However, the early Western Han labelling the imperial Qin as "brutal" and "anti-traditionalistic" was not a popular trend; indeed, the models, such as burial and court rituals, that the Qin established were imitated in the early period of the Western Han. In this context, what was the grand historian's purpose in portraying the imperial Qin in such a negative

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Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2000). The structure of the First Emperor's mausoleum and the findings, such as the "Hundred Offices," from the tomb further demonstrate the civil virtue of the first empire. For the archeological summary of the structure of and findings in the mausoleum as well as their representation of the Qin's continuity with the ancient culture and its civil virtue, see Duan Qingbo 段清波, *Qin shi huang diling yuan kaogu yanjiu* 秦始皇帝陵園考古研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011); Zhang Weixing 張衛星, *Liyi yu zhixu: Qin shi huang diling yanjiu* 禮儀與秩序：秦始皇帝陵研究 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2016); and Jeffrey Riegel, 'The Archaeology of the First Emperor's Tomb," *Lotus Leaves* 8.2 (2006): 91-103.

The Qin imperial government also had high demands on its officials' morality, as demonstrated by *Weili zhi dao* 為吏之道 (*The Way of Being an Official*) from the Shuihudi 睡虎地 and *Weili zhiguan ji qianshou* 爲吏治官及黔首 (*The Way of Governing the Officials and the Common People*) now preserved at the Yuelu 嶽麓 Academy. For a discussion on both manuscripts, see Kim Ho Kyung 金慶浩, "Qin, Han chu '*shi*' yu '*li*' de xingzhi: Yi *Wei li zhi dao* he *Wei li zhiguan ji qianshou* wei zhongxin" 秦、漢初「士」與「吏」的性質—以《爲吏之道》和《爲吏治官及黔首》爲中心, *Jian bo* 簡帛 8 (2013): 309-33. Michael Puett is also aware of the First Emperor's use of the Theory of the Five Cyclic Virtues in legitimizing its authority as the successor to the Zhou. However, instead of seeing his dynasty as only one in an unending cycle which will be supplanted by another, Puett suggests that the First Emperor believed his dynasty ended the cycle begun by the Yellow Emperor. See Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*, 144.

[108] Sima, *Shiji*, 6.283.

[109] See Michael Nylan, "Han Views of the Qin Legacy and the Late Western Han 'Classical Turn,'" *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 79 (2020): 75.

and distorted way and emphasizing the cultural catastrophe that the burning of texts and murdering of scholars allegedly caused?

Taking into consideration both incidents as the climax of the pre-Han *ru*'s suffering described in the "Rulin," I understand the alleged great loss as necessary components of Sima Qian's construction of the Qi-Lu centric *ru* community beginning with Confucius. Attributing the Classics, in which the Six Arts of the golden age were preserved, to Confucius and arguing that the *ru* techniques—studying of the Classics—survived only in the Qi-Lu region, Sima Qian asserted that this *ru* community and their unrecorded fellows enjoyed interpretative authority over the Classics. It should be kept in mind, however, that the Classics were actually a cultural heritage widely shared by scholars from different sects or traditions, and did not reach their fixed or stable form in Sima Qian's time. For instance, three interpretative lineages of the *Shi* in Lu, Qi, and Yan were recorded in the "Rulin."[110] It is also noteworthy that the most well-known and influential Mao interpretation and its leader Mao Heng 毛亨 (fl. 3rd century-2nd century B.C.E.) were not included in Sima Qian's narrative.[111] The absence of the Mao lineage, which was labelled as the represented lineage of Ancient Script (*guwen* 古文) interpretation of the *Shi* in the late Qing's problematic and controversial reconstruction of the Ancient Script versus Modern Script

[110] These three schools of interpretation were represented by Shen Peigong 申培公 (Lu), Yuan Gusheng 轅固生 (Qi), and the Grand Tutor Han Ying 韓嬰 (Han). See Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3118.

[111] Despite its dominance in most of the time of imperial China, the Mao interpretation was not as popular as we expect in early medieval time. For the reception history of the Mao interpretative school in pre-Tang period, see Martin Kern, "Beyond the Mao Odes: *Shijing* Reception in Early Medieval China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 127 (2007): 131-42.

(*jinwen* 今文) controversy in the Han, has even prompted certain modern scholars to argue that Sima Qian was a member of the Modern Script camp.[112]

Although the claim that Sima Qian was a supporter of the school of Modern Script is too arbitrary to be tenable,[113] the filtered record in the "Rulin" manifests the artificial construction of Sima Qian's account that offered a narrative about the history of the *ru* community that conformed with the grand historian's expectation. In fact, the interpretations of the "Guanju" 關雎 ("Guan guan cry the ospreys") seen in the *Wuxing* 五行 (*Five Phases*) manuscript in the Mawangdui Collection (dated to the late Warring States and early Western Han eras) represented another tradition of the *Shi* that differs from the transmitted interpretations handed down through centuries of texts.[114] The fact that a Classic had more than one parallel or variant further intensified the divergence among interpretations of the (instable) Classics. The interpretative as well as textual diversity in

[112] See Chapter Four's summary of scholars' doubt about the nature of the Ancient Script (*guwen* 古文) versus Modern Script (*jinwen* 今文) controversy in the Han. In short, based on available Han historical documents, Michael Nylan argues that there was no such Ancient Script/Modern Script Classics controversy in the Han. See Michael Nylan, "The *chinwen*/*kuwen* (New Text/Old Text) Controversy in Han," *T'oung pao* 80 (1994): 83-145. Hans van Ess, in contrast, believes that this controversy did exist in the Han. Nevertheless, this controversy was not philosophical but institutional in nature and was not as diametrically opposed as late Qing accounts suggested. See Hans van Ess, "The Apocryphal Texts (*ch'en-wei*) of the Han Dynasty and the Old Text/New Text Controversy," *T'oung Pao* 1 (1999): 29-64.

[113] Evidence to reject the so-called Modern Script stance of Sima Qian on the Classics comes from the "Rulin" chapter of the *Hanshu*, where it was said that Sima Qian studied with Kong Anguo 孔安國 before composing his *Shiji*; moreover, the chapters of the *Shu* which the *Shiji* recorded were almost the version following the interpretation of the Ancient Script campaign. See Ban, *Hanshu*, 88.3607. Rather than saying that Sima Qian was a member of either one of the camps, it would be better to say that the debate between both sides was not as obvious and important as the late Qing scholars suggested, and Sima Qian appeared to be eclectic in reading the Classics.

[114] For detailed discussions on the interpretation of the "Guan guan cry the ospreys" seen in the *Five Phases*, see Jeffery Riegel, "Eros, Introversion, and the Beginnings of *Shijing* Commentary," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57.1 (1997): 143-77; Boqun Zhou, "Virtue as Desire: *Mengzi* 6A in Light of the *Kongzi Shilun*," *Philosophy East and West*, 70.1 (2020): 196-213.

the early imperial era reflected competition among traditions for the interpretative power. Sima Qian did not simply aim to conform to the authority of the Qi-Lu centric *ru* community that he constructed in the "Rulin," but also proposed tracing the interpretative diversity in his time back to the incidents he recorded. The destruction of ancient texts and the murder of scholars caused a cultural vacuum that could well explain the diversity and controversies among interpreters over the Classics. As will be demonstrated in the next section through the case of Mr. Fu, the purported reconstruction of the persecuted ancient classical texts was not completely successful. Since no definitive text and interpretation of the Classics survived the Qin, divergence increased.

Assuming that readers accept the argument that Sima Qian's demonizing the First Emperor as a brutal and iconoclastic ruler served to construct a *ru* community that Sima idealized, the next set of questions would be: How could the grand historian transform an empire which had connections with the ancient culture into an anti-traditional empire? How did he narrate the misfortunes with which the *ru* scholars from Qi and Lu met in the imperial Qin? Why and how were both incidents the fatal wounds in the *ru* community and to their techniques, which were already in imminent danger? In other words, how were both incidents presented in the *Shiji* as the Qin's suppression of the development of the *ru* community? The following sections will demonstrate, Sima Qian minimized the ancient elements of the first imperial dynasty and emphasized the tension between the First Emperor and the *ru* scholars from Qi and Lu. His narrative eventually established both incidents as the inevitable results of the First Emperor's prolonged hostility towards the *ru* scholars from the Qi-Lu area and their ancient culture.

2.4 The Rupture between the Imperial Qin and Ancient Knowledge

Although currently available materials demonstrate the First Emperor's acceptance of and connection to ancient culture, his projection of history was not simply to inherit, but also to transcend, what had been passed down from the past. In studying the First Emperor's self-established image as a Messianic emperor, Yuri Pines points out that the First Emperor held a linear perspective on history; therefore, he celebrated himself as the savior of humankind and presented his rule as "the end of history."[115] As his prestigious title *Huangdi* 皇帝 (August Thearch)—which was a combination of the Three Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇) and Five Emperors (*wudi* 五帝)—suggested, the First Emperor saw his accomplishments as unprecedented and unsurpassable, so he was superior to previous rulers in every way.[116] It is doubtlessly true that the First Emperor devoted himself to creating a new world order that would distinguish him from former kings. As the propaganda of his unparalleled achievements, the stele inscriptions the emperor actively erected after the unification are full of such words as "to create" (*zuo* 作) and "to begin"

[115] Yuri Pines, "The Messianic Emperor: A New Look at Qin's Place in China's History," in Pines, von Falkenhausen, Shelach, and Yates eds., *Birth of an Empire*, 259.

[116] Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生 (1919-1998) asserted that both incidents were the Qin's *fajia*-style suppression of the Confucian school, since the Confucian ideal of kingly way (*wangdao* 王道) was incompatible with the concept of "August Emperor" (*Huangdi* 皇帝). The Confucian concept of kingly way assumed that the ruler of the mortal world as the son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) was entrusted by Heaven, or the heavenly therach, to rule. However, the concept of "August Emperor" indicated the First Emperor's divinity as a divine ruler who was capable of ruling all creatures in both mortal and immortal worlds. The First Emperor, in this sense, was himself the heavenly thearch. See Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生, *Shinkan teikoku: Chūgoku kodai teikoku no kōbō* 秦漢帝国：中国古代帝国の興亡 (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 1997), 44-50. Putting aside the controversial issue that whether "Confucianism" as a school of thought already existed in the imperial Qin, the problem with Nishijima Sadao's argument is that, even though the concept of "August Emperor" was beyond the concept of son of Heaven in pre-imperial context, the difference did not necessarily lead to the Legalistic First Emperor's suppression of Confucianism. As will be shown in this chapter, the title of *Huangdi* was actually an invention by a group of scholars who had profound knowledge of the past.

(*shi* 始).[117] However, the First Emperor's political ambition (his adoption of the new title) and his linear view of history did not necessarily lead to his open disparagement and negation of the past; it did not even result in his anti-traditionalism that separated his new rule from the past.[118] Rather, although Sima Qian attempted to weaken and downgrade the Qin, we still can see in the *Shiji* faint traces of bridges that linked the imperial Qin and antiquity. Such connections implied that despite considering himself to be a great sage and an incomparable ruler, the First Emperor did not create his new order from nothing (*creatio ex hinilo*). Instead, the past offered him the foundation both to create a new era that had a connection with the earlier periods and to transcend the past from which this new era evolved. In other words, the past was not something the First Emperor aimed to overthrow or destroy; rather, it was something he wanted to transcend.

Thus, the First Emperor's radical innovation that cut off the imperial Qin from the past, as presented in the "Benji," was no more than Sima Qian's fantasy. Sima Qian's imperative was to wash away the ancient elements of the imperial Qin. Nonetheless, the *Shiji*'s narratives of the imperial Qin history divulged Sima Qian's reluctant recognition of the connection between the first imperial dynasty and antiquity. The reluctance underlying its accounts reflected one of the driving forces behind his composition of the *Shiji*, namely, to portray the imperial Qin as an anti-traditional dynasty, which the *ru* resisted and to

[117] See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.243, 245.

[118] Michael Puett demonstrates that the First Emperor's decision to invent a new title, rather than maintain the old one that could emphasize his own links to the Zhou rulers, was to "mark a point of discontinuity from the past." See Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*, 142.

magnify the *ru*'s authority over the ancient knowledge passed down from Confucius. Two occasions in the *Shiji* exemplify how the past mattered to the Qin imperial court.

The first occasion is in the "Yueshu" 樂書 (Book of Music). In tracing the history of music, this treatise mentioned that when competing with his former accomplice, Zhao Gao 趙高 (258 – 207 B.C.E.), in enthroning the Second Emperor (Huhai 胡亥, r. 210 – 207 B.C.E.), Li Si admonished the Second Emperor against abandoning the *Shi* and *Shu* and forgetting lessons from the Shang dynasty:

> The Second Emperor particularly [took music] as entertainment. Chancellor Li Si presented his remonstration and said: "To abandon the *Shi* and *Shu*, and to set one's heart completely on [lascivious] sounds and attractive beauty, are what Zu Yi feared. It was because King Zhou [of Shang] enduringly ignored any minor mistakes and was intemperate at night that he died." Zhao Gao responded: "The names of the music of the Five Thearchs and Three Kings were different. Their names indicate that their music did not continue [the music of their predecessors]. From the [members of the] imperial court to the common people, all can receive happiness and assemble deep affections. Were it not for this harmony, people's joys could not be linked up, and [ruler's] bounties could not be extended. Each of them is the teaching of one generation and music of an appropriate time. Why should one start to take his long journey only after getting the swift horse Lu Er from Mt. Hua?" The Second Emperor thought this was right.
>
> 秦二世尤以為娛。丞相李斯進諫曰：「放棄《詩》《書》，極意聲色，祖伊所以懼也；輕積細過，恣心長夜，紂所以亡也。」趙高曰：「五帝、三王樂各殊名，示不相襲。上自朝廷，下至人民，得以接歡喜，合殷勤，非此和說不通，解澤不流，亦各一世之化，度時之樂，何必華山之騄耳而後行遠乎？」二世然之。[119]

What concerns us first in this paragraph is that Li Si's admonishment is contradictory to his above proposal submitted to the First Emperor in 213 B.C.E., where Li Si, as an instigator of the book burning, criticized those who only spoke of the past to damage the

[119] Ibid, 24.1177.

present (*dao gu yi hai jin* 道古以害今). Indeed, as a scholar who knew the origin of the Six Arts (*[Li] Si zhi liuyi zhi gui* 斯知六藝之歸),[120] as Derk Bodde (1909 – 2003) noticed, Li Si also used historical precedents elsewhere in his reasoning.[121] Why, then, did Li Si have such dramatically contradictory views on the past and ancient heritages? This contradiction can be resolved by seeing Li Si as more an opportunist than an iconoclastic and anti-cultural Legalist.[122] Insofar as the ancient knowledge he learned from his alleged master, Xunzi 荀子 (c. 316 – c. 235 B.C.E),[123] could be beneficial to his career, Li Si would not hesitate to utilize it. Similarly, if such knowledge from the ancient times frustrated his

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[120] Ibid, 87.2563.

[121] Bodde presented Li Si as a stateman rather than as a thinker. See Bodde, *China's First Unifier A Study of the Ch'in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssŭ (280?-208 B.C.)*, 223-24. Bodde's argument can be supported by the passage from Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2560: when he was thrown into prison, Li Si also stressed the importance of drawing lessons from the ancient sage-kings:

> As for the sage-kings in ancient times, they were all moderate in diet, had certain numbers of their chariots and vessels, had limitation on their palaces. Whenever they announced orders to manage affairs, they banned everything that increased burdens on people and was unprofitable to people's interests. Therefore, they could achieve a long period of order and stability.
>
> 凡古聖王，飲食有節，車器有數，宮室有度，出令造事，加費而無益於民利者禁，故能長久治安.

Nevertheless, the presumption that Li Si was one of the Legalists in early imperial China still exerts influence on modern Chinese scholarship. In the past century, for example, Hsiao Kung-ch'uan 蕭公權 and Lu Xun 魯迅 studied *fajia* and Li Si's writings within this framework, and respectively argued that Li Si marked the decline of pre-Qin *fajia* and that Li Si's literary style differed from that of other *fajia* scholars. See Kung-ch'uan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought, Volume 1* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 368-424; Lu Xun 魯迅, *Han wenxue shi gangyao* 漢文學史綱要, in Lu Xun 魯迅, *Lu xun quanji* 魯迅全集, vol. 9 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2005), 394-98. In recent years, Chai Yongchang 柴永昌 argues that Li Si's *Writing on Supervising and Reprimanding* (*Duze shu* 督責書) distorted the *fajia* which had been passed down from Shen Buhai 申不害 (420 B.C.E. – 337 B.C.E.). See Chai Yongchang 柴永昌, "Lun Li Si *Duze shu* yu fajia sixiang zhi yi" 論李斯《督責書》與法家思想之異, *Guanzi xuekan* 管子學刊 2 (2019): 36-41.

[122] Bodde, *China's First Unifier*, 211.

[123] This given date of Xunzi is based on Masayuki Sato, *The Confucian Quest for Order: The Origin and Formation of the Political Thought of Xunzi* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 60-61.

career, there would be no reason for him to show any tolerance towards it. Li Si's proposal to burn the texts, in this sense, seems to be his reaction to the threat the revivalist Chunyu Yue might have posed to him.

In addition, this paragraph from the "Yueshu" even suggests that the abandonment of the *Shi* and *Shu* and the knowledge therein was not institutionalized in the Qin, but depended only on the emperor's personal preference. The second occasion, in the "Lishu" 禮書 (Book of Rituals) of the same history, further testifies to this observation of the imperial Qin's attitude toward ancient knowledge. A portrayal in this treatise stated explicitly that the institutionalized rituals of the Qin were derived from the ancient rituals, even though they were not the same as those of the ancient sage-kings: "Since the Qin owned the world under Heaven, it completely examined the rituals and decorum of the six vassal states and adapted the good among them. Although its rituals did not accord with the institutions of the sage-kings, it venerated rulers and restrained officials, and its court was dignified, [all of these] were achieved by following antiquity" 至秦有天下，悉內六國禮儀，采擇其善，雖不合聖制，其尊君抑臣，朝廷濟濟，依古以來.[124]

The citation from the "Lishu" confirms the historical continuum between the Qin and the era of China's antiquity. More importantly, it illustrates that, to the imperial Qin, the past and history were the basis for contemporary institutions. As it mentioned, the abundance of intellectual men in the imperial Qin was due to its compliance with antiquity. Contrary to the theme of radical innovation in the "Benji," Sima Qian conceded on both

[124] Sima, *Shiji*, 23.1159.

occasions that there was continuity between the imperial Qin and antiquity. His recognition of this continuity appears to be attributable to his motive to emphasize the ancient base of the rituals of the Han court. As Sima Qian further confirmed later on in the "Lishu," Shusun Tong 叔孫通 (fl. 3rd century B.C.E.), who was appointed by Emperor Gaozu (Liu Bang 劉邦, r. 202 – 195 B.C.E.) to reconstruct imperial ritual institutions, probably took the ritual institutions of the imperial Qin as the base and formed those of the early Western Han by adding to, or decreasing (*zengyi jiansun* 增益減損), Qin's institutions.[125] Thus, to show the genealogy between the ritual institutions of the Western Han and the ancient times, Sima Qian should first admit, however grudgingly, the connection between the Qin and ancient times, for this connection was realized among many at the time of Sima Qian since the institutions of the early Han were constructed on the basis of the Qin's.

However, why did the Qin's institutionalized rituals not accord with, but still be grounded on, those of the sage-kings? The connection between Qin rituals and those of the ancient sage-kings, as clarified in the "Lishu," rested only on the Qin's emphasis on honoring the ruler and humbling officials. Thus, this connection was meant to secure the First Emperor's authority, but not to restore the prototype established in antiquity. While the *Shiji* admitted the vulnerable connection between the imperial Qin and the ancient times, the First Emperor in the grand historian's narrative preserved only a fraction of ancient elements which could be used to defend himself as a supreme ruler while he completely dismissed and replaced many elements irrelevant to his authority. Among the many cultural resources that the Qin inherited from its predecessors, as our archaeological findings have

[125] Ibid.

demonstrated, Sima Qian only mentioned the rigid hierarchy that the Qin's rituals embodied; thus, he underscored his critique of the First Emperor's arrogance and the Qin's dismissal of the ancient elements that defined the cultural standard of a dynasty.

Nevertheless, the statement in the "Lishu" shows that previous institutions formed at least part of the basis on which the First Emperor created his new era. The First Emperor's exploitation of the past to create his new era was probably thanks to the establishment of the erudites. As the "Shang baiguan gongqing biao" 上百官公卿表 (First Table of Nobility Ranks and Government Offices) of the *Hanshu* indicated, this group of seventy Qin Erudites (*boshi qishi ren* 博士七十人) were encyclopedic experts, understanding and connecting the past and the present (*zhangtong gujin* 掌通古今).[126] As we can see in the *Shiji*, the prestigious terms *Huangdi* and *zhen* 朕 as the imperial emperors' title and self-designation were suggested by Erudites to signify the new era the First Emperor had created.[127] In addition, Erudites in the Qin also gave advice on sacrifices and helped the emperor interpret abnormal phenomenon with their knowledge of the remote past.[128]

[126] Ban, *Hanshu*, 19a.726. However, rather than saying specifically that there were seventy Erudites in the Qin, the table of the *History of the Former History* said in general that the number of the Qin Erudites was up to several tens (*shushi ren* 數十人). Perhaps we can assume that the tens of Erudites to whom this table referred were the appointed Erudites during the entire Qin dynasty, rather than the total number of this group of scholars at a specific time.

[127] For more detail, see Sima, *Shiji*, 6.236.

[128] In 219 B.C.E., when the First Emperor returned from the Langya Mountain, he and his entourage encountered a storm near the shrine of the Xiang consort (Xiangfei 湘妃) that stopped them from crossing the river. In response to the First Emperor's question about the identity of the deity in the Xiang river, the erudites identified her as the wife of Shun 舜. See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.248.

In spite of their erudition, the *Shiji* attempted to minimize the influence of this group of the Qin Erudites. As suggested by the dialogue between Mr. Lu and Mr. Hou in the *Shiji*'s account of the second incident, the Qin Erudites were more like occasional consultants than regular officials.[129] The *Shiji* provided only a handful of narratives about the Qin Erudites. As exemplified by Chunyu Yue and the following discussed Shusun Tong, Sima Qian endeavored to deliver the following message: those who were trusted and whose suggestions were accepted by the Qin court were not upright and honest, but flattering, Erudites. Unlike other adulators, Chunyu Yue's uningratiating proposal could not vanquish Zhou Qingchen, whose praise of the First Emperor's unparalleled achievements pleased (*yue* 悅) the emperor. Moreover, Li Si asserted the fundamental change in the times. This sharp contrast Sima Qian drew, in his account of the Qin bibliocaust, demonstrated his claim about the Qin's dismissal of antiquity and the uselessness of the Qin's establishment of the Erudites who could not successfully bridge between the imperial Qin and antiquity.

The episode in which Shusun Tong entered the arena of history in the *Shiji* further attests to Sima Qian's idea that the system of Erudites was only an empty shell in the Qin. As one of the identified Qin Erudites, Shusun Tong was a native of Xue 薛, an area of Lu. Because of his excellence in knowledge of literature, he was awaiting official appointment as an imperial Erudite in the reign of the Second Emperor. When Chen Sheng 陳勝 (d. 208

[129] Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1904-1982) observed that the Qin erudites were occasional consultants who did not have any stable and certain duty and were no more than idle officials if the emperor did not assign them any mission. Xu Fuguan's comment on the Qin erudites' duties appears to come from the dialogue between Mr. Lu and Mr. Hou in the *Shiji*. See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.258. For Xu Fuguan's comment, see Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Xu Fuguan lun jingxue shi er zhong* 徐復觀論經學史二種 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), 58-59.

B.C.E.) rose in rebellion against the harsh Qin, Shusun was summoned as one of the Erudites and *ru* scholars (*boshi zhu rusheng* 博士諸儒生). Before Shusun Tong assessed the rebellion, the Second Emperor had already become angry about the opinion offered by a group of about thirty Erudites who urged the emperor to send his troops to suppress the revolt. Shusun Tong, on the contrary, argued that because of the great achievements the imperial Qin had made, Chen Sheng and his fellows were no more than mousey robbers and doggery and were therefore not worthy of concern. His cunning but tactful response won the Second Emperor's favor, and he was finally appointed as an Erudite because of his response.[130] Although Shusun Tong finally escaped to his hometown and gave up his appointment, his response provoked criticism by various scholars for its flattery. The Erudites—who had urged the emperor to dispatch his troops and to designate Chen Sheng's campaign as rebels (*fan* 反)—were imprisoned because of their inapt suggestion.[131]

Shusun Tong's notoriety due to his flattery and disloyalty was further reiterated in the *Shiji*'s episode of his preparation for reconstructing Han rituals.[132] At the earliest stage of the Western Han, when Emperor Gaozu planned to reconstruct imperial ritual institutions, Shusun Tong proposed to recruit scholars from Lu to establish imperial etiquette (*qi chaoyi*

[130] For the detailed account, see Sima, *Shiji*, 99.2720-1; Ban, *Hanshu*, 43.2124.

[131] Sima, *Shiji*, 99.2720.

[132] Shusun Tong's notoriety was mainly due to his recantation and his crafty responses to any interrogations about his behavior. It was because his idea won the Second Emperor's favor that he could be officially appointed as an erudite, so scholars immediately questioned how he fawned on the emperor. After defending himself as so fortunate to escape the jaws of death, he escaped immediately to his home area and joined the campaign of Xiang Liang 項梁 (d. 208 B.C.E.). After Xiang Liang was defeated, he followed Emperor Yi of Chu (d. 206 B.C.E.), and then Xiang Yu 項羽 (232– 202 B.C.E.), and finally Liu Bang. After the founding of the Western Han, although Shusun Tong led a hundred disciples, none of them could gain an opportunity to work in the Han government and grumbled at their unsupportive master. See Sima, *Shiji*, 99: 2720-21 for more information about his career before the founding of the Western Han.

起朝儀). Of the thirty or more scholars he recruited, two refused to offer Shusun Tong a hand and censured him for currying favor with ten rulers. The two Erudites argued that since the world was just pacified and that the corpses of the dead were still exposed without proper disposal, while the wounded were still recovering and unable to move, it was absolutely not the time to institutionalize new rituals and music. Instead, they recommended the Han ruling house spend a hundred years to accumulate power or potency (*ji de* 積德).[133] Only afterwards, could new rituals and music arise. Since Shusun Tong's behavior did not conform to practices in antiquity (*buhe gu* 不合古), the two scholars could not side with Shusun Tong and urged him to leave so he would not pollute them. In response, Shusun Tong gave them the title "superficial *ru"* (*biru* 鄙儒) who were incapable of noticing that the times had changed.[134] The astonishing resemblance between his comment on the *ru* who refused to help and Li Si's comment on Chunyu Yue implied that, similar to Li Si, Shusun Tong was an opportunist who cared more about his career than the revival of ancient practices. Ironically, despite his notoriety, Shusun Tong was celebrated by Sima Qian as the master of *ru* in the Han (*Hanjia ruzhong* 漢家儒宗) because of his reconstruction of Han rituals and the changes he made in accordance with the times.[135] Sima Qian's honoring Shusun Tong probably illustrates that Shusun Tong's contribution

[133] Here, I follow Constance A. Cook's conventional translation of *de* as "power" or "potency". Constance A. Cook, "Scribes, Cooks, and Artisans: Breaking Zhou Tradition," *Early China* 20 (1995): 245. However, based on recently discovered bronze inscriptions, scholars have recently questioned the existence of the concept of heavenly mandate in the Western Zhou. Scott A. Barnwell, "The Evolution of the Concept of *De* 德 in Early China," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 235 (March 2013): 1-83.

[134] Sima, *Shiji*, 99.2722; Ban, *Hanshu*, 43.2126-27.

[135] Ibid, 99.2726.

to the survival and development of *ru* techniques in the Western Han was great enough to compensate for his character fault; moreover, Sima Qian did not resist any change as long as it was not iconoclastic and could conform with ancient practices.

Although Shusun Tong's personality was perhaps not Sima Qian's chief concern, both the cases of Chunyu Yue and Shusun Tong represented Sima Qin's idea that the Qin Erudites were tokens and lacked the ability to influence imperial decision-making not because they were incompetent, but because their talents and sincere advice were not valued by the emperors of the Qin. If the token Erudites played no important role in the Qin court, why did they have the imperial permission to keep the manuscripts of the banned *Shi* and *Shu* as well as other forbidden texts? Even though it may be assumed that it was their profound knowledge that granted them immunity from the prohibitory edict, the issue becomes more complicated when we consider the case of Mr. Fu, for his case reveals that the *Shi* and the *Shu* that the Erudites could keep were not the version(s) they supported or had originally studied. It was written almost verbatim in the "Rulin" of both the *Shi* and the *Hanshu* that Mr. Fu had to bury his manuscript of the *Shu* in a wall when the Qin government implemented the book burning. After the establishment of the Western Han, he could only regain twenty-nine *pian* of the manuscript, while dozens of *pian* of the original manuscript were lost. The *Shiji* declared:

> In the Qin dynasty, texts were burned. Mr. Fu kept [his manuscript] of [the *Shu*] in a wall. Thereafter, war waged rapidly, and [Mr. Fu] went into exile. When the Han pacified [the world], Mr. Fu requested his texts. However, dozens of *pian* of his copy were lost, and he could recover only twenty-nine *pian*. He immediately used this [fragmentary copy] to teach in the area of Qi and Lu. Therefore, scholars were considerably able to talk about the *Shu*. As for the various great masters in the area east of Mt. Tai, none of them excluded the *Shu* from their teachings.

> 秦時焚書，伏生壁藏之。其後兵大起，流亡，漢定，伏生求其書，亡數十篇，獨得二十九篇，即以教于齊魯之閒。學者由是頗能言尚書，諸山東大師無不涉尚書以教矣。[136]

Why did Mr. Fu need to secretly preserve his copy of the *Shu*, if his status as an Erudite permitted him to own the banned texts? This question can only be answered by concluding that his copy of the *Shu* was a version that the Qin imperial government deemed to be useless and did not approve. Nevertheless, since Erudites were allowed to keep the copy of the *Shi* and the *Shu*, there should have been "useful" *Shu* and *Shi* existing in the minds of the First Emperor and Li Si that conformed to the Qin's ideology and the First Emperor's linear view of history.[137]

Thus, Li Si's proposal probably targeted only specific version(s) of the *Shi* and *Shu* which, such as Mr. Fu's version of the *Shu*, provided historical precedents for the "stupid" *ru* to praise the past while criticizing the present and ran counter to the First Emperor's political ambition. Such *ru* were nostalgic for the times of the ancient kings and thus were so insensitive that they did not recognize the significant changes the First Emperor had brought.[138] Similarly, the speeches of hundred experts, which Jens Østergård Petersen has notably argued were "compilations predominantly consisting of didactic historical anecdotes,"[139] may also contain similar strong feelings of nostalgia that was not politically

[136] Ibid, 121.3124; see also Ban, *Hanshu*, 88.3603, which said specifically that the scholars who could speak of the *Documents* were those from Qi.

[137] The "Yao dian" 堯典 ("Canon of Yao") in the received *Documents* is said to conform the Qin ideology. See Martin Kern, "Language and the Ideology of Kingship in the 'Canon of Yao'," (revised version), in Martin Kern and Dirk Meyer, eds., *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy: Studies in the Composition and Thought of the Shangshu (Classic of Documents)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 23-61.

[138] Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*,138-53.

[139] Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn?" *Monumenta Serica*

correct during the imperial Qin. As Martin Kern has argued, the burning of books, as a form of censorship, was a mean to control, define, and unify official memory of the Classics, which were indispensable in the newborn empire.

The *Shi* and *Shu,* as well as those historical anecdotes could not provoke the First Emperor without the assistance of specific interpretations. It is highly possible that when issuing the order to ban the *Shi* and *Shu*, the First Emperor also intended to ban certain commentaries that might empower the poetry and royal speeches in both anthologies to challenge imperial decisions. Sima Qian's reason for only mentioning the titles of both *Shi* and *Shu* was perhaps due to the fact that commentaries on specific texts were inseparable from the texts on which they commented, so it was hard to distinguish the texts and their commentaries in the early imperial era.[140] The titles of the Classics receptus, therefore, were used either consciously or unconsciously to refer to the Classics and/or the commentaries on them.[141] Thus, in the *Shiji*'s record of Li Si's proposal to burn the banned anthologies, the *Shi* and *Shu* referred not only the anthologies themselves, but also the commentaries which the imperial court did not accept.

Vol. 43 (1995): 2.

[140] An example is the *Wuxing* manuscript from the Mawangdui. The manuscript contains both what modern scholars call the *jing* (Classic) section and the *zhuan* (Commentary) section. This manuscript therefore informs us of the possibility that the classical texts were sometimes combined with their commentaries.

[141] That a title of a Classic could refer to either the Classic *per se* or its commentaries can be elaborated by the reception history of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. As Liang Cai has demonstrated, the title *Spring and Autumn Annals* could also refer to the commentaries on the annals in the early Han. See Liang Cai, "Who said 'Confucius Composed *Chunqiu*?'" *Frontiers of History in China* 5.3 (2010): 372-73.

Even though the Qin imperial court might have had its approved *Shu*, it was the (incomplete) version passed down from Mr. Fu that the members of Sima Qian's imagined *ru* community extensively studied. What Mr. Fu represented was the ancient tradition that the *ru* in the "Rulin" followed and transmitted, while the imperial Qin was presented as a symbol of a fabricated tradition that was incompatible with the authoritative tradition to which Sima Qian and the *ru* adhered. However, Sima Qian's simplified depiction created an illusion that the policy was directed against all versions of both anthologies. Although he recognized the Qin's continuities with the ancient cultures, his pessimistic accounts of the Qin Erudites repeatedly conveyed the message: these Erudites with expertise in ancient knowledge were not respected by the First Emperor, so their presence could not help the imperial Qin gain a connection with the ancient times. Although the book-burning policy might have had a narrow scope of targets, it was exaggerated in the *Shiji* to represent the First Emperor's brutal endeavor to devastate all ancient knowledge upheld by the *ru* scholars. Despite the imperial Qin's suppression, ancient knowledge could successfully survive because of the efforts the early imperial *ru*, yet not in its intact or original form.

2.5 The Increasing Tension between the First Emperor and *Ru* Scholars

If the First Emperor was so contemptuous of the ancient culture and the *ru* scholars, why did he wait for eight years to destroy the texts and murder the scholars? If Sima Qian had not explicitly pointed out their regional identity in his narrative about both incidents, how could one determine that the victims in both incidents were *ru* scholars mainly from the Qi-Lu region? When admonishing his father against the decision to bury the *ru* scholars

alive, Fusu reportedly mentioned that those scholars being buried "all praised and follow the example of Confucius." However, in the *Shiji*'s account, the First Emperor's anger was indeed aroused by the esoteric experts who failed to discover the immortal elixir and vilified the First Emperor; moreover, Fusu's statement was so incoherent and out of tune with Sima Qian's narrative about the second incident that modern scholars have suggested that it is a later interpolation.[142] In fact, in the "Feng shan shu" 封禪書 (Book of Feng and Shan [Sacrifices]), Sima Qian explicitly criticized Emperor Wu for his belief in and the superstitions about immorality.[143] How, then, could Sima Qian transform the second incident from the emperor's revenge against the esoteric experts (whose pseudo skills Sima criticized) into a persecution of the *ru* scholars whom he favored?

As modern scholars have noticed, it was only after the earliest of the declining years of the Western Han that the victims of the second incidents were explicitly said to be *ru* scholars (*rusheng*).[144] Differing from his late Western Han successors, the words Sima Qian used were generalized and polysemantic terms "various scholars" and "scholars of techniques" (*shushi* 術士), and his word choices have led modern scholars to speculate that the executed scholars were from multiple traditions and not solely *ru* scholars.[145] In fact, both "various scholars" and "masters of techniques" had such broad semantic scope that

[142] Li, "Fenshu kengru de zhenwei xushi," 40.

[143] Sima, *Shiji,* 28.1385-90.

[144] That the phrases *keng rushi* 坑儒士, *keng rusheng* 坑儒生, and simply *kengru* 坑儒 first appeared in Wang Chong's *Lunheng* and the *Hanshu*. See Wang, *Lunheng jiao shi* 論衡校釋, 7.355-57. Ban, *Hanshu*, 27A.1472; 28B.1641, where the character *keng* 坑 is written as *keng* 阬.

[145] Osamu Kanaya 金谷治, *Shin Kan shisōshi kenkyū* 秦漢思想史研究 (Tōkyō Heirakuji Shoten, 1992), 234-35.

they could mean either esoteric experts and/or *ru* scholars. The ambiguity of both terms allowed Sima Qian to convert the victims of the second incident into, or confine the victims to, the *ru* scholars who transmitted Confucius's legacy. Moreover, Gu Jiegang argued that the distinction between the *ru* and esoteric experts was too blurred and obscure to be recognized in the early imperial period.[146] Following Gu's point, Anne Cheng further notes that both types of scholars inherited a common knowledge nourished by pre-imperial texts, and it was only when the*y* were in direct competition with the esoteric experts for support that the *ru* found it necessary to draw a line between them.[147] This indistinguishability becomes more obvious if we consider the place where the esoteric experts in the *Shiji* were produced. As Gongsun Qing 公孫卿 and Mr. Dongguo 東郭先生 could exemplify, Qi was the cradle of the esoteric experts, just as Qi and Lu were for the *Shiji*'s *ru* community.[148] Because considerable numbers of both scholarly groups were natives of Qi, they might have mutually influenced each other; the resulting similarities hinder modern scholars who try to differentiate them.

As Sima Qian admitted, the skills early *ru* possessed were quite similar to the skills of those whom we call esoteric experts.[149] For example, the *Shiji* says that Dong Zhongshu

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[146] Gu Jiegang, *Qin Han de fangshi yu rusheng*, 12.

[147] In contrast to the esoteric experts, *ru*, as Anne Cheng explains, remained attached to the textual or scriptural tradition, combining their competence in omens with the interpretation of texts, and playing the crucial role of being intermediaries between Heaven and the rulers of mankind. See Anne Cheng, "What did It Mean to be a *Ru* in Han Times?" *Asia Major*, 3rd Series, 14.2 (2003): 103.

[148] Sima, *Shiji,* 12.467; 126.3208.

[149] That *ru* and esoteric experts were hard to be distinguished in early China may relate to the earlier religious meaning of the word *ru* before Confucius. As discussed in Jensen's study of the twentieth century scholars' reconstruction of the early history of *ru*, *ru* could refer to the prophetic sorcerers who served the Shang royal house, and the skills inherited by their successors, i.e., the *ru* in later generations, included divination and homeopathy which were criticized by Confucius. See Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism:*

was an expert in evoking and stopping rain by using the *Chunqiu*.[150] Dong's combination of this Classic and rain magic suggests that Sima Qian not only did not exclude such skills from the techniques *ru* could possess as long as the skills were based on the Classics, but also recognized the hybridity of *ru* in early history and the indistinguishability between *ru* and esoteric experts. Although early *ru* could have acquired many techniques, Sima Qian's "Rulin" focused on their studies of Confucius's Classics and the Six Arts preserved in the classical texts; their classical scholarship therefore became the major criterion for the *ru* community in the *Shiji*. Despite claiming that the First Emperor executed various scholars or masters of techniques and quoting Fusu to say that the martyrs followed Confucius's model, the grand historian ingeniously made use of the indistinguishability and overlap between both groups of scholars to characterize victims as the *ru* scholars who were Confucius's academic offspring.

In addition to limiting the scope of executed scholars in the second incident to *ru* scholars, Sima Qian also identified the victims as being from this eastern area within Qin territory, especially the purported motherland of Confucius in Lu. As the following "Rulin"

Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization, 195-96.

[150] "[He], based on the changes of the disasters and abnormal phenomena in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to " 以春秋災異之變推陰陽所以錯行，故求雨閉諸陽，縱諸陰，其止雨反是. See Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3128. Also see Ban, *Hanshu*, 56.2524. In the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*) which has been attributed to Dong Zhongshu, we see two chapters entitled "Qiuyu" 求雨 ("Seeking Rain") and "Zhiyu" 止雨 (Stopping Rain). See Michael Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 142-59 for a detailed discussion on both chapters. As Michael Loewe argues elsewhere, the method of seeking rain presented in the "Qiuyu" chapter was different from the methods in other texts attributed to him. See Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 165-72. The authorship of the entire *Chunqiu fanlu* has been discussed since the early imperial period. For summaries of imperial scholars' discussion on Dong Zhongshu's authorship, see Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn according to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 39-50; Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu*, 192-214.

passage shows, *ru* scholars from that area played an especially active role in the rebellions in the final years of the imperial Qin:

> When Chen She proclaimed himself king, all *ru* scholars in Lu carried the ritual vessels of the Kong clan and joined the King of Chen. As a result, Kong Jia served as Chen She's erudite and eventually died with him. Starting out as an ignorant man, Chen She forced an uprising of the rabble in the garrisons and crowned himself the King of Chu within a month. [However,] in no more than half of a year, his rebellion was extinguished. His affair was extremely insignificant. Nevertheless, such people as those with certain ranks and gentlemen carried Confucius's ritual vessels went to submit themselves to him. Why? It was because the Qin burned their profession. They had accumulated anger and discharged their grievances [when they were under the rule of] the King of Chen.
>
> 陳涉之王也，而魯諸儒持孔氏之禮器往歸陳王。於是孔甲為陳涉博士，卒與涉俱死。陳涉起匹夫，驅瓦合適戍，旬月以王楚，不滿半歲竟滅亡，其事至微淺，然而縉紳先生之徒負孔子禮器往委質為臣者，何也？以秦焚其業，積怨而發憤于陳王也。[151]

This account at first glance claims that only the *ru* scholars from Lu joined Chen She 陳涉 (i.e., Chen Sheng 陳勝) simply because Confucius's alleged motherland Qufu was in close proximity to Dazexiang (only about 250 kilometers away), where Chen Sheng and his ally Wu Guang 吳廣 (d. 208 B.C.E.) staged an uprising against the imperial Qin, and to Chen (about 300 kilometer), where Chen Sheng established his rebellious regime Zhang Chu 張楚.[152] However, since *ru* scholars from Lu also carried Confucius's cumbersome ritual vessels to join Chen Sheng's rebellion, this geographic distance runs counter to our expectation that it could discourage *ru* scholars from joining Chen's rebellion. Their successful journey to the political center of Chen Sheng's rebellious regime demonstrated

[151] Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3116.

[152] Ibid, 8.349; 48.1952. Dazexiang is located in the modern-day Yongqiao District of Suzhou City in Anhui Province, while Chen is in modern-day Huaiyang District of Zhoukou City in Henan Province.

their resentment of the imperial Qin's bibliocaust. However, no clue was given in the *Shiji* regarding whether the *ru* scholars from Lu were the only scholars who supported Chen Sheng's rebellion. The absence of non-Lu scholars in Chen Sheng's campaign in Sima Qian's account cannot be valid evidence to argue that only the *ru* scholars from this region and Confucius's descendants joined Chen Sheng's uprising against the Qin. Rather, their absence probably manifests the grand historian's intentional tailoring of historical records to highlight the demographic characteristic of his *ru* community.[153] A question that remains is why did he highlight the demographics of Chen Sheng's academic supporters? According to the above citation, it was because the First Emperor burned their profession (*fen qi ye* 焚其業) that the *ru* scholars from Lu supported Chen Sheng's rebellion. Confucius's descendant, Kong Jia 孔甲, even died with Chen Sheng when the rebellion ended in failure. The insertion of this story into the "Rulin" history of the *ru* community appears to reiterate the point that, as the majority of the *ru* community presented in the *Shiji*, the *ru* scholars from Lu (and Qi) were the major victims of the incidents in 213 and 212 B.C.E.

However, rather than saying that both incidents triggered the grievances of the *ru* scholars from the Qi-Lu region against the First Emperor, it would be better to see both incidents as the height of their accumulated discord. Although the first incident happened eight years after the unification, Sima Qian made a special effort to highlight the First Emperor's disrespect for this group of scholars in his record of the Feng and Chan sacrifice

[153] Chen Kanli 陳侃理, "*Shiji* yu *Zhao Zheng shu*—Qin mo lishi de jiyi he yiwang" 《史記》與《趙正書》——秦末歷史的記憶和遺忘, *Chugoku shigaku* 中國史學 26 (2016): 25-37.

that the emperor proposed to perform in the twenty-eighth year of his reign (218 B.C.E.), i.e., three years after the founding of the imperial Qin. According to the "Feng chan shu," the First Emperor was about to make a journey to the east to perform a Feng and Chan sacrifice and erect another stele inscription on the Mt. Yi:

> In the third year of his emperorship, [the First Emperor] patrolled the eastern prefectures and counties. He worshipped [the spirits] on the Zouyi Mountain to eulogize the exploits and achievements of the Qin. As a result, [he] summoned seventy *ru* scholars and Erudites in the Qi-Lu region to accompany him to the foot of Mt. Tai. Some of the *ru* scholars suggested, "In the antiquity, [the rulers] rode on the chariots with their wheels covered by cattail leaves to offer the Feng and Chan sacrifices, [for] they loathed hurting the soils and rocks as well as the grass and trees [of the mountain]. They cleaned up the ground to perform the sacrifice, used withered grass and millet to make their mats, and said that their words are easily followed." After hearing these suggestions, the First Emperor found their suggestion to be weird and difficult to practice. He therefore dismissed the *ru* scholars.
>
> 即帝位三年，東巡郡縣，祠騶嶧山，頌秦功業。於是徵從齊魯之儒生博士七十人，至乎泰山下。諸儒生或議曰：「古者封禪為蒲車，惡傷山之土石草木；埽地而祭，席用葅稭，言其易遵也。」始皇聞此議各乖異，難施用，由此絀儒生。[154]

Two points in this passage deserve further elaboration. First, it seems there was a huge overlap or even an equivalence between the *ru* scholars and the Qin Erudites, for this passage may be read to imply that both titles were interchangeable. At the end of this passage, the grand historian only mentioned that the First Emperor dismissed the *ru* scholars because of the impracticability of their proposal, while no note of the exit of the First Emperor's Erudites was made. As mentioned earlier, there were seventy Erudites during the reign of the First Emperor. If the *ru* scholars and the Qin Erudites were indeed interchangeable, this passage would then suggest that all Erudites in that reign were from

[154] Sima, *Shiji*, 28.1366.

the Qi-Lu region, as the Erudites from this region already formed a group with seventy members.

However, our discussion of the case of Shusun Tong seems to imply a difference, howbeit slight, between the Erudites and *ru* scholars, and thus challenges the interchangeability between them. The crux of the matter is that Shusun Tong was not yet an Erudite, but was awaiting his official appointment when he was summoned as one of the members of Erudites and *ru* scholars when Chen Sheng rebelled. It would thus be better to categorize him among the *ru* scholars rather than among the Erudites at the moment the Second Emperor summoned him and his colleagues.[155] Although *ru* scholars were one part of Qin Erudites, they were not synonyms. Therefore, it is more proper to treat them as two different groups. Referencing back to the passage in the "Book of Feng and Chan [Sacrifices]," we may assume that the seventy in the entourage of the First Emperor in his journey to the East in 218 B.C.E. consisted not only of Erudites but also of non-Erudite *ru* scholars. The number of seventy, which corresponds to the number of the First Emperor's Erudites, seems to be more likely a coincidence than evidence that those in his entourage were all Erudites in his court.

It is also noteworthy that in the "Benji," the emperor summoned only the *ru* scholars from Lu, while those from Qi were not mentioned, "[the First Emperor] discussed with *ru* scholars from Lu" 與魯諸儒生議.[156] This difference in members being summoned between the "Feng shan shu" and the "Benji" revalidates my argument that *ru* scholars

[155] See Xin, *Sheng si Qin shi huang*, 149-50 for similar argument.

[156] Sima, *Shiji*, 6.242.

from Lu played a more active role in the history of the *ru* community presented in the *Shiji*. Why were *ru* scholars and Erudites from the Qi-Lu region, particularly Lu, called when the First Emperor was about to perform the Feng and Chan sacrifice? The location of this sacrifice may well explain why the emperor decided to ask his entourage from the Qi-Lu region for advice. Mt. Yi, on which the sacrifice was performed, is in the southeast of Zou County in the modern-day Shandong province, which was in the Lu region at the time. Ironically, this episode shows that the *ru* scholars from Lu and Qi were not completely excluded from the imperial ritual system, and the First Emperor appeared to be enthusiastic about hearing their suggestions; thus, their participation was supposed to be indispensable. However, the First Emperor rejected their archaic suggestions because he deemed them impracticable, and his rejection echoed my earlier point about the *Shiji*'s emphasis on the emperor's deceptive appropriation of the past. Just as the establishment of Qin Erudites was no more than mere posturing, so also was the First Emperor's consultation with the *ru* scholars from Qi and Lu on sacrifice. As the excerpt indicated, the *ru* scholars recommended that the emperor follow ancient regulations that ran counter the expectations of the First Emperor—or at least the expectations arising from the historian's image of an iconoclastic emperor.

Sima Qian's record of this episode did not end with the dismissal of the *ru* scholars. The same treatise immediately gave an account of the disgraced *ru* scholars' subsequent reaction to the emperor's frustration in performing the sacrifice:

> When the First Emperor was climbing to the peak of the Mt. Tai, he encountered a rainstorm on the mountainside and took refuge under a giant tree. Since all of the *ru* scholars were dismissed and could not engage in the ritual of the Feng and Chan sacrifice, they sneered at [the First Emperor's] frustration when they heard that the First Emperor encountered a rainstorm.

始皇之上泰山，中阪遇暴風雨，休於大樹下。諸儒生既絀，不得與用於封事之禮，聞始皇遇風雨，則譏之。[157]

The central theme of this statement, according to Michael Puett, was to deny the imperial Qin's political legitimacy, for the First Emperor was not allowed by the spiritual powers to perform the sacrifice and thus did not obtain their approval, which Sima Qian clarified at the very beginning of the treatise as symbolizing the receipt of heavenly mandate.[158] However, what is also relevant is that the fired *ru* scholars' sneering indicated the discord between the emperor and the *ru* scholars and prefigured future incidents when the emperor cursed the *ru* scholars who urged the revival of ancient institutions. Intriguingly, Sima Qian did not inform us of any consequence they suffered from ridiculing the emperor. If the emperor did bear grudge against these disgraced *ru* scholars and took vengeance upon them for their offense, Sima Qian would surely have written it down in his masterpiece since his purpose was to portray the emperor as an iconoclastic ruler who showed no mercy to *ru* scholars, the protectors of ancient culture. The absence of such a reference and/or the First Emperor's silence implies the First Emperor's tolerance, at least at the time, of the scholars with whom he disagreed.

However, to the grand historian, the First Emperor's silence was not a reflection of his open-mindedness. Rather, it is more likely that the emperor did not yet realize the threat the *ru* scholars might posed to his sovereignty. The *ru* scholars' sarcasm mentioned in the

[157] Sima, *Shiji*, 28.1367; see also Ban, *Hanshu*, 25A.1202.

[158] Another record from the "Benji" declared that the rainstorm arrived when the First Emperor was going downhill after he had finished the sacrifice. Ibid, 6.242. Michael Puett, aware of this difference in record, argues that the First Emperor encountered less spirited resistance in the "Benji" than in the "Feng chan shu." Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation,* 258, n. 22.

"Feng chan shu" was not the only sarcasm they made before the bibliocaust. In his proposal for book burning, Li Si expounded the potential danger of letting private learning go unchecked:

> The world under Heaven was in disorder in the ancient times, and nothing could be unified. Therefore, vassals of the territorial states arose, all words were about the past to damage the present, and empty words were polished to confuse the reality. People appreciated what they had privately learned to criticize what their superior had established. Now, Your Majesty has conquered the world under Heaven, distinguished between black and white, and confirmed the unified standards. The men of private learning join together to censure the laws. Every time people hear an order is issued, they will comment on it according to what they have learned. They will dispute [the order] in the innermost recesses of their hearts when inside [the imperial court], and discuss [the order] in the lanes and alleys when outside. They flaunt [themselves in front of] the ruler to make their reputations, search for peculiar speeches for dignifying [themselves], and lead their subordinates to slander [the ruler]. Given this situation, if you do not ban [them], your influence as ruler would decline from above, while factions would form from below.
>
> 古者天下散亂，莫之能一，是以諸侯并作，語皆道古以害今，飾虛言以亂實，人善其所私學，以非上之所建立。今皇帝并有天下，別黑白而定一尊。私學而相與非法教，人聞令下，則各以其學議之，入則心非，出則巷議，夸主以為名，異取以為高，率群下以造謗。如此弗禁，則主勢降乎上，黨與成乎下。[159]

The *Shiji*'s retelling of Li Si's proposal—which Sima Qian might have edited—did not clarify who the promoters of the private learning were. Nevertheless, Li Si's proposal purported to be a refutation of Chunyu Yue's suggestion, and Li's proposal, according to Sima Qian, led to the loss of the ancient Six Arts of the *ru* scholars. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that in the *Shiji*'s narrative, the *ru* scholars in the Qin were at least a principal part of the advocates of the private learnings which the First Emperor and Li Si meant to suppress.[160] Putting the records of the "Feng shan shu" and Li Si's proposal together, it

[159] Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2546.

[160] Circumstantial evidence comes from the "Xian xue" chapter of the *Hanfeizi*, where *ru*, defined in the

would be pertinent to say that the *ru* scholars in the *Shiji* had constantly complained, even before the books burning happened in 213 B.C.E., about imperial policies that did not follow ancient standards; therefore, the criticism they made when the First Emperor failed to perform the sacrifice was never the only occasion. Their courage to condemn and offend the emperor in response to his policies and problematic legitimacy appeared to foreshadow the calm that the *ru* scholars from Lu showed when they were besieged by Liu Bang's troop. That courage was attributed to the legacy of earlier sages who transformed Lu and to the predisposition of Qi people who, according to the *Shiji,* were fond of debating.[161] Li Si's reminder in the last part of the above excerpt even suggests that the First Emperor had not recognized the potential threat and challenges the advocates of the private learnings could present to his authority and sovereignty. His unawareness also explains why, when the suggestion about reviving the system of enfeoffment was first introduced to the court in 215 B.C.E., the First Emperor did not immediately implement the policy of book-burning.

2.6 Conclusion

Sima Qian's *Shiji* has been our major source to reconstruct the early history of *ru*/Confucian Community. However, as my analysis has demonstrated, the grand historian's narrative is never without bias. Through his deft tailoring of materials, Sima

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same chapter as the followers of Confucius, were criticized for caring only about the past, but not the present. Han Fei, *Han Feizi ji jie*, 19: 463. The "Wudu" 五蠹 (Five Vermin) chapter also blamed the ru for violating the laws by using their writings (*wen*) to violate the laws. See Han Fei, *Han Feizi ji jie*, 19.449.

[161] Sima, *Shiji*, 129.3265.

Qian emphasized the tension between the *ru* scholars from Qi-Lu area and the First Emperor of Qin, whose genealogical lineage was and whose notoriety as a destroyer of ancient culture basically originated from the *Shiji*'s records of his decision to burn ancient texts and bury scholars. The sharp contrasts portrayed in the *Shiji* further enhanced Sima Qian's image of Qi-Lu *ru* scholars as the authoritative transmitters or preservers of ancient culture. The *ru* scholars who survived the imperial Qin strove to revive ancient classical culture in the early Western Han. However, the near extinction of the ancient texts during the Qin resulted in textual fluidity or instability and thus ultimately to the interpretative diversity in later generations. Nevertheless, given the *ru* scholars' insistence on and expert knowledge of ancient culture, as portrayed in the *Shiji*, the grand historian often suggested that only these remaining *ru* scholars and their interpretative lineages could recover the classical tradition Confucius had passed down.

CHAPTER 3

OMNIPOTENT TRANSMITTERS AND SPECIALIZED CREATORS: THE "CONFUCIANIZATION" OF THE CLASSICS IN THE "YI WEN ZHI"

3.1 Introduction

The framework of the "victory of Han Confucianism" or "triumph of Confucianism," which emphasizes the dominance of Confucianism (*rujia* 儒家)[162] as a school of thought since the Western Han (202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.), has been challenged and revised in recent scholarship.[163] Arguing that the concept of "philosophical schools" or more accurately

[162] See my Introduction for the problem of translating *rujia* into Confucianism.

[163] In her recent article, Ting-mien Lee points out that this research framework was adopted in different terminology in English, Japanese, and Chinese scholarship. While Sinologists in the English world, such as Homer H. Dubs (1892 – 1969), used the slogan "victory/triumph of Confucianism" to stress Confucianism overcoming other schools of thought in the reign of Han Emperor Yuan (Liu Shi 劉奭, r. 48-33 B.C.E.), scholars in the Chinese and Japanese worlds used "dismissing the hundred schools and revering only the Confucian arts" (*bachu baijia du zun rushu* 罷黜百家，獨尊儒術) and "the establishment of Confucian doctrine/religion as the state doctrine/religion" (*jukyō kokkyōka* 儒教國教化) respectively. Despite of the difference in terminology, scholars who advocate this theoretical framework all have a consensus that the middle period of the Western Han—either during the reign of Emperor Wu (r. 141 B.C.E. – 87. B.C.E.) or during the reign of Emperor Yuan—marked a crucial step in the rise of Confucianism as a state ideology in imperial China. See Ting-mien Lee, "Ideological Orthodoxy, State Doctrine, or Art of Governance? The 'Victory of Confucianism' Revisited in Contemporary Chinese Scholarship," *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 51.2 (2020): 79-95. For an example of the framework of the "victory/triumph of Confucianism" in the Western world, see Homer H. Dubs, "The Victory of Han Confucianism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 58.3 (1938), 435-449. However, according to Michael Nylan's research, there are in total five assumptions that one should address when using such a questionable slogan: (1) We can easily identify who the Confucians really were, as a distinct group with a distinct ideology; (2) The empire, like the later Neo-Confucians, presumed an absolute need for a single ruling orthodoxy; (3) State sponsorship of Confucian activities was consistent; (4) State sponsorship of Confucian activities was also effective, in that it led to markedly greater uniformity in thought and in practice; and (5) This greater uniformity represented something quite distinct from what had existed in the pre-Han period. See Michael Nylan, "A Problematic Model: Than Han 'Orthodox Synthesis,' Then and Now," in Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng and John B. Henderson eds., *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 17-56.

"schools of thought" did not exist until the late Western Han,[164] and that Emperor Wu did not favor Confucianism as a state ideology, some scholars have concluded that the dominant influence of Confucianism on the Western Han intellectual atmosphere was overemphasized in the past.[165] How, then, could Confucianism successfully stand out among other early intellectual traditions in imperial China? This chapter argues for regarding the "Yi wen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Writing) of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han*) as a milestone in the ascendancy of Confucianism in China's imperial history.

Based primarily on Liu Xiang's 劉向 (79-8 B.C.E.)[166] *Bielu* 別錄 (*Separate Records*), Liu Xin's 劉歆 (50 B.C.E.-23) *Qilüe* 七略 (*Seven Surveys*),[167] which was an abbreviation of the *Bielu*, and their comments on early Chinese textual and intellectual history, the "Yi wen zhi" bibliography was the earliest extant attempt in imperial China to put every branch of knowledge into a systematic scheme with six divisions in total. The Lius unprecedentedly argued that the predecessors of the ten schools of the most influential and representative masters (*zhuzi* 諸子) were the royal officials (*wangguan* 王官) who had served the Zhou ruling house before the turmoil and disunion in the Eastern Zhou dynasty.

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[164] See Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions in the *Shiji*," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 59-99.

[165] Michael Loewe has argued that it was only since Emperor Yuan that citations of Confucius appear more frequently in political speeches. See Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, A 'Confucian' Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 159-64.

[166] For the date of Liu xiang's death, see Qian Mu 錢穆, "Liu Xiang, Xin f zi nianpu" 劉向、歆父子年譜, in *Liang Han jingxue jinguwen pingyi* 兩漢經學今古文平議, (Beijing, Shangwu yinshuguan, 2001), 1.

[167] Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.1701.

As great as their divergences were, all masters or intellectual traditions derived from one unitary origin embodied in the texts which we now conventionally call "Confucian Classics." This corpus of Confucian Classics, however, was actually a shared cultural heritage in the pre-imperial era,[168] which is observable through the citations and allusions from the Classics in texts traditionally attributed to other intellectual traditions.[169] This chapter will argue that the theory that the masters were the descendants of the royal officials of the idealized ancient official system arose in this cultural context during the Han.

How could such a theory successfully transform the Classics from being a heritage shared by diverse masters into an exclusive domain of *ru* 儒 (Confucians) in the "Yi wen zhi"? As we shall see, the Lius imagined that seven of the Zhou dynasty's royal officials were creators of what I call the proto-Classics, i.e., the Classics prior to the alleged time when Confucius edited and authored the Classics. The predecessors of the Confucians, in contrast, were only transmitters or interpreters of the proto-Classics. Nevertheless, an underlying assumption in the "Yi wen zhi" was that the status as omnipotent transmitters or interpreters enabled the predecessors of the Confucians to systematically and organically synthesize the knowledge from different proto-Classics. This was unlike the creators who only specialized in one aspect and lacked a big picture of world knowledge. Thus, this chapter argues that not only did this theory intend to explain the phenomenon that the

[168] Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 19-20.

[169] The Research Centre for Chinese Ancient Texts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong has launched a research project "Citations from the *Thirteen Classics* Found in Pre-Han and Han Texts" since 1998 under the Chinese Ancient Text (CHANT) series and has published five volumes on the *Thirteen Classics* citations seen in available early Chinese texts. We can see from the published volumes how "non-Confucian" texts quoted sentences or phrases from the Classics.

Classics were alluded to and quoted by various texts, including those affiliated to non-Confucian schools in the "Yi wen zhi," but, more importantly, to also complete the process of the "Confucianization" of the Classics. Even though our available sources inform us of the ascendency of Confucian scholars since as early as the reign of Emperor Xuan (Liu Xun 劉詢, r. 74-48 B.C.E.),[170] there was still a need during the times of Liu Xiang and Liu Xin to justify the Confucian monopoly on the Classics. The "Yi wen zhi" and its theory regarding the origins of the masters emerged in response to this need.

3.2 The "Yi wen zhi" Bibliography as a Form of Intellectual Argumentation

Before getting into the Lius' theory, let us first scrutinize the basic information about the "Yi wen zhi," the main source which we will use to develop our discussion in this chapter. The extant ""Yi wen zhi" of the *Hanshu* is Ban Gu's refinement and abbreviation of Liu Xiang's *Bielu* and Liu Xin's *Qilüe*. According to the introduction of the "Yi wen zhi," Ban Gu "cut [the *Qilüe*] down to its essence and supplemented with texts and books which had been produced later" 刪其要，以備篇籍.[171] The fragments of the Lius' original works were found within such other materials as Yan Shigu's 顏師古 (581–645)

[170] In her study of the rise of Confucian Empire in the Han, Liang Cai argues that, based on the statistical data from the *Records of the Grand Historian* and the *History of the Former Han*, a plague of witchcraft had created a power vacuum in the Han official system, and the *ru* scholars, who arose from obscure backgrounds, were able to quickly fill such a vacuum during and after the reign of Emperor Xuan. See Liang Cai, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014). I am not as optimistic as Cai was about the adequacy of the records from both histories. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, one problem of her statistical approach is that we have no reason to assume what both histories presented was the whole picture of the Han political history. Therefore, a danger of heavily relying on their records is that we can only reconstruct a spot on a leopard but not an entire leopard.

[171] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1701.

commentary on the treatise; and the majority of their fragments were even gathered in Yao Zhenzong's 姚振宗 (1842 – 1906) supplemented edition of the "Yi wen zhi."[172] In light of those surviving fragments, we are now able to determine Ban Gu's standard(s) for cutting down the catalog of the Lius. Nevertheless, as Ban Gu's goal was only to omit irrelevant and redundant parts of the Lius' bibliography, the extant "Yi wen zhi" is still reliable to understand the bibliographical theory of both Lius.

As the "Yi wen zhi" pointed out, during the reign of Emperor Cheng (Liu Ao 劉驁, r. 33-7 B.C.E.), Liu Xiang, as the Imperial Household Grandee (*Guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫), was commanded (in 26 B.C.E.) to collate the miscellaneous texts from three different categories besides military, mathematical, and medical writings that had been gathered by the Conservancy Commissioner (*yezhe* 謁者) Chen Nong 陳農 (fl. 26 B.C.E.) in the imperial archive. Every time he finished collating a text, Liu Xiang put the sections of the text in order, summarized its central idea, and presented what he had recorded to the throne. His records then formed the basis for the *Bielu*. After Liu Xiang's death, his son Liu Xin, the Palace Attendance and Commandant-in-chief of Chariots (*Shizhong fengche duwei* 侍中奉車都尉), continued his father's work. Liu Xin synthesized all texts and classified them into six major categorical divisions according to his understanding of the attributions of the texts. The six categorical divisions included: the "Six Arts" (*liu yi* 六藝), "Masters" (*zhuzi* 諸子), "Poems and Rhapsodies" (*shifu* 詩賦), "Military Writings" (*bingshu* 兵書),

[172] For the fragments of Lius' works Yao Zhenzong 姚振宗 collected and collated, see his *Hanshu Yi wen zhi tiaoli* 漢書藝文志條理 (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2011).

"Mathematics and Divination" (*shushu* 數術), and "Medicine and Techniques" (*fangji* 方技). Under each major division, there were varying numbers of sub-divisions.[173] As many studies of Chinese Bibliology (*mulu xue* 目錄學) have suggested, the Lius' divisions exerted great influence on later classifications of knowledge in official histories.[174] Liu Xin presented the *Qilüe*, with six "surveys" corresponding to the above categorical divisions and the last survey, the introductive "general survey" (Ji lüe 輯略), to Emperor Ai (Liu Xin 劉欣, r. 7-1 B.C.E.).[175]

The above description is the historical background of the Lius' catalog. This catalog was never impartial and comprehensive, in the sense that, as Martin Kern and Michael Hunter have argued, it did not record everything in the imperial library and was therefore not an ideal guideline for using the sources stored within the library.[176] Instead, this catalog

[173] For instance, there were nine sub-divisions within the "Six Arts" category, while there were only four sub-divisions within the "Medicine and Techniques" category.

[174] There are many studies of the "Yi wen zhi," particularly its significance in the development of Chinese Bibliology (*mulu xue* 目錄學) in the Chinese world. For example, Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 (1884-1955) asserted at the very beginning of his monograph on Chinese Bibliology that the style of Chinese Bibliology was perfected by Liu Xiang and Liu Xin. Since then, Chinese Bibliology had become the guidance for all traditional scholars to start their scholarly career. See Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, *Mulu xue fawei* 目錄學發微 (Chengdou: Bashu shushe, 1991), 1. See also Yao Mingda. 姚名達, *Zhongguo muluxue shi* 中國目錄學史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2002), 37-46, 53-57; Zhou Shaochuan 周少川, *Guji mulu xue* 古籍目錄學 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1996), 103-118. In his recent monograph, Li Ling 李零 carefully studied the classification of the "Treatise on Arts and Writings" and regrouped the entries of the studied treatise based on the inferred material nature of the texts included in the studied treatise. See Li Ling 李零, *Lantai wanjuan: Dou Hanshu "Yi wen zhi"* 蘭台萬卷：讀《漢書・藝文志》 (Beijing: Shenghuo, doushu, xinzhi; Sanlian shudian, 2013).

[175] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1701; 36.1967. According to Deng Junjie 鄧駿捷, Liu Xin presented the *Qilüe* in the period between late 7 B.C.E. and early 6 B.C.E. See Deng Junjie 鄧駿捷, "Liu Xin shangzou *Qilüe* shijian kaobian" 劉歆上奏《七略》時間考辨, *Aomen ligong xuebao* 澳門理工學報 1 (2012): 167-72.

[176] Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han," in Stephen Owen, ed., *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, vol. 1: *To 1375* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 61; Michael Hunter, "The 'Yiwen zhi' 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) Bibliography in Its Own Context,"

was used by both Lius to present their own views on the history of knowledge and the classification of texts. The privilege they got from Han emperors to access the imperial holdings provided them a precious opportunity to read numerous texts, of which some have been lost.

However, instead of saying that the opportunity of collating the texts in the imperial archive allowed both Lius to build their systematic view on knowledge, I prefer to turn the argument around and maintain that both bibliographers' perspective on knowledge was the presumption of their classificatory theory. As many excavated manuscripts have exemplified, early Chinese texts were more miscellaneous and heterogeneous than the Lius' classification presented, and it may be hard to categorize any single text with multiple features into a specific group emphasizing one shared feature and separate the group from another.[177] The absence of many excavated texts which have no parallel in the transmitted tradition also points to one possibility that many texts, both known and unknown, were intentionally excluded from the Lius' catalog due to their incompatibility with their pre-existing schematic theory. Meanwhile, the neat division of labor at the time when Liu Xiang was first appointed to collate the texts in the imperial archive implies that the

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[177] An example comes from the *Natural Dispositions come from Endowment* (*Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出) manuscript from the Guodian bamboo-slip collection. While many scholars see it as a Confucian text, there are some who claim that it was a synthesis of Confucianism, Daoism, and Mohism. For the former stance, see Gu Shikao 顧史考 (Scott Bradley Cook), *Guodian Chu jian xian Qin ru shu hong wei guan* 郭店楚簡先秦儒書宏微觀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012). For the latter stance, see Gao Huaping 高華平, "Lunshu Guodian Chu mu zhujian *Xing zi ming chu* de Daojia si xiang" 論述《郭店楚墓竹簡・性自命出》的道家思想, in Wuhan da xue Zhongguo wen hua yan jiu yuan 武漢大學中國文化研究院, ed., *Guodian Chu jian guoji xueshu yataohui lunwenji* 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 371-74. However, as the concept of schools of thought was largely a Western Han invention, any attempt to attribute the newly discovered texts to a specific school is no more than an anachronism.

systematic division we now observe in the "Yi wen zhi" receptus already existed before the starting of his collation. As mentioned, Liu Xiang was responsible for collating texts from three categories: the "Classics and Commentaries" (*jingchuan* 經傳) which corresponded to the "Six Arts" category in the "Yi wen zhi," "Masters", and "Poems and Rhapsodies." Under Liu Xiang's leadership were Ren Hong 任宏 (f. 1st century B.C.E.), Yin Xian 尹咸 (f. 1st century B.C.E.), and Li Zhuguo 李柱國 (f. 1st century B.C.E.), who were in charge of collating texts from the categories of "Military Writings," "Mathematics and Divination", and "Medicine and Techniques."[178] Their divisions corresponded perfectly to that of the "Yi wen zhi," and therefore demonstrated that classifying the texts into six major groups was something already in Liu Xiang's mind before he started his job in the imperial library. Thus, the opportunity to collate the imperial collection did not shape the Lius' classified theory of texts and knowledge; rather, it allowed them to apply their theory of classification. In this vein, the prototypes of the extant "Yi wen zhi"—the *Bielu* and the *Qilüe*—were combinations of the Lius' pre-existing theory and real-world application.

3.3 The Zhou Royal Officials as the Ancestors of the Masters

Liu Xiang's and Liu Xin's catalog provided them with a fascinating platform to put their knowledge into a systematic schema in which each category of knowledge was supposed to be distinct from but also relevant to each other. This schema was also

[178] For this division of labor, see Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1701.

hierarchical in the sense that the first division, i.e., the "Six Arts," was superior to the rest. This leading division consisted of six sub-divisions represented by each of the Six Classics respectively and three sub-divisions of the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classics of Filial Piety*) and *xiaoxue* 小學 (Lesser Learning). Although they could be divided for the purpose of organizing, each Classic was thought to be indispensable and mutually complementary, as demonstrated in the following excerpt from the conclusion of the "Liuyi lue" 六藝略 (Survey of the Six Arts):

> The writing of the Six Arts: The *Yue* is used to harmonize one's spirit, and it is the manifestation of benevolence. The *Shi* is used to rectify language, and it is the application of correctness. The *Li* is used to illuminate deportment, and since its illumination is manifest, there is no explanation [on the *Li*]. The *Shu* is used to broaden one's hearing, and it is the skill of being intelligent. The *Chunqiu* is used to judge affairs, and it is the tally of trust. As for these five things, they are surely the principles of five constant values. They rely on each other to be complete, and the *Yi* is their origin. As a result, it is said, "If the *Yi* cannot be seen, then Qian and Kun would probably be almost eliminated." [It] means that [the *Yi*] begins and ends in light of [the operation of] Heaven and Earth. As for the five learnings, generations change as if the five phrases mutually affect each other.
>
> 六藝之文：《樂》以和神，仁之表也；《詩》以正言，義之用也；《禮》以明體，明者著見，故無訓也；《書》以廣聽，知之術也；《春秋》以斷事，信之符也。五者，蓋五常[179]之道，相須而備，而《易》為之原。故曰：「《易》不可見，則乾坤或幾乎息矣」，言與天地為終始也。至於五學，世有變改，猶五行之更用事焉。[180]

[179] These five constant values were defined in the "Temperament and character" (Qingxing 情性) chapter of the *Virtuous discussions of the White Tiger Hall* (*Baihu tong delun* 白虎通德論), "What are Five Cardinal Values? They are benevolence, correctness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity" 五常者何？謂仁、義、禮、智、信也. See Ban Gu, *Baihu tong delun* 白虎通德論 (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1967), 8.1a. In a difference from this *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 edition, Chen Li's edition transcribed the character *chang* 常 as *xing* 性; see Ban Gu, *Baihu tong shu zheng* 白虎通疏證, commented and annotated by Chen Li 陳立 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1994), 8.381.

[180] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1723.

Similar to the six major categorical divisions of the Lius' catalog in which the first—"the Six Arts"—was thought to lead the other five, within the corpus of Confucian Classics, the *Yi* was said to be the origin (*yuan* 原) of the other Five Classics and was therefore elevated above them.[181] Here we see a rhetorical analogy between the system of world knowledge and the corpus of Confucian Classics, with the divisions of Confucian Classics exemplifying the classification of the "Yi wen zhi." The *Yi* was the origin of the other Five Classics, so the "Six Arts" were also foundational to the knowledge in the other five categorical divisions.

It was upon this assumption about the Classics' ancestral role in knowledge that the Lius fabricated their theory of the source of the masters. In concluding the "Survey of Masters" section, the treatise gave a summary:

> Of the ten lineages of masters, only nine are significant. [They] all arose because of the decline of the kingly way and the enfeoffed vassals' use of violence to govern. The favors and disfavors of the rulers at that time differed. Therefore, the skills of the nine lineages flowed forth. Each [of the masters] pulled out only one thread and promoted what they were skilled in. [The masters] persuaded [others] with these treads and pleased the enfeoffed vassals. Although what they presented were as different as water and fire, [their teachings] mutually reinforced and neutralized each other. As in the case when benevolence is accompanied by correctness, and as in the case when reverence is accompanied by harmony, [the values within each pair] contradict each other while completing each other. The *Yi* says, "All [people] under Heaven return to the same place but through different paths, while there is a direction but hundreds of considerations."[182] Nowadays, [the masters] from

[181] The *Yijing* enjoyed a prominent status among other Classics in the Lius' philosophy. See Zheng Wangeng 鄭萬耕, "Liu Xiang, Liu Xin fuzi de *Yi* shuo" 劉向、劉歆父子的易說, *Zhouyi yanjiu* 周易研究 64.2 (2004): 3-12. Wang Feng 王鳳 even argues it was not until Liu Xin that the *Yijing* became the leading Classic in Chinese classical scholarship. See Wang Feng 王鳳, "Liu Xin yu Zhouyi zuigao jingdian diwei de queli" 劉歆與《周易》最高經典地位的確立, in Jiang Guanghui 姜廣輝, ed., *Zhongguo jingxue sixiang shi (di er juan)* 中國經學思想史（第二卷） (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2003), 313-35.

[182] This citation does not come from the *Yi* but from the "Commentary on the Appended Phrases" (Xici zhuan 繫辭傳). See Kong Yingda 孔穎達, ed., *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisanjing*

different branches promote what they excel in, fathom what they know, and probe their considerations to illustrate their aims. Although their ideas have defects, they are still the branches and fringes of the Six Classics when we combine their main ideas.

諸子十家，其可觀者九家而已。皆起於王道既微，諸侯力政，時君世主，好惡殊方，是以九家之術蠭出並作，各引一端，崇其所善，以此馳說，取合諸侯。其言雖殊，辟猶水火，相滅亦相生也。仁之與義，敬之與和，相反而皆相成也。《易》曰：「天下同歸而殊塗，一致而百慮。」今異家者各推所長，窮知究慮，以明其指，雖有蔽短，合其要歸，亦六經之支與流裔。[183]

Sima Tan's 司馬談 (165-110 B.C.E.) "Lun liujia yaozhi" 論六家要旨 (On the Essences of the Six Experts) had also utilized this citation from the "Xici zhuan" 繫辭傳 (Commentary on the Appended Phrases) to explain the same goal of achieving a harmonious ordering (*zhi* 治) of all that the six branches of experts (*jia* 家) shared.[184] In the Lius' catalog, this citation was understood the other way around to emphasize the recognition that all the masters were the descendants of the Classics.

The concept that the Classics were the embodied sources of the entire world of knowledge, meaning that the Classics manifested the Way (*dao* 道), was not something

zhushu 十三經注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 8.169a.

[183] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1746.

[184] See Sima Qian, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1959), 130.3288. I adopt Kidder Smith's translation of the word *jia* 家 as "experts" here, instead of translating it as "schools." Unlike A. C. Graham who had remarked that a firm classification of the pre-Han schools begins with Sima Tan, Kidder Smith argued that the word *jia* in Sima Tan's treatise meant "people (with expertise in something)." According to Smith, Tan's reason for using the word *jia* was to identify a set of ideas in a manner to make them attractive to Emperor Wu. The six configurations in Sima Tan's treatise did not necessarily point to then current schools or even self-identifying specialists. Rather, the ideas under his rubrics (e.g., *Ru* and *Yin-Yang*) were exclusive possession of these specific groups, for those ideas or teachings were commonplace in Han social-political life. See Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and Invention of Daoism, Legalism, et cetera," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61.1 (2003): 129-56. For A. C. Graham's understanding of the word *jia* as philosophical schools, see A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 337.

novel in the Lius' times. As we can see in the "Tianxia" 天下 (All under Heaven) chapter of the received *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (*Master Zhuang*), the Six Classics were already esteemed as the textual source of the hundred masters (*baijia* 百家):

> How completed the people in the ancient times were! They were comparable to deities and spirits, and as pure as Heaven and Earth. They raised all creative matters and harmonized all under Heaven. Their bounties reached to all common people. They had a clear understanding of fundamental principles, while linking all implemented policies to principles. They penetrated into six directions and open up four quarters. In big and small, and in fine and coarse, there was no place where they do not exist. As for their insights that are preserved in various regulations, many scribes, who have handed down old laws, generation by generation, still possess them. Many scholars and gentlemen from Zhou and Lu can understand those preserved in the *Shi*, *Shu*, *Li*, and *Yue*. The *Shi* is used to present one's aspiration; the *Shu* is used to describe affairs; the *Li* is used to direct one's behavior; the *Yue* is used to guide to harmony; the *Yi* is used to show the operation of the *Yin* and *Yang*; and the *Chunqiu* is used to present the titled roles and assumed obligations of people. Some that dispersed throughout the world under Heaven and became established in the Middle Kingdom are still occasionally mentioned and presented in the teachings of hundred experts.
>
> When all under Heaven is in great chaos, the sages and worthies are no longer shining. The standard of morality is no longer unified, and people under Heaven are usually self-conceited about understanding the whole despite gaining only one glimpse. Just like one's ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, although they all have their faculties, cannot be interlinked. Just like the hundred experts' skills, they all have their excellence and can be utilized at appropriate times. Nevertheless, they are not complete and well-rounded, so [the hundred experts] are narrow-minded scholars. They judge the beauty of Heaven and Earth, divide the principles of all creative matters, and gaze back toward the completeness of ancient people. [However,] only a few can embrace the beauty of Heaven and Earth, or articulate the rules of deities and spirits. As a result, the Way of the inner sages and outer kings fell into darkness, unable to shine, it is suppressed and unable to develop. Everyone under Heaven pursues what each one desires and regards [limited] skills as all-round knowledge. Alas! The hundred experts have departed and never return, so it is inevitable that they cannot match [the Way and techniques of the ancient people]. Scholars in the later generations are so unfortunate that they cannot see the purity of Heaven and Earth and the big picture of the people in the ancient times. The Way and techniques are about to be cut off from the people under Heaven.
>
> 古之人其備乎！配神明，醇天地，育萬物，和天下，澤及百姓，明於本數，係於末度，六通四辟，小大精粗，其運無乎不在。其明而在數度者，舊法世傳之史尚多有之。其在於《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》者，鄒、魯之士、

> 搢紳先生多能明之。《詩》以道志，《書》以道事，《禮》以道行，《樂》以道和，《易》以道陰陽，《春秋》以道名分。其數散於天下而設於中國者，百家之學時或稱而道之。
>
> 天下大亂，賢聖不明，道德不一，天下多得一察焉以自好。譬如耳目鼻口，皆有所明，不能相通。猶百家眾技也，皆有所長，時有所用。雖然，不該不遍，一曲之士也。判天地之美，析萬物之理，察古人之全，寡能備於天地之美，稱神明之容。是故內聖外王之道，闇而不明，鬱而不發，天下之人各為其所欲焉以自為方。悲夫！百家往而不反，必不合矣。後世之學者，不幸不見天地之純，古人之大體，道術將為天下裂。[185]

This excerpt presented a devolutionary historical scheme in which knowledge (the Way) was originally intact in ancient times but was fragmented during more recent tumult and the loss of virtuous and sagacious men. At that time, scholars only investigated one of the many aspects of the Way and were conceited about their partial understanding of the knowledge of the world. The holism of knowledge, as a result, was fractured (*lie* 裂) by scholars under Heaven.

Despite this depressing intellectual atmosphere, the author(s) of the "Tianxia" was far from falling into despair about the fate of the ancient Way. A glimpse of hope can still be perceived. The first part of the previous excerpt made it clear that the holistic Way that the ancient people grasped existed in four texts: The *Shi*, *Shu*, *Li*, and *Yue*. Together with two other texts—the *Yi* and *Chunqiu*—each text bore specific responsibilities. To restore holistic knowledge, one must utilize every text of this corpus. We cannot determine whether the six texts were *jing*, Classics, in the mind of the author(s) of the "Tianxia" chapter.[186] Nevertheless, they were said to preserve the ubiquitous ancient wisdom in its

[185] Zhuangzi 莊子, *Zhuangzi ji jie* 莊子集解, commented and annotated by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 33.287-88.

[186] Indeed, the *Master Zhuang*'s chapter did not crown them with the sacred term "Classic" (*jing* 經). However, as will be elaborated below, in a dialogue between Confucius and Laozi recorded in the "Tianyuan"

integrity and thus fit well with early Chinese understanding of the sacred term; as a result, we may have reason to assume that in the "Tianxia," these six texts enjoyed a privileged status beyond other texts which resembled that of the Classics in later imperial history of China.[187]

However, problems still remain regarding this passage from the "Tianxia." Besides the mysterious date and authorship of the "Tianxia,"[188] what matters most to our current discussion is what corpus of Classics did this last chapter of the received *Zhuangzi* refer to?

天運 (The Turning of Heaven) chapter of the *Master Zhuang*, Confucius explicitly stated that the texts he studied were Classics. Meanwhile, we also see five identical titles besides the *Music* in the *Yucong* 語叢 (*Thicket of Sayings*) manuscript of the Guodian collection. See Scott Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2012), 2: 835-36. These sources suggest that a corpus with Five/Six texts bearing identical titles already existed and were known by scholars in the Warring States Era (476-221 B.C.E.).

[187] The word *jing*, according to Michael Nylan, delivered the following meanings besides "Classics" in classical Chinese: "(1) a 'constant' (*chang* 常) that is regular and predictable; (2) the 'main thread' or 'warp' in a fabric, in contrast to 'secondary threads' or 'woof' (*wei* 緯; *ji* 紀); (3) 'to manage,' 'to arrange' or 'to rule'; and (4) 'to pass through.'" See Michael Nylan, "Classics without Canonization, Reflections on Classical Learning and Authority in Qin (221-210 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220)," in John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part One, Shang through Han (1250 BC - AD 220)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 726. In addition to these meanings, as this chapter demonstrates, in the Lius' theory, the word *jing* and the corpus of classical texts to which the word referred also implied the meaning of "origin" or "root."

[188] The date of the "Tianxia" has been vividly debated among scholars since imperial China. The purported author of the *Master Zhuang* anthology, Zhuang Zhou 莊周, was said in traditional narrative as a thinker alive in the late fourth century B.C.E. However, the current anthology that bears his honorific has been thought to a work composed collectively by many hands. For example, Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540 – 1620) argued that the seven chapters of the "Inner Chapters" of the received *Zhuangzi* could not be written by persons other than Zhuang Zhou, while many chapters of "Outer Chapters" and "Mixed Chapters" were interpolated by later scholars. See Jiao Hong 焦竑, *Jiao shi bicheng* 焦氏筆乘, collated by Li Jianxiong 李劍雄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 2.41. A.C. Graham suggested that certain passages from the "Mixed Chapters" section were Zhuang Zhou's works and were related to the "Inner Chapters" section of the collection. See A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 173. Also see A.C. Graham, *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 100-11, for his translation of these passages related to the "Inner Chapters." Yang Richu 楊日出 has summarized the different opinions on the authorship of the "All under Heaven," see his *Zhuangzi Tianxia pian yanjiu* 《莊子・天下篇》研究 (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2014), 87-119. To sum up, Yang Richu enumerate three major points of view on its authorship. The first suggested that this chapter was Zhuangzi's own writing. The second one, however, argued that it was written by Zhuangzi's followers. In contrast, the last group of scholars, such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), contended that this chapter was a product by Confucian scholars who were familiar with the Dao.

Did it refer to the corpus in our possession? Was that the corpus in minds of the Lius? Even though the "Tianxia" mentioned the identical titles of the Six Classics, I cannot assert here that both the "Tianxia" and the "Yi wen zhi" were talking about the same corpus in the light of the textual fluidity of early Chinese texts.[189] Nor do I intend to declare that the texts in the "Tianxia" were our available Classics. Nevertheless, stating that many gentlemen in the areas of Zou and Lu were capable of understanding the sacred texts, the "Tianxia" appears to draw a connection between the Classics, the textual repository of the holistic Way, and the *ru* scholars in modern-day Shandong where Confucius was born. As demonstrated in Chapter One, our transmitted Han narratives was inclined to emphasize that the majority of the known *ru* scholars in the Han dynasty were from this eastern area of the empire.[190]

The "Tianxia," however, did not exclude scholars from other regions, and suggested that the hundred masters who spread over the Central States or Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo* 中國) usually cited and mentioned the Classics. This observation is confirmed by available early materials, both transmitted and excavated, where many early anthologies which

[189] The recent discoveries of ancient Chinese manuscripts have suggested that early Chinese texts were never stabilized in the sense that variants of a single text were circulated among literati in the early period. For instance, both the Guodian and Shanghai Museum collections of the Chu bamboo-slips contain counterparts of a chapter entitled "Ziyi" 緇衣 (Black Jacket) in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*). Scholars have recognized that a major difference between the transmitted version and the excavated versions is their sequences. For a detailed study of the versions of the "Ziyi," see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 63-130.

[190] This tendency is particularly obvious in Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historians*. In the "Rulin liezhuan" 儒林列傳 (Collective Biographies of the Ru), 28 out of 39 identified *ru* scholars were from modern-day Shandong. Liang Cai, in her recent article, has studied the social network of the men from Donghai, an area which comprises modern-day Shandong and northern Jiangsu, and examined the models of success of the *ru* scholars from this area. See Liang Cai, "Ru Scholars, Social Networks, and Bureaucracy: Donghai 東海 men and Models for Success in Western Han China (206 B.C.E–9 C.E.)," *Early China* 42 (2019): 237-71.

scholars do not classify as "Confucian" texts had the citations to the Classics, howbeit with degrees of textual variance.[191] However, stating that most scholars living in Zou and Lu areas could understand four of the six texts, the chapter appeared to argue that the scholars living beyond Zou and Lu were probably less competent in their understanding of those sacred texts which embodied the holistic knowledge in ancient times. More to the point, when saying that the Classics preserved the ancient knowledge, the "Tianxia" did not specify who composed the texts and infused them with the holistic knowledge. Who exactly were the ancient people the chapter was referring to? Was there any division of labor when the ancient people put together the Classics and bestowed them with distinct missions? The "Tianxia," however, did not address these two questions.

In this light, both Lius appeared to fill in the hole the "Tianxia" had left. When affirming the genealogical relationship between the Classics and the masters, the Lius, in an innovative but controversial way, also assigned the masters with their respective ancestors in the idealized Zhou bureaucracy. In the "Survey of Masters" section, as we can see above, the Lius identified a total of ten branches of masters. When concluding the list of each branch of the masters, both Lius consistently used the following formula to trace the history of each master: "A probably originated from B" (A 者，蓋出於 B), in which A referred to the generic name of the master while B referred to the title of the royal official

[191] An example of such textual variants comes from an anecdote in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Commentary*), where the stanza "I am personally rejected; Why does it matter what may happen to me afterwards?" 我躬不閱，遑恤我後 of the "Gu Feng" 谷風 in the *Shi* receptus was written as 我躬不說，皇恤我後. See Kong Yingda 孔穎達, ed., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 36.625a. The variants of the *Shi* were extensively studied by Qing scholars. For Qing scholarship of the *Shi*'s textual variants, see Chen Zhi 陳致, "Qingdai *Shijing* yiwen kaoshi yanjiu" 清代《詩經》異文考釋研究, *Dongfang wenhua* 東方文化 41.2 (2008): 1-56.

from whom the corresponding master derived. After this formula, there was a description of the duties of that royal official, his professional specialty, sometimes with citations from the *Analects* and the *Yi*, and the defects that royal official's descendent, i.e., the master, had. According to the treatise, both Lius claimed that Confucians originated from the Officials of Instruction (*Situ zhi guan* 司徒之官), Daoists (*daojia* 道家) from the Scribal Officials (*Shi guan* 史官), the *yin-yang* experts (*yin-yang jia* 陰陽家) from the Officials of Xihe (*Xihe zhi huan* 羲和之官), Legalists (*fajia* 法家)[192] from the Officials of Justification (*Li guan* 理官); the Terminologists (*mingjia* 名家) from the Ritual Officials (*Li guan* 禮官), Mohists (*mojia* 墨家) from the Guardians of the Pure Temple (*Qingmiao zhi shou* 清廟之守), Strategists (*zonghengjia* 縱橫家) from the Officials of Foreign Intercourse (*Xingren zhi guan* 行人之官), Syncretists from the Officials of Remonstrance (*Yi guan* 議官), Agriculturalists (*nongjia* 農家) from the Officials of Agriculture (*Nongji zhi guan* 農稷之官), and finally Folklorists from the Insignificant Officials (*Bai guan* 稗官).[193]

Whether the masters actually derived from the royal officials of the Zhou dynasty was one of the major topics studied among Chinese scholars in the first half of the past century. Among those scholars, Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936) was a big advocate of the Lius' theory.[194] In response to Zhang Taiyan, Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) published his famous

[192] Translating the Chinese word *fajia* into "Legalism" in English is problematic. See Chapter One n.5.

[193] See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1728, 1732, 1734, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1740, 1742, 1743, 1745.

[194] See Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, *Zhuzi xue lüeshuo* 諸子學略說 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010), 3.

article, “Zhuzi bu chu yu wangguan lun” 諸子不出於王官論 (On the Masters were not derived from the Royal Officials) in 1917 to criticize this claim of the “Yi wen zhi” as anachronistic.[195] In sum, Hu’s criticisms are fourfold. First, this view on the early Chinese intellectual history did not exist in the narratives before the “Yi wen zhi.” Second, arguments by the pre-imperial masters were widely divergent, so they could not have originated from a single fountainhead. Third, the division of the nine branches (*jiuliu* 九流) in the “Yi wen zhi” was problematic. Fourth, the loss of early Chinese texts obstructed even efforts by influential scholars like Zhang Taiyan to make any provable arguments. Following Hu Shih’s objection, Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990) suggested that Han people proposed this idea due to their esteem for order and system.[196] Although voices opposing Hu Shih’s argument can be heard in the ensuing decades,[197] a number of prominent scholars at that time, such as Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) and Fu Sinian 傅斯年 (1896-1950) sided with Hu Shi.[198]

[195] Hu Shi 胡適, “Zhuzi bu chu yu wangguan lun” 諸子不出於王官論, in Hu Shih, *Hushi wenji* 胡適文集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), 2: 180-86.

[196] Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, *Zhongguo zhexue shi bu* 中國哲學史補 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2014), 74.

[197] For example, Lü Simian 呂思勉 (1884-1957) criticized Hu Shih’s argument and asked that if the masters did not originate from royal officials in the Zhou dynasty, how could they be so popular and prosperous? See Lü Simian 呂思勉, *Xian Qin xueshu gailun* 先秦學術概論 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1992), 13.

[198] Fu Sinian 傅斯年, “Zhanguo zhuzi chu Mozi wai jie chu yu zhiye” 戰國諸子除墨子外皆出於職業, in his, *Fu Sinian “Zhan guo zi jia” yu* Shiji *jiangyi* 傅斯年「戰國子家」與《史記》講義 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2007), 6-13.

I do not intend to delve farther into their debate;[199] nor am I interested in ascertaining whose stance is tenable. Nevertheless, I do agree with Hu Shi that this idea about the masters' ancestors had not appeared in earlier texts, and we cannot determine where the Lius got this idea. One possible exception is the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of the Zhou*), a Classic which Liu Xin favored and whose date is still questionable because certain officials' titles appeared in this ritual Classic as well.[200] For instance, we see the Officials of Instruction, Scribe Ritual Officials, and Officials of Foreign Intercourse therein.[201] However, it is not until the "Jingji zhi" 經籍志 (Treatise on Classics and Texts) in the *Suishu* 隋書 (*History of the Sui*) that we can see a more affirmative association between the masters and the official system in the *Zhouli*.[202] Why was there such a difference between both treatises? In the quoted formula, the word *gai* 蓋, translated here as "probably," implies the Lius' hesitation about assigning specific royal officials to different masters.[203] Their hesitation

[199] For a summary of the debate on the authenticity of Liu Xin's theory took place in the past century, see Deng Junjie 鄧駿捷, "'Zhuzi chu yu wangguan' shuo yu Han jia xueshu huayu" 「諸子出於王官」說與漢家學術話語, *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 9 (2017): 184-204.

[200] The authorship and the date of the *Zhouli* have long been a headache to many modern scholars. For the debate, see Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Zhouguan chengli zhi shidai ji qi sixiang xingge* 周官成立之時代及其思想性格 (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shu ju, 1981); Peng Lin 彭林, *Zhouli zhuti sixiang yu chengshu niandai yanjiu* 《周禮》主體思想與成書年代研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991), especially Chapter One; Jin Chunfeng 金春峰, *Zhouguan zhi chengshu ji qi fanying de wenhua yu shidai xinkao* 周官之成書及其反映的文化與時代新考 (Taibei: Dongda ttushu gongsi, Zongjingxiao sanmin shu ju, 1993), 199-222; David Schaberg, "The *Zhouli* As Constitutional Text," in Benjamin Elman and Martin Kern eds., *Statecraft and Classical Learning: The Rituals of Zhou in East Asian History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 31-63.

[201] Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, ed., *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 9.138a; 1.12b; 17.260a; 37.560a-567b.

[202] See Wei Zheng 魏徵, *Suishu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1973), 34.997-1051 for the treatise's discussion on the masters.

[203] Yu Jiaxi, "Xiaoshuo jia chu yu Bai guan shuo" 小說家出於稗官說, in his Yu Jiaxi wenshi lunji 余嘉錫文史論集 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1997), 245-58.

perhaps reflected the competition they faced with others to transform the Classics from shared cultural heritage into exclusive Confucian ownership. A function word *gai* might protect the Lius from attacks on their blueprint of the Zhou official system and their theory of the masters' origin, even if the *Zhouli* might have been the source of their inspiration. In fact, in the late Western Han, the authority and authenticity of the *Zhouli* were actively questioned by a group of scholars, who, in traditional narratives, were members of the Modern Script group.[204] However, as Lu Zhao suggested, a Classic with a shorter genealogical history like the *Zhouli* was less authoritative than the Classics which were officially recognized at that time.[205] Although Liu Xin himself was in favor of this ritual Classic, the lower status of the *Zhouli* among many late Western Han scholars may explain the Lius' hesitation and reluctance to cite the *Zhouli* to promote their enterprising idea about the origin of the masters. In contrast, in the early Tang when the "Jingji zhi" was composed, the *Zhouli* had already gained superb authority among Confucian scholars, and the problems and dilemma that the Lius had faced were no longer an issue to Tang scholars.[206]

[204] Chapter Four of this dissertation will reexamine the nature of the Ancient Script/Modern Script debate in the Han; and I agree that the debate was not as polarized as traditional narratives claimed.

[205] Lu Zhao, *In Pursuit of the Great Peace: Han Dynasty Classicism and the Making of Early Medieval Literati Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019), 110.

[206] For the reception history of the *Zhouli*, see Jaeyoon Song, *Traces of Grand Peace: Classics and State Activism in Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 32-35; see also David McMullen, "The Role of the *Zhouli* in Seventh- and Eighth-Century Civil Administrative Traditions," in Elman and Kern, eds., *Statecraft and Classical Learning*, 183-85.

3.4 The Masters and the Classics: What Classics did They Contribute to?

Putting aside the dubious association that the Lius' theory claimed that the masters had with the *Zhouli*, we may still be able to infer their intention from the linkage they made between each master and a fictitious royal official. As I will show below, aside from the pre-Confucians and pre-*Zajia* masters, the remaining seven masters, according to the Lius' theory, contributed to one or more specific proto-Classics, or at least part of a proto-Classic. The prefix "proto-" is added here to the "Classics" because, in their theory, the Classics that the royal officials created were not redacted by Confucius. The ancestors of the masters, thus, only possessed one facet of knowledge of the world. In contrast, the pre-Confucians and pre-*Zajia* masters were superior to the others due to their relatively versatile knowledge in comparison to the other seven royal officials. In particular, the Official of Instruction was the official who possessed all branches of knowledge the other royal officials respectively expertized. The sophistication of this idealized official system of the Zhou dynasty, in the end, achieved the "Confucianization" of the Classics.[207]

The *Daojia* Masters

The Lius' suggestion that the *Daojia* masters were derived from the ancient scribal officials probably came from Sima Qian's biography of Laozi's 老子 in the *Shiji*, where Laozi was said to serve as the scribe (*shi* 史) of the repository in the Zhou capital (*Zhou*

[207] Since the pre-Folklorists, the rumormongers (*daoting tushuo zhe* 道聽塗說者), according to the "YWZ," were "Insignificant Officials" and unworthy of close observation (*guan* 觀), I decided not to discuss this royal official. See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1745.

shoucang shi zhi shi ye 周守藏室之史也).[208] The character *shi* in the sense of an official title appeared as early as Shang oracle bone inscriptions. Taking a paleographic approach, Wang Guowei's 王國維 (1877-1927) "Shi shi" 釋史 (Interpreting Scribe) suggested that *shi* in the Shang and Zhou dynasties were dignitaries responsible for written documents (*chishu zhi ren* 持書之人).[209] Wang's interpretation fits Xu Shen's gloss of the character *shi* which asserted that "*shi* is the official who records affairs" 史，記事者也.[210] However, besides the defects of Wang's graphic analysis in searching for the original meaning of this word,[211] another problem with Wang's essay is that he did not elaborate on what kinds of documents a *shi* was responsible for. This problem is also reflected in translating *shi* as "scribe," for this translation may oversimplify the duties and qualifications of a *shi* in ancient China. As Martin Kern stated, *shi* can be variously rendered in different context as "scribe," "clerk," "historian," "historiographer," "archivist," "ritualist," or "astrologer."[212] What kind of *shi* were the pre-*Daojia* masters in the Lius' blueprint of the idealized Zhou official system?

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[208] Sima, *Shiji*, 63.2139.

[209] Wang Guowei, "Shi shi" 釋史, in Wang Guowei, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林, in *Wang Guowei yishu* 王國維遺書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 6.1a-6b. Shirakawa Shizuka 白川靜 (1910-2006), in contrast, argued that *shi* appeared in the Shang and Western Zhou religious and ritual contexts.

[210] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 3B.4b.

[211] Tsang Wing Ma has offered a critical review on Wang Guowei's graphic analysis of the character *shi* and argued that there is potential danger in using the graphic form of a character to infer its original meaning. See Tsang Wing Ma, "Scribes in Early Imperial China," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2017), 18-21.

[212] Martin Kern, "The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China," in Porta S. La and D. Shulman eds., *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 115.

According to the summary in the "Yi wen zhi," Scribal Officials' duties were to "chronologically record the principles of success and failure, life and death, calamity, and happiness, and the past and the present. Thereafter one could understand how to grasp the essence and hold onto the root, to be quiet and empty for self-protection, to be humble and meek for self-control. These are the methods a ruler can use to face south to rule" 歷記成敗存亡禍福古今之道，然後知秉要執本，清虛以自守，卑弱以自持，此君人南面之術也.[213] If we compare this citation with the conclusion of the sub-division of the *Chunqiu*, we can enhance our sense of what the Scribal Officials in the imagined ancient times were supposed to record in order to assist rulers to grasp the methods of reigning:

> In the ancient times, every king had scribal officials. They wrote down whatever rulers did. That's why [the ancient kings] were careful about their words and deeds and could illustrate their rules and models. The scribes on his left recorded his words, while the scribes on his right recorded his matters. His matters constituted the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and his words constituted the *Documents*. Emperors and kings did not do differently.
>
> 古之王者世有史官，君舉必書，所以慎言行，昭法式也。左史記言，右史記事，事為《春秋》，言為《尚書》，帝王靡不同之。[214]

Even though a scribe was supposed to record all matters, as Xu Shen's description suggested and in the context of the Lius' catalog, the records of the Scribal Officials centered on rulers' words and actions that were crucial to their ruling. Significantly the previous citation references the *Shu* as recording a ruler's words and the *Chunqiu* as recording a ruler's activities. Since many chapters of the extant *Shu* are royal speeches

[213] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1732.

[214] Ibid, 30.1715.

made in historic moments,[215] we may conclude that the Scribal Officials in the treatise resemble modern secretaries whose duties were to write down royal speeches.

The discussion becomes more complicated when we consider that traditional scholarship credited Confucius with authoring the extant *Chunqiu*.[216] Early on in the *Mencius*, we already see that Confucius literally authored (*zuo* 作) and completed (*cheng* 成) the *Chunqiu* to implicitly criticize the frequent usurpations in his era.[217] Whether or not the *Mencius* actually suggested that Confucius authored the *Chunqiu* has been recently questioned.[218] Nevertheless, the content of the extant *Chunqiu*, covering the history from 722 B.C.E. to 481 B.C.E., supports the suspicion that it is by no means the annals composed by any of the royal officials discussed in the "Yi wen zhi." How then, can we verify the treatise's asserted Daoist relationship with the *Chunqiu*? In the *Mencius* 4B.49, we read, "The *Sheng* of the Jin, the *Tao Wu* of the Chu, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* of the

[215] For Martin Kern's analysis of three harangues in the *Documents*, which were actually records of the royal speeches made before battles, see Martin Kern, "The 'Harangues' (Shi 誓) in the Classic of Documents," in Martin Kern and Dirk Meyer, eds., *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy: Studies in the Composition and Thought of the Shangshu (Classic of Documents)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 281-319.

[216] For the discussion on Confucius's authorship, see, for example, Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, "Lun *Chunqiu* shi zuo bushi chaolu shi zuojing bushi zuoshi Du Yu yiwei Zhou Gong zuo fanli Lu Chun bo zhi shenming" 論春秋是作不是鈔錄是作經不是作史杜預以為周公作凡例陸淳駁之甚明, in *Jingxue tonglun* 經學通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954), 4: 2-4.

[217] Sun Shi 孫奭, ed., *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 6B.117b-118a.

[218] Scholars have recently started to doubt *Mencius*'s claim about Confucius's authorship of the extant *Spring and Autumn Annals*; see Liang Cai, "Who Said, 'Confucius Composed *Chunqiu*'? The Genealogy of the 'Chunqiu' Canon in the Pre-Han and Han Periods," *Frontiers of History in China* 5.3 (2010): 363-85. Martin Kern reinterprets the phrase Kongzi zuo *Chunqiu* 孔子作《春秋》as "Kongzi gave the *Springs and Autumns* its meaning." See Martin Kern, "Kongzi as Author in the Han," in Michael Hunter and Martin Kern, eds., *The Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on the Dating of a Classic* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 303.

Lu are one [category]" 晉之乘，楚之檮杌，魯之春秋，一也.[219] This juxtaposition of the *Chunqiu* of the state of Lu and the historical records of other states indicates that the genre of annals was not something novel in the time of Confucius. Was there a proto-Annals, i.e., a pre-existing *Chunqiu*? According to both Lius' comment on the Daoists, it is highly possible that both Lius conceived of annals in the idealized Western Zhou that served as the archetype of later annals and of Confucius's *Chunqiu*. This proto-*Chunqiu*, supposedly created by the Scribal Officials, recorded every significant event in the times of the ancient kings in order to explain the rise and fall of their reigns.

The *Yin-Yang jia* Masters and the *Nongjia* Masters

The *Yin-Yang jia* masters and the *Nongjia* masters appear to be a pair in the Lius' theory. The "Yi wen zhi" claimed that *Yin-Yang jia* were originally the Officials of Xihe who observed the stellar movements or orbital motions to provide people with accurate calendar to indicate seasonal changes. The "Yi wen zhi" suggested that the duties of the prototype of the *Yin-Yang jia* masters were to "respect and obey Great Heaven, calculate and observe the orbital motions of sun, moon, and stars, and to respectfully teach common people about the seasons" 敬順昊天，歷象日月星辰，敬授民時.[220] The Officials of Agriculture, the ancestors of the *Nongjia* masters, were in charge of "seeding the hundred grains, advising farming and feeding silkworms to provide sufficient clothes and food" 播

[219] Sun, *Mengzi zhushu*, 8A.146b.

[220] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1734.

百穀，勸耕桑，以足衣食.[221] To ensure that the agricultural and sericultural activities ran successfully and seasonally, the Officials of Agriculture had to collaborate closely with the Officials of Xihe to correctly calculate the seasonal changes and set up a reliable calendar. For example, the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) included the "Yueling" 月令 (Proceedings of government in the different months), and the *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 (*Dai the Elder's Book of Rites*) contained the "Xia xiaozheng" 夏小正 (Small calendar of the Xia Dynasty). These two elaborated calendars of a full year provided notes on astronomical and other phenomena, as well as corresponding agricultural and ritual activities. However, given their status as chapters of two sub-Classics, it is uncertain whether they were the supposed products of the imagined Officials of Xihe and the Officials of Agriculture. Instead, we find that the extant *Yi* may be associated to both royal officials, since the hexagrams of the received *Yi* are recognized as astronomical records from the ancient times.[222]

More importantly, this alignment of a Classic and both royal officials does match how the Classic was interpreted and appropriated in the Han. A famous example comes from Jing Fang 京房 (77-37 B.C.E.), who studied the *Yi* with Jiao Yanshou 焦延壽 (fl. 2nd century B.C.E.) according to Jing's biography in the *Hanshu*.[223] Even though his theory

[221] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1743.

[222] For instance, the Qian 乾 and Kun 坤 hexagrams were interpreted as being inspired by particular astronomical phenomena according to's earlier study. Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius: Studies in the Creation of the Chinese Classics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 197-220. Although Shaughnessy's theory focuses on the use of both hexagrams in the Western Zhou dynasty, as I will discuss shortly, the hexagrams in the *Yijing* were interpreted in the same way in the Han dynasty as well. See also Lu Yang 盧央, *Yixue yu tianwen xue* 易學與天文學 (Taipei: Dazhan, 2005).

[223] Ban, *Hanshu*, 75.3160. See also Andrew Seth Meyer, "The 'Correct Meaning of the Five Classics' and the intellectual foundations of the Tang" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1999), 43-48 for a brief

about the *Yi* was peculiar in Han times in comparison with other scholarly lineages of the same Classic,[224] his scholarship was so prominent that the catalog of the Lius privileged his writings.[225] One eminent feature of Jing Fang's theory of the *Yi* is his combination of the hexagrams into the sexagenary cycle, as demonstrated in the following passage of the *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Balanced Inquiries*):

> Mr. Jing's study of the *Yi* distributes six-four hexagrams over a year, with six days sharing seven hexagrams. [In each time,] only one hexagram is in power. Each hexagram has *yin* and *yang*, while *qi* can rise and fall. The temperature gets warm when the *yang* [*qi*] rises, while it gets cold when the *yin* [*qi*] falls.
>
> 《易》京氏布六十四卦於一歲中，六日七分，一卦用事。卦有陰陽，氣有升降，陽升則溫，陰升則寒。[226]

A detailed discussion of Jing Fang's scholarship on the *Yi* and its difference from other lineages is beyond the scope of this chapter.[227] However, the excerpt from the *Lunheng*

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discussion on Jing Fang's "image and number" (*xiangshu* 象數) exegesis.

[224] According to the genealogy in the "Collective Biographies of Ru" (Rulin zhuan 儒林傳) of the *History of the Former Han*, Tian He 田何 was the patriarch of the three major Han studies of the *Yi*, "Those who spoke on the *Yi* were based on Tian He's [scholarship]" 要言易者本之田何. See Ban, *Hanshu*, 88.3697. However, among all studies of this Classic, "only Mr. Jing's study was different" 唯京氏為異. Ibid, 3601. Chen Kanli 陳侃理 has argued that the difference between Jing Fang's scholarship of the *Yi* and the others was that Jing Fang focused more on "image and number," while other Han studies were inclined to understand the meaning and pattern (*yili* 義理) of this Classic. See Chen Kanli 陳侃理, *Ruxue, shushu yu zhengzhi: Zaiyi de zhengzhi wenhua shi* 儒學, 數術與政治 : 災異的政治文化史 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2015), 83-85.

[225] The studied treatise recorded a text with eleven *pian* attributed to Jing Fang of the Meng clan (*Mengshi* 孟氏) and a text with sixty-six *pian* on disaster and abnormality (*zaiyi* 災異), also by Jing Fang of the Meng clan. See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1703.

[226] Wang Chong 王充, *Lunheng jiao shi* 論衡校釋, collated and annotated by Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 631-32.

[227] For a detailed discussion on Jing Fang's study of the *Yi* and its application in calendar system, see Gao Jiyi 郜積意, *Liang Han jingxue de lishu beijing* 兩漢經學的曆術背景 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), 1-47.

indicates that the *Yi* had a strong astronomical application in the Han, and it was this astronomical application that associated the Classic with the fabricated royal official in both Lius' theory. The difference between the Officials of Xihe and the Officials of Agriculture was that the former was supposed to observe the stellar movements and the consequence seasonal changes, while the latter put such seasonal changes into appropriate time within a yearly calendar and regulated corresponding activities.

The *Fajia* Masters

The *Fajia* masters were originally the Officials of Justification in the Lius' assertion about the Zhou official system. They rewarded merits and punished offenses (*xinshang bifa* 信賞必罰) to assist the ritual systems in running smoothly (*yi fu lizhi* 以輔禮制).[228] However, their existence in this imagined bureaucracy was indeed awkward, because earlier texts presented heterogeneous and complicated accounts about the emergence of punishments in the civilized society. As Michael Puett has discussed, texts like the "Lüxing" 呂刑 (Marquis of Lü on Punishments) of the received *Shu* and the *Mencius* objected the rise and use of punishments.[229] Attributing the creation of punishments to the uncivilized Miao 苗 people, the "Lüxing" aimed to refute the relationship between ancient sages and punishments. Our received Confucius in the *Analects* 2.3 even had doubts about the use of

[228] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1736.

[229] Michael Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 101-05.

laws and punishments in moral cultivation.[230] In contrast, the *Shangjun shu* 商君書 (*Book of Lord Shang*), an anthology that was categorized as "*Fajia*" in the Lius' catalog, demonstrated that punishments were created in response to changes in the times.[231] Perhaps the Lius' realization of the necessity of punishments in a centralized empire was based upon the *Yi* citation, "the former kings manifested their punishments and put their laws in order" (*xianwang yi mingfa chifa* 先王以明罰飭法),[232] or perhaps they were simply aware of the significance of the *Fajia* masters in history. In any case, they reserved a place to this school of experts in their imagined official system. However, the prevalent narrative that imputed the Qin's collapse to its overuse of punishments and laws led them to put the Officials of Justification in a more auxiliary position.

Which Classic(s) were the pre-*Fajia* masters supposed to contribute? Their contribution seems to be the "Lüxing," which recorded the specific punishments the Marquis of Lü was commanded to set up and the principles behind the punishments. Beyond this one chapter of the *Shu*, we cannot find in the corpus of the Five Classics any enumeration of laws and punishments. However, was this chapter their only contribution? If so, the link between the *Fajia* and the Classics was so vulnerable to rupture that the existence of the *Fajia* masters in the Lius' system of knowledge was dispensable. To better

[230] "Common people would only avoid from [laws and punishments] but do not have the sense of shame if they are guided with laws and uniformed with punishments. Common people would have the sense of shame and can correct [themselves] if they are guided with virtue and uniformed with proprieties" 道之以政，齊之以刑，民免而無恥；道之以德，齊之以禮，有恥且格. Xing Bing 邢昺, ed., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 2001), 2.16a.

[231] Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*, 114-17.

[232] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1736.

understand the *Fajia* masters' association with the Classics, I turn to examine how legal judgments were made in the Han, and what Classic was used in this process. In the Lius' catalog, under the rubric of the *Chunqiu*, we find an item titled, *Gongyang Dong Zhongshu zhiyu* 公羊董仲舒治獄 (*Legal Judgments by Dong Zhongshu of the Gongyang Tradition*) in sixteen *pian*.[233] Later on, in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han*), we hear from Ying Shao 應劭 (d. c. 203) that there was the *Chunqiu Jueyu* 春秋決獄 (*Making Adjudications in Light of the Spring and Autumn Annals*), which contained 232 legal cases attributed to Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒.[234] However, Dong Zhongshu's authorship of this collection is not beyond doubt.[235] Nor are we able to determine whether both collections were the same. Nevertheless, the fact that the *Chunqiu*, particularly the interpretations from the *Gongyang* 公羊 commentarial tradition, was frequently cited as the foundation of laws and adjudications at that time is widely acknowledged by scholars.[236] Although the *Shi* was also cited to justify legal judgments on two occasions in the *Hanshu*,[237] its significance in the field of law was negligible when compared to the *Chunqiu*.[238]

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[233] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1714.

[234] Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1965), 48.1612.

[235] Michael Loewe, "Dong Zhongshu as Consultant," *Asia Major* (third series) 22.1 (2009): 163-82.

[236] Benjamin E. Wallacker, "The *Spring and Autumn Annals* as a Source of Law in Han China," *Journal of Chinese Studies* 2.1 (1985): 59-72; Charles Sanft, "Dong Zhongshu's *Chunqiu jueyu* Reconsidered: On the Legal Interest in Subjective States and the Privilege of Hiding Family Members' Crimes as Developments from Earlier Practice," *Early China* 33 (2011): 141-169.

[237] Ban, *Hanshu*, 72.3062-3; 78.3287.

[238] For the use of the *Poetry* in legal adjudication in the Han, see Liu Lizhi 劉立志, "Hanren yin *Shi* jueyu chuyi" 漢人引《詩》决獄芻議, *Nanjing shifan daxue wenxue yuan xuebao* 南京師範大學文學院學報 1 (2002): 131-35.

In that case, we may arrive at a conclusion that the *Chunqiu* was inspired by the Officials of Justification. However, I have already discussed how the Scribal Officials were supposed to record everything relevant to the destiny of the ancient rulers' governance, and what they recorded finally constituted the proto-*Chunqiu* on which Confucius's work was modelled. Did their duties overlap if the Scribal Officials were already responsible for the proto-*Chunqiu*? To resolve this contradiction, let us first recall that what distinguished Confucius's *Chunqiu* from other existing annals was the alleged "profound meanings behind the subtle words" (*weiyan dayi* 微言大義) that Confucius bestowed upon the Classic.[239] This notion that every word in Confucius's *Chunqiu* had profound meaning assumes that the words were all consciously chosen. However, on what basis did Confucius know the moral implication of each of the words he used? How could he differentiate *shi* 弑 (to murder one's superior) from *sha* 殺 (to murder)?[240] If every single word was crucial in making adjudications, I offer the hypothesis that the treatise's implied connection between the *Fajia* masters and the *Chunqiu* rested on the assumption that the predecessors of the *Fajia* masters, i.e., the Officials of Justification, decided what terms should be used under certain conditions in the proto-*Chunqiu*. In other words, while the Scribal Officials were in charge of recording the affairs which were later used to compose the proto-*Chunqiu*, the Officials of Justification presided over the principles or word choice in the annals. The

[239] See, for example, Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, "Lun *Chunqiu* dayi zai zhutao luanzei weiyan zai gailizhi Mengzi zhiyan yu *Gongyang* he Zhuzi zhizhu shende Mengzi zhizhi" 論春秋大義在誅討亂賊微言在改立制孟子之言與公羊合朱子之注深得孟子之旨, in *Jingxue tonglun* 經學通論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1954), 4: 1-2.

[240] For the discussion on the difference between sha and shi, see Liu Zhiji 劉知幾, *Shitong xinjiao zhu* 史通新校注, annotated and collated by Zhao Lüfu 趙呂浦 (Chongqing : Chongqing chubanshe, 1990), 819-20.

proto-*Chunqiu*, therefore, was their joint product. This hypothesis conforms to how the Classic was used to determine legal cases in the Han, on the one hand, and Confucius's self-identification as a transmitter rather than a creator (*Analects* 7.1), on the other hand.[241] In this case, what the pre-*Fajia* masters contributed was not a concrete proto-text, but a series of vocabularies which the *Chunqiu* receptus has been thought to consciously utilize to help make moral judgements in as a Classic.

The *Mingjia* Masters Versus the *Mojia* Masters

The ancestors of both *Mingjia* masters and *Mojia* masters, based on the narrative of the "Yi wen zhi," shared at first glance very similar duties just as the pre-*Daojia* masters and pre-*Fajia* masters did in the imagined Zhou bureaucratic system. As the Officials of Rituals, the pre-*Mingjia* masters were appointed to institutionalize ancient rituals in accordance with the titles and statuses of each member within the social hierarchy. The prototype of the *Mojia* masters—the Guardians of the Pure Temple—possessed an official title reminiscent of the first poem in the "Eulogies of Zhou" (Zhousong 周頌) section of the received *Shi*, which is an ode used to worship King Wen of Zhou;[242] thus, they bore responsibility for managing and conducting ceremonies and affairs held in the ancestral temple. The treatise set forth that the Guardians of the Pure Temple had to look after the elders and youngers, hold the ceremonies of great archery to select qualified servicemen

[241] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 7.60b. The following section will discuss this passage from the *Analects* in a more detailed way.

[242] Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Mao Shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 2001), 26.706b

(*shi* 士), worship spirits and ancestors, act in accordance with the four seasons, and be filial when interacting others in the world.[243]

The limited sphere where the Guardians of the Pure Temple could exercise their power implies the spatial difference between them and other royal officials. At the same time, their title implies that their responsibilities included contributing the "Hymns" and "Eulogies" sections of the *Shi* receptus and the elegant performative music of the lost *Yuejing*.[244] However, the more fundamental difference between both royal officials lay instead on their foci. The Officials of Rituals, as the *Analects* 13.3 which the studied treatise cited suggested,[245] were ritual designers who specialized in determining how the rites could comply with the theory of proper use of titles (*zhengming* 正名).[246] In other words, the Officials of Rituals were responsible for setting up a sophisticated system of rites that standardized the behavior of each person, and everyone within this system should behave appropriately corresponding to their titles and relationships with others. The Lius' explanation of the pre-*Mingjia* masters' duty to human society apparently followed Sima Tan's and Sima Qian's assessment of the contribution of the *Mingjia* experts. In the "Taishi gong zixu" 太史公自序 (Autobiographical Afterword of the Grand Historian), the grand

[243] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1738.

[244] For a discussion on the performative nature of the poems in the *Shi*, see Martin Kern, "*Shijing* Songs as Performance Texts: A Case Study of 'Chu ci' ('Thorny Caltrop')," *Early China* 25 (2000): 49-111.

[245] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 13.115a.

[246] *Zhengming* was translated in Roger T. Ames' research on the key Confucian vocabulary as "proper use of language," see Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011), 100. However, I here translate it as "proper use of title" because in the context of the "Yi wen zhi," the Chinese term *zhengming* referred more to one's title and assumed obligation than to one's use of language.

historian recorded: "The *Mingjia* experts restrain people and cause them to lose the genuineness . Notwithstanding, they rectify the relationship between names and substances, and we cannot but to be aware of that" 名家使人儉而善失真；然其正名實，不可不察也.[247] To sum up, the Officials of Rituals focused more on *matters of principle* in the ritual system. Rather, as ritual executives, the Guardians of the Pure Temple paid more attention to *practical issues* when ceremonies were held in ancestral temples, and their task was therefore to balance the principles and practicality of the rites.

The *Zongheng jia* Masters

The predecessors of the *Zongheng jia* masters were said to be the Officials of Foreign Intercourse who were in charge of diplomatic affairs, such as those mentioned in the *Analects* 13.5.[248] The *Analects* even further confirmed the relationship between this royal official and the *Shi*. As we can see on many occasions in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Commentary*), reciting poems was a common practice at diplomatic occasions in the Spring and Autumn Period.[249] Where did they get the poems—if not from performative odes recited in the ancestral temples? The "Shi huo zhi 食貨志 (Treatise on Food and Currency)

[247] Sima, *Shiji*, 130.3289.

[248] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 13.116a-b.

[249] The use of Poetry citation is demonstrated by Steven Van Zoeren: "As depicted there [*Zuo* Commentary], the *Odes* were chanted by various figures—princes, ministers, a palace lady—as a means to elegant or persuasive expression. Very likely the practice was associated with banquets and diplomatic missions; it may have served a function roughly analogous to the toasts or speeches made at diplomatic functions today." See Steven Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 38-39.

in the *Hanshu* records that "Officials of Foreign Intercourse waved the wooden-clappers and walked around on the roads for the purpose of collecting poems to present to the great masters. [The great masters then] checked over their Pitch-standards to prepare them to be listened to by the sons of Heaven" 行人振木鐸徇于路，以采詩，獻之大師，比其音律，以聞於天子.[250] There was probably a consensus among literati in the Han that the Officials of Foreign Intercourse were responsible for going abroad as ambassadors and collecting folk songs during their trips.

In concluding its sub-division of the *Shi*, the "Yi wen zhi" declared: "As a result, there were officials who were responsible for collecting poems in the ancient times. It was through these poems that the kings could observe the customs [of different places], recognize their gains and losses, and inspect and correct themselves" 故古有采詩之官，王者所以觀風俗，知得失，自考正也.[251] This legend that the folk songs in the "Airs of the States" section of the *Shi* were collected by ancient officials can be traced back to the anecdotes in the *Guo Yu* 國語 (*Discourses of the States*). In one anecdote, Fan Wenzi 范文子 (d. 574 B.C.E.) told Zhao Wu 趙武 (598. B.C.E. – 541 B.C.E.) at his capping ceremony that the ministers of the ancient kings presented poems to admonish their rulers against being deceived, and thus had to ask the people on roads about their praises and criticisms of the rulers.[252] The establishment of the *Yuefu* 樂府 (Music Bureau) during the

[250] Ban, *Hanshu*, 24A.1123.

[251] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1708.

[252] Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, *Guo Yu* 國語 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 12.409. Similar narratives can also be seen elsewhere in the *Guo Yu*, where sons of Heaven were said to ask their ministers and the attendants of their courts to present poems to them so that the words of common people could be

reign of Emperor Wu seems to be influenced by this legend.[253] In the "Liyue zhi" 禮樂志 (Treatise on Rituals and Music) of the *Hanshu*, it was said that Emperor Wu established the Music Bureau to "collect poems and recite them at night. [As a result], there are folk songs from the Zhao, Dai, Qin, and Chu areas" 采詩夜誦，有趙、代、秦、楚之謳.[254] The treatise seemed to project this image of the officials of the Music Bureau in the Han onto the Officials of Foreign Intercourse in the imagined ancient bureaucratic system.

3.5 The Authoritative and Omnipotent Interpreters of the Classics

Thus far, we have seen how the seven schools of masters and their predecessors were associated respectively with the six proto-Classics in both Lius' blueprint of the ancient bureaucracy. As we can see in the aforesaid analysis, their theory made every effort to project the Han official system onto their imagination. However, if the proto-Classics were the products of the masters' ancestors, why did the Classics finally become the exclusive cultural capital of the Confucian school? The Classics are thought to be "Confucian" largely due to Confucius's alleged editorship and authorship. Although the opening description of the "Yi wen zhi," in which the anecdote of Confucius's editorial and authorial authority on the Classics was stated, was basically Ban Gu's work, we can confidently say that Liu Xiang and Liu Xin were also crucial in establishing this anecdote.

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heard. See Ibid, 1.9-10.

[253] See Anne Birrell, *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1993), xviii-xx for the history of the Music Bureau in the Han dynasty.

[254] Ban, *Hanshu*, 22.1045.

Liu Xin declared in his "Yishu rang Taichang boshi" 移書讓太常博士 (Letter reprimanding the Erudites of the Commissioner for Ceremonial):

> Confucius was anxious about the failure of the Way. He traveled to different states to accept official appointments. After he had returned from Wei to Lu, the music was rectified, and the hymns and eulogies all gained their proper places. [He] revised the *Yi* and put the *Shu* in order. [He] composed and authored the *Chunqiu* to record the way of emperors and kings.
>
> 孔子憂道之不行，歷國應聘。自衛反魯，然後樂正，雅頌乃得其所；修易，序書，制作春秋，以紀帝王之道。[255]

Containing a citation from the *Analects* 9.15 to document and certify Confucius's editorial hand in the *Shi* receptus, this excerpt also declared the connection between Confucius and the other three Classics.[256] However, even though the *Analects* is widely regarded as the most reliable anthology of Confucius's teachings when both Lius started their editorial project, whether the *Analects* citation can prove Confucius's editorial work on the received *Shi* is questionable.[257]

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[255] Ban, *Hanshu*, 36.1968. According to Eva Yuen-wah Chung, Liu Xin's purpose of writing this letter was to preserve the true form of the ancient classical texts and seek collaboration with the Erudites of the Commissioner for Ceremonial to discover the forgotten implications of the ancient texts. See Eva Yuen-wah Chung, "A Study of the *Shu* (Letters) of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220)," (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Washington 1982), 295.

[256] The *Analects* 7.17 is a passage which scholars have used to prove that Confucius did study the *Yi*, "If I were given a few more years, I could be elegant and refined in the *Yi*" 假我數年，若是，我於易則彬彬矣. However, in the Lu school version of the *Analects*, the character *yi* 易 was transcribed as *yi* 亦, meaning "also." See Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 7.62b. E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks therefore translated this sentence as "Give me several more years, with fifty to study, I too might come to be without major faults." See Ernest Bruce Brooks & A Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 41.

[257] The *Analects* 9.15 is too ambiguous to be evidence. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200), an influential Han scholar, did not explain in his comment on this passage whether or not it justified the grand scribe's use of this section. However, Zhu Xi argued that Confucius was lamenting the fragmentary condition and disorder of the *Book of Songs* and the legendary *Yuejing*. Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Si shu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 113. In opposite to Zhu Xi's argument, Jiang Fan 江藩 (1761-1831) made the hypothesis that enabling both hymns and eulogies to gain their proper place meant to rearrange each musical scale, but mean to either edit the texts of the hymns and eulogies or delete any repeated odes. See Jiang Fan

More to the point, the anecdote that Confucius edited and authored the corpus of the Six Classics did not appear in our extant early materials until Sima Qian's *Shiji*. In the "Kongzi shijia" 孔子世家 (Hereditary House of Confucius), the grand historian described in a more detailed way Confucius's editorship.[258] Since it was about four hundred years after the death of Confucius before the idea of Confucius's editorship of the entire corpus of the Classics appeared, we can be suspicious about the circulation and acceptance of this idea in the Western Han. How many Han literati supported this idea? Who were they? Why was it Confucius, but not others, for example, Mozi 墨子, who cited the Classics many times in the anthology attributed to him, who edited the Classics?[259] Our transmitted Han evidence tended to convince us that this idea had been widely accepted among Han scholars. However, why were our received Han texts so unilateral and monologic on this issue?

The special status the proto-Confucians enjoyed in both Lius' theory was meant to consolidate Confucius's authority over the Classics. As shown in the treatise, Liu Xin and his father appeared committed to proving that the "Confucianization" of the Classics in the Han was historically inevitable. To guarantee and justify the Confucian attribution of the Classics, they first put the archetype of the Confucians—the Officials of Instruction—in the upper stratum of their imagined official pyramid. Among the nine royal officials, the

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江藩, "Ya Song ge de qisuo jie" 雅頌各得其所解, in Qi Yongxiang 漆永祥, ed., *Jiang Fan ji* 江藩集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe. 2006), 30-32.

[258] See Sima, *Shiji*, 47.1935-37, 1943.

[259] For the discussion on the citations of the *Poetry* and the *Documents* in the *Master Mo*, see Luo Genze 羅根澤, "*You Mozi yinjing tuice Ru Mo liangjia yu jingshu zhi guanxi*" 由《墨子》引經推測儒墨兩家與經書之關係, in Luo Genze 羅根澤, *Luo Genze shuo zhuzi* 羅根澤說諸子 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), 77-98.

remaining two officials—the Officials of Instruction and the Officials of Remonstrance—enjoyed distinctive statuses, with the former superior to the latter. This supremacy of the proto-Confucians over other royal officials hinged not on their contribution to the production of any specific Classic, as other seven royal officials did, but on their paramount interpretative authority over the Classics.

According to the "Yi wen zhi," Confucians were assumed to originate from the ancient Officials of Instruction, whose duties were to "assist rulers to obey the operation of *yin* and *yang* to illustrate their educational transformations" 助人君順陰陽明教化者也.[260] In other words, the Officials of Instruction were expected to assist their ruler to fulfil his duties as leader of the mortal world. The assumed duties mentioned in the above citation revealed not only the intellectual atmosphere in the Han, in which the *yin-yang* theory was dominant in all aspects of academic life,[261] but also conformed to the long-standing expectation for a ruler since the Warring States Period.[262] A ruler should follow the cosmological order by obeying the operation of *yin* and *yang,* on the one hand, and carry out the will of Heaven by putting the world in order through educational transformation, on the other hand. To perfectly complete both tasks, rulers were requested to have a thorough understanding of the world, both natural and human. However, the ubiquity of

[260] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1728.

[261] As to the popularity and significance of the *yin-yang* theory in Han political culture, see, for example, Sawada Takio 沢田多喜男, "Tō Chūjo tenken setsu no keisei to seikaku" 董仲舒天譴説の形成と性格, *Banku* 文化 31.3 (1968): 485-508; Michael Loewe, "Water, Earth and Fire-the Symbols of the Han Dynasty," *Nachrichten* 125 (1979): 63-68; Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[262] See Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), especially Chapters 1-4, for pre-imperial discourse on rulers.

mediocre rulers made the presence of competent and omnipotent assistants who could provide rulers with transparent and appropriate guidance indispensable.[263] Thus, this role in the Lius' blueprint was taken on by the proto-Confucians.

By what means could the proto-Confucians assist their rulers? Why were they capable of assisting ancient rulers? The answer to the first question is through the use of the proto-Classics contributed by other seven royal officials. As the conclusion of the "Survey of the Six Arts" declared, each Classic had a particular focus on moral cultivation. The specializations of the Classics seen in the "Yi wen zhi" was not something new in the late Western Han. Although the assigned tasks of the Classics were different from the "Yi wen zhi" and the "Tianxia" chapter, the "Guji Liezhuan" 滑稽列傳 (Collective Biographies of Jesters) in the *Shiji* already said that Confucius assigned all Six Classics different functions, "The Six Arts are the same in regard of governing: the *Li* is to restrict people; the *Yue* is to express harmony; the *Shu* is to recite affairs; the *Shi* is to deliver ideas; the *Yi* is to achieve divine transformation; the *Chunqiu* is to achieve correctness" 六藝於治一也。禮以節人，樂以發和，書以道事，詩以達意，易以神化，春秋以義.[264] These three versions of the functions of the Classics in our transmitted materials, as well as the version from the excavated *Yucong* 語叢 (*Thicket of Sayings*), point to a fact that,[265] in spite of their

[263] The received *Xunzi* 荀子 (*Master Xun*) had been aware of this tendency. As a result, this anthology suggested that a ruler should appoint worthy ministers and delegate his power to them. For a more detailed discussion, see Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire*, 90.

[264] Sima, *Shiji*, 126.3197.

[265] See Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 2: 835-36.

divergences, there had been a tendency since as early as the Warring States Period to assign a Classic a specific function in intellectual discourse.

We may associate both tasks of obeying the operation of *yin* and *yang* and illustrating rulers' educational transformations with corresponding Classics. For instance, understanding the cosmological order was the prerequisite for obeying it, and the *Yi* was the best source among the Classics that the rulers and the Officials of Instruction should approach when gaining knowledge of the natural world. To educate people in the world required rulers to grasp the principles for ordering human society and behave in compliance with a set of rigid rules. In this situation, the *Li* could give rulers clues to successfully build up a civilized and orderly society in which people could behave in accordance with their position within the social hierarchy. The *Shu* and the proto-*Chunqiu* reminded rulers of any potential dangers of their behavior. By penetrating the *Shi* and *Yue*, rulers could understand how to express one's inspiration and emotion in appropriate ways and in accord with the local customs within a territory.[266]

The Classics were so all-inclusive and overarching that this corpus alone could direct rulers to the knowledge of the entire world and guide them to successful governance. But why? This question becomes thornier than we expected because of the divergence of views of world knowledge in the time of both Lius. As Lu Zhao points out, late Western Han

[266] As demonstrated by the "Shi daxu" 詩大序 (Great Preface) of the Mao interpretative tradition, a poet could express his inspiration through poetic composition, "A poem is where one's inspiration goes. It is inspiration when it is in one's mind, while it becomes a poem when it is articulated" 詩者，志之所之也。在心為志，發言為詩. Kong, *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1.13a. In citing the "Canon of Shun" (Shundian 舜典) in the *Documents*, "a poem speaks out one's inspiration, while music eulogizes his language" 詩言志，哥詠言, the "Yi wen zhi" obviously understood the function of poetic composition, which was articulated in the "Great Preface." See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1708.

scholars like both Lius claimed that the Classics to be an integrated corpus encompassed the truth of the entire world, because they accorded with both Heaven's will and human nature. Thus, to achieve great peace (*taiping* 太平), the Han government should follow the Way the Classics set forth.[267] On the other hand, another group of scholars led by Li Xun 李尋 (fl. 15 B.C.E. – 5 B.C.E.) questioned the authority of the Classics and searched for the will of Heaven through the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of the Great Peace*), a scripture beyond the corpus of Classics.[268] Although this group exerted little influence on the intellectual tendency at the time of both Lius, scholars associated with this group became the forerunner of the broad learning in the ensuing two centuries, when the Classics were dismissed by certain Han literati due to their view that the scope of knowledge in the Classics was narrow.

Li Xun and his fellows represented just one intellectual stream with which the Lius had to contend. Beyond those who generally dismissed the significance of the Classics, there was another intellectual stream that specifically challenged the idea of Confucius's editorship and authorship of the corpus of the Classics. Even though those in this stream did not deny the authority of the Classics, they denied Confucian influence on and authority over this scared corpus. Who were the literati who shared this skepticism? What texts could represent such an intellectual stream that confronted the one represented by both Lius and others who championed Confucius's authority?

[267] Zhao, *In Pursuit of the Great Peace*, 26.

[268] Ibid, 28-45.

The "Tianxia" chapter of the *Zhuangzi* neither confirmed nor denied Confucius's authority, but its praise of the scholars from the Zou-Lu area might suggest its proximity to certain Confucian scholars from this area at that time. In contrast to the "Tianixa" chapter, the dialogue between Confucius and Laozi recorded in the "Tianyuan" 天運 (The Operation of Heaven) chapter attempted to deny Confucius's editorship and authorship of the Classics and may therefore provide a hint to answer our question.

> Confucius told Lao Dan, "I, Qiu, have studied the *Shi*, *Shu*, *Li*, *Yue*, *Yi*, and *Chunqiu*. I personally think that I have spent a lot of time [studying them] and am familiar with their contents. I have taken seventy-two villainous rulers to demonstrate [contrasts to] the ways of the former kings and illustrate the traces of Duke Zhou and Duke Zhao. [Nevertheless], there is no single ruler who adopted my suggestions and put them into practice. How extremely difficult it is! Isn't it difficult to convince other people, isn't it difficult to illustrate the Way!" Laozi responded, "It is fortunate that you have not met a ruler who is competent to rule the world! The Six Classics are [merely] the traces left by the former kings. How could they be the reasons for their traces? Now what you are saying is like the traces. Traces are the footprints left by the shoes. How could traces be the shoes (themselves)?"
>
> 孔子謂老聃曰：「丘治《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》、《易》、《春秋》六經，自以為久矣，孰知其故矣，以奸者七十二君，論先王之道而明周、召之跡，一君無所鉤用。甚矣夫！人之難說也，道之難明邪！」老子曰：「幸矣，子之不遇治世之君也！夫六經，先王之陳跡也，豈其所以跡哉！今子之所言，猶迹也。夫迹，履之所出，而迹豈履哉！」[269]

Setting aside scholars' doubts about the authenticity of this account,[270] it is noteworthy in three aspects. First, this account asserts that the Six Classics were not something Confucius edited or authored, but rather only something he studied thoroughly. Such a relationship

[269] Zhuang, *Zhuangzi ji jie*, 14.130-31.

[270] In the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1912), Cui Shu 崔述 (1740 – 1816) suggested that this dialogue was fabricated by followers of Yangzhu 楊朱 to degrade Confucius, "Speakers of Mr. Yang defamed Confucius on the pretext of Lao Dan" 楊氏說者因託諸老聃以詆孔子. See Cui Shu, *Kao xin lu* 考信錄, in Yang Jialuo 楊家駱, ed., *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu di si ji* 中國史學名著第四集 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1968), 2: 1.20.

denied Confucius's editorial and authorial authority over the Classics. Second, Confucius's acquaintance with the contents of the Six Classics and his use of the sacred term *jing* implied that the texts were already set and had a definite scope prior to this conversation. Third, and more importantly, although not clearly stated, the conversation appears to be set when Confucius was profoundly discouraged about his political career and thus sought consolation from Laozi. Notably, according to Sima Qian's and the Lius' accounts, it was only after Confucius retreated to Lu that he began his editorial and authorial work. Therefore, this account of the "Tianyuan" presents the Classics as having attained stable form before Confucius's seclusion in Lu and thus challenged, either intentionally or unintentionally, the Confucian attribution of the Classics, which was proclaimed in the *Shiji* and the "Yi wen zhi." The reason that the chapter could survive in the *Zhuanzig* might be that its main concern was to criticize Confucius's persistence in digging into the meaningless vestiges of the ancient kings. This contextual layer significantly covered and thus diverted attention from its more fundamental challenge to the presumption that Confucius was not only a reader or an interpreter of the Classics, but was their authoritative editor and author.

Therefore, Liu Xin and his father had to compete not only with Li Xun and the followers of the *Taiping jing*, who rejected the inclusiveness of the Classics, but also with those who cast doubt on Confucius's editorial and authorial authority over the Classics. What was imperative to the Lius was to secure Confucius's peculiar status as the editor and author of the entire corpus of the Six Classics and thereby the attribution of the Classics to the Confucians. How, then, could the Lius' creation of the idealized official system in the ancient times help their cause?

As their title may imply, the Officials of Instruction acted like personal teachers or advisors of rulers. Since the Lius asserted that the Classics were indispensable and mutually complementary, it is easy to see why they presented the Officials of Instruction as superior to other royal officials in their imagined bureaucracy of the golden age of antiquity. Unlike the other seven types of royal officials who specialized in only one aspect of the knowledge of the world, the Officials of Instruction were versatile generalists who could not only interpret all Classics comprehensively but also connect them like weaving warp threads (as the meaning of the word *jing* may suggest) into a complete fabric. Hence, while the other seven royal officials supplied the raw silk threads, the Officials of Instruction were like textile workers who master the loom to weave. Only Officials of Instruction grasped the knowledge in each Classic that was necessary to synthesize all Six Classics and assist their rulers.

The role of the Officials of Instruction as royal instructors was a projection from Confucius's popular and self-defined images as a teacher and as a transmitter. Late Qing scholars, such as Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) and Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908), argued that in the Han dynasty, members of the New Script campaign—particularly the *Gongyang* 公羊 lineage—advocated enthroning Confucius as an uncrowned king (*suwang* 素王) who was insightful enough to have composed the *Chunqiu* in preparation for the establishment of the Han dynasty. However, these Qing scholars identified Liu Xin with the Ancient Script campaign and thus as an opponent of such a prophetic understanding of Confucius's significance.[271] Despite this debatable status of Confucius, and setting aside

[271] See Kang Youwei 康有為, *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 8.199-

the Ancient Script/Modern Script debate, it was generally admitted among certain scholars in the Han that Confucius was a teacher who was frustrated in his political career and whose teachings were passed down from generation to generation.[272] The *Analects* further promoted Confucius's image as a farsighted teacher, for the *Analects* demonstrated how he educated his disciples.[273]

When projecting that Confucian ancestors were the Officials of Instruction in the Zhou, both Lius asserted that being a transmitter is more important than being a creator. In the *Analects* 7.1, Confucius identified himself: "I transmit but do not create; I believe in and favor the ancients, and privately compare myself to the Old Peng " 述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭.[274] Although the names were different, Laozi, Lao Dan, and Old Peng were interchangeable and referring to a same person in four chapters of the *Zhuangzi*, including the "Tianyuan," as well as in other Han materials.[275] But why should it be Laozi

201; Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, "Lun *Chunqiu* suwang bubi shuo shi Kongzi suwang *Chunqiu* wei houwang lifa ji yun wei Han zhifa yi wu buke" 論春秋素王不必說是孔子素王春秋為後王立法即云為漢制法亦無不可, in *Jingxue tonglun*, 4: 10-12. Also see Michael Nylan and Thomas A Wilson, *Lives of Confucius: Civilization's Greatest Sage Through the Ages* (New York: Random House/Doubleday, 2010), especially Chapter Three on Confucius's image as an uncrowned king.

[272] Sima, *Shiji*, 47.1947.

[273] The *Analects* has long been seen as the most authoritative text of Confucius's image and teaching. However, Michael Hunter recently contends that the *Analects* was composed to counter the proliferation of Confucius's multifaceted images in the Han; therefore, the images in this anthology were only parts of the picture in our available early texts. See Michal Hunter, *Confucius beyond the Analects* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[274] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 7.60a.

[275] In Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Handai Kongzi jian Laozi huaxiang de shehui sixiang shi yiyi" 漢代孔子見老子畫像的社會思想史意義, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu suo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報 65 (2017): 29. However, we see different identifications of the Old Peng in Xing Bing's commentary on this passage. As cited by Xing Bing, Wang Bi 王弼 (226 – 249) suggested that Old Peng referred to two different persons: Lao referred to Laozi, while Peng referred to Pang Zu 彭祖. The *zhengyi* 正義 (*Corrected Meaning*) by He Yan 何晏 (? – 249), however, treated Old Peng as a single person and argued that he referred to Peng Zu

with whom Confucius wanted to compare himself? There are more reasons than the grand historian's claim that Laozi served in the royal archive of the Eastern Zhou dynasty and Confucius's meeting with him before Confucius retired to pursue his editorial work. In addition, Han texts mentioning their meeting, as well as their portrayal in paintings and sculptures, demonstrate that the legend of Confucius asking Laozi for advice about rituals was so popular during the Han dynasty that Laozi was one of the sources of Confucius's teaching.[276] The many relevant paintings found in the modern-day Shandong Province even suggests that numerous literati in the Zou-Lu area accepted the view that Laozi was a teacher of Confucius.[277] The recorder(s) of *Analects* 7.1 was apparently among those who sought to emphasize the point that Confucius was comparable to Laozi in terms of versatile knowledge of ancient rituals and institutions.

Being versatile means that one should not specialize only in one thing; for instance, a metaphor in the *Analects* 2.12 admonished gentlemen against being utensils (*qi* 器).[278] In his commentary, He Yan 何晏 (? – 249) quoted a Han scholar Bao Xian's 包咸 (6 B.C.E. – 65 C.E.) interpretation of this passage: "As for utensils, each [only] fits its specific use. As for gentlemen, there is nothing in which they cannot show their use" 器者，各周其用。

mentioned in the *Master Zhang*. See Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 7.60a.

[276] As Hsing I-tien 邢義田 has argued in his study of the Han paintings of Confucius meeting Laozi, our Han materials were not fastidious about whether Laozi and Lao Dan were two persons or not. The only exception came from Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian*, in which Sima Qian hesitated to say that Confucius consulted Laozi about the rituals in the Zhou dynasty. See Hsing, "Handai Kongzi jian Laozi huaxiang de shehui sixiang shi yiyi," 29.

[277] Ibid, particularly 62-63.

[278] Xing, *Lunyu zhushu*, 2.18a.

至於君子，無所不施.[279] Representing at least one of the Han understandings of this metaphor of utensils, Bao Xian projected an idealized scholar as an Erudite who was not limited to only one branch of knowledge. The Lius portrayed each of the seven royal officials as specialized in one specific area without dabbling in others expertise, despite the potential collaborations among some officials. Other early Chinese legends of creation presented creators as experts in given areas without being well-rounded. Consider, for instance, the conclusion to the "Junshou" 君守 (On what ruler should observe) chapter in *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*):

> Xi Zhong created chariots, Cang Jie created writing, Hou Ji created agricultural production, Gao Yao created punishments, Kun Wu created potteries, and Xia Gun created city walls. What these six people created are appropriate. However, they are not the perfect Way. That's why people say, "Creators disturb, while followers pacify."
>
> 奚仲作車，蒼頡作書，后稷作稼，皋陶作刑，昆吾作陶，夏鯀作城，此六人者所作當矣，然而非主道者，故曰作者憂，因者平。[280]

Including Cang Jie, who was traditionally acclaimed to be the creator of Chinese writing, each creator enumerated here was professional in their creations, but appeared to be ignorant about things that others created. This understanding of specific creator's ignorance of other fields was even more evident in the *Xunzi* 荀子 (*Master Xun*).[281] The specialties

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[279] Ibid.

[280] Lü Buwei 呂不韋, *Lüshi chunqiu zhushu* 呂氏春秋注疏, collated and annotated by Wang Liqi 王利器 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2002), 17.1972-77. As its annotation suggests, the word *you* 憂 was originally transcribed as *rao* 擾.

[281] See Xunzi 荀子, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解, collated and annotated by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2013), 21.401, "From ancient times to the present, no one could have been grasped and proficient in two different things" 自古及今，未嘗有兩而能精者也.

of creators, such as those seven royal officials and those mentioned in the "Junshou" chapter, were also limitations that prevented creators from integrating all fields of knowledge into one, regardless of how essential and fundamental each one was to the rise of a civilization. In contrast, transmitters like the Officials of Instruction in the Lius' imagined bureaucracy and Confucius were so omnipotent that they could organically synthesize or integrate all branches of knowledge into a systematic unity in which each element was indispensable.

A remaining problem is the difference between the Officials of Instruction and the Officials of Remonstrance, who were purportedly the predecessor of the later *Zajia*. Similar to the case of the Officials of Instruction, the Lius did not associate any specific Classic to the Officials of Remonstrance. The Lius asserted the Officials of Remonstrance prefigured the *Zajia* who "united the Confucians and *Mojia* and combined the *Mingjia* and *Fajia*. When we understand that the state system had this position, we can see that there is nothing that kingly government cannot penetrate and link together" 兼儒、墨，合名、法，知國體之有此，見王治之無不貫.[282] This statement, however, did not clarify the duty of this official. If the Officials of Remonstrance did take at least part of the responsibilities of the four types of royal officials including the Officials of Instruction, i.e., the pre-Confucians, why did the Officials of Remonstrance not rise to the apex of the Lius' imagined official pyramid? The word *yi* 議 in their title, which I translated here as "remonstrance," is reminiscent of the Grandee of Remonstrance (*Jian dafu* 諫大夫), one of the Grandee (*Dafu*

[282] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1742.

大夫) in the Han whose duty was to comment on imperial policies (*yilun* 議論). If the existing Han official system did inspire Liu Xiang and Liu Xin to a considerable degree (just as the Music Bureau in the Han resembled the ancient officials who collected the folksongs), we may infer that the Officials of Instruction in the Lius' theory were also responsible for commenting on royal policies and remonstrating rulers. Given the fact that both Lius were appointed to be Grandee,[283] we may assume that they might have projected themselves into this imagined Official of Remonstrance. However, the ranking of the Grandee in the Western Han was inferior to the Grand Chancellor (*chengxiang* 丞相), the highest official in the Western Han whose title was changed into the Grand Official of Instruction (*da situ* 大司徒) in 1 B.C.E.,[284] and this inferiority of the Grandee further reflected that in the Lius' imagined official system, the Officials of Remonstrance were subordinate to the Officials of Instruction. Moreover, the summary in the "Yi wen zhi" suggests that since the Officials of Remonstrance could only unite the duties of Confucians (to comment on governmental policies), *Mojia*, *Mingjia*, and *Fajia*, this official possessed less extensive knowledge than the Officials of Instruction, who encompassed the knowledge preserved in all Classics. The Officials of Remonstrance had the ability to comment on parts of the royal policies, yet they were incapable of synthesizing all branches of knowledge into one as the Officials of Instruction did.

Reflecting back on our discussion on the role of pre-Confucians, the difference between creators (the seven royal officials) and transmitters (the Officials of Instruction)

[283] Ibid, 36.1928.

[284] Ibid, 19A.725.

not only determined their rankings in the Lius' idealized official system, but it also explained why, among the descendants of all royal officials, only Confucians could remain close to their ancestors and their treasured Classics. After describing the duties of the royal officials, both Lius criticized the faults of the royal officials' offspring by using a list of negative words: bewildered (*huo* 惑) and wicked (*pi* 辟)[285] for the Confucians; unrestrained (*fang* 放) for the *Daojia*; hairsplitting (*ju* 拘) for the *Yin-Yang* jia; harsh (*ke* 刻) for the *Fajia*; gossipy (*jiao* 譸) for the *Mingjia*; blinded (*bi* 蔽) for the *Mojia*; vicious (*xie* 邪) for the *Zongheng jia*; dissolute (*dang* 盪) for the *Zajia*; and vulgar (*bi* 鄙) for the *Nongjia*.[286] These faults eventually led the masters during the Han, except for certain Confucians, to deviate from the Classics in ways that violated the Classics. For instance, the *Daojia* were said to cut themselves off from rituals and to abandon benevolence (*ren* 仁) and correctness (*yi* 義), which were the essence of the Classics according to the conclusion of the "Survey of the Six Arts" where the *Yue* and the *Shi* represented both moral values.[287] *Mojia* blurred the boundary between close and distant.[288] *Fajia* dismissed educational transformation and departed from benevolence and human love (*ai* 愛).[289]

[285] According to Yan Shigu's 顏師古 (581-645) comment on this statement, the word *bi* 辟 is read as *pi* 僻. See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1728.

[286] Ibid, 30.1732, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1740, 1742, 1743.

[287] Ibid, 30.1732.

[288] Ibid, 30.1738.

[289] Ibid, 30.1736.

How about the Confucians? When the Lius said that at least certain Confucians could remain in tune with the Classics, to whom did they refer? When they complained that there were bewildered and wicked Confucians, what faults deserved such criticisms? Carefully consider their conclusion about the subdivision of Confucian texts:

> They wander over the Six Classics, pay attention to the boundary between humanity and justice, imitate their ancestors Yao and Shun, follow the system of [Kings] Wen and Wu, and treat Confucius as their patriarch. Since they valued Confucius's speeches, they are the most outstanding [among others] in understanding the Way. Confucius said, "If one has something to be praised, it is because he is tested." As for the zenith of Tang [Yao] and Yu [Shun], the prosperity of the Yan and Zhou dynasties, and the career of Confucius, there was something that had already tested them. However, the bewildered lose the profound and subtle [words], and those of the way also swim and sink at any time. [The latter] violate the Way and depart from the root, and even please the public with claptrap. Later generations follow them. The Five Classics are therefore torn to pieces, and the Ru teaching are downfallen. These are the troubles caused by undesirable Confucians.
>
> 游文於六經之中，留意於仁義之際，祖述堯舜，憲章文武，宗師仲尼，以重其言，於道最為高。孔子曰：「如有所譽，其有所試。」唐虞之隆，殷周之盛，仲尼之業，已試之效者也。然惑者既失精微，而辟者又隨時抑揚，違離道本，苟以譁眾取寵。後進循之，是以五經乖析，儒學浸衰，此辟儒之患。[290]

Their comment on the bewildered Confucians' incapability to grasp the profound and subtle words in the Classics pointed to a major anxiety prevailing in the "Yi wen zhi" and Liu Xin's "Yishu rang Taichang boshi," i.e., the loss of Confucius's subtle words and profound meanings since the demise of Confucius and his seventy disciples. In addition, there was the rise of the methods of Sunzi and Wuzi (*Sun Wu zhi shu* 孫吳之術, focusing on military knowledge) and the book burning during the Qin.[291]

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[290] Ibid, 30.1728.

[291] Ban, *Hanshu*, 36.1968.

These calamities made the revival and reconstruction of Confucius's profound meanings difficult, if not impossible, and contributed to the diverse body of interpretative lineages in the Han. If the Classics could only be understood fully in one way, why were there many interpretations of a single Classic? The diversity of classical interpretations implied that many were indefensible. This did not mean that both Lius preferred only one interpretative lineage, as the traditional paradigm of the Ancient/New Scripts debate in the Han suggested. As Liu Xin underscored at the end of his letter, each of the interpretative lineages "cover and include greater and lesser meanings, how can we have any bias in favor of one, but completely dismiss others? If one insists on sticking to his own view and defending what is incomplete, factionalizing those who are taught by the same master, begrudging those who present the truth, violating the sacred edicts, and losing the sagely intention in order to land himself in debates between civil officials, all this is precisely something that all disciples [of Confucius] did not accept" 兼包大小之義，豈可偏絕哉？若必專己守殘，黨同門，妒道真，違明詔，失聖意，以陷於文吏之議，甚為二三君子不取也.[292] Thus, no interpretation was perfectly right and valid. If one persisted in only one single lineage, he would just lose the intention of the sage (Confucius) and sink into an endless loop of debate.

What made the situation worse was the splendor of "chapter and verse" (*zhangju* 章句) scholarship, which had led to Han pedantic and trifling classical scholarship. In contrast to the Lius championing the indispensability of the Classics and the integrity of the entire

[292] Ibid, 36.1971.

corpus of the Six Classics, scholars of the "chapter and verse" specialty dismembered the Classics into countless fragments, and it was no longer possible for scholars to see the holistic picture of the Classics:

> Scholars in the ancient times farmed the land and cultivate themselves. They spent three years to understand one art thoroughly, preserved its entirety, and took their leisure in the words of the Classics and nothing else. Consequently, even though the days they spent were little, the virtues they accumulated were plentiful. They established [their scholarship on] Five Classics when they were thirty years old. Later generations already deviated from the transmission of the Classics and commentaries. Versatile scholars have not considered the significance of hearing much and rejecting any dubious points. Instead, they have devoted themselves to trivial meanings and fled from rigors. They made far-fetched interpretations and luring speeches, destroyed the structures [of the Classics], spent twenty to thirty thousand words to explain a phrase of only five words. Junior scholars even galloped ahead or chased after [their seniors]. Hence, when one started to concentrate on one art when he was a young child, only when his hair turned white could he speak on that art. He was satisfied with what he had studied, defamed what he had not seen, and eventually deluded himself. This is the big drawback of scholars.
>
> 古之學者耕且養，三年而通一藝，存其大體，玩經文而已，是故用日少而畜德多，三十而五經立也。後世經傳既已乖離，博學者又不思多聞闕疑之義，而務碎義逃難，便辭巧說，破壞形體；說五字之文，至於二三萬言。後進彌以馳逐，故幼童而守一藝，白首而後能言；安其所習，毀所不見，終以自蔽。此學者之大患也。[293]

To the Lius, scholars who dedicated themselves to the "chapter and verse" put the cart before the horse. The words of the Classics were only the carriers of Confucius's mysterious messages. Thus, scholars should not fixate on examining the literal meanings of each of the words in the Classics, which to the Lius was a time-consuming and meaningless task, because at that rate, people could understand the entire corpus of at most only one Classic in their lifetime. Instead, people should take their pleasure (*wan* 玩) in the

[293] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1723.

words of the Classics and retain the integrity of the Classics. The Confucians of the "chapter and verse" skills who were bewildered by trivia were far removed from their imagined ancestors, whom the Lius had projected as able to understand all Classics so as to assist their rulers to govern. Nevertheless, in contrast to other masters who deviated from the Classics, these bewildered Confucians still positioned themselves within the hermeneutic scope that Confucius was said to have created. Thus, their problem was their *approach* to the Classics, not their *violation* of the Classics.

However, the existence of the wicked Confucians directly led to the collapse of Confucian studies, and this was the reason for both Lius to harshly criticize this group of Confucians. The wicked Confucians violated the Way and departed from the root. The Lius did not name the wicked Confucians. Nevertheless, their critique appears to equate this group of Confucians and non-Confucian masters, for both groups strayed from the Classics and the principles therein. But who were they? Michal Nylan classifies the *ru* in the Han context into Classicists, Confucians, and Government officials.[294] A classicist would not necessarily be at the same time an adherent to Confucius's teaching and the values upheld by the Classics they studied. A man might become a classicist merely because of the promising career a classicist could have.[295] Certainly, there is no clear division between

[294] Michael Nylan, "A Problematic Model: Than Han 'Orthodox Synthesis,' Then and Now," in Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng and John B. Henderson, eds., *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 18-19.

[295] As Nylan discusses elsewhere, Han scholars Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.E – 18 C.E), Wang Chung 王充 (27 – 97), and Ying Shao 應劭 (140 – 206) used the dialogue form—which is distinctive of the *Analects*—to criticize contemporary classicists for not epitomizing the true values recorded in the Classics and were thus not qualified to be labeled as Confucians. See Michael Nylan, "Han Classicists Writing in Dialogue about their own Tradition," *Philosophy East and West* 47:2 (1996): 133-88.

these three criteria. Although Nylan's division are open to question, as discussed in my Introduction,[296] it does alert us to a possibility that there were cunning scholars in the Han who pretended to be Confucius's adherents or misappropriated the name of Confucius for their personal interests. Therefore, by separating the problematic Confucians into two groups—the bewildered and the wicked Confucians—both Lius attempted to deliver a message: as long as one adhered sincerely to Confucius and his teaching, one would still have more potential (than those who do not follow the way of Confucius such as the followers of other masters) to reconstruct the complete picture of the Six Classics and understand the principles the Classics embodied.

3.6 Conclusion

The "Yi wen zhi" is one of the fundamental texts on which scholars have relied to study the intellectual history of ancient China. However, as an imperial-sponsored bibliography, the "Yi wen zhi" shows how the ideal of unification in the political dimension was transplanted to, or super imposed upon, the knowledge dimension. Mark Lewis suggests that the Lius' "mapping texts onto political offices reflects not only the equation of intellectual authority with political authority but also the ideal of restoring unity to a fragmented world."[297] In this bibliographical treatise, Liu Xiang and Liu Xin interpreted

[296] Liang Cai has recently challenged Nylan's division, calculating that only few Western Han officials were trained in the Five Classics, Cai argued that not all officials in the Han were designated as *ru* by their contemporaries. See Cai, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire*, 212, n. 89.

[297] Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 224.

the unity, embodied in a corpus of proto-Classics, as a joint product of different royal officials in the assumed golden age of China. However, the creative royal officials were incapable of grasping the entirety of the world of knowledge. In contrast, as transmitters of this unity of knowledge, the prototype of later Confucians, the Officials of Instruction, was able to acquire omnipotence in that they could synthesize and integrate each proto-Classic into one holistic system. The expected result of this theoretical framework was the "Confucianization" of the Classics commonly shared by scholars with different attributions. Among all schools of thought (ten according to the "Yi wen zhi"), only the Confucian school, with Confucius perceived as its patriarch, was said by the Lius to possess interpretive authority over this corpus of sacred texts in history. Therefore, this chapter offers a case study to see how the source which shapes our conventional understanding of the past may be filled with its author's subjective judgement. The thought of both Lius as presented in the "Yi wen zhi" was by no means the only late Western Han attempt to synthesize all branches of knowledge into a hierarchy. Rather, both Lius' attempt was only one among many that "invented" Confucianism as an intellectual tradition.

CHAPTER 4

XU SHEN'S *SHUOWEN JIEZI* AS A RESPONSE TO THE MISUSE OF WRITING IN THE HAN BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM

4.1 Introduction

In various aspects, the Han empire (202 B.C.E.-220 C.E) marked an unprecedented and pioneering stage of Chinese philology. Here are three noted examples. First, seminal works, like Xu Shen's 許慎 (c. 58-c. 148) influential *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Explaining Graphs and Deconstructing Characters*, hereafter *Shuowen*), were produced in this second imperial dynasty. In the *Shuowen*—a dictionary on which this chapter will focus—we also find the conventional terms of each form of Chinese writing.[298] Second, our extant sources during the Han indicated that the seal script (*zhuanshu* 篆書) and the clerical script (*lishu* 隸書) reached their maturity. Third, traditional portrayals of the history of the Chinese writing system, which emphasized the overnight and immediate inventions of each form of writing and thus was historically and archaeologically problematic, were formed in this dynasty.[299] These developments, as some scholars have argued, represented an increasing

[298] Itaru Tomiya 冨谷至 argues it was not until the Eastern Han that these typological terms appeared in our available early Chinese sources. See Itaru Tomiya 冨谷至, *Bunsho gyōsei no Kan Teikoku: Mokkan, chikukan no jidai* 文書行政の漢帝国 : 木簡・竹簡の時代 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), 142-49. It should be noted that, albeit providing us with some conveniences in describing the history of Chinese writing, these typological terms are oversimplified and over-theoretical, since they not only ignore the gradual development and variabilities within each form of writing, but also disregard the coexistence or overlap of more than one form of script in a character. As we will discuss below, in discovered Han manuscripts, we can see characters bearing the characteristics of both small seal script and clerical script.

[299] Regarding the origin of Chinese writing, modern sinologists have been generally divided into two groups. The first group, represented by such scholars as William Boltz and Robert W. Bagley, suggest that Chinese writing was invented suddenly. See, for example, William Boltz, "The Invention of Writing in China,"

concern in the Han about written texts and writing as major sources of authority and ancient wisdom.[300]

Alongside this growing concern were Han intellectuals' reflections on the problems that the development of the Chinese writing system and the consequential rise of literacy rate had caused. According to their own narratives about the history of the Chinese writing system, the small seal (*xiaozhuan* 小篆, or *qinzhuan* 秦篆) and the clerical scripts, which were invented in the Qin (221 – 206 B.C.E), were the major forms of writing (particular the latter) which certain people in the Han, regardless of their social ranks or status , used to read both classical texts and the document of the complicated administration of the Han bureaucratic system. Prior to both script forms, our traditional narrative suggested that there were the ancient script (*guwen* 古文) and the large seal script (*zhouwen* 籀文). Although the conveniences which the clerical script provided stimulated the growth in the number of literate men and therefore met the Han government's increasing demand for officials who could process administrative documents rapidly,[301] the famous Han

Oriens Extremus 42.1 (2000): 1-17; Robert W. Bagley, "Anyang Writing and the Origin of the Chinese Writing System," in S.D. Houston, ed., *The First Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 190-249. The second group, with scholars like Adam Smith and Paola Demattè as its representatives, argue that Chinese writing developed gradually to its mature form. See, for example, Adam D. Smith, "Are Writing Systems Intelligently Designed?" in Joshua Englehardt, ed., *Agency in Ancient Writing* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2013), 77-93; Paola. Demattè, "The Origins of Chinese Writing: the Neolithic Evidence," C*ambridge Archaeological Journal* 20.2 (2010): 211-28. A problem of the idea about the overnight invention of Chinese writing is that it cannot fully explain why people at a certain point in history had the consciousness to create writing. The widely used signs, although were not writing *per se*, formed the basis for later Chinese writing (with meaning and sound), and should be counted as part of the creation of Chinese writing.

[300] Luke Waring, "Writing and Materiality in the Three Han Dynasty Tombs at Mawangdui," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2019), 254.

[301] The competency in reading and writing was no longer monopolized in the hands of the rulers and high-ranking elites in the Han. As Robin D. S. Yates argues, there is enough evidence to prove that certain members of the lower social ranks, including females, were asked to be partly literate in the early imperial era, and literate persons could enjoy some powers of resistance as a result. See Robin D. S. Yates, "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women: Literacy among the Lower Orders in Early China," in Feng Li and David Prager Branner,

philologist Xu Shen was not optimistic about this development. He urged his contemporaries, from both higher and lower classes, to learn reading the ancient script as well as the large and small scripts, for the teachings of ancient sages could only be recovered "by working backward through the reforms and changes in writing."[302]

Given his adoration for the ancient script, Xu Shen has since the late Qing been treated as an advocate of the Ancient Script Classics (*guwen jing* 古文經), and his masterpiece has been studied in the framework of the so-called Ancient Script and Modern Script Classics (*jinwen jing* 今文經) debate put forward by late Qing classicists. However, this dichotomy in the Han has been proven problematic. Michael Nylan states that our Han materials never focused on this alleged controversy of two factions, nor did they establish any criterion for affiliating an individual with the Modern Script Classics or Ancient Script Classics tradition. In contrast, Han classicists, regardless of which category they were put in late Qing discourse, actually followed more than one interpretative line of a specific Classic. Thus, Nylan argues that there was no such Ancient Script/Modern Script Classics controversy in the Han.[303] Hans van Ess, however, argues that this controversy did exist in the Han. Nevertheless, this controversy was not philosophical, but rather institutional, and

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eds., *Writing & Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 339-69. To complement Yates's essay, Anthony J. Barbieri-Low discusses in the same volume craftsman's literacy and how artisans used the skill of literacy to promote their business interests. See Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, "Craftsman's Literacy: Uses of Writing by Male and Female Artisans in Qin and Han China," in Feng Li and David Prager Branner, eds., *Writing & Literacy in Early China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 370-99.

[302] Timothy O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory: A History*, Welten Ostasiens 26 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 251.

[303] Michael Nylan, "The *chinwen*/*kuwen* (New Text/Old Text) Controversy in Han," *T'oung pao* 80 (1994): 83-145.

was not as diametrically opposed as the late Qing accounts suggested. The label of "Ancient" and "Modern," according to van Ess, should be considered as "two poles between which a great variety of opinions was possible," so we should "remember that it was only for the sake of clarity that the historians and philologists of the Han reduced these opinions to two opposites."[304]

Despite their divergence, Nylan and van Ess concur that Han classicists shared a more inclusive attitude to each interpretative line, and this open-mindedness can be illustrated in Xu Shen's works. Of the surviving 101 fragments of Xu Shen's *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義 (*Various meanings of the Five Classics*), 12 explicitly show Xu Shen's agreement with the interpretations which have been attributed to the so-called Modern Script School.[305] Thus,

[304] Hans van Ess disagrees with Michael Loewe's earlier argument about the two main factions at the Han court, which Loewe called Reformists and Modernists. Inspired by Masakazu Fujikawa 藤川正數 (1915 – 1998), Loewe had argued that the reforms of the Reformists were inspired by the Ancient Script classics while the Modernists relied on Modern Script texts. See Michael Loewe, *Crisis and conflict in Han China, 104 B.C. to A.D. 9.* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974). For Fujikawa's work on this issue, see Masakazu Fujikawa 藤川正數, *Kandai ni okeru reigaku no kenkyū* 漢代における礼学の研究 (Tōkyō: Kazama Shobō, 1968). In contrast, van Ess focused on the *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義 (*Various meanings of the Five Classics*) and argued that the Modernist institutions built upon the Ancient Script Classics, while the Reformist one's were from the Modern Script Classics. See Hans van Ess, "The Apocryphal Texts (*ch'en-wei*) of the Han Dynasty and the Old Text/New Text Controversy," *T'oung Pao*, 2nd Series, 85, no. 1/3 (1999): 29-64, particular 46. Taking such 19th century and 20th scholars as Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858 – 1927), Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893 – 1980), Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893 – 1964), and Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895 – 1990) as examples, van Ess also argued elsewhere that motivated by their desire to search for rationalism in the China's past and the culprit that had tampered with the Chinese tradition, these scholars drew a line between the rational and irrational parts of the traditions and anachronistically attributed the Ancient Script and Modern Script campaigns to each respectively. See Hans. van Ess, "The Old text/New text Controversy: Has the 20th Century Got It Wrong," *T'oung Pao* 80.1 (1994): 146-70.

[305] Shi Yingyong 史應勇, "Xu Shen de jingyi qushe: Cancun *Wujing yiyi* bucong *guwen* shuo 27 tiao kao" 史應勇許慎的經義取捨：殘存《五經異義》不從古文說 27 條考, in Wang Yunzhi 王蘊智 and Wu Yupei 吳玉培, ed., *Xu shen wenhua yanjiu (er): Di er jie Xu Shen wenhua guoji yantaohui lunwen ji* 許慎文化研究（二）：第二屆許慎文化國際研討會論文集 (Beijing : Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2015), 833-877. Shirakawa Shizuka 白川靜 (1910 – 2006) suggested that the *Shuowen* should be placed into the context of Classical learning (jingxue 經學) and be studied together with the *Wujing yiyi* as well as the *Huainanzi zhu* 淮南子注 (*Commentary on the Master Huainan*). See Shirakawa Shizuka 白川靜, *Setsumon shingi* 說文新義, in idem, *Shirakawa Shizuka chosakushū bekkan* 白川靜著作集別卷 (Tōkyō: Heibonsha,

the dichotomy between the Ancient and Modern Scripts in the Han was not as clear or obvious as late Qing scholars suggested; Therefore, an alternative framework is in demand to study Xu Shen's postface.

Beyond the framework of the ancient script/modern script controversy, focusing on the "Postface" to the *Shuowen*, this chapter argues that Xu Shen's preference for ancient script and his dissatisfaction with clerical script should be understood as Xu Shen's reaction to and critique of the growth in the Han officialdom, which had caused an irretrievable rupture between the Han empire and the past. To ensure that the administration could run smoothly, more and more officials who could merely read the clerical script were recruited into the Han official system. However, lacking the ability to read the ancient script, the Han officials were regarded in Xu Shen's work as being unable to understand the teachings the ancient sages. In this light, Xu Shen's insistence on the ancient script—the most authoritative form of writing because of its pictoriality—resisted the substitution of administrative literacy for cultural literacy, which resulted from the popularity of the clerical script. The clerical script, in Xu Shen's theory, was too abstract, so pictoriality was completely erased. By "administrative literacy," I mean one's ability to write and read—preferably in a high-speed way—administrative documents which were very formulaic and monotonous in their wordings and structures.[306] "Cultural literacy" refers to one's ability

2002), vol. 8, 1-42.

[306] "Administrative literacy" resembles what Yates calls "functional literacy," i.e., "able to meet the state's demands for competency in reading and writing within specific domains, social formations, and ideologies, to observe the regulations promulgated by the state, to be incorporated into its ever-expanding administrative and economic system, and to be ever more legible to its officers." See Robin Yates, "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women," 340-41. The word "functional literacy" contrasts to "full literacy," with which a person could handle all kinds of written texts. Instead, I use "administrative literacy" here to draw a contrast between this type of literacy and "cultural literary" which I am about to define.

to read texts which had long traditions and were purported to be profitable to one's moral cultivation. Recent archaeological findings suggest that the cultural elites in the Han dynasty were not the only audience of the Confucian (*Ru* 儒) Classics. Many lower-ranked Han officials, who might only have the mastery of the clerical script, were also trained to read Classics written in the clerical script. However, as will be shown, Xu Shen suggested that these Classics could not reveal the secret messages that the sage Confucius (Kongzi 孔子) had bestowed upon them, since Confucius composed them in the ancient script, and thereby led to misinterpretations of the sacred texts and eventually resulted in corruption in the Han official system. Only when officials in his era acquired the ability to read the ancient script, could the problems caused by the misuse of writing be solved.

4.2 *Wenzi* and the Ideal Form of Writing in the *Shuowen*

Xu Shen mentioned four script forms—the ancient script, large seal script, small seal script, and clerical script.[307] As many scholars have already shown, the ancient script was the ideal form of writing in Xu Shen's philosophy, because the pictoriality of this script could faithfully and accurately represent and project the patterns of the natural world or the universal principle, i.e., the Way. However, what was the ancient script referred to in Xu Shen's *Shuowen* or in Han discourse? Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877 – 1927) suggested that the ancient script in Han materials referred to the forms of writing being used in the eastern

[307] By citing "Statute on Commandants" (Weilü 尉律), Xu Shen also mentioned the eight styles of writing (*bati* 八體) in the Han. However, as will be shown below, the *bati* were more stylistic than structural.

states during the Warring States Period.[308] In Zhang Fuhai's 張富海 evidential comparison of the ancient characters in the *Shuowen*, characters written on recently discovered pre-imperial manuscripts, and the ancient characters inscribed on the fragments of the stele Classics erected in the second year of the Zhengshi 正始 reign (241), he further argues that the majority of the so-called ancient script in Han materials referred to the forms of script widely used in the pre-imperial territorial states of Lu 魯 and Qi 齊 (modern Shandong 山東 Province). These forms of script, Zhang added, were also influenced by Chu script.[309] Thus, the ancient script which Xu Shen favored was not the script we see on oracle bones, which is the earliest mature Chinese writing we currently have available. It is also possible that Xu's ancient script was not the script inscribed on early Western Zhou bronzes. However, as Xu Shen clearly stated in his "Postface," there were several bronze vessels excavated during the Han era: "Prefectures and enfeoffed states[310] also often discovered cauldrons and vessels from mountains and rivers. The inscriptions on them are the ancient script of the previous generations that are all similar to one another" 郡國亦往往於山川

[308] Wang Guowei 王國維, "*Shi zhou pian shuzheng* xu" 史籀篇疏證序, in Wang Guowei, *Shi zhou pian shuzheng* 史籀篇疏證, Wang Guowei yishu 王國維遺書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 1a-7b; which is also in Wang's "Zhanguo shi Qin yong zhouwen liuguo yong guwen shuo" 戰國時秦用籀文六國用古文說, in Wang Guowei, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林, in Wang Guowei yishu 王國維遺書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), vol. 7, 1a-5b.

[309] Zhang Fuhai 張富海, *Hanren suowei guwen zhi yanjiu* 漢人所謂古文之研究 (Beijing: Xian zhuang shuju, 2007), 305-27.

[310] Feng Li pointed out that the English term feudalism, which had been commonly used in previous scholarship on the Western Zhou political structure, is not equivalent to the Chinese term *fengjian* 封建, the governance system Zhou rulers employed to give or enfeoff lands to their relatives and subordinates as vassals. See Feng Li, "'Feudalism' and Western Zhou China: A Criticism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 63. 1 (2003): 115-44.

得鼎彝，其銘即前代之古文，皆自相似.[311] It is not known, however, if these were bronze vessels from the early Western Zhou. If so, Xu Shen would probably be astonished by the difference between the Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and the ancient script he saw in the Classics, which were reported to be discovered in the walls of Confucius's residence. Nor do we know whether the bronze vessels Xu Shen mentioned were the vessels cast in the Eastern Zhou on which the characters inscribed were structurally and stylistically similar to the ancient characters in the ancient version of Classics. In any case, the ancient script in Xu Shen's mind should be pictorial in its very nature; thus, it was entirely different in structure from the clerical script widely used in the Han.

Xu's predilection for the pictoriality of writing and his pictorial orientation are well manifested in his inclusion of the terms, *wen* 文 and *zi* 字, in the title of his *magnum opus*, which has provoked vivid scholarly discussion in later generations. Song scholar Zheng Qiao's 鄭樵 (1104 – 1162) definition of *wen* in terms of "non-compound character" and *zi* in terms of "compound character" is the most influential definition, so its shadow still hangs over modern scholarship.[312] However, Françoise Bottéro maintains that Zheng

[311] Xu Shen 許慎, *Shiwen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, annotated by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (Taibei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 2005), 15A.18b. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Xu Shen's "Postface" to his *Shuowen* and other sources are my own.

[312] Boltz also accepts this interpretation of the terms of *wen* and *zi* in his monograph on the development of Chinese writing:

> The *wen* are single, unanalyzable graphic elements that may function as whole graphs standing for words in their own right, of that may enter into combination with other *wen* to yield complex, multi-component characters, called *tzu* (*zi*), with the *wen* as their identifiable constituent parts.

William Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2003), 41.

Qiao's definition was an analysis produced under the influence of the Indian writing system, in which limited basic elements (*ti* 體) were combined to form infinite compound characters. Therefore, this distinction should not be what Xu Shen had in mind.[313] Instead, Bottéro convincingly argues elsewhere that *wen* in the *Shuowen* refers to graphs–in the sense that they are not associated with words (logos) *per se* but directly with the shape of things—while *zi* refers to graphic representations of spoken words.[314] Bottéro's interpretation of both *wen* and *zi* not only accords with the modern theory of writing, which defines writing as notation to represent spoken language,[315] but it also conforms with, at least in terms of the pictoriality of writing, Xu Shen's following definition of both terms:

> When Cang Jie first invented writing, since he followed the images and forms/shapes of every category, the characters were called *wen*. After that, forms/shapes and sounds added to each other, and the characters [produced in this way] were called *zi*. *Wen* refers to the basis of an object's image. *Zi* means to engender and to increase gradually.
>
> 倉頡之初作書，蓋依類象形，故謂之文。其後形聲相益，即謂之字。文者，物象之本；字者，言孳乳而寖多也。[316]

What distinguishes *wen* and *zi* in Xu Shen's work is whether a character has its counterpart in spoken language, but not whether a character has a phonetic element/component or not.

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[313] Françoise Bottéro, "Chinese Characters versus Other Writing Systems: The Song Origins of the Distinction between 'Non-Compound Characters' (*wen* 文) and 'Compound Characters' (*zi* 字)," in Ken-ichi Takashima and Shaoyu Jiang, eds., *Meaning and Form: Essays in Pre-modern Chinese Grammar* (München: Lincom Europa, 2004), 1-17.

[314] Françoise Bottéro, "Revisiting the *wén* 文 and the *zì* 字: The Great Chinese Characters Hoax," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002): 23, 26.

[315] On the modern theory of writing as a representation of spoken language, see John DeFrancis, *Visible Speech: The Diverse Oneness of Writing Systems* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989).

[316] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.2a.

(A *xingsheng zi* 形聲字 in Xu Shen's definition typically consists of a phonetic element and a semantic element) Despite this difference, both *wen* and *zi* in the *Shuowen* emphasize the pictorial nature of writing. As Xu Shen defined in his Postface, the form/shape (*xing* 形) is the inalienable part of both *wen* and *zi*.

What is of equal importance in the above passage is the distinction between *wen/zi* and *shu* 書 (writing). When saying that Cang Jie invented writing, nearly all of our extant accounts, including the *Shuowen*, mention that he created writing (*zuoshu* 作書).[317] Yet the earliest record of Cang Jie's inventing writing can be traced back only to the *Xunzi* 荀子 (*Master Xun*),[318] a collection which includes a series of essays attributed to Xunzi 荀子 (c. 316 – c. 235 B.C.E) and whose date is undetermined.[319] It was not until the time of Wang Chong's 王充 (27 – c. 97) *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Balanced Inquiries*) and the *Shuowen* (the second half of the first century to the early second century of our common era) that *wen* (as well as *zi*) harbored the sense of writing and served as a supplementary element to define the nature of writing invented by Cang Jie.[320] Furthermore, it is only since Wang Chong and Xu Shen that we read the story in which Cang Jie's invention was inspired by

[317] For the early imperial mythical narratives of Cang Jie's invention, see Françoise Bottéro, "Cāng Jié and the Invention of Writing: Reflections on the Elaboration of a Legend," in C. Anderl and H. Eifring, eds., *Studies in Chinese Language and Culture* (Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2006), 135-55.

[318] The *Xunzi* did not say that Cang Jie invented writing. In its narrative, writing already existed before the time of Cang Jie. Instead, Cang Jie transmitted pre-existing writing. See Ibid, 136.

[319] This given date of Xunzi is based on Masayuki Sato, *The Confucian Quest for Order: The Origin and Formation of the Political Thought of Xunzi* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 60-61.

[320] See Wang Chong 王充, *Lunheng jiao shi* 論衡校釋, collated and annotated by Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1990), 18.800.

his observation of the tracks of birds and beasts. For example, "When observing the traces of the footprints and the tracks of birds and beasts, the Scribe of the Yellow Emperor, Cang Jie, knew that their patterns could be distinguished and differed from one another through observations" 黃帝史官倉頡，見鳥獸蹄迒之跡，知分理之可相別異也.[321] Why did Wang Chong and Xu Shen add the term *wen* in the mythical narrative of Cang Jie's invention? How should we understand the difference between *wen*/*zi* and *shu*? Meanwhile, when saying that Cang Jie invented (*zuo*) writing, in what sense did they take the word *zuo*?

The Chinese term *wen*, particularly the multiple but bewildering meanings it harbored in our corpus of early Chinese texts, is an everlasting headache to any sinologists. Not only has its ambiguity and polysemy induced a variety of translations in modern scholarship,[322] but the controversial dates of early Chinese texts have also made the mission to trace its original meaning difficult, if not impossible.[323] Despite its numerous translations, it is generally admitted that the basic meaning of *wen* was "pattern" in early materials, and that,

[321] Boltz, *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System*, 130-38.

[322] To name but a few, the word *wen* was translated by Peter Bol as "culture," see Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); by Tse-Tsung Chow as "literature," see Tse-Tsung Chow, "Ancient Chinese Views on Literature, the Tao, and Their Relationship," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 1 (1979): 3-29; by Martin Kern as "pattern," see Martin Kern "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon: Historical Transitions of *Wen* in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 87.1-3 (2001): 43-91.

[323] Uffe Bergeton suggests that in the Western Zhou, *wen* referred to "awe-inspiring beauty" that was physically visible and inherited only by members of ruling elite because of their birthrights. See Uffe Bergeton, "From 'Awe-Inspiringly Beautiful' to 'Patterns in Conventionalized Behavior': The Historical Development of the Metacultural Concept of *Wén* in Pre-Qín China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139.2 (2019): 433-54. His article also traces the sematic development of this term. However, we cannot determine whether "awe-inspiring beauty" was the original meaning of this word. Neither can we determine the developmental chain of the *wen*, which Bergeton presents, is not without problems. One of the major issues is that his chronology of the source texts is based primarily on traditional dating. However, given that many transmitted pre-imperial texts had been edited before being recorded in the imperial library catalogue in the *Hanshu*, his discussion on the pre-imperial semantic development of the word *wen* is not conclusive.

as Martin Kern has contended, it was not until the late first century B.C.E that *wen* and *wenzhang* 文章 started to take on the meaning of writing and of written text.[324] Aside from the definition previously cited, Xu Shen also defined *wen* in the main body of his dictionary as, "*Wen* means intersecting lines. [Its graphic structure] imitates an intersecting pattern" 文，錯畫也。象交文.[325] Understanding that *wen* is the pattern of [intersecting] lines, Xu Shen accepted the basic meaning of this term to put emphasis on the pictoriality of the writing Cang Jie reportedly invented.

In contrast, the word *shu* referred only to writing in a very general sense that it alone implies little or no pictoriality. After clarifying the difference between *wen* and *zi*, Xu Shen defined the word *shu* as follows, "Those written on bamboo and silk is called *shu* (writing). *Shu* means to resemble" 著於竹帛謂之書。書者，如也.[326] However, "to resemble" does not bear the accuracy that was characterized as prevalent in the ancient script and that Xu Shen sought in the Classics. The phrase *xiangxing* 象形 that appears in Xu Shen's definition of *wen* in the "Postface" has been translated differently by Timothy O'Neill and Bottéro. O'Neill takes it as the *xiangxing zi* 象形字 ("represent the shape" graphs), one of the Six Writings (*lushu* 六書) loosely defined by Xu Shen.[327] O'Neill also understands the *xingsheng* in Xu's definition of *zi* as the *xingsheng zi* ("classifier and phonetic" characters).

[324] See Kern, "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon: Historical Transitions of *Wen* in Early China," 43-91.

[325] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 9A.20b.

[326] Ibid, 15A.2b.

[327] O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory: A History*, 260.

However, if this were the case, then only the "represent the shape" graphs could be qualified as *wen*, while only the "classifier and phonetic" characters could be qualified as *zi*. This definition is somewhat awkward or problematic, for the *Shuowen* also includes characters which can be classified under the rubrics of the other four types, yet some of them can fall into more than one category.[328] As aforesaid, *wen* and *zi* both refer to characters with pictoriality, but this does not necessarily mean that those characters must be, in the strictest sense, *xiangxing zi* in the six types of characters. Two examples can sufficiently illustrate this point. The words *ben* 本 (root) and *mo* 末 (tip) are classified as *zhishi zi* 指事字 ("point to the thing" characters). However, their shared component *mu* 木 (tree) not only serves as their radical but also as an indispensable image through which one can recognize both words are referring to the root and tip of a tree. The function of pointing to the parts of a tree, in both cases, relies also on the pictoriality of the characters, which are not treated as *xiangxing zi* according to Xu Shen's classification.

Bottéro, on the other hand, translates *xiangxing* in the definition of *wen* as "the forms according to their resemblances,"[329] i.e., to resemble the shape of an object. In this sense, it seems both *wen* and *shu* are synonymous. However, I am inclined to believe that the word *xiang* in *xiangxing* bears the same meaning with that in "the basis of an object's image" (*wuxiang zhi ben* 物象之本) and is different from the word *shu*. Thus, rather than

[328] For instance, *xiangxing zi* and *zhishi zi* are confusing. As Pan Zhonggui 潘重規 indicated, although characters like *bie* 別 and *bu* 卜 are categorized into the *zhishi*, they bear characteristics of the *xiangxing zi*. See Pan Chonggui 潘重規, *Zhongguo wenzi xue* 中國文字學 (Taibei: Sanmin shuju gufen youxian gongsi, 2004), 46b. They exemplify that the boundary between the six types of characters defined by Xu Shen is so vague that in some cases, we cannot determine into which category a character should be placed.

[329] Bottéro, "Revisiting the *wén* 文 and the *zì* 字," 23.

taking *xiang* as a verb, this word on both occasions should be understood as a noun that refers to the meaning of "image." In his observation of animals' tracks, Cang Jie was able to distinguish one from another. The distinction he drew was based primarily on his capturing every detail of the images and shapes of each category of creatures. As Victor Mair suggested, the creation of writing was "a matter of discerning and disclosing a pre-existent shape in the natural world."[330] Although the shapes of the objects or creatures in a single category are different case-by-case, they do enjoy certain shared characteristics and patterns that distinguish them from others. Accuracy, therefore, was required in showing the respective characteristics of all categories, for any blur would definitely break down the boundary between each category and thus ruin the order. Only with this accuracy, could the patterns and veins of each category of creative matters be presented and distinguished correctly, and could the innermost principle be clear. This accuracy, however, was not guaranteed in resemblance to the word *shu* provided. Xu Shen did not use *wen* to modify the clerical script in his *Shuowen*, for the clerical script was so abstract and symbolic that the pictoriality of its predecessors was wiped out. Instead, since the large and small seal scripts bore a sufficient degree of pictoriality, we can see in the *Shuowen* that they were sometimes designated as *zhouwen* and *zhuanwen*, where the word *wen* indicates their necessary pictoriality. Thus, when clarifying that the writing (*shu*), which Cang Jie invented, was actually *wen* and *zi*, it seems Xu Shen, as well as Wang Chong, were emphasizing the importance of the pictoriality that Chinese writing was supposed to have.

[330] Victor H. Mair, "The Narrative Revolution in Chinese Literature: Ontological Presuppositions," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles and Reviews* 5.1 (1983): 20.

With its pictoriality, writing can reflect the semblance among things, which grounds categories as the basis of the natural order.

Similar to its forerunner, i.e., the trigrams in the *Zhouyi* 周易 or *Yijing* 易經 (*I Ching*), writing was a product of an ancient sage's observation of the natural world. Before the time of Cang Jie, according to Xu Shen, the trigrams had been created to help in governing:

> When Paoxi ruled the world in antiquity, he observed the celestial phenomena in the heavens when looking up, and observed the regulations on the earth when looking down. He saw that the patterns of birds and wild animals properly match with the earth. From nearby he picked up the patterns from his body, from afar he picked up the patterns from a variety of creative matters. As a result, he started to create the eight trigrams of the *Yij* in order to hand down normative phenomena.
>
> 古者庖羲氏之王天下也，仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地，視鳥獸之文與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物；於是始作《易》八卦，以垂憲象。[331]

Both Paoxi and Cang Jie invented their tools to govern by observing the world. But why were they capable of inventing both trigrams and writing? In the *Lunheng*, we read that Cang Jie was a legendary figure with four eyes, "Cang Jie had four eyes, and acted as a scribe of the Yellow Emperor" 蒼頡四目，為黃帝史.[332] We do not have any valid evidence to assert that Xu Shen read Wang Chong's work. Nevertheless, the intertextuality between their works regarding the mythical narrative about Cang Jie suggests that the assumption that his two extra eyes enhanced his extraordinary appearance and supernatural mysterious visual perception was widely known in the Eastern Han. Since Cang Jie was exceedingly sensitive in his observations, he could catch sight of the cosmic patterns that might not be visible to normal people, discover the shared patterns of all members in a

[331] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.1a.

[332] Wang, *Lunheng jiao shi*, 3.112.

single category, and correctly distinguish each category based on the patterns. More importantly, his visual sensitivity also allowed him to penetrate and further embody the universal principle behind these patterns through his invention. Just as each trigram in the *Yijing* had a specific meaning and represented a specific principle, so too did each character Cang Jie invented. Thus, what his pictorial characters did was to reproduce accurately the patterns in the world and to simultaneously embody their connoted meanings.

In this case, is it appropriate to say that Cang Jie "invented" writing, for only he reproduced the patterns that already existed? The concept of creation was somewhat complicated in early Chinese thought; therefore, some scholars have argued that, in ancient Chinese context, there was no such idea of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) that there was in the Biblical context.[333] In the case of mythical narrative of Cang Jie, Tobias Benedikt Zürn has argued that Cang Jie did not act as an inventor in this sense of *creatio ex nihilo*, but was simply a transmitter of the Way/Dao.[334] I agree with him that the patterns in which the Way lay were not things that Cang Jie invented. However, writing, which not only represents the patterns but also corresponds to human spoken language, was a vehicle that, according to the ancient sources, had been absent before the time of Cang Jie. Although human beings already possessed trigrams and knotting cords, they could only embody part of the patterns of this world (e.g., celestial phenomena and time flow) and thereby limited aspects of principle. Only through writing could all patterns of the world

[333] For an elaborated discussion on creation (*zuo* 作) in early Chinese thought, see Michael Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[334] Tobias Benedikt Zürn, "The Han Imaginaire of Writing as Weaving: Intertextuality and the *Huainanzi*'s Self-Fashioning as an Embodiment of the Way," *Journal of Asian Studies* 79.2 (2020): 383-84.

be represented and become visible even to ordinary people. By perfectly and accurately "shrinking" and reproducing—not just emulating—the cosmic patterns, Cang Jie created a micro-universe in which meanings could be embodied and concretized. The invention of Cang Jie, therefore, should better be understood in this sense of the microreplica of the Way.

Since this form of writing with accurate pictoriality could perfectly reflect the principles of the world, it was said to mark the advent of the civilized world and to set forth the perfect government in the human world. In Xu Shen's "Postface," we see several times the parallel drawn between (the ideal form of) writing and the trigrams in the *Ying* on the basis that both contributed to the grand peace and perfect government of the ancient sages. As the citation of the *Yijing*'s "Xici zhuan" 繫辭傳 (Commentary on Appended Statements) stated, since the appearance of writing, "The hundred officials could be governed and the common people could be supervised" 百官以治，萬民以察.[335] Governmental achievements should not be limited to their administrative dimension. Already in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (*Master Huainan*), as Bottéro has argued, writing had been thought to facilitate administrative function. However, writing also bore responsibility for moral integrity.[336] Indeed, Xu Shen did not claim that the operation of the administrative system alone could lead to such a perfect status of government. Instead, such a perfection was achieved mainly because writing has such a visual influence that it could proclaim the

[335] Kong Yingda 孔穎達, ed., *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 8.168b.

[336] Bottéro, "Cāng Jié and the Invention of Writing," 150.

teachings of the sages in the royal court. This point is illustrated in his interpretation of the "Tuanzhuan" 彖傳 (Tuan Commentary) to the *guai* 夬 hexagram that was quoted in the postface, "As for *wen*, it means to proclaim the teachings and to manifest the transformations in the court of a true King" 文者, 宣教明化於王者朝庭.[337] This close relationship between writing and the *Yi* was not something novel in Xu Shen's *Shuowen*.[338] Already in the "Yi wen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Writings) of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han*), citations from the ten commentaries on the *Yi*, as seen in the "Postface," had already been used to elaborate on the function of writing in human society.[339] This example may imply an historical tendency in the Han toward the mixture of image and writing, so that pictoriality became a critical criterion that writing was supposed to meet to secure its authority. Thus, at the end of his "Postface," Xu declared that the ideal form of writing is the foundation of Classics and Arts:

> Graphs and letters (the perfect form of writing) are probably the foundation of the Classics and the Arts, and the beginning of kingly government. It is the means by which people in older generations could transmit [their teachings] to later generations, and people in these later generations could know the older generations.
>
> 蓋文字者，經藝之本。王政之始。前人所以垂後，後人所以識古。[340]

[337] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.2a.

[338] Mark Lewis suggests that in early Chinese thought, the hexagrams were actually the ancestors of Chinese characters. See Mark Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 272-73. Bottéro also argues that in the mythical narratives dated to the Han, the *Yijing* was thought as the origin of all inventions, and this was an idea to which Xu Shen adhered. See Bottéro, "Cāng Jié and the Invention of Writing: Reflections on the Elaboration of a Legend," 150.

[339] Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.1720.

[340] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.21b.

The authority of writing resided in its transformative power. This power, in turn, depended on the pictoriality of writing which could successfully reproduce the visible patterns and therefore the principles—thought to be intangible—hidden therein.

4.3 Cheng Miao and the Incorrectness of his Invention

If the ancient script, the earliest and most ideal form of writing, was said to be invented for reproducing the patterns of each category and visualizing the hidden principles of the world, any changes in the script should be treated as devolutions. The degeneracy of writing, in Xu Shen's point of view, even accelerated during the Qin when the clerical script was invented. In the "Postface" of the *Shuowen*, Xu Shen set forth the pervasive incorrectness (*buzheng* 不正 and *wuzheng* 無正) in his time.[341] Being manifest in the following two aspects, this incorrectness was presumed to have the clerical script as its culprit.

First, as Xu complained, certain classicists in his era mistakenly and unreasonably claimed that the clerical script was the script used in Cang Jie's time: "Various classicists compete over the suitable matchings between explaining characters and explicating the classics, and claim that the Qin clerical script was the writing in Cang Jie's time" 諸生競逐說字，解經誼，稱秦之隸書為倉頡時書.[342] Bottéro maintains that Xu Shen was here

[341] Ibid, 15A.13a.

[342] Ibid, 15A.19a.

criticizing the classicists who promoted the Modern Script (of the Qin).[343] However, our available sources do not include any evidence that any so-called Modern Script classicist explicitly claimed that the clerical script was used at the earliest stage of the civilized world. Whom, then, was Xu Shen criticizing? Why did these classicists make such a claim that was so ridiculous in Xu Shen's view? Second, magistrates made adjudications in accordance with their erroneous analyses of the characters written in statutes, "When the Chamberlains for Law Enforcement explained the laws, they made verdicts on the basis of analyzing the characters [in the statutes. For instance, they said,] 'in the sentence about reprimanding a person who receives bribes, the character *ke* 'punish' consists of *zhi* (to stop) and *gou* (to catch).' Examples like this are many" 廷尉說律，至以字斷法：「苛人受錢，苛之字止句也。」若此者甚眾.[344] Instead of punishing criminals harshly, as the laws required, magistrates just chose to arrest them and seize their money. Why, then, did the chamberlains' graphic analyses of the characters err, especially since Xu Shen's major method of analyzing characters in his dictionary is also a graphic analysis?

The clerical script, throughout Xu's "Postface," was blamed on this incorrectness because it was, according to Xu, invented by a Qin official Cheng Miao 程邈 (n.d.) who received no moral training; therefore, this form of writing aimed merely to provide administrative convenience, but completely disregarded the function of morally transforming people. This official was so mediocre that he even could not foresee the problems his invention might cause, but could only anticipate the administrative efficiency

[343] Bottéro, "Revisiting the *wén* 文 and the *zì* 字," 17.

[344] Ibid, 15A.19b.

his invention might provide. Xu Shen's repugnance to the clerical script is manifest in the absence of this style of script in his *magnum opus* and in his decision to use the small seal script as the microstructure of his dictionary.[345] However, such modern scholars as Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容 have indicated that the clerical script had already been used before the Qin unification.[346] Why, then, did Xu Shen attribute this form of script to Cheng Miao? To better understand Xu Shen's repugnance, let us first scrutinize the biographic information about Cheng Miao.

The only Han reference of Cheng Miao appears in Xu Shen's "Postface" of the *Shuowen*, "The fourth is the assistant script, which is the clerical script of the Qin. It was created by Cheng Miao, a native of Xiadu and a clerk of the First Emperor of Qin." 四曰左書，即秦隸書，秦始皇帝使下杜人程邈所作也.[347] I agree with Duan Yucai's 段玉

[345] O'Neill argues that Xu Shen's reason for arranging the ancient script, large seal script, and small seal script was to "prove that the changes in the writing systems are historically and graphemically observable, and consequently that the original intentions of the sages who used *guwen* to write the classics are literally recoverable by working backwards through the reforms and changes in writing to a proper understanding of how they classified and used their words in the *guwen* writing system." See O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory*, 251. As elaborated below, because the inventors of the two seal scripts knew the tradition since the time when Cang Jie invented writing, Xu Shen accepted the view that these two script forms were key for scholars to access the ancient form.

[346] Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容, *Qin xi wenzi yanjiu: Cong hanzi shi de jiaodu kaocha* 秦系文字研究：從漢字史的角度考察 (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 2003).

[347] Xu, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15A.3a. My translation of the word *shi* 使 as "official" deserves further discussion, for it disagrees with previous translations of this "Postface," which translated the word as "order." Nils Göran David Malmqvist translated the sentence *Qin shi huangdi shi Xiadu ren Cheng Miao suo zuo ye* 秦始皇帝使下杜人程邈所作也 as, "Created by Cheng Miao of Xiadu on the order of the First Emperor of Qin." However, he misplaced the sentence, and therefore, mistakenly attributed the small seal script to Cheng Miao. Nevertheless, his translation is enough to prove his understanding of *shi* as "to order." See Nils Göran David Malmqvist, "Xu Shen's Postface to the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*," in David Pankenier, ed., *On Script and Writing in Ancient China* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 1974), 51. Adopting the problematic sequence, O'Neill translates the sentence as "which was made by Cheng Miao, a person from Xiadu, who was ordered to do so by the first emperor of Qin." See O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory*, 265. The reasons for my translation are twofold. First, my translation can resolve the textual contradiction between both accounts in Xu Shen's "Postface" and in Wei Heng's *Siti shu shi* 四體書勢 *Four Styles of the Chinese Calligraphy*. In Wei Heng's account, it was only after Cheng Miao had invented the clerical script that the First Emperor

裁 (1735 – 1815) judgement that in previous editions of the *Shuowen*, the last thirteen words of this sentence were placed wrongly after the phrase "the third is the seal script, which is the small seal script" 三曰篆書，即小篆, for Xu Shen had already stated clearly that the small seal script was invented by Li Si 李斯 (280? – 208 B.C.E), Zhao Gao 趙高 (c. 257– 207 B.C.E), and Huwu Jing 胡毋敬 (fl. 2nd century B.C.E).[348] Yet, stated more indirectly, Cheng's reason for inventing this new form of writing was to simplify (administrative) writing and accommodate different administrative demands because the Qin seal script was complicated and thus time-consuming: "At this time, [the Qin government] massively sent out its officials and troops and developed corvée labor services. The duties of the judicial officials were so heavy that the clerical script first appeared at this time. [The clerical script was] simplified and could be written with speed" 大發吏卒，興戍役。官獄職務繁，初有隸書，以趣約易.[349] The "Yi wen zhi" and the *Hanji* 漢紀 (*Annals of the Former Han*), before and after the *Shuowen,* also mentioned that the clerical script purported to help Qin judges to work more effectively by abbreviating and simplifying the characters.[350] These sources suggest that it was generally acknowledged

ordered him to standardize this form script. In other words, Cheng Miao spontaneously invented this script form without orders from the First Emperor. Second, the words *shi* 使 and *li* 吏 (official) were interchangeable in early Chinese texts. See Huang Dekuan 黃德寬, ed., *Gu wenzi puxi shuzheng* 古文字譜系疏證 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007), 1: 251.

[348] See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1721.

[349] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.10b.

[350] "The judges in the Qin dealt with numerous cases, [someone, therefore,] abbreviated the characters and followed what was easy. Judicial officials used the characters [he abbreviated], and it was thus called the clerical script" 秦時獄官多事，省文從易，施之於徒隸。故謂之隸書. See Zhang Lie 張烈, ed., *Liang Hanji* 兩漢紀, *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965), 25.3a.

during the Eastern Han that the primary use of the clerical script was in legal and administrative dimensions.

The second and a more elaborated biographic account of Cheng Miao in our extant corpus came from a Western Jin (266 – 316) source, *Siti shu shi* 四體書勢 (*Four Styles of the Chinese Calligraphy*) by Wei Heng 衛恒 (d. 291), in which Cheng Miao's status was unequivocally stated:

> Some say that Cheng Miao, a native of Xiadu, offended the First Emperor when he was working as a judicial official in Ya.[351] [As a result,] he was thrown into prison in Yunyang for ten years. In the prison, [Cheng Miao] worked on the large seal script by augmenting [strokes] to those characters with insufficient [strokes] but reducing [strokes] from those characters with exceeded [strokes]; and circularized the squares and quadrated the circles. [Thereafter,] he presented [the new script] to the First Emperor. The First Emperor was fond of him and appointed him as censor to standardize the script. Some say that what [Cheng] Miao standardized is the clerical script.
>
> Since the Qin used the small seal script, the memorials used to report affairs were so manifold that it was difficult to use the small seal script to write all of them. [The First Emperor] immediately ordered clerks to assist in writing the memorials, [and the script they used] was called the clerical script. The Han followed and implemented [this practice], and only those characters written on contracts, seals, flag signals, and signatures are in the small seal script. The clerical script is a short-cut of the small seal script.
>
> 或曰，下土人程邈為衙獄吏，得罪始皇，幽繫雲陽十年，從獄中作大篆，少者增益，多者損減，方者使員，員者使方，奏之始皇。始皇善之，出以為御史，使定書。或曰，邈所定乃隸字也。
>
> 秦既用篆，奏事繁多，篆字難成，即令隸人佐書，曰隸字。漢因行之，獨符、印璽、幡信、題署用篆。隸書者，篆之捷也。[352]

[351] This translation is in accordance with the *Judgments on Calligraphies* (*Shuduan* 書斷), in which we see the following sentence, "the courtesy name of Miao is Yuancen. He first served as a judicial official in the Ya county" 邈字元岑，始為衙縣獄吏. See Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘, *Shuduan* 書斷 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 1.11a.

[352] For Wei Heng's *Siti shu shi*, see Fang, *Jinshu*, 36.1063.

According to Wei Heng's deeper description, Cheng Miao was originally a judicial official (*yu li* 獄吏) in a place called Ya 衙 and invented the clerical script on the basis of the large seal script when he was in prison. The clerical script, as stressed at the end of this passage, was a short-cut of the seal script, which the Qin government had used. What confuses us is whether Cheng Miao abbreviated the large seal script or the small seal script. We know from Xu's "Postface" that both seal scripts and the clerical script, together with the other five styles of writing, namely the tally engraving (*kefu* 刻符), the insect script (*chongshu* 蟲書), the copy stamp (*moyin* 摹印), the public official script (*shushu* 署書), and the spear script (*shushu* 殳書), were in use in the Qin. However, these five other styles of writing were not structurally divergent from the scripts in question. They were divided depending on the material surfaces on which they were written.[353] As Wei Heng stated, when characters were written on such materials as seals and contracts, those characters were conventionally written by Han officials in the form of seal scripts. The textual contradiction or ambiguity regarding the seal scripts may imply that the boundary between the large and small seal scripts was still obscure and fuzzy in the third century of our common era. No matter on which script Cheng Miao relied to invent the clerical script, we can still affirm that this form of script was abbreviated and easier to write.

What does his status as a judicial official matter to our current discussion? Another issue we should address beforehand is the qualifications an official like Cheng Miao was supposed to possess in the Qin. The conventional narratives, which were based on the

[353] Itaru, *Bunsho gyōsei no Kan Teikoku: Mokkan, chikukan no jidai*, 111; Hsing, "Han dai *Cang jie*, *Jijiu*, ba ti he "shi shu" wenti: Zai lun Qin Han guanli ruhe xuexi wenzi", 434-9.

narratives formed in the Han, described Qin officials in very negative and devilish ways. According to the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Scribe*), the First Emperor agreed with Li Si's proposal to have those who want to learn statues and decrees treat officials as their teachers (*yi li wei shi* 以吏為師).[354] Echoing the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (*Master Han Fei*) in which the synonymous master, after abandoning the words of the Former Kings (*xianwang* 先王), recommended treating officials as teachers,[355] traditional narratives portrayed Li Si's proposal as an obscurantist policy. The narratives also defamed Qin officials and compared them to the harsh officials (*kuli* 酷吏), who were described in the works of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 or 135 B.C.E – ?) and Ban Gu 班固 (32 – 92), as extreme in their use laws and punishments extremely.[356] As teachers, what Qin officials taught were only the statutes and ordinances that common people were compelled to follow, whereas the moral lessons of the ancient sages were completely withdrawn from the curriculum. As a result of this policy, common people were no longer able to criticize current affairs by referring to the words from the past.

[354] Sima, *Shiji*, 6.255; 87.2546. Xu Guang 徐廣 (352 – 425) added in his commentary on this phrase that in another edition, the compound "statutes ordinances" (*faling* 法令) did not appear in the "Annuals of the First Emperor of Qin."

[355] Han Fei 韓非, *Han Feizi ji jie* 韓非子集解, annotated by Wang Xianshen 王先慎 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 19.452.

[356] In contrast to the harsh officials were the reasonable officials (*xunli* 循吏) since the reign of the Emperor Xuan of Han (r. 74 – 48 B.C.E) who bore the responsibility of teachers (*shi* 師) to promote moral education. It should also be noticed that, although they were criticized for their abuses of laws and punishments, the harsh officials by the time of Zhang Tang 張湯 (155 B.C – 115 B.C) did receive positive comments from both historians at the ends of the biographies. See Sima, *Shiji*, 122.3154; Ban, *Hanshu*, 90.3676.

In this traditional narrative about Qin officials, it will not surprise us that Cheng Miao was an official who lacked the foundational knowledge of the ancient teachings that his colleagues in the Han were supposed to possess. However, recent discoveries of Qin bamboo-slip manuscripts, such as *Weili zhi dao* 為吏之道 (*The Way of Being an Official*) from the Shuihudi 睡虎地 and the *Weili zhiguan ji qianshou* 爲吏治官及黔首 (*The Way of Governing the Officials and the Common People*), which are preserved at the Yuelu 嶽麓 Academy, enable modern scholars to challenge the traditional narrative and shed new light on the actual qualities of Qin officials.[357] Taking the former manuscript as an example, I agree with Hsing I-tien's 邢義田 conclusion that this manuscript, although bearing a pedagogical purpose of teaching potential officials how to read and write, was primarily used to provide its readers with necessary moral trainings and to encourage their self-cultivation.[358] Korean scholar Kim Kyŏngho 金慶浩 even claims that both manuscripts promoted ideas similar to those in later "Confucian" Classics; moreover, both refer to Qin officials as *shi* 士, a title for intellectuals in later Chinese imperium.[359] If it were not for the findings of Qin manuscripts like these two, we might still be misguided by the received

[357] For the transcription of the entire text of *The Way of Being an Official*, see Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組, ed., *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* 睡虎地秦墓竹簡 (Beijing Wenwu chubanshe, 2001), 165-76. For the transcription of the entire text of *The Way of Governing the Officials and the Common People*, see Zhu Hanmin 朱漢民, Chen Songzhang 陳松長, ed., *Yuelu shuyuan cang qinjia*n 嶽麓書院藏秦簡 (Shanghai: Shanghai ci shu chubanshe, 2010), 1: 187-91.

[358] Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Han jiceng yuanli de jingshen suyang yu jiaoyu: Cong Juyan du 506.7 (*Li pian*) shuo qi" 漢基層員吏的精神素養與教育──從居延牘 506.7（《吏》篇）說起, *Guwenzi yu gudai shi* 古文字與古代史 3 (2012): 416-17.

[359] Kim Kyŏngho 金慶浩, "Qin, Han chu '*shi*' yu '*li*' de xingzhi: Yi *Wei li zhi dao* he *Wei li zhiguan ji qianshou* wei zhongxin" 秦、漢初「士」與「吏」的性質—以《爲吏之道》和《爲吏治官及黔首》爲中心, *Jian bo* 簡帛 8 (2013): 309-31.

tradition since the Han. But why did Han historiography discredit and distort the actual situation in the Qin and emphasize the Qin's notoriety in such a way?

Yü Ying-shih's 余英時 (1930 – 2021) thorough a study of the accounts of reasonable officials in the Han convincingly claims that none of the five reasonable officials (*xunli* 循吏) in the *Shiji* were from the Qin and the Han; moreover, it was not until the composition of the *Hanshu* in the Eastern Han, that Han reasonable officials were given more positive and honorable comment.[360] Yü further reminds us that harsh officials and vulgar officials (*suli* 俗吏) were still the majority in the Han.[361] If the early Western Han did have any reasonable officials, their exclusion from the biography dedicated to this type of official might be a way that Sima Qian used to deviously criticize his majesty Emperor Wu and Han officials. That possibility notwithstanding, as we can see in both the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*, harsh officials consistently outnumbered reasonable officials;[362] therefore, we are

[360] See Yü Ying-shih 余英時, "Han dai xunli yu wenhua chuanbo" 漢代循吏與文化傳播, in Yu Ying-shih, *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1987), 211. However, Yu's analysis still does not dispense with the traditional narrative of Han intellectual history, in which each scholastic tradition, including the so-called Confucianism (*rujia* 儒家), was well-established, defined, and distinguishable, despite the interactions and penetrations between each of the scholastic traditions. Michael Nylan and Mark Csikszentmihalyi, in contrast, maintain that the scholastic lineages appeared because the Eastern Han government relied heavily on its faithful sponsorship of textual traditions associated with the Five Classics to legitimize its authority. Therefore, the imperial court embraced the importance of reinforcing the implied parallel between faithful service to the dynasty and faithful transmission of the canonical traditions. Thus, the Han conferred legality on precise interpretive traditions or lines of transmission already existed in the late Western Han, which allowed the imperial government to monopolize the conferral of prestige and authority. It is in this political context that lines of transmission, and therefore the concept of lineages, became more important and central in the official histories. See Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions in the *Shiji*," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 59-99.

[361] In contrast, reasonable officials (twelve in total) in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Later Han*) outnumbered harsh officials (only six in total).

[362] We see in total thirteen harsh officials in the *Hanshu*, while the same history only includes six reasonable officials in the biography dedicated to them.

suggesting that there were relatively few reasonable officials in the Western Han who were worth mentioning even in the *Hanshu*. If Ban Gu's work had a mission to celebrate the dynasty beyond merely recording historical "facts" from the Western Han, this imbalance in numbers of reasonable and harsh officials should not be downplayed, for the imbalance insinuates the severity of the overall decadence of Han bureaucracy.

It is likely that Han misrepresentation of the qualities of Qin officials—particularly their moral standards—was driven primarily by this political agenda that emphasized the Qin destruction of cultural heritage and blamed the Qin for Han problems in various areas, particularly the corruption rampant in the Han official system. The ubiquity of harsh officials in the Han was explained as a long-term consequence of the Qin's obscurantist policy of having officials, who knew only laws and ordinances, serve as the teachers of common people. The judicial official Cheng Miao, regardless of his historical existence, was a product of this Han intentional bias against the Qin legacy. The possible purpose was to ascribe the Han empire's problems to the "notorious" Qin. Unlike Cang Jie, Cheng Miao was a mortal official who dismissed the teachings of the ancient sages and respected only the exclusive and extreme use of laws and ordinances; therefore, Cheng could never possess the ability to invent a form of writing to accurately display the hidden principle of the world and convey the secret messages of ancient sages.

When stressing that the invention of the clerical script was motivated by the complication of handling administrative documents and the consequent desire to simplify the administrative process, Xu Shen implied that the clerical script by its very nature focused only on administrative literacy, but not cultural literacy. In other words, an official who could merely master the clerical script was only able to handle administrative and

legal documents, but was unable to read such texts, such as the Classics, which were purported to deliver moral teachings to their readers. In introducing the clerical script, Cheng Miao aimed to train a professionalized corps of clerks or clerical scribes to be skillful in administrative writings; all this is evident in various phrases, such as *qiao shishu* 巧史書, *neng shi* 能史, and *shan shishu* 善史書, in the Han materials.[363] As Itaru Tomiya 冨谷至 and Hsing I-tien have proposed, such phrases, which were negative in the Western Han, meant an official could properly read and write administrative documents in the clerical script and thereby fulfill his assigned duties without encountering any difficulty.[364]

4.4 Han Bureaucrats and Their Mastery of the Clerical Script

What trainings did a Han official receive before and during his appointment? When informing us about the appearance of the cursive script (*caoshu* 草書), a cursory way of writing the clerical characters, Xu Shen cited a statement from the "Weilü" 尉律 (Statute on Commandants), which had a parallel in the "Yi wen zhi" and a variant in the "Shilü 史律" (Statute on Scribes) in the *Ernian lüling* 二年律令 (*Statutes and Ordinances of the*

[363] For *qiao shishu*, see Ban, *Hanshu*, 72.3077. For *neng shi*, see Ban, *Hanshu*, 76.3226; 96B.3907. For *shan shishu*, see Ban, *Hanshu*, 9.258; 58.2628; 76.3233; 90.3669; 97B.2974.

[364] Tomiya, *Bunsho gyōsei no Kan Teikoku*, 112-16; Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Han dai *Cang jie*, *Jijiu*, ba ti he "shi shu" wenti: Zai lun Qin Han guanli ruhe xuexi wenzi" 漢代《蒼頡》、《急就》、八體和「史書」問題—再論秦漢官吏如何學習文字, *Guwenzi yu gudai shi* 古文字與古代史 2 (2009): 437. An immediate example comes from the biography of Gong Yu 貢禹 (124-44 B.C.E.), where the skill of writing administrative documents (*qiao shishu* 巧史書) acquired by officials in counties and kingdoms was said to cheat one's superior. Ban, *Hanshu*, 72.3077.

Second Year) in the Zhangjia 張家 Mountain Han bamboo-slip collection.[365] The statement indicated the trainings and tests officials were supposed to receive during their career:

> When the Han arose, there already was cursive script. The "Statute on Commandants" [says], "Students who aspire to be scribes[366] and reach their seventeenth year or more should start to be tested. They had to memorize and recite 9000 characters. Only then could they be appointed as officials. [After being appointed], they would be tested on writing in eight forms and styles of writing. The provinces would send them to the Grand Scribe,[367] who would test them both ways. The best among them would be appointed as Imperial Secretary Scribes. If what they wrote is not correct, [examiners] will immediately report their faults and censure them."
>
> 漢興有草書。〈尉律〉：「學僮十七以上始試。諷籀書九千字，乃得為吏。又以八體試之。郡移太史並課。最者，以為尚書史。書或不正，輒舉劾之。」[368]

The variant in the "Shilü," which has been dated to the early Western Han, prescribed students to learn, recognize and write 5000 characters before being a scribe or clerk,[369]

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[365] See Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1721; Zhangjiashan ersiqi hao Hanmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 張家山二四七號漢墓竹簡整理小組張家山漢墓竹簡, ed., *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhu jian (er si qi hao mu): (shiwen xiuding ben)* 張家山漢墓竹簡（二四七號墓）：（釋文修訂本）(Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), 80-81. Anthony J. Barbieri-Low and Robin D. S. Yates, *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China: Study and Translation of the Legal Texts from Zhangjiashan Tomb no. 247* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), vol. 1, 48-47. Vol. 2 of this book includes an annotated translation of the *Ernian lüling*. Barbieri-Low suggests elsewhere that the discovered *Ernian lüling* manuscript had undergone multiple stages of textual construction, and the edition in our possession is a joint work of copyists, compilers, commentators, and editors. See Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, "Copyists, Compilers, and Commentators: Constructing the *Statutes and Ordinances of the Second Year* and the *Book of Submitted Doubtful Cases*," *Asia Major*, 3rd Series, 32.2 (2019): 33-56.

[366] Itaru maintains that *xuetong* referred to students who wished to be scribes, but not students in a general sense. See Itaru, *Bunsho gyōsei no Kan Teikoku*, 132.

[367] Translating *shi* 史 as "scribe" may oversimplify the duties and qualifications of a *shi* in early China. As Martin Kern states, *shi* can be variously rendered as "scribe," "clerk," "historian," "historiographer," "archivist," "ritualist," or "astrologer" depending on specific contexts. See Martin Kern, "The Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China," in Porta S. La and D. Shulman, ed., *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 115.

[368] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.11b-13a.

[369] Although this manuscript reflects only the early Han situation, we may retrospectively assume that a candidate for scribe in the Qin was also required to recognize as many characters as an early Han scribe was supposed to know. Besides the difference in the number of characters, what also differs the "Weilü" and the "Shilü" is that the status of scribe was hereditary in the "Shilü" while it was opened to larger candidates in the "Weilü." See Li Xueqin 李學勤, "Shishuo Zhangjiashan jian 'Shilü'" 試說張家山漢簡史律, *Wenwu* 文

which was 4000 characters less than the requirement cited in the *Shuowen* and the "Yi wen zhi." This difference in number indicates a surge in the amount of characters from the early Western Han onward. The huge number of characters, which students were required to learn, implies the increasing difficulty of, as well as the large investment of time in, training a competent scribal official.

Although the previous prescriptions from the "Weilü" and the "Shilü" requested students to learn the eight forms and styles of writing, including the large and small seal scripts, this prescription was no longer strictly followed in Xu Shen's time:

> Today, although the 'Statute on Commandants' still exists, no examination is held [to test the ability of students and scribes to read and write 9000 characters in eight styles of script]. [Consequently], lesser learning is not cultivated, and no one has reached the principle [of the structure of a character] for a long time.
>
> 今雖有尉律，不課，小學不修，莫達其說久矣。[370]

What is unclear in Xu Shen's complaint is the phrase "no examination" (*buke* 不課). Should it mean no examination was given to test the students or the scribes? A reasonable speculation is that Xu was dissatisfied with the cancellation of testing the appointed scribes' ability to write and read all of the eight forms and styles of script. Why did this prescription lose its influence in Xu Shen's era? Meanwhile, what form of writing did students study if the eight forms and styles of writing were not in the syllabus?

物 4 (2002): 69-72.

[370] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.13a-b.

Under the Lesser Learning (*xiaoxue* 小學) category of the "Yi wen zhi," we see works by ten experts (*jia* 家)[371] that were used to teach juniors to read and write. Among those works, the *Cang Jie* 蒼頡 was the most prominent one. Three other works included in this bibliography were based on the correct characters (*zhengzi* 正字) in the *Cang Jie*. These were the *Fan Jiang pian* 凡將篇 (*General Primer*) by Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (c. 179 – 117 B.C.E), the *Jijiupian* 急就篇 (*Quickly Master*) by Shi You 史游 (fl. 48 – 33 B.C.E), and the *Yuanshang pian* 元尚篇 (*Yuanshang Primer*) by Li Zhang 李長 (? – ?), , but Sima Xiangru's work contained several differences. The *Cang Jie* also had one extension by Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.E – 18), who was also the purported author of the *Regional Speech* (*Fangyan* 方言), and one annotated version by Du Lin 杜林 (fl. 1st century), the great-grandson of Zhang Chang 張敞 (d. 47 B.C.E).[372] This prominent work, however, was a combination of the works of Li Si, Zhao Gao, and Huwu Jing, which were composed to invent the small seal script by abbreviating and simplifying the large seal script in the *Shi Zhou* 史籀 (*Scribe Zhou*). The works by Li Si and his co-workers were combined, according to the "Yi wen zhi," by a village teacher (*lu li shu shi* 閭里書師) in the early

[371] I interpret the term *jia* in the "Yi wen zhi" as "expert," instead of the commonly adopted understanding "school." In his analysis of Sima Tan's 司馬談 "Yaozhi" 要旨 (Essential points), Kidder Smith rejects A. C. Graham's argument that a firm classification of the pre-Han schools began with Sima Tan. Smith saw the term "*jia*" in Sima Tan's treatise as people with expertise in something. See Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and Invention of Daoism, Legalism, et cetera," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61.1 (Feb 2003): 130. For A. C. Graham's argument, see A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*, (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 337. In the context of the "Yi wen zhi," when referring to people who composed the works in the Lesser Learning category, the "Yi wen zhi" does not use the term *jia* in the sense of "school," but in the sense of "experts" who composed those philological works.

[372] Ban, *Hanshu*, 30.1721.

Western Han.[373] We may assume, based merely on the records in the "Yi wen zhi" and the "Postface" of the *Shuowen*, that like the three works by Li Si, Zhao Gao, and Huwu Jing, their descendent, the prominent *Cang Jie*, was also written in the small seal script.

Studying the small seal script was important to Xu Shen for accessing and mastering the ancient script, because there was continuity, howbeit vulnerable, between the small seal script and the ancient script invented by Cang Jie. Two of the three inventors of the small seal script, namely Li Si and Huwu Jing, were familiar with the ancient tradition. As a disciple of Xunzi, Li Si could flexibly employ the lessons from the past to strive for his political goals.[374] Even though we do not have Huwu Jing's biographical information, his status as a scribe, probably hereditary, ensured his broad and profound scribal and classical knowledge. The title of Huwu Jing's work, the *Boxue* 博學 (*Extensive Learning*), might well manifest his erudition.[375]

The link between the small seal script and the ancient script is more explicit in the two editions of the *Cang Jie* by Yang Xiong and Du Lin. According to the narratives in the "Yi wen zhi" and Xu Shen's "Postface," both editions were the products of two imperially sponsored conferences convened in the reign of Emperor Xuan (r. 74 – 48 B.C.E) and the

[373] Ibid.

[374] As Derk Bodde noticed, Li Si also used historical precedents for reasoning. See Derk Bodde, *China's First Unifier A Study of the Ch'in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssŭ (280?-208 B.C.)* (Leiden: Brill, 1938), 223-24. An example can be seen in the "Yueshu" 樂書 (Book of Music) of the *Shiji*, in which Li Si mentioned the *Book of Songs* and the *Book of Documents* to admonish the Second Emperor of Qin against setting his heart completely on lascivious sounds and attractive beauty. See Sima, *Shiji*, 24.1177.

[375] Based on the titles of the three Qin inventors' texts, Galambos hypothesizes that the characters included therein were in ascendingly different degrees of difficulty and frequency of usage according to the sequence presented in both "Yi wen zhi" and *Shuowen*'s "Postface." See Galambos, "The Myth of the Qin Unification of Writing in Han Sources," 199, n. 26.

reign of Emperor Ping (r. 1 B.C.E – 6) respectively. The reason for holding the first conference was that there were numerous ancient characters (*guzi* 古字) in the *Cang Jie* that obstructed scholars' understanding; therefore, scholars from Qi 齊 were summoned and ordered to correctly read (*zhengdu* 正讀) the piece. Did these ancient characters (*guzi*) refer to the ancient script (*guwen*) purportedly invented by Cang Jie? It is worth mentioning that, among the attendants of both conferences, many were from the easternmost territory of the Han empire. A conference held during the reign of Yuanshi 元始 (1 – 5) had scholars like Yuan Li 爰禮 (? – ?) who was a native of Pei 沛, a place located near such eastern states as Qi and Lu, attend the meeting. As mentioned earlier, the ancient script in Han materials refers to the script form widely used in the eastern states during the Warring States Period. Thus, convening scholars from Qi or neighboring places in these conferences was not a coincidence, but was a conscious decision, for they were expected to be capable of discovering and reconstructing connections between the ancient script and the small seal script. We cannot rule out the possibility that in the course of the conferences, these scholars would, based on their memory and knowledge, make suggestions about varying the structures of each small seal character discussed to fit the characters into their ideal forms (the forms resembling the ancient script). Be this as it may, what is of equal importance is that the phrase "ancient characters" (*guzie*) implied that one might not be able in the Han to identify whether a character in the *Cang Jie* was written in small seal script or ancient script. This blurring of the boundary between both scripts in the eyes of certain Han scholars further suggests that the small seal script was thought to be not dramatically, but only slightly, different from the earliest form of writing.

However, the Han fragments of the *Cang Jie* discovered since the twentieth century indicate that this collection was transcribed in different script forms during the Han dynasty.[376] Being discovered as far west as Niya 尼雅 in the Xinjiang 新疆 Uygur Autonomous Region, these fragments from the Han were scattered in different parts of what is now the People's Republic of China (PRC).[377] These fragmentary manuscripts tell us that the *Cang Jie* in the Han was scribed not only in the small seal script. As mentioned above, the names of each form of writing are mainly Han-era inventions and oversimplify the actual situation of the development of Chinese writing where there were no clear distinctions between the successive forms of writing included in traditional genealogies. In the case of the *Cang Jie* manuscript in the Peking University Collection of the Han Bamboo-Slips, although the characters in the manuscript have few features of the small seal script, as Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 argues, their style is partial to the clerical script. To clarify, those characters are more clerical than seal.[378] Moreover, unlike other manuscripts of the *Cang Jie* that were written in four-syllable lines, the fragmentary manuscript excavated from the village of Shuiquanzi 水泉子 in the Gansu 甘肅 Province was written in seven-syllable lines, even though the style of its characters is closer to the clerical script

[376] For a general study of the Han manuscripts of the *Cang Jie*, see Hu Pingsheng 胡平生, "Hanjian *Cang Jie pian* xin ziliao yanjiu" 漢簡《蒼頡篇》新資料研究, in idem, *Hu Pingsheng jiandu wenwu lungao* 胡平生簡牘文物論稿 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2012), 45-69.

[377] One of the extant manuscripts of the *Cang Jie* was excavated in Niya 尼雅 ruins located in Xinjiang in 1901 by Marc Aurel Stein (1862 – 1943). See Wang Yue 王樾, "Lueshuo Niya faxian de *Cang Jie pian* Hanjian" 略說尼雅發現的《蒼頡篇》漢簡, *Xiyu yanjiu* 西域研究 4 (1998): 55-58.

[378] Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, "Beida hanjian *Cang Jie pian* gaishu" 北大漢簡《蒼頡篇》概述, *Wenwu* 文物 6 (2011): 57-63.

in the Qin.[379] This *Cang Jie* manuscript from Shuiquanzi suggests that the text of *Cang Jie* was not standardized and stabilized during the Han.

Given that when compiling the catalogue of the imperial library, Liu Xiang 劉向 (77 – 6 B.C.E) and his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 B.C.E ? – 23) also edited the manuscripts of the texts stored in the imperial library,[380] we may assume that the edition of the *Cang Jie* mentioned in the "Yi wen zhi" and the "Postface" of the *Shuowen* differed from other versions in terms of syntax and written characters. This version of the *Cang Jie* might have been written in the small seal script. Coexisting with this idealized edition were other versions of the *Cang Jie* written in other forms of writing (e.g., script closer to the clerical script). These versions of the *Cang Jie* were supposed to be used to teach juniors how to write and read so that a student or an official would be able to master more than one form of script. However, the fact that the discovered *Cang Jie* manuscripts were written mainly in script closer to the clerical script adds further evidence that the clerical script was the form of writing Han officials preferred to master. If this hypothesis is tenable, and if a large part of the documents in "being skillful in administrative documents" refers to those written in the clerical script, the script which students were asked to learn before being tested

[379] Zhang Cunliang 張存良, "Shuiquanzi Han jian qiyan ben *Cang Jie pian* lice" 水泉子漢簡七言本〈蒼頡篇〉蠡測, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 9 (2010): 60-75; Hu Pingsheng 胡平生, "Du Shuiquanzi Hanjian qiyan ben *Cang Jie pian*" 讀水泉子漢簡七言本《蒼頡篇》, in idem, *Hu Pingsheng jiandu wenwu lungao* 胡平生簡牘文物論稿 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2012), 42-51.

[380] For the editorial hands of both Liu Xiang and his son Liu Xin, particularly, see Kogachi Ryūichi 古勝隆一, *Mokurokugaku no tanjō: Ryū Kyō ga unda shomotsu bunka* 目録学の誕生：劉向が生んだ書物文化 (Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 2019), 147-68.

according to the prescriptions in the "Weilü" and the "Shilü" was probably the clerical script.

Tsang Wing Ma utilized new evidence from different archaeological sites, like Liye 里耶, and pointed out that the workload and complexity of official matters in the Qin-Han period were so extremely high that officials had to deal with dozens of documents a day.[381] It is imaginable that when clerks and officials were asked to handle tremendous amounts of paperwork regularly, it was imperative not only to have a form of writing that could shorten their time processing administrative documents, but also to recruit more officials who were at least literate in formulistic administrative documents.[382] Since there was urgent demand for processing administrative documents rapidly and training sufficient clerical scribes in the early imperial period, the clerical script was a perfect choice to reach both goals because of its abbreviation and the consequent efficiency. Modern scholars, such as Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 and Cornelia Schindelin, have demonstrated how clericalization or Li-variation (*libian* 隸變)—a process of turning a character into a clerical form—structurally changed Chinese writing from pictorial into symbolic.[383] By reducing the number of strokes in a small seal character, the time spent on writing could be shortened.

[381] Tsang Wing Ma, "Scribes in Early Imperial China," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2017), 130-46.

[382] As Tsang Wing Ma argues, it was because of the heavy workload a scribe had to face that the assistants (*zuo* 佐) could obtain their own positions. See Tsang Wing Ma, "Scribes, Assistants, and the Materiality of Administrative Documents in Qin-Early Han China: Excavated Evidence from Liye, Shuihudi, and Zhangjiashan," *T'oung Pao* 103. 4-5 (2017): 297-333.

[383] Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, *Wenzi xue gaiyao* 文字學概要 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1988), 82-85; Cornelia Schindelin: "The Li-Variation 隸變 (lìbiàn): When the Ancient Chinese Writing Changed to Modern Chinese Script," in Yannis Haralambous, ed., *Graphemics in the 21st century. Brest, June 13–15, 2018. Proceedings* (Brest: Fluxus Editions, 2019), 227-43.

The introduction of simplified Chinese (*jianti zi* 簡體字) in the twentieth century might serve as a comparable example to demonstrate this argument. One of the purposes of promoting and standardizing simplified Chinese was to reduce the illiteracy rate in PRC. The reduction of the strokes' number does provide writers with convenience when they are asked to process or handwrite a lengthy document. Convenience, therefore, may be used to explain why all of the fragmentary manuscripts of the *Cang Jie*, which was expected to be written in the small seal script according to the sources in the "Yi wen zhi" and the *Shuowen*, were actually written in script closer to the clerical.

This does not mean that Han officials did not know how to read small seal script. As Hsing I-tien argues, some of them did master the small seal script in order to read documents irrelevant to their jobs, i.e., impractical documents for moral and cultural cultivation.[384] However, we do not know the proportion of these officials to other Han officials who could not read the small seal script. The new evidence implies that it was highly possible that in Xu Shen's time, the clerical script was the major, or even the only script the majority of officials could manage. However, despite the administrative convenience and efficiency that the clerical script offered, the appearance of this script was more harmful than good, according to Xu Shen. As already noted, pervasive incorrectness in his time was the major concern of Xu Shen. I agree with Imre Galambos's argument that correctness (*zheng*) in writing was a moral issue in the Han.[385] However, rather than referring to the variability and irregularity in writing as moral incorrectness, as Galambos

[384] Hsing I-tien, "Han dai *Cang Jie*, *Jijiu*, ba ti he "shi shu" wenti," 462.

[385] Imre Galambos, "The Myth of the Qin Unification of Writing in Han Sources," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 57. 2 (2004): 194-201.

proposed, I argue that Xu Shen attributed incorrectness mostly to the lack of training in using other forms of writing besides the clerical script. Xu Shen did not spend too much space criticizing the variability of writing before the Qin unification. Indeed, the clerical script was not immune from being blamed for the corruption and cheating in the official system. As Xu complained, the graphic analysis the chamberlains used to make legal judgements was inherently problematic because certain chamberlains were said in the postface to consciously use incorrect visual identification of parts to conduct erroneous analysis for their personal interests (as in the above case of changing the character *ke* into *gou*). As Xu later declared, "With the use their own selfishness, people have no correct standard to determine right and wrong; they employ cunning explanations and deviant expressions to puzzle the scholars of the world under Heaven" 人用己私，是非無正，巧說邪辭，使天下學者疑.[386]

Tsang Wing Ma correctly points out that many harsh officials in Han historical narratives were associated with the knife-and-brush, a tool on which officials and clerks relied to fulfill their duties in the early imperial era. As Ma states, harsh officials and knife-and-brush officials (*daobi li* 刀筆吏) were actually the same.[387] With their tool and their administrative literacy, these officials were able to falsify documents—brushing away or altering characters—for their personal needs and interests. Itaru Tomiya even shows that the phrase, "being skillful in administrative documents," was not considered to be a

[386] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.21b.

[387] Ma, "Scribes in Early Imperial China," 117. In biographies of the harsh officials written by Sima Qian and Ban Gu, the term knife-and-brush official was often mentioned. Tsang Wing Ma even questioned the reliability of the traditional narratives in which scribes' fiscal hardships and dilemmas were absent.

positive comment in the early Han—especially when compared to the middle Han.[388] It is very likely that early Han depreciation of the fine skill in handling administrative documents, which was noted in surviving records, was partly due to the corruption caused by knife-and-brush officials who were thought to misuse their administrative literacy for personal interests. Xu's criticism of officials for contriving an explanation of the meaning of the charcter *ke* as based on a combination of the characters *zhi* and *gou* was not an exceptional case in the Han. In contrast to the ancient script, which Xu said was the key to successful and perfect government, the clerical script had the adverse effect that led only to failure in making correct judgements and thus to moral decline in the Han.

The corruption among Han officials and its relationship to the clerical script seems to confirm a warning the *Huainanzi* gave that writing could be a weapon to commit maleficence:

> When Cang Jie first invented writing, it was used to manage the hundreds of officials and to set a mass of things in order. A fool is able to not forget [how each character should be written], and a wise man is able to extend his inspiration to a distant place [through writing]. When it [the order] declines, writing is used by villainous men to scribe pseudo-documents to save the criminals, on the one hand, and to murder the innocents, on the other hand.
>
> 蒼頡之初作書，以辯治百官，領理萬事，愚者得以不忘，智者得以志遠；至其衰也，為奸刻偽書，以解有罪，以殺不辜。[389]

This warning may reflect an overwhelming problem that had become widespread by the time this collection was compiled sometime before 139 B.C.E.[390] Writing was first

[388] Tomiya, *Bunsho gyōsei no Kan Teikoku*, 167.

[389] Liu An 劉安, *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解 annotated by Liu Wendian 劉文典 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2013), 20.673.

[390] The *Master Huainan* was believed to be compiled sometime before 139 B.C.E. See Charles Le Blanc, "Huai nan tzu" 淮南子, in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley:

invented for the purpose of promoting moral integrity and maintaining successful government. However, as time went on, it became a tool in the hands of crafty men. A similar idea was also articulated in the *Lunheng*, where Wang Chong complained that the proliferation of writing would lead to further degeneration because, as Michael Puett observed, false ideas could be written down and circulated.[391] The above passage from the *Huainanzi* does not clarify whether it was the writing originally invented by Cang Jie or other forms of script invented by others that was abused for such cunning schemes. In either case, the *Huainanzi* passage informs us that the moral problems arising with writing due to the rise of literacy was already an enduring problem in the Western Han. As Xu Shen demonstrated in his postface, it seems that such problems had not been fully solved by the times of Wang Chong and Xu Shen.

Since the ancient script invented by Cang Jie was so prominent and perfect in Xu Shen's etymological philosophy, he did not fault of Cang Jie's invention for the problems attributed to writing. The incorrectness prevalent in the Han was the disastrous effect of the convenience of the clerical script. A reason that Qin-Han officials could use the knife-and-brush to pursue personal interests was that the clerical characters were easier to write than the small seal characters; thereby, they were easier to be grasped and mastered by anyone, including immoral men. As a mortal official without training in the Classics and who thus dismissed the ancient sages' moral teachings and the lessons from the past, Cheng

Society for the Study of Early China; Institute for East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993), 189-95.

[391] Michael Puett, "The Temptations of Sagehood, or: The Rise and Decline of Sagely Writing in Early China," in Wilt L. Idema, ed., *Books in Numbers: Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library: Conference Papers* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007), 24.

Miao was incapable of foreseeing the harm in introducing the clerical script to the world. By contrast, the four eyes of the mysterious figure Cang Jie reportedly enabled him to accurately observe the innate patterns of the world. More importantly, his miraculous eyes also bestowed upon him an anticipation of any catastrophes when those patterns could not be truthfully represented in writing.

The citation from the *Huainanzi* reminded its readers about the importance of ethics education and the need to prevent any crafty man from acquiring literacy. Only when people had moral consciousness and an ethical awareness of their actions in the world, could writing be employed in a right way. In a time when writing became so crucial to government and to the circulation of knowledge and ideas, preventing malicious men from acquiring the skill of writing seems to be impractical or impossible to implement. Instead, the crux of the matter was to ensure that every literate man have moral consciousness so that writing would not be misemployed. Han documents show that the Classics were required readings for Han officials and was part of the curriculum for training officials.[392] However, the widespread existence of the harsh officials and corruption in the official system suggest that the result of such a training did not meet expectations. We even have evidence to prove that harsh officials in the Han were also students of Classical Studies. According to the biography of the harsh officials in the Eastern Han, for example, among the six harsh officials it records, at least two of them did grasp certain classical knowledge: Li Zhang 李章 (fl. 1st century) studied the interpretation of Mr. Yan 嚴 on the *Spring and*

[392] As Hsing I-tien demonstrates, the Juyan collection contains multiple manuscripts of the Classics. See Hsing, "Han jiceng yuanli de jingshen suyang yu jiaoyu," 419-26.

Autumn (Yanshi *Chunqiu* 嚴氏春秋, a branch of the *Gongyang* 公羊 tradition); and Huang Chang 黃昌 (fl. 142) was dedicated to classical learning after he had seen several classicists practice rituals in an educational institution.[393]

In Xu Shen's philosophy, both the acquisition of knowledge of the ancient script and the cultivation of moral consciousness are too intimate to be separated. As the most ideal and perfect form of writing, Xu Shen believed that the ancient script was employed by Confucius to compose his Classics, "When Confucius wrote the Six Classics, and when Zuo Qiuming reported the Commentary on the *Chunqiu*, the script they used was the ancient script. Thus, its meanings could be obtained and articulated" 至孔子書六經，左丘明述春秋傳，皆以古文，厥意可得而說也.[394] According to the narratives in Xu's "Postface" and the "Yi wn zhi," Confucius lived at a time when the large seal script had already been introduced by Shi Zhou. Confucius's insistence on using ancient script, but not a more "updated" script, suggests that in Xu Shen's interpretation, the ancient script was also the most ideal form of script in Confucius's view to deliver his profound meanings behind the subtle words (*weiyan dayi* 微言大義) in his Classics. Confucius's creation (*zuo*) was similar to Cang Jie's invention in the sense that both used the ancient script, which

[393] Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 17.2492, 2496. The biography also mentioned that Wang Ji 王吉 (? – 179) was interested in reading *shuzhuan* 書傳. However, should the *shuzhuan* here refer to the commentaries on the *Book of Documents* or texts in general? See *Hou Hanshu*, 17.2501.

[394] Xu, *Shiwen jiezi zhu*, 15A.9a.

was regarded as pictorial in its very nature, to deliver the hidden, but universal, principles of the world.[395]

However, the Classics of Confucius were transcribed in the Han, at least partly, in the clerical script. The survived but fragmentary manuscripts of the classical texts from Juyan 居延, which have parallels in the transmitted version, inform us that texts, such as the *Chunqiu*, *Li,* and *Yijing,* formed the essential part of the curriculum of even the officials on the frontiers of the empire.[396] Written in the clerical script, these manuscripts suggest that the clerical script was the major form of writing among Han officials to study non-administrative texts like the Classics. This phenomenon may be a result of the abrogation of the scribal examination, because Xu's "Postface" complains that a group of Han officials were incapable of reading documents written in other script forms. Since Xu claimed that the ancient script was the original script Confucius used to compose his Classics, he condemned this "clerical version" of the Classics as symbolizing not only the distortion of Confucius's profound meaning, but also the destructive intrusion of administrative literacy into cultural literacy. One of the dramatic changes the clericalization brought to Chinese writing was erroneous changes (*ebian* 訛變).[397] As this term suggests, it has caused

[395] The *Analects* suggests that Confucius regarded himself as a transmitter rather than a creator (*shu er buzuo* 述而不作). See Xing Bing 邢昺, ed., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan yinhang, 2001), 7.60b.

[396] See Hsing, "Han jiceng yuanli de jingshen suyang yu jiaoyu: Cong Juyan du 506.7 (*Li pian*) shuo qi," 417-26.

[397] For the meaning of *ebian* as erroneous change, see Dong Min 董珉, "Gu wenzi xingti ebian dui *Shuowen jiezi* de yingxiang" 古文字形體訛變對《說文解字》的影響, *Zhongguo yuwen* 中國語文 3 (1991): 222. For the specific examples in the *Shuowen* of the erroneous changes the clerical script made to the small seal script, see Ma Xulun 馬敘倫, *Shuowen jiezi yanjiu fa* 說文解字研究法 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1988). See also Lin Yun 林澐, *Gu wenzi yanjiu jianlun* 古文字研究簡論 (Changchun: Jilin daxue

structural changes to certain characters (by reducing, substituting, and adding phonetic or significs components) so that it is impossible to trace back the original structures of those characters. Not only was one unable to understand the messages of Confucius through reading the "false" Classics written in the clerical script, but the meanings obtained were also invalid and thus so indefensible that they were not the authorial messages of Confucius.

Thus, although Cang Jie's invention was complicated and pictorial, Xu Shen treated the ancient script as the perfect form of writing. In contrast, the clerical script, an invention of an immoral official, oversimplified the pictorial but integral characters merely for the sake of administrative convenience. The patterns as well as the principles of the world and Confucius's moral lessons, which were composed relying on the pictorial nature of the ancient writing, were thus regarded as being obscure, because the symbolized and administrative-oriented clerical script could not truthfully represent them. Just as simplified Chinese characters have been criticized for obstructing the reading of classical Chinese texts, which were written in traditional Chinese characters (*zhengti zi* 正體字), Xu Shen attacked the clerical script for oversimplifying the characters (especially the ancient writing) that had been prevalent in the pre-imperial era and were used by ancient sages. In Xu Shen's narrative about the invention of the clerical script, the Qin official Cheng Miao was not concerned about whether or not one could successfully access the teachings and subtle meanings of the ancient sages recorded in the Classics. We may even hypothesize that in the eyes of Xu Shen, the inaccessibility of the ancient sages' words was one of the goals of Cheng Miao; Han scholars regarded obscurantism to be a major policy of the Qin

chubanshe, 1986).

government. In inventing the clerical script, Cheng Miao was able to initiate the process of wiping out cultural literacy and replacing it with administrative literary. Those who could read only the clerical script, in this sense, were semi-illiterate.

4.5 Conclusion

In the early period of imperial China, ability to read and write documents in the clerical script was the prerequisite for official appointment. The unimaginably heavy and complicated workload of a scribal official further forced Han officials to focus merely on one script form—the clerical script. It is highly possible that the cancellation of the examination recorded in both the "Weilü" and the "Shilü" was a logical result of this difficulty. Taking this historical context into consideration, the so-called Modern Script advocates might not necessarily be the people whom Xu Shen criticized for making the fallacious claim that the clerical script was the script of Cang Jie's era. In the traditional spectrum that ranges from Ancient Script Classics, on the one end, and Modern Script Classics, on the other end, even a Han classicist or scholar who was closer to the pole of the Modern Script Classics and preferred Modern Script interpretations, could admit that the script used in their era was not the one in Cang Jie's day.

The persons whom Xu Shen attacked were probably those realists and pragmatic scholars who aimed to lower the threshold to facilitate semi-literate officials who could only read one single script form to study the Classics. Aware of the corruption in the Han bureaucratic system and the existence of harsh or vulgar officials, the pragmatic officials urged lower officials to study the Classics, even copies written in the clerical script. Such

officials were so pragmatic that they acknowledged the difficulty, if not impossibility, to require all officials to master all script forms since Han officials were so busy handling innumerable official documents daily. In other words, whether the Classics were written in ancient or clerical script was not a significant concern. To them, the crucial point was to broaden the scope of the audience of the Classics. The manuscripts of the Classics discovered in Juyan have already shown that the Classics written in the clerical script were in wide circulation and were accepted by officials as the texts to which they had access in their careers.

Xu Shen and his followers represented the idealists who proclaimed that the Way could not be manifested through the graphic structures of the clerical characters. Consequently, officials who read only the unauthoritative classical texts written in the clerical script could never fully understand the Way and the profound meanings Confucius had infused into his works through his subtle words. To Xu Shen, simply reading the Classics was not enough to cultivate an official and train one's moral consciousness. One must read the authoritative Classics which were written in the ancient script. Perhaps Xu Shen was overly idealistic in that he underestimated the time one must spend in becoming proficient in more than one form of script, and also overestimated the overall ability of Han officials to master the script beyond the one they relied on to make a living. In fact, to master the ancient script, one should also first be knowledgeable of the large and small seal scripts since they were also pictorial—or at least semi-pictorial—and preserved a connection to the ancient script.

Despite all this, Xu Shen was more open-minded, as certain scholars have suggested, in accepting interpretations from different commentarial traditions. As long as an

interpretation could withstand the test of graphic analysis based purely on the ancient script, Xu Shen found no reason to reject a reasonable and insightful interpretation—regardless of who initiated it, or which pole it sided with. Similarly, Xu Shen would not hesitate to dismiss an interpretation based on the Classics written in ancient script if its graphic analysis was untenable and problematic. The prerequisite for conducting an authentic graphic analysis was, to Xu Shen, to master the ancient script which was pictorial in nature. Hence, instead of situating Xu Shen's promotion of the ancient script into late Qing framework of the Modern/Ancient Scripts, it is better to regard him as constructing an orthodox version of the script in response to the widespread, long-term anxiety about the misuse of writing in the wake rising literacy rates since the early years of the Han empire.

CHAPTER 5

THE "UNTRANSLATABLE" CLASSICS: THE *ERYA* AND THE CONCEPT OF ELEGANT LANGUAGE IN CONFUCIAN CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

> Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves. Otherwise, we will be scattered across the face of the entire earth."
>
> But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the people had started building. And the Lord said, "If as one people all sharing a common language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be beyond them. Come, let's go down and confuse their language so they won't be able to understand each other."
>
> *Genesis* 11:4-7

5.1 Introduction

The myth of the Tower of Babel provides a Biblical explanation of the language differences in the world. Like their Hebrew counterpart, pre-modern Chinese scholars were also well aware of the linguistic diversity in the world they knew. How could those who spoke different languages in China's history have communicated with each other? How could their communications inform us of the power dynamics among different groups of people in history, especially when a cultural hierarchy was perceived, either unilaterally or mutually? Within this cultural hierarchy, what language was cultural superior to the others, and how could translation of one language into another take place, if the languages involved were not culturally equal? This chapter will examine these questions through the lens of the importance of the *Erya* 爾雅 (*Approaching Correctness*) in imperial Chinese history.

It is well known among Sinologists that the *Erya* was one of the most fundamental texts in imperial China for teaching students the basic knowledge about reading ancient Chinese texts. As a dictionary-like collection of word glosses,[398] the *Erya* has been regarded as the ancient primogenitor of pre-modern Chinese lexicons and was officially canonized in 837, when the Kaicheng 開成 Stone Classics were engraved by the Tang ruling house. However, as this chapter will examine, the *Erya* was never an inclusive collection of word glosses. Why, then, did the *Erya* still enjoy such weight among imperial scholars? This chapter argues that this dictionary-like collection remained significant in history because it embodied the Sinocentric attitude and concept of elegant language (*yayan* 雅言) which began in the Zhou dynasty and continued onward. The concept of elegant language manifested a clear hierarchy with the culture formed in this culturally superior language at the top of a spectrum of those formed in culturally inferior languages which were defined in traditional Confucian discourse as less elegant or even inelegant.

In the Confucian textual tradition, the Classics were thought to be written in elegant language and therefore set the standard for refining one's language. How could those who spoke and used other languages possibly understand the Classics, if the corpus itself was formed in a language those cultural Others did not master? The question leads us to an important concept in Chinese history, *jiaohua* 教化 or educational transformation, which involves inculcating people in the moral values and ways of the Confucian textual tradition.[399] How could Confucian values be promoted to ethnic and cultural Others? We

[398] Uffe Bergeton, *The Emergence of Civilizational Consciousness in Early China: History Word by Word* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 174.

[399] In her definition of the ideal of *jiaohua*, Erica Fox Brindley argues that it was "an education that

can witness in the history of Chinese Buddhism numerous translations of Buddhist scriptures.[400] However, only a few translations of the Confucian Classics were recorded in our extant pre-modern Chinese materials.[401] How should we understand this phenomenon? As this chapter will demonstrate, the rarity of non-Chinese translations of the Confucian Classics in China's history suggests that, to imperial scholars, translating the elegant language was not recommended, as the translation itself manifested a distance from the correct standard the Classics esteemed. The analysis of this chapter will culminate with a discussion on the translation of the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classics of Filial Piety*) in the Northern

involves inculcating people in the moral values and ways of Chinese culture and civilization." See Erica Fox Brindley, "The Concept of 'Educational Transformation' and its Relationship to Civilizing Missions in Early China," *Journal of Chinese History* 5 (2021): 2. However, Brindley's statement does not identify the meaning of "Chinese." The concept of "Chineseness" is never homogeneous but heterogeneous and fluid over time. See Allen Chun, "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity," *Boundary* 2 23.2 (1996): 111-38; Rey Chow, "On Chineseness as a theoretical problem," *Boundary* 25.3 (1998): 1-24; and Emma J. Teng, "On Not Looking Chinese: Does 'Mixed Race' Decenter the Han from Chineseness?" in Thomas S. Mullaney, et al., *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 45-72.

[400] For discussions on the translations of Buddhist scriptures, see, for example, Walter Fuchs, "Zur technischen Organisation der chinesischen Sanskrit-Übersetzungen," *Asia Major* 6 (1930): 84-103; Tso Szu-bong 曹仕邦, "Lun Zhongguo Fojiao yichang zhi yijing fangshi yu chengxu" 論中國佛教譯場之譯經方式與程序, *Xin Ya xuebao* 新亞學報 5 (1963): 239-21; and Paul Harrison, "The Earliest Chinese translations of Mahayana Buddhist Sutras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokaksema," *Buddhist Studies Review* 10.2 (1993): 135-78.

[401] There were indeed records of the Classics being translated into other Asian languages. For example, a Tibetan translation of four chapters of the *Shangshu* was discovered at Dunhang. For the studies of this Tibetan translation, see Huang Bufan 黃布凡, "*Shangshu* si pian gu cangwen yiwen de chubu yanjiu"《尚書》四篇古藏文譯文的初步研究, *Yuyan yanjiu* 語言研究 00 (1981): 203-32. W. South Coblin, "A Study of the Old Tibetan Shangshu Paraphrase, Part I," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111.2 (1991): 303-22; W. South Coblin, "A Study of the Old Tibetan Shangshu Paraphrase, Part II," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111.3 (1991): 523-39. The *Analects* and the *Mencius* were translated into Tangut language. See Kirill Solonin, "The Formation of Tangut Ideology: Buddhism and Confucianism," in Carmen Meinert and Henrik Sørensen, eds., *Buddhism in Central Asia I: Patronage, Legitimation, Sacred Space, and Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 123-48 for a discussion on the Confucian influence on the Western Xia dynasty (1038-1227). The practices of translating the Classics into other languages were also mentioned in traditional Chinese historiography. See, for example, Tuo Tuo 脫脫, *Jinshi* 金史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 8.184.

Wei dynasty (386-535). The translation of this classic and its gloomy reception history, I will contend, exemplify the Sinocentric idea that the *Erya* was assumed to embody.

5.2 The *Erya*: A Synonymicon Awaits Supplementation[402]

This section aims to set the stage by providing background contextual information for the subsequent discussion. It is not necessary for this chapter to detail the textual history and traditional scholarship on the *Erya*, which have been comprehensively summarized elsewhere.[403] Nevertheless, an overview of the content of the *Erya*, its glossing methodology, and traditional discussion of its alleged authorship and date is indispensable for our understanding of the *Erya*'s prominence throughout China's imperial history. The following is a passage from the abstract the *Siku* 四庫 collectors in the Qianlong reign (r. 1735-1796) of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) wrote for the *Erya zhushu* 爾雅註疏 (*Commentary and Sub-commentary on the Approaching Correctness*) by Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010):

> It is almost the case that [the *Erya* was composed by] experts in Elementary Learning who in turns collected and edited the ancient words and accreted these words. The descriptions [that it was composed by] the Duke of Zhou and Confucius are all forged.

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[402] The *Erya* as a *synonymicon* is A. von Rosthorn's invention. See A. von Rosthorn, "The *Erh-ya* and Other Synonymicons," *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association* 10.3 (1975): 137-45.

[403] For a very brief introduction to the *Erya*, see Micheal Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley 1993), 94-100. There are also studies in Chinese and English with which we can grasp a general understanding of this dictionary-like collection. To name but a few, see Lu Guoping 盧國屏, *Erya yuyan wenhua xue* 爾雅語言文化學 (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shu ju, 1999); Guo Pengfei 郭鵬飛, *Erya yixun yanjiu* 爾雅義訓研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012); and Timothy Michael O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory: A History* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 202-35. For an inclusive study written in Chinese, see Huang Kan 黃侃, *Huang Kan lunxue zazhu* 黃侃論學雜著 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 361-401.

It is seen that there is [the phrase] *jianjian* [auspicious image of two birds together] in [the chapter of] "Shidi," and [the chapter of] "Shiniao" also has [the phrase] *jianjian*. The exact same phrase is glossed repeatedly, [but differently] [in the *Erya*];[404] hence, we know that it was not composed by one hand. As for this text, Ouyang Xiu's *Shi benyi* argues that it was those who were studying *Shi* (Book of Poetry) who collected the interpretation and exegesis of the *boshi* (Erudites). Gao Cheng's *Shiwu jiyuan* also argues that it basically interprets and exegetes the purposes of the poets. However, less than one-tenth [of the *Erya*] is used to interpret the *Shi*, so it was not composed exclusively for the *Shi*. Yang Xiong's *Fangyan* contends that [it was used] by Confucius's disciples to explain the Six Arts, and Wang Chong's *Lunheng* also suggests that it is the annotations of the Five Classics. Nevertheless, less than three-tenths or four-tenths [of the *Erya* was used to] interpret the Five Classics. It was not even composed exclusively for the Five Classics. Now, when reading the text, it is almost [the case that] it collects the similarities and differences of the annotations of the names and things in various texts in order to broaden one's horizon. It alone is actually a single text and does not attach any meaning to the Classics.

大抵小學家綴緝舊文，遞相增益，周公、孔子皆依託之詞。觀《釋地》有鶼鶼，《釋鳥》又有鶼鶼，同文複出，知非纂自一手也。其書歐陽修《詩本義》以為學《詩》者纂集博士解詁。高承《事物紀原》亦以為大抵解詁詩人之旨。然釋《詩》者不及十之一，非專為《詩》作。揚雄《方言》以為孔子門徒解釋六藝，王充《論衡》亦以為《五經》之訓故，然釋《五經》者不及十之三四，更非專為《五經》作。今觀其文，大抵采諸書訓詁名物之同異，以廣見聞，實自為一書，不附經義。[405]

Although this passage from the *Siku* abstract represents a seventeenth-century attitude toward the *Erya* and its textual history, the multiple aspects it touched on concerning the *Erya* provide food for thought. A large part of the abstract discussed the *Erya*'s authorship and its content. Its iconoclastic denial of the earlier claims about the *Erya*'s attribution to either the Duke of Zhou or Confucius seemed to destroy the authority that had been attached to the *Erya*.[406] Rather, it proposed a theory of the composition of the *Erya* which

[404] For the Erya's glosses of this phrase, see Xing Bing 邢昺 (932-1010), *Erya zhushu* 爾雅註疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (1816; reprint, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1960), 9.1b.

[405] Xing, *Erya zhushu*, 7.112a; 10.186b.

[406] For the Duke of Zhou's and Confucius's authorship, see the discussion below on Zhang Yi's 張揖 (fl. 3rd century) "Shang Guangya biao" 上廣雅表 (Memorial on Presenting the *Extension to Approaching Correctness*).

reminds us of the accretion theory of the *Analects* suggested by E. Bruce Brooks and Taeko Brooks in the late twentieth century.[407] Just as the *Analects* was a joint product of many scholars after Confucius according to the accretion theory, so was the *Erya*, the *Siku* editors argued, a work contributed by numerous experts in Lesser Learning (*xiaoxue* 小學).

The second aspect the abstract concerned was the nature of the *Erya*. Bernhard Karlgren (1889-1978), in his study of the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*) and the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*The Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*) published in 1931, claimed that "the *Erya* is not a dictionary in *abstracto*, it is a collection of direct glosses to concrete passages in ancient texts."[408]

The *Erya* has long been seen as a dictionary, or in Uffe Bergeton's wording, a dictionary-like collection of word glosses, because it and its commentaries were placed under the "Elementary Learning" category in imperial bibliographies ever since the official history of the Tang dynasty.[409] However, prior to the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (*New History of the Tang*), the "Yi wen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) of the *Hanshu* 漢書

[407] For the accretion theory of the textual formation of the *Analects*, see Ernest Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Robert Eno, "The *Lunyu* as an Accretion Text," in Michael Hunter and Martin Kern, eds., *Confucius and the Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on Composition, Dating, and Authorship* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 39-66. Recently, Michael Hunter offered a criticism of the accretion theory and its methodological problem. As Hunter argues, although there is a consensus among scholars that the received *Analects* experienced multiple stages of textual formation, there is no valid evidence to prove which part of the received *Analects* was the first or core section of the entire analogy. See Michael Hunter, *Confucius Beyond the* Analects (Leiden: Brill, 2017), especially Chapter Four.

[408] Bernhard Karlgren, "The Early History of the *Chou Li* and *Tso Chuan* Texts," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 3 (1931): 46. Karlgren's argument is followed by South Coblin. Weldon South Coblin, "An Introductory Study of Textual and Linguistic Problems in *Erh-ya*" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Seattle, University of Washington, 1972).

[409] See Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 57.1447, 1450.

(*History of the Former Han*), the earliest extant bibliography in East Asia, placed the *Erya* under the subcategory of the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (*Classics of Filial Piety*).[410] The later "Jingji zhi" 經籍志 (Treatise on Canons and Texts) of the *Suishu* 隋書 (*The History of Sui*) placed the *Erya*, its commentaries and imitations under the *Lunyu* 論語 (The *Analects*).[411] The reasons for categorizing the *Erya* under either the *Xiaojing* or the *Lunyu* are perplexing, but both classifications indicated its association with the Classics.[412] Despite its recognition of the *Erya*'s as a collection of glosses, the *Siku* abstract did not put the *Erya* in an auxiliary position in which glossing the words of the Classics, particularly words in the *Shijing*, was its mere function; rather, it asserted that the *Erya* should be seen as an encyclopedia with which readers could train themselves to be knowledgeable.

The encyclopedic nature of the *Erya* can be verified by penetrating what Timothy O'Neill called its macrostructure, that is, the division of its chapters.[413] Divided into nineteen chapters, the *Erya* was said to cover all aspects of the human and natural worlds.[414] The first three chapters, which were exclusively examined by Coblin,[415] are foundationally

[410] Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhognhua shuju, 1962), 30.1720.

[411] Wei Zhi 魏徵, *Shuishu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 32.937.

[412] Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864-1927) argued that "In that case, the *Erya* and the *Xiaojing* are all the texts used to gloss the canons and combine all the things [in the Classics]. Thus, it (*Erya*) is listed under the subcategory of *Xiaojing.*" 然則《爾雅》與《孝經》同為釋經總會之書，故列入《孝經》家. See Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Hanshu buzhu* 漢書補注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 30.1883.

[413] O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory*, 210.

[414] A complete table of *Erya*'s contents can be seen, for example, in ibid, 212; see also Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, 94-95.

[415] The first three chapters of the *Erya* are "Shigu" 釋詁 (Explaining old word gloss-class words), "Shiyan" 釋言 (Explaining spoken word gloss-class words), and "Shixun" 釋訓 (Explaining explanatory

different from the remaining chapters because the first three chapters deal primarily with abstract linguistic expressions, such as binomes, and are composed mainly of glosses on the words of the *Shijing*. The last sixteen chapters, based on their contents, can be divided into two groups. The first group, the fourth to the seventh chapters, contain words concerning human affairs, while the second group, the eighth to the nineteenth chapters, cover words related to the natural world, such as animals and landscapes. As Coblin explained, these sixteen chapters deal with "concrete" items, such as specific things and their related actions or activities.[416] More to the point, contrary to the first three chapters, some of the last sixteen chapters even have subclasses. For instance, the "Shichu" 釋畜 (explaining domestic animal-class words) chapter has six subclasses which are used to classify the names of animals according to their *genera*, including horse, sheep, and so on, even though the classifications were not cognitive, but mostly based on their ritual purposes.[417]

gloss-class words). See Coblin, "An Introductory Study of Textual and Linguistic Problems in *Erh-ya*" for his discussion on these three chapters.

[416] Coblin, "An Introductory Study of Textual and Linguistic Problems in *Erh-ya*," 7.

[417] Although a systematic animal classification is seen in Chapter Sixteen of the *Erya*, the classification itself is by no means a representation of the emergence of zoology. As Roel Sterckx has suggested, it was the naming and the mastery of animal nomenclature, but not the detached analysis of animals, that mattered in the ancient Chinese understanding of the animal world. Originating from the idea of *zhengming* 正名 (rectification of names), early Chinese emphasis on animal nomenclature was meant to maintain the social order and hierarchy which relied heavily on the correspondence between names and social functions. Much of the proto-scientific discourse on animals in ancient China occurred in lexicons and dictionaries, such as the *Erya* and the *Shuowen jizi,* indicates that animal nomenclature "was part of a wider concern with textual exegesis and lexicographic classification." Therefore, ancient Chinese analyses and classifications of animals were not naturalistic *per se,* but were rather sociopolitical in nature. See Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 15-43.

When did the *Erya* reach its current form, especially when its chapters were composed by different generations? In the bibliographic treatise of the *Hanshu*, we see an entry in which an *Erya* in three *juan* consisted of twenty chapters.[418] We know neither the content of the extra chapter of the *Erya* recorded in the *Hanshu* nor the degree of similarity between the version recorded in the *Hanshu* and the extant one. Nevertheless, we do have evidence to speculate that the embryonic form of the current *Erya* already existed in the first century when the "Yi wen zhi" was composed. The first, but controversial, evidence is the *Fangyan* 方言 (*Local Expressions*), an *Erya* imitation traditionally attributed to Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.E -18 C.E.), who had an interest in mimicking his predecessors. As scholars have already noted, the structure as well as the glossing method of the *Fangyan* are identical to that of the extant *Erya*.[419] However, Yang Xiong's authorship of the *Fangyan* is problematic. No entry dedicated to Yang Xiong's *Fangyan* is found in the "Yi wen zhi." Nor did Yang Xiong's biography in the *Hanshu* mention the *Fangyan* among his imitative works.[420] Our earliest record of Yang Xiong's authorship of the *Fangyan* appeared in Ying Shao's 應劭 (140-206) *Fengsu Tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Comprehensive Meaning of Customs*

[418] Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 30.1718.

[419] For a comprehensive study of the *Fangyan*, see Paul Leo-Mary Serruys, *The Chinese Dialects of Han time according to* Fang yen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959); As for the parallel between the *Erya* and the *Fangyan*, see Li Shuhao 李恕豪, Zhongguo gudai yuyan xue jianzhi 中國古代語言學簡史 (Chengdu: Ba-Shu shushe, 2003), 75; Wang Zhiqun 王智群, Fangyan *yu Yang Xiong cihui* xue 《方言》與揚雄詞匯學 (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2011), 123-26. Li Shuhao 李恕豪, *Yang Xiong Fangyan yu fangyan dilixue yanjiu* 揚雄《方言》與方言地理學研究 (Chengdu: Ba-Shu sushe, 2003).

[420] For the list of Yang Xiong's imitative works, see Ban, *Hanshu*, 87B.3583. Similar account appeared in Chang Qu's 常璩 *Huayang guozhi* 華陽國志 but a sentence about Yang Xiong's authorship of the *Fangyan* was added, see Chang Qu 常璩, *Huayang guozhi jiaozhu* 華陽國志校注, collated and annotated by Liu Lin 劉琳 (Chengdu: BaShu shushe, 1984), 10A.705, 708. Paul Serruys suggested that both internal and external evidence vindicated Yang Xiong's authorship in the traditional narrative. See Serruys, *The Chinese Dialects of Han time according to* Fang yen, x.

and Mores), about 200 years after Yang Xiong's death.[421] Despite Yang Xiong's problematic and unverifiable authorship, the emergence of the *Fangyan* in the Later Han Dynasty indicates that, at least in this period, an *Erya* already existed and had a systematic structure similar to what we see in the extant version.

The second and more convincing evidence comes from Wang Chong's 王充 (27- ca. 100) *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Balanced Discourses*), where Wang stated, as the *Siku* abstract reiterated, "The text of *Erya* is the interpretation and exegesis of the Five Classics; this is what all *ru* scholars have observed"《爾雅》之書，五經之訓故，儒者所共觀察也.[422] What is of more importance is that we find certain *Erya* citations in Wang Chong's work that parallel the extant *Erya*.[423] However, the chapter titles that Wang Chong mentioned were different from the ones in our possession. For instance, the "Shitian" 釋天 (Explaining heaven-class words) chapter was written as "Shi sishi zhang" 釋四時章 in the *Lunhen*. As a result, we cannot conclude that the *Erya* had already reached its current form by Wang Chong's time. What we can at least say is that in the early Later Han, there was

[421] Ying Shao 應劭, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu* 風俗通義校注, collated and annotated by Wang Liqi 王利器 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), xi.

[422] Wang Chong 王充, *Lunheng jiao shi* 論衡校釋, collated and annotated by Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 52.1174.

[423] For example, the "Shiying" 是應 (Auguries verified) chapter of the *Lunheng* also cited a sentence from the *Erya*: "In spring plants begin growing, in summer they develop and ripen, in autumn they are harvested, and in winter there is complete stillness" 春為發生，夏為長嬴，秋為收成，冬為安寧. See Wang, *Lunheng jiao shi*, 17: 765. For the English translation, see Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun-hêng, Part 2. Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung* (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962), 371. For the original reference of the citation, see Xing, *Erya zhushu*, 6.95a.

an *Erya* which was the archetype of the extant one, in which we can see a neat classification of the words it covers.[424]

Nevertheless, we should have reservations about Wang Chong's observation that the *Erya* glossed the Five Classics. As the *Siku* abstract and certain modern quantitative analyses have shown, not all *Erya* glossaries were used to explain the words in the Classics. Although 85% of the glosses in the "Shixun" chapter are from the *Shijing* (*loci classici*), according to Coblin's and Carr's calculations,[425] the chapters beyond the first three (especially the thirteenth and fourteenth) are more eclectic in nature, because words from texts beyond the Confucian Classics are more frequently mentioned in these later chapters. For instance, words from non-Confucian texts such as the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (*Master Zhuang*), *Shan hai jing* 山海經 (*Canon of Mountains and Seas*), and *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Elegies of Chu*) are cited in these two chapters. Most of the words in these two chapters on flora and fauna are "lexical ghosts," i.e., words that cannot be associated with any known texts.[426] Similar cases also occur in the eighth ("Shitian") and ninth ("Shidi" 釋地) chapters; moreover, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980), the leading scholar of the School of Doubting Antiquity,

[424] Situating the *Erya*, or at least the archetype of the extant *Erya*, in the first century may well explain its encyclopedic nature. As discussed in Chapter Two, the search for broad learning was a prominent intellectual trend in the late Western Han and the Eastern Han periods. The Classics were assumed by scholars like Liu Xin to be all-inclusive, but were at the same time challenged by other scholars like Li Xun. Systematically organizing the words in the *Erya*, both archetypal and extant, in accordance with their attributes in the natural and human worlds thus highlighted the point that the Classics, which the *Erya* was widely thought to gloss, was the corpus and source through which one could grasp all branches of knowledge of the world.

[425] Michael E. Carr, "A Linguistic Study of the Flora and Fauna Sections of the *ERH-YA*," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1972), 523.

[426] Ibid.

discovered that these two chapters contain words that only exist in such non-Classics as the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*) and the *Huainan zi* 淮南子 (*Master Huainan*).[427]

Even though the *Erya* did not only gloss words from the Five Classics, its encyclopedic nature and its wide coverage were still highly esteemed by pre-modern scholars. Among them, the erudite scholar Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324) was the one to be reckoned with given his seminal and the earliest extant commentary on the *Erya*. As Guo Pu demonstrated in his preface, the importance of the *Erya* lay primarily in its function to assist scholars in accessing knowledge:

> As for the *Erya*, it is used to comprehend the intention and purpose of glossing, and to describe what stimulated the poets and for what they sang. It concludes the variants in remote antiquity and identifies the things with same substance, but different names. It is indeed the path through which one can access the nine streams and the key to the Six Arts. It is the deep room of erudite learners and the illustrious garden of the literary writers. There is nothing close to the *Erya* when it comes to learning widely about things without being misled, and knowing more about the names of birds, beasts, grass, and trees.
>
> 夫爾雅者，所以通訓詁之指歸，敘詩人之興詠，總絕代之離詞，辯同實而殊號者也。誠九流之津涉，六藝之鈐鍵，學覽者之潭奧，摛翰者之華苑也。若乃可以博物不惑，多識於鳥獸草木之名者，莫近於《爾雅》。[428]

A similar account, particularly about the *Erya*'s utility for understanding the names of birds, beasts, grass, and trees, appeared with slight textual variant in the preface to the *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (*Textual Explanations of Classics and Texts*) composed by early Tang

[427] Coblin, "An Introductory Study of Textual and Linguistic Problems in *Erh-ya*," 10.

[428] Xing, *Erya zhushu*, 1.4a.

scholar Lu Deming 陸德明 (556?- 630).[429] Claiming that the *Erya* could pave the way for accessing the nine branches and the Six Arts, which implied the association between the Classics and all branches of thought (as discussed in Chapter Two), both Guo Pu and Lu Deming attributed this fundamental function of the *Erya* to its ability to identify the shared substance of things with different designations. This ability was reiterated in another preface Guo Pu wrote to the *Fangyan*, which imitated the *Erya*.[430] In addition, the allusion to *Analects* 17.9, in which Confucius explicitly argued that one of the benefits of studying the *Shi* was to understand the names of flora and fauna,[431] implied the association between

[429] "As for the *Erya*, it is a text whereby one glosses the Five Classics and distinguishes and sets forth that which is the same and that which is different. It is, in fact, a direct route to the nine streams and a guide to the whole range of philosophical and literary works. [It is a text that helps scholars] to gain broad acquaintance with the names of birds, beasts, grass, and trees, on the one hand; and to read extensively while not being doubted, on the other hand" 《爾雅》者，所以訓釋五經，辯章同異。實九流之通路，百氏之指南。多識鳥獸草木之名，博覽而不惑者也. Lu Deming 陸德明, *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (Jinan: Shandong youyi shushe, 1991), 1.1a.

[430] In his preface to his commentary on the *Fangyan*, Guo Pu expounded the functions of the *Fangyan* with the words parallel to that he used to describe the *Erya*:

> [The *Fangyan*] examines the lost words of the nine territories, connects the extinct words of the previous six generations, categorizes the implicated meaning of the variants, and illustrates the same destination of different paths. It manifests the folk songs and distinguishes one from another, it also leads to the ten thousand differences through winding path while does not get miscellaneous. It is indeed a marvelous book for wide knowledge and extensive records that cannot be changed. I have ruminated the glosses of the *Erya* since I was young and have ponder the *Fangyan* as a minor
>
> 考九服之逸言，摽六代之絕語，類離詞之指韻，明乖途而同致；辨章風謠而區分，曲通萬殊而不雜；真洽見之奇書，不刊之碩記也。余少玩《雅》訓，旁味《方言》，復為之解，觸事廣之，演其未及，摘其謬漏。

See Xing, *Erya zhushu*, 1.4b.

[431] Xing Bing 邢昺, ed., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 17.156a.

the *Erya* and the *Shijing* which was challenged in the above cited excerpt from the *Siku* abstract, but had been suggested by earlier scholars, including Guo Pu.[432]

It is also worth mentioning that, besides indicating the *Erya*'s encyclopedic capacity, both Guo Pu and Lu Deming agreed that scholars could stray or be misled while reading a wide range of writings, but the *Erya* could help scholars be on the right track. Inferring from their prefaces, the chief reason scholars went astray was the common use of synonyms for a substance that possessed more than one designation. Why was more than one designation used to refer to a single substance? One reason for the common use of synonyms was regional differences in language and the subsequent existence of what we now call dialects or regional languages. As Hua Xuecheng 華學誠 has concluded on the basis of both transmitted and excavated texts, of the 5239 words included in the *Erya*, 221 can be determined with certainty to be regional words from different areas.[433] Considering the fact that the materials Hua Xuecheng used might not be inclusive enough because unknown numbers of early and early medieval texts are missing, the number of regional words included in the *Erya* may actually be even more.

The following sections of this chapter will discuss in further detail how regional differences in language mattered in our understanding of the importance of the *Erya* and

[432] For the similarities and differences between the *Erya* and the commentary on the *Shijing*, particularly the Mao commentary, see Ding Chen 丁枕, Erya Maozhuan *yitong kao* 《爾雅》《毛傳》異同考 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1988); and Lu Guoping 盧國屏, Erya *yu* Maozhuan *zhi bijiao yanjiu* 《爾雅》與《毛傳》之比較研究 (Taibei: Hua mulan wenhua chubanshe, 2009).

[433] Hua Xuecheng 華學誠, "Lun *Erya* fangyan ci de kaojian" 論《爾雅》方言詞的考鑒, in Hua Xuecheng 華學誠, *Hua Xuecheng gu hanyu lunwen ji* 華學誠古漢語論文集 (Beijing: Beijing yuyan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 201-09.

of the nature of Confucianism. What should be noticed here is the limitation of the *Erya* as time passed. Reaching its current form by the end of the Later Han, the *Erya* could no longer meet the needs of the later generations when new words and new knowledge were introduced.[434] This limitation was already recognized by Zhang Yi 張揖 (fl. 3rd century) shortly after the collapse of the Han empire. In his memorial "Shang *Guangya* biao" 上廣雅表 (Memorial on Presenting the *Extension to Approaching Correctness*) presented to Emperor Ming of Wei (r. 226-239), Zhang Yi explained his reason for composing and submitting the *Guangya* 廣雅 (*Extension to Approaching Correctness*) to the court:

> As a book, the *Erya* has concise words with solid meanings. [It] is meticulous without making any mistake in presenting the Way. [It] is indeed the standard for the Seven Classics,[435] the path for learning, and the model to various *ru* scholars. However, as for embracing Heaven and Earth, ruling over and ordering human affairs, circulating and examining institutions, and developing the glossing interpretations by hundred schools, [the *Erya*] was not complete and inclusive.
>
> 夫《爾雅》之為書也，文約而義固；其敕道也，精研而無誤。真七經之檢度，學問之階路，儒林之楷素也。若其包羅天地，綱紀人事，權揆制度，發百家之訓詁，未能悉備也。[436]

As its title suggested, the *Guangya* was an extension to the *Erya*. Despite the *Erya*'s significance in opening the path through which scholars can access the great principles of

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[434] The proliferation of words can be exemplified by a new animal classification in Daoxuan's 道宣 (596-667) *Liangchu qingzhong yi* 量處輕重儀 (*Ritual of Measuring and Handling Light and Heavy Property*) in the Tang dynasty. As Chen Huaiyu 陳懷宇 argues, this manual enumerated only animals which were the properties of Buddhist monastery and focused on the relationship between human beings and animals. Thus, the animal classification we see in this manual was not meant to be comprehensive and inclusive. However, Daoxuan's classification with its narrow application still included the names of animals which were not included in the *Erya*. For the discussion on the animal classification of the *Liangchu qingzhong yi*, See Chen Huaiyu 陳懷宇, *Dongwu yu zhonggu zhengzhi zongjiao zhixu* 動物與中古政治宗教秩序 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 49-98.

[435] The Seven Classics here refer to the original Five Classics as well as the *Analects* and the *Xiaojing*.

[436] Wang Niansun 王念孫, *Guangya shuzheng* 廣雅疏證 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1984), iia.

the Classics, Zhang Yi argued that the *Erya* itself was not comprehensive and inclusive enough in covering all affairs in both natural and human worlds.

It was because of this limitation that Zhang Yi composed the *Guangya* to extend the scope of the *Erya*, "I humbly use what I know to explore and select from the various arts the words with the same graphs but different meanings, the words which [people] no longer know how to pronounce because of their changing pronunciations, the different languages of the eight directions, the variant names of all creations, and those words not included in the *Erya*. [I] recorded these words in detail and examined them in order to put them into the *pian* [of the *Guangya*]" 竊以所識，擇撢羣藝，文同義異，音轉失讀，八方殊語，庶物易名，不在《爾雅》者，詳錄品核，以著於篇.[437] Despite his awareness of the *Erya*'s limitation, Zhang Yi composed another text, but did not add the new words to the *Erya*'s text. Coblin has argued that interpolation in such philosophical texts as the *Analects* and such divinatory texts as the *Yijing* 易經 (*I Ching*) is textual corruption, while addition of useful supplementary material to a lexicon such as the *Erya* may enhance its value.[438] Zhang Yi might have wanted to avoid making any offensive interpolations to the text composed by the ancient sage, i.e., the Duke of Zhou. Nevertheless, Zhang Yi's extension was so quantitatively tremendous that one cannot help but doubt the practical value of the

[437] Ibid, iib. Two major ways of extension are observed after scrutiny of the *Guangya*. The first is adding new words to the existing *Erya* entries. This way of extension is more common in the chapters which correspond to the first three chapters of the *Erya,* and are dedicated to abstract linguistic expressions. The second way of the *Guangya*'s extension, which is frequently seen in the rest of the *Guangya*, is to create new entries in which words with meanings that cannot be found in the *Erya* were included and put together.

[438] Coblin, "An Introductory Study of Textual and Linguistic Problems in *Erh-ya*," 31.

Erya during the imperial period, at least since the time of Zhang Yi in the third century.[439] If the *Erya* was not in accord with the requirements of later times and was not as all-inclusive as later lexicons and its extensions, why could it still be highly esteemed by scholars and repeatedly imitated throughout China's imperial history?[440]

5.3 "Approaching Correctness" as Cultural Assimilation

To answer the above question about the enduring value of the *Erya*, this section will scrutinize the title of the *Erya*, as rendered in this chapter as "approaching (*er*) correctness (*ya*)" or "approaching elegance (*ya*)." The title of the *Erya* can then be rephrased as "removing what is incorrect (wrong) or inelegant (vulgar)." The translation of the *Erya*'s title is based largely on how each word, particularly the word *ya*, was interpreted in traditional classical scholarship. It was said in the *Analects* 7.18 that whatever Confucius said was all in elegant language: "What the Master said is elegant language. When [reciting] the *Odes* and the *Documents* and when practicing rituals, he used elegant language on all these occasions" 子所雅言，詩、書、執禮，皆雅言也.[441] Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200),

[439] As scholars have argued, the *Guangya* includes 18150 words, which is nearly 7000 words more than the *Erya* (10819 words), and has 2343 entries, which is 252 more than the *Erya* with 2091 entries. See Wei Lifeng 韋利鋒 and Hu Jiming 胡繼明, "*Guangya* yu *Erya* yitong lun" 《廣雅》與《爾雅》異同論, *Zhongqing sanxia xueyuan xuebao* 重慶三峽學院學報 25.115 (2009): 98.

[440] Examples of imitations of the *Erya* include: Lu Dian's 陸佃 (1042-1102) *Piya* 埤雅 (*Increased Correctness*) composed in the 11th century, which is an imitation focused on flora and fauna terminology; Fang Yizhi's 方以智 (1611-1671) *Tongya* 通雅 (*Comprehensive Correctness*); and Wang Chutong's 王初桐 (1729-1821) *Xiyu erya* 西域爾雅 (*Approaching Correctness for the Languages in the Western Regions*) composed in 1796.

[441] Xing Bing 邢昺, ed., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 7.62b.

a classicist who lived in the final years of the Later Han, interpreted this passage: "When reciting the Classics and the statutes of the former kings, one must read with correct pronunciation. Only after that can the meaning be intact. As a result, there cannot be anything that is forbidden" 讀先王典法，必正言其音，然後義全，故不可有所諱.[442] Zheng Xuan's commentary on this *Analects'* passage focused on using the correct pronunciation to recite the Classics. The claim that there is nothing one should avoid reading the Classics aloud seems linked to the common practice of name avoidance (*bihui* 避諱) in pre-modern Chinese history.[443] What is particularly worth noting is the equivalence between *ya* 雅 (elegance) and *zheng* 正 (correctness). Only when the classical texts were recited in correct pronunciation, according to Zheng Xuan, could their meanings be kept intact. The interchange of elegance and correctness was widely adopted by imperial scholars when they interpreted the meaning of the *Erya*'s title. Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648), in his preface to Guo Pu's seminal commentary on the *Erya*, defined the title: "As for the word *er*, it means 'approaching.' As for the word *ya*, it means 'correctness.' It is to say one can approach and then get what is correct" 爾，近也。雅，正也。言可近而取正也.[444] Thus, with the use of the *Erya*, one's language could become elegant and correct.

The following questions immediately come to mind regarding the meaning of the *Erya*'s title: What was correctness or elegance, in contrast to what was incorrectness or

[442] Ibid.

[443] For the history of the practice of name taboo in Chinese culture, see Piotr Adamek, *Good Son Is Sad If He Hears the Name of His Father: The Tabooing of Names in China as a Way of Implementing Social Values* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[444] Xing, *Erya zhushu*, 1.4a.

inelegance? In what sense was a language correct or elegant? What criteria were used to determine what was elegant and correct or what was not? Through what ways can one approach correctness or elegance? How could the *Erya* as a *synonymicon* or lexicon of synonyms help one approach correctness or elegance, as its title suggested? Why did approaching correctness or elegance matter? As for the *Analects* 7.18, why was the use of correct pronunciation a requisite for keeping the meaning of the Classics intact, as Zheng Xuan suggested? I understand the idea of "approaching correctness" as an ethno-cultural concept which illustrated and specified the process of *jiaohua* (educational transformation) through which the ones outside the cultural sphere established by the ancient sages and shared diverse cultures could assimilate into the correct and elegant culture determined by the ancient sages. As Erica F. Brindley explains, the idea of *jiaohua* was not merely about Confucian moral self-cultivation, but was a civilizing mission to educate and assimilate ethnic, alien others in an "ethnicized, moral way" in China's imperial history.[445]

What culture and language did elegance or correctness refer to? In explaining the title of the *Erya*, Qing philologist Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) narrowed down the geographic scope of the word *ya* and its equivalent *zheng* to the language used primarily at the capitals of the ancient times:

> As for correctness, it means the correct language being used at the places where Yu [Shun], the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou dynasties built up their capitals. As for approaching correctness, it means the correct language being used at the places near the royal capitals of all enfeoffed states. What the *Erya* as a book cited are all variants in the world from the past to the present. [The *Erya* did that] in order to approach to

[445] Brindley, "The Concept of 'Educational Transformation' and its Relationship to Civilizing Missions in Early China," 3.

the correct language. As for correctness, it is identical to the official language of the current day.

正者，虞、夏、商、周建都之地之正言也。近正者，各國近于王都之正言也。《爾雅》一書，皆引古今天下之異言，以近於正言，正者，猶今之官話也。[446]

In other words, whether a language was correct or not depended heavily on where the cultural and political center was located, in which ancient culture as represented in the Classics was produced. The correct language of the central court was the major criterion for distinguishing the more civilized ones from the less civilized or uncivilized ones; therefore, the correct language here as well as the concept of *ya* should be understood both politically and ethno-culturally. Scholars, both pre-modern and modern, have reached a consensus that the word *ya* was semantically associated with the word *xia* 夏, one of whose well-known meanings was the name of the legendary earliest dynasty of China's history. In annotating two passages from the *Xunzi*,[447] Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744-1823) concluded that *ya* was actually a loan word of *xia* and that they were interchangeable, "[The word] *ya* should be read as *xia*. [The word] *xia* means the Central States. Thus, [the word ya] was in opposition to Chu and Yue in the text…… In ancient times, [the words] *xia* and *ya* were interchangeable" 雅讀為夏，夏謂中國也。故與楚越對文……古者，夏雅二

[446] Ruan Yuan 阮元, "Yu Doulan Gao hubu lun *Erya* shu" 與都蘭皋戶部論《爾雅》書, in *Yanjing shi ji* 揅經室集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1985), 5.107. William Hubbard Baxter also states that the word *xia* is "assumed to be a geographical term referring to the district under direct royal control in Western Zhou times." See William Hubbard Baxter, *The Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), 355. See also John Knoblock, trans., *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 1: 289-90, for the interchangeability of *xia* and *ya*.

[447] For the *Xunzi* passages which Wang Niansun annotated, see Xunzi 荀子, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解, collated and annotated by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 2.62.

字互通.[448] Wang Niansun's opinion on the synonymous relationship between the words *ya* and *xia* in ancient Chinese texts have been acknowledged by later paleographers. For instance, in his phonetic reconstruction of Ancient Chinese, Bernhard Karlgren suggested that the ancient pronunciation of *ya* was **ng'a* while that of *xia* was **g'a*, and this proposed phonetic proximity provides additional evidence to support Wang Niansun's observation.[449]

When exactly the words *xia* and *ya* became interchangeable is a topic discussed vividly in modern scholarship. Uffe Bergeton recently proposed a tentative chronology of the meaning changes of the words *xia* and *ya*. As a concomitance of the emergence of the Zhou elite's civilizational consciousness, the word *ya* in the meaning "elegant/proper, *Xia*-like" was coined around 600-400 B.C.E. as a derivative of one of the meanings of the word *xia*, "the Great Ones",[450] an autonym of the Zhou ruling elites coined by the Spring and Autumn Period (c. 770-481 B.C.E.)[451] or even earlier.[452] Chen Zhi 陳致 argues instead that

[448] Wang Niansun 王念孫, *Dushu zazhi* 讀書雜誌 (Taibei: Guangwen shuju, 1963), 647. Early Chinese texts treated Chu and Yue as uncontrollable and uncivilized or as southern people who were instinctively different from those living in the Central Plain. See, for example, Xunzi, *Xunzi jijie*, 12.328-31; Wang, *Lunheng jiao shi*, 2.78-79; 23.949-50.

[449] Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1957), 28-29.

[450] *Xia* was a polysemy in the pre-imperial period. In addition to the meaning "summer," Bergeton summarizes other five meanings the word *xia* carried in pre-imperil texts, including: "large," "great," "magnificent," "name of the Xia dynasty," and "Zhou autonym." See Bergeton, *The Emergence of Civilizational Consciousness in Early China*, 174-77.

[451] For the dates of the Spring and Autumn Period, see Cho-yun Hsu, "The Spring and Autumn Period," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds., *The Cambridge history of ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 545.

[452] Bergeton admits that the time when the word *xia* was first used as an autonym of the Zhou ruling elites could have been earlier. However, Bergeton remains reserved about this issue given the scarcity of evidence. See Bergeton, *The Emergence of Civilizational Consciousness in Early China*, 187 n.21.

the Zhou ruling house started to use the word *xia* as their autonym much earlier. When the Zhou ruling house conquered the Shang, its members immediately found it imperative to trace their ethnic origin back to the legendary Xia people, and they therefore used the phrases such as *shixia* 時夏 and *quxia* 區夏 with strong ethnic color to strengthen their political authority.[453] Chen even hypothesizes that the word *ya* became the borrowed word for *xia* as early as the time when the Shang royal house moved its capital to Anyang (c. 1350-1049 B.C.E.).[454] No matter whose chronology is more accurate and convincing, we can say with certainty that as ethno-cultural terms, *xia* and *ya* were used on many early occasions to articulate the cultural superiority of the social values, practices, rites, demeanor, language, and so forth that distinguished the Zhou elite from the culturally inferior barbarians (*yi*) or non-Zhou others, such as the Chu and Yue cited in Wang Niansun's statement.[455]

As the repository of the court culture of the ancient times, the Classics were thought in the imperial era to represent the standard for elegant and correct language. One of the well-known examples comes from Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-522), a scholar who was not eminent in his time, but has been celebrated posthumously because of his *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕

[453] Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Mao Shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 19.719b, 721b; Kong Yunda 孔穎達, *Shangshu zhushu* 尚書注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Shisan jing zhu shu* 十三經注疏 (1816; reprint, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1960), 14.201a; 16.237a.

[454] Chen Zhi 陳致, *Cong liyihua dao shisuhua:* Shijing *de xingcheng* 從禮儀化到世俗化：《詩經》的形成 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 111-12.

[455] According to Chen Zhi, there was a subtle difference between the words *xia* and *ya* in terms of their usages: The word *xia* in the Shang-Zhou transition period referred primarily to the capital area of the Western Zhou (the Zhong Zhou 宗周) while the word *ya* focused more on the cultural factor of the Zhou court. See Ibid, 112.

龍 (*Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*), which contributed to pre-modern Chinese literary criticism.[456] In his epochal treatise, Liu Xie traced all writings in the world to the Classics and argued that despite their differences, they had the Classics as their ancestors, "The Five Classics are art masters molding human nature and spirit, and they are the great treasure house of literary writings. Unfathomable and lustrous, they are the source of all writings." 性靈熔匠，文章奧府。淵哉鑠乎，群言之祖.[457] The Classics' ancestral role lay not only in the categories the Classics set up for later literary writings, but also in the language the Classics used. As Liu Xie claimed, the sagely writings (the Classics) were so elegant and beautiful (*yali* 雅麗) that "those which imitated them would automatically gain the advantage of being refined and elegant" 是以模經為式者，自入典雅之懿.[458] Only when people model their writings after the Classics could their works be considered elegant.

These refined and elegant Classics, Liu Xie further argued, defined the scope of *wen* 文 within which all branches of knowledge could not overstep the boundary the Classics drew. In the "Zhongjing" 宗經 (The Classics as literary sources) chapter, Liu Xie adopted, in an unspoken way, the theory from the "Yi wen zhi" that the literature of the ancient

[456] This chapter does not attempt to discuss further Liu Xie's idea that the Classics represented the standard for literary writing. For a more detailed discussion, see Kang-I Sun Chang, "Liu Xie's Idea of Canonicity," in Zong-Qi Cai, ed., *A Chinese Literary Mind: Culture, Creativity and Rhetoric in* Wenxin Diaolong (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 17-32. The same volume also contains the editor's article on how the concept of literature was defined in *Wenxin diaolong* and other previous texts. See Zong-Qi Cai, "The Making of a Critical System: Concepts of Literature in *Wenxin diaolong* and Earlier Texts," 33-61.

[457] For the original text, see, Liu Xie 劉勰, *Wenxin Diaolong zhushi* 文心雕龍注釋, annotated by Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), 19. For the translation, see Vincent Yu-chung Shih, trans., *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press 2015), 24. Translated slightly modified.

[458] Liu, *Wenxin Diaolong zhushi*, 339; Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, 127.

masters (*zhuzi* 諸子) was the descendant of the Classics, no matter how the former outnumbered the latter, "All [these Classics] have reached great heights in establishing standards; they have also opened up vast new vistas. So that no matter how the hundred experts may leap and bound, they must eventually come home to the fold of the Classics" 並窮高以樹表，極遠以啟疆，所以百家騰躍，終入環內者也.[459] No matter how different the literature of the masters appeared to be from the Classics, they were still within the scope which the Classics defined. This idea was reiterated in the "Zhuzi" 諸子 (The various masters) chapter, in which Liu Xie indicated that certain masters did confuse the principles the Classics embodied and promoted: "However, although many sayings have been accumulated, their main ideas can easily be summed up. For all works dealing with morals and government developed out of the Five Classics. Those which are pure conform to the classical pattern, and those which are impure do not" 然繁辭雖積，而本體易總，述道言治，枝條五經。其純粹者入矩，踳駁者出規.[460]

The impurity (*chuanbo* 踳駁) mentioned in the previous excerpt pointed out a long-term concern about the loss of the elegant or correct language due to the *xie* 邪 (vicious), *buzheng* 不正 (incorrect), or *su* 俗 (vulgar) languages, which were opposite to the elegant or correct language and thus supposed to be culturally inferior.[461] However, a language and

[459] Liu, *Wenxin Diaolong zhushi*, 19; Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, 23.

[460] Liu, *Wenxin Diaolong zhushi*, 339; Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, 127.

[461] As Uffe Bergeton demonstrated, the word *su* 俗, customs, were viewed as 'vulgar' (*su*) in ancient Chinese because customs were "associated with satisfaction of 'desires' (*yu*)" and were "bound to specific places and times." See Bergeton, *The Emergence of Civilizational Consciousness in Early China*, 181.

a culture were not in and of themselves incorrect or vulgar. It was only because they did accord with the correct language and culture as determined by those members at the court and later scholars who treasured the ancient culture stored in the Classics. The loss of the elegant or correct language also indicated the vulnerability of correctness or elegance to incorrectness, viciousness, and vulgarity. In the "Yuelun" 樂論 (On Music) chapter of the *Xunzi* 荀子 (*Master Xun*), the Grand Instructor (*taishi* 太師) was said to be responsible for stopping the vicious sounds from disrupting (*luan* 亂) the elegant sounds, and thus exemplified the vulnerability of the correctness and the need to be vigilant.[462]

It was because of this vulnerability that the expression "approaching correctness" (*erya* 爾雅) appeared on different occasions in the materials in our possession as an esteemed standard for writings. For instance, in his memorial recorded in the "Rulin" 儒林 (Forest of *Ru*) biography of both the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*, Gongsun Hong 公孫弘 (199-121 B.C.E.) urged the Han court to make sure that its edict, which was used to recruit the talents within the empire, could "illustrate the boundary between Heaven and human and link up the meanings in the past and the present. The writing [of the edict] should approach elegance, its instructional language should be deep and profound, and its bestowing can then be very beautiful" 明天人分際，通古今之義，文章爾雅，訓辭深厚，恩施甚美.[463] In this memorial, approaching correctness was thought to be one of the major

[462] Xunzi, *Xunzi jijie*, 14.380-81.

[463] Sima, *Shiji*, 121.3119; Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 88.3594.

requirements for writing imperial edicts and an essential factor in determining the quality of the ruler's bestowing.

However, how could writing approach the correctness or elegance that Gongsun Hong advocated? What standard(s) was writing supposed to follow? The other occurrences of the *erya* expression in early texts suggested that writing should follow the archaic (*gu* 古) standard that the Classics established or embodied. As the *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 (*Records of Rituals by Dai the Elder*) recorded, when replying to the Duke Ai's inquiry about distinguishing right from wrong in minor issues, Confucius answered, "When you follow the strings to observe the music, it is enough for you to recognize the custom. When you approach correctness to observe antiquity, it is enough for you to distinguish one language [from others]" 循弦以觀於樂，足以辨風矣；爾雅以觀於古，足以辨言矣.[464] That the expression "approaching correctness" was associated with the archaic style language was also attested in the "Yi wen zhi" of the *Hanshu*. In concluding the sub-section of the *Shangshu* 尚書 (*The Documents*), the treatise said, "Reading [the *Shangshu*] through the archaic style language is supposed to be approaching correctness. As a result, one can decipher both the ancient and modern languages and understand their meanings" 古文讀應爾雅，故解古今語而可知也.[465] Insofar as the documents included in the *Shangshu*

[464] Dai De 戴德, *Da Dai liji jiegu* 大戴禮記解詁, annotated and glossed by Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 11.206.

[465] Rather than understanding the phrase *guwen* 古文 (archaic words) within the framework of the anachronistic and problematic ancient/ modern scripts controversy, it is better to interpret the phrase as describing the language the *Shangshu* used. In the *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子 (*The Many Kong Family Master's Anthology*), we read of the following statement in which the language of the *Shangshu* was thought by ancient people to be elegant and refined, "The intention of the *Shu* is abstruse and unpredictable that one must complete its meaning through glossary and commentary. Ancient people therefore thought that it is refined

was written in archaic style language, the Classic itself should be close to correctness or elegance. By associating the concept of *gu* (archaism) and that of correctness or elegance, both texts advocated that *gu* refers specifically to the language used at the Zhou court. Written in the language used primarily at the capital city in high antiquity, the Classics represented and embodied the standard for elegance and correctness that later writers were obligated to follow and thus enjoyed cultural superiority over other writings.

The imperative to approach correctness in writing implied a distance between the elegant, correct language (archaic style language) and that used in later generations. As Guo Pu's preface demonstrated, one of the *Erya*'s functions was to help later scholars understand the meanings of those words which had already died out. One reason for this distance was the mixture of different languages, both elegant and inelegant, because of the continuous and unavoidable interactions and contacts between different language users from various regions. This distance became even wider in the Six Dynasties Period (220-589), when large-scale immigrations happened due to the invasions and political turmoil.[466] As Andrew Chittick has demonstrated in his recent study of the Jiankang empire, the political elites who migrated southward to the previously peripheral southern area considered their elite vernacular language elegant, but not the language being used in the

and elegant"《書》之意兼複深奧，訓詁成義，古人所以為典雅也, see Kong Fu 孔鮒, *Kongcongzi jiaoshi* 孔叢子校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 2.132.

[466] For the studies of the immigrations happened in the Six Dynasties Period, see Ge Jianxiong 葛劍雄. *Zhongguo yimin shi di er juan* 中國移民史・第二卷 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1997); Axiang Hu, "The Population Migration and Its Influence in the Period of the Eastern Jin, the Sixteen States, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties," *China Frontiers of History in China: Selected Publications from Chinese Universities* 5. 4 (2010): 576-615; and Wen-Yi Huang, "Negotiating Boundaries: Cross-Border Migrants in Early Medieval China," (Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 2017).

historic capital of Luoyang and the north at that time. The northern land had been conquered and governed by successive steppe peoples, so its language had been influenced especially by the Xianbei language.[467] Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531- c. 590) wrote in his *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 (*The Family Instructions for the Yan Clan*) about the linguistic diversity in his day and compared northern and southern languages:

> People of the Nine Regions all speak different languages, and this has always been the case since there were living men until now. The [*Gongyang*] commentary on the *Chunqiu* is marked by the Qi dialect; the *Li sao* is viewed as a classic in the Chu language. Both show a clear linguistic distinction from the beginning. Later on, Yang Xiong authored the *Fangyan*, in which what Yang Xiong said is greatly comprehensive. However, it only examines the differences in names of things, but does not reveal the right and wrong of their pronunciations. It was not until Zheng Xuan annotated the Six Classics, Gao You interpreted Lü [Buwei]'s *Lülan* (i.e., the *Lüshi Chunqiu*) and the *Huainanzi*, Xu Shen created the *Shuowen*, and Liu Xi produced the *Shiming* that there were scholars using analogy and phonetic loan characters to verify pronunciation and characters.
>
> However, the ancient speech was quite different from modern speech, and the distinction between heavy and light, voiced and voiceless, was not yet entirely clear. In addition, there are also confusing issues, such as the syllables with and without palatal medial, the tensed and lax vowels, and the practice of "reading X as Y." Sun Shuyan (ca. 260) wrote the *Erya yinyi*, and he was the only person who knew about the *fanqie* system at the end of the Han dynasty. By the time of the Wei dynasty, this system had become so popular. The Duke of Gaogui District did not understand it and thought it strange. From this point onward, works about sounds and rhymes emerged like a swarm of wasps. Scholars individually followed their own regional customs, criticizing and mocking one another; as in the discussions of "the reference to horses," it is hard to know which was right. Let us take the imperial capitals as the universal standard and regional customs as points of reference to investigate the past and present in order to find the middle way. After negotiation and calculation, there are only Jinling and Luoyang [that can serve as standards].
>
> The water and soil in the South are harmonious and soft; the sounds [of the people living there] are clear, elevated, and fast, but their weakness is superficiality, and many of their expressions are vulgar and unrefined. The mountains and rivers in the North are impenetrable and deep; the sounds [of the people living there] are muddy,

[467] Andrew Chittick, *The Jiankang Empire in Chinese and World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 91-94.

heavy, and blunt, but they can acquire the solidity and directness [of the standard language of the capitals], and many of their expressions are from ancient times. However, as for the speaking of capped gentlemen, the South is superior to the North; as for the speaking of low-born rustics, then the North is better than the South. For in the South, even if they exchange their clothes, one can distinguish a gentry member from a commoner after hearing them say a few words. In the North, if you listen to people talking on the other side of a wall, you will have a hard time distinguishing a court official from a plebeian even after listening all day.

Nevertheless, Southerners' speech is contaminated by Wu and Yue, while Northerners' speech is mixed with *yi* and *lu* barbarians' tongues. Each has its great shortcomings, which cannot be discussed in detail here. As for their minor errors, Southerners mispronounce *qian* ("coin") as *xian* ("saliva"), *shi* ("stone") as *she* ("shoot an arrow"), *jian* ("lowly") as *xian* ("envy"), and *shi* ("this") as *shi* ("lick"); Northerners mispronounce *shu* ("commoner") as *shu* ("guard the fronter";), *ru* ("if") as *ru* ("Ruist or Confucian"), *zi* ("purple") as *zi* ("elder sister"), and *qia* ("moisten") as *xia* ("overly familiar"). There are many such examples of errors on both sides.[468]

夫九州之人，言語不同，生民已來，固常然矣。自春秋標齊言之傳，離騷目楚詞之經，此蓋其較明之初也。後有揚雄著方言，其言大備。然皆考名物之同異，不顯聲讀之是非也。逮鄭玄注六經，高誘解呂覽、淮南，許慎造說文，劉熹製釋名，始有譬況假借以證音字耳。

而古語與今殊別，其間輕重清濁，猶未可曉；加以內言外言、急言徐言、讀若之類，益使人疑。孫叔言創爾雅音義，是漢末人獨知反語。至於魏世，此事大行。高貴鄉公不解反語，以為怪異。自茲厥後，音韻鋒出，各有土風，遞相非笑，指馬之諭，未知孰是。共以帝王都邑，參校方俗，考覈古今，為之折衷。搉而量之，獨金陵與洛下耳。

南方水土和柔，其音清舉而切詣，失在浮淺，其辭多鄙俗。北方山川深厚，其音沈濁而鈋鈍，得其質直，其辭多古語。然冠冕君子，南方為優；閭里小人，北方為愈。易服而與之談，南方士庶，數言可辯；隔垣而聽其語，北方朝野，終日難分。

而南染吳、越，北雜夷虜，皆有深弊，不可具論。其謬失輕微者，則南人以錢為涎，以石為射，以賤為羨，以是為舐；北人以庶為戍，以如為儒，以紫為姊，以洽為狎。如此之例，兩失甚多。[469]

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[468] I modified the translation by Xiaofei Tian, trans., *Family Instructions for the Yan Clan and Other Works by Yan Zhitui (531–590s)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 395-99.

[469] Yan Zhitui 顏之推, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* 顏氏家訓集解, annotated by Wang Liqi 王利器 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2018), 7.529-30.

As suggested by the title of the chapter "Yinci" 音辭 (Make sound your words) from which the above statement was quoted, here Yan Zhitui focused more on the phonological difference between each regional language. However, it is hard to say that the regional differences in language limited only to pronunciations of words.[470] Rather, differences in syntax and morphology also matter, as Yan Zhitui himself mentioned in the excerpt that the expressions of Southerners were mostly unrefined, while those of the Northerners were mostly from ancient times and thus refined. His phonological focus in the "Yinci" chapter was largely his response to prior scholarship which cared more about the differences in naming than that in pronunciation.

Adopting the idea of environmental determinism, Yan Zhitui attributed the regional language differences to the natural environments from which languages were propagated.[471] At the end of the above excerpt, Yan Zhitui lamented the contamination of the languages in the South and North with the languages used by those culturally inferior ethnic others; thus, he also drew attention to the vulnerability of languages which were supposed to be culturally superior.

According to Yan Zhitui, linguistic diversity was originally a result of environmental differences, but was exacerbated due to the contamination caused by culturally inferior languages. The solution to this linguistic diversity, Yan Zhitui suggested, was to follow the language used in Jinling (i.e., Jiankang) in his time and that of Luoyang in the past.[472] The

[470] Coblin W. South, *A Handbook of Eastern Han Sound Glosses* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983), 20.

[471] See Chittick, *The Jiankang Empire in Chinese and World History*, 45-51.

[472] For te regional languages in Luoyang and Jinling, see Richard B. Mather, "A Note on the Dialects of

former was the principal city where the northern immigrant dynasties consistently located their capitals, while the latter was the ancient capital city constructed by the Duke of Zhou, one of the alleged authors of the *Erya*. Given their geopolitical and cultural importance in history, it is understandable why Yan Zhitui placed value on the language and sound used in both cities.

Yan Zhitui's opposition to the contamination by the culturally inferior languages and his preference for languages used in both Jiankang and Luoyang reflected a shared pursuit of elegant language at that time. In the "Rulin" biography of the official histories of the Southern Dynasties, Lu Guang 盧廣 (fl. 6th century), a Northern *ru* scholar who submitted to the Liang ruling house, was distinguished from other Northern *ru* scholars because his language and sound were said to be pure and elegant: "At that time, the *ru* scholars from the North included Cui Lingen, Sun Xiang, and Jiang Xian. They assembled their disciples to explain and discuss [the meanings of the Classics]. However, their sounds and words were low and unrefined. Only [Lu] Guang's speeches were pure and elegant, so they did not resemble [that of] Northerners" 時北來人儒學者有崔靈恩、孫詳、蔣顯，並聚徒講說，而音辭鄙拙；惟廣言論清雅，不類北人.[473]

Loyang and Nanking During the Six Dynasties," in Tse-tsung Chow, ed., *Wen Lin: Studies in the Chinese Humanities* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 247-56.

[473] Yao Silian 姚思廉, *Liangshu* 梁書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 48.678; Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Nanshi* 南史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 71.1740. Although this account from both official histories of the Southern Dynasties might represent more of the Southern attitude against the language used in the North, for it implied the Jiankang elites' concern about the use of elegant language in expounding the meanings of the Classics.

Their common pursuit of the elegant language was closely tied to the correct understanding of the Classics, as a reflection of the *Analects* 7.18. The mastery of the elegant language paved the way for correctly understanding the great principles underlying the Classics, and this correct understanding became a criterion for determining the cultural superiority of the users of the elegant language. The view that the mastery of the elegant language was prerequisite to the understanding of the Classics is exemplified in the following comment the historical officials gave to Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422), the founding ruler of the Liu Song Dynasty (420-479): "Although Gaozu had lived south of the river for multiple years, his Chu language had not changed. [As a result,] he did not hear about elegant ways and customs" 高祖雖累葉江南，楚言未變，雅道風流，無聞焉爾.[474]

This close relationship between the elegant or correct language and the correct understanding of the Classics explains how the ideal Confucian educational transformation worked within the Sinocentric framework and why there were only a few translations of the Confucian Classics in China's imperial history. A prerequisite for educating those ethnic and cultural others through the Classics that represented the high culture in antiquity was to ensure the others' proficiency in the elegant language of the Classics, but not to translate the Classics into languages which were considered culturally inferior. Translating the elegant language of the Classics was to alienate correctness, a process which was in opposition to the idea of approaching correctness. The principle that the cultural and ethnic others must acquire the elegant language offers us an insight into the *Erya*'s privilege in the history of China. The following section will examine the legend of the Duke of Zhou's

[474] Shen Yue 沈約, *Songshu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), 52.1506.

authorship of the *Erya* to see how the concept of "approaching correctness" was considered the primary way to transform and inculcate the cultural and ethnic orders.

5.4 Relay Translation as a Way of Inculcating Cultural Others

The Duke of Zhou was among the persons to whom the *Erya* was attributed in traditional scholarship.[475] In particular, it was suggested that the first chapter of the current *Erya*, which I call the proto-*Erya*, was composed by the duke. Given his well-known contribution to the cultural construction of the newly founded Western Zhou Dynasty, the duke's authorship would bestow upon the *Erya* a significant textual authority.[476] In traditional narrative, the Duke of Zhou was celebrated as the illustrious designer of the ritual institutions and bureaucratic system that represented the high level of civilization of the Western Zhou Dynasty.[477] During the sixth year of his regency, after suppressing the

[475] The authorship of the Duke of Zhou was called into question by the *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (*Miscellaneous records of the Western Capital*), a collection of short semi-historiographical stories which were reportedly compiled by either Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 B.C.E.-23 C.E.) or Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343). According to this collection, Guo Wei 郭威, a native of Maoling 茂陵, decided that the presence of Zhang Zhong 張仲, a person who lived in the reign of King Xuan 宣 (r. 828-782 B.C.E) more than a century after the death of the Duke of Zhou, invalidated the Duke of Zhou as its author. Liu Xin 劉歆, *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (Taibei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 3.2b.

[476] For discussions on authorship and textual authority in early China, see, for example, Hanmo Zhang, *Authorship and Text-making in Early China* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2018).

[477] Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) argued that it was the Duke of Zhou who facilitated the institutional reformation of the Zhou. See Wang Guowei 王國維 "Yin Zhou zhidu lun" 殷周制度論, in *Guanlin tang ji* 觀林堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 10: 451-80. However, based on recently discovered archaeological findings, many scholars have suggested that with their origins as outsiders and a different ethnic group, the Zhou royal house was culturally inferior to the Shang ruling house, so the rituals and institutions in the early Western Zhou basically continued those of the Shang. Therefore, the institutional change was more a gradual than a sudden process, and the legend that the duke implemented thorough and radical ritual institutions was merely later Confucian scholars' imagination. See Cho-yun Hsu and Katheryn M. Linduff, *Western Chou Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); and Chen, *Cong liyihua*

rebellion led by two of his brothers and Wu Geng 武庚, a remnant of the previously conquered Shang Dynasty, and constructing the eastern capital Luoyang, the Duke of Zhou was said to institute the rituals of the dynasty and the music played in ceremonies (*zhili zuoyue* 制禮作樂) before giving the power back to his nephew, King Cheng of Zhou.[478] The *Zhouli*, despite its controversial and dubious origin,[479] was thought by Liu Xin (46 B.C.E.-23 C.E.) and post-Han classicists to be an authoritative blueprint of the Duke of Zhou's government that would finally lead to the Grand Peace (*taiping* 太平). The text was therefore highly esteemed as one of the Confucian Classics from the Tang dynasty onward.[480]

It was in this context that the claim on the duke's authorship of the *Erya* was understood. In the "Shang *Guangya* biao," Zhang Yi, as one of the scholars who advocated the duke's authorship, associated the composition of the first *pian* of the *Erya* with the duke's cultural achievement:

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dao shisuhua, 19-27.

[478] Fu Sheng 伏生, *Shangshu dazhuan* 尚書大傳, collated by Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺 (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1967) , 4.14a.

[479] The authorship and the date of the *Rites of the Zhou* have long been a headache to many modern scholars. For the debate, see Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Zhouguan chengli zhi shidai ji qi sixiang xingge* 周官成立之時代及其思想性格 (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1981); Peng Lin 彭林, *Zhouli zhuti sixiang yu chengshu niandai yanjiu* 《周禮》主體思想與成書年代研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991), especially Chapter One; Jin Chunfeng 金春峰, *Zhouguan zhi chengshu ji qi fanying de wenhua yu shidai xinkao* 周官之成書及其反映的文化與時代新考 (Taibei: Dongda tushu gongsi, Zongjingxiao sanmin shu ju, 1993), 199-222; David Schaberg, "The Zhouli as Constitutional Text," in Benjamin Elman and Martin Kern, eds., *Statecraft and Classical Learning: The Rituals of Zhou in East Asian History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 31-63.

[480] For the discussion on the importance of the *Zhouli* in Wang Anshi's 王安石 (1021-1086) reforms, see Jaeyoon Song, *Traces of Grand Peace: Classics and State Activism in Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

> Yi, Your Majesty's *baoshi* (Erudite) subject, submits, "I, your subject, have heard that in the past the Duke of Zhou inherited and transmitted [the Way of] Tang [Yao] and Yu [Shun], respected and assisted [King] Wen and [King] Wu, conquered and pacified the land within the four seas, industriously served King Cheng as a prime minister, and handled governmental issues at the eastern steps. [He] did not eat during the day and sat [in his office at night] until dawn. His virtuous transformation spread so widely that the tribal leader of Yuechang visited [the capital] to present tributes [to him] and that there were mysterious grains penetrating through the mulberries. In the sixth year [of his regency], he established the rituals to guide [the people] under Heaven. He composed *Erya* in one *pian* to expound the meaning of his rituals.
>
> 博士臣揖言：「臣聞昔在周公，纘述唐虞，宗翼文武，克定四海，勤相成王，踐阼理政，日昊不食，坐而待旦，德化宣流，越裳倏貢，嘉禾貫桑。六年制禮以導天下。著《爾雅》一篇，以釋其意義。」[481]

Referencing back to our previous analysis of the concept of elegance, the rituals the duke instituted were elegant in the sense that they were supposed to be used at the central court and thus culturally superior. However, why did the duke have to compose the *Erya* in one *pian* as a derivative of his ritual institution to expound the meaning of the rituals he established? In the legend of the duke's authorship, who was the targeted readers for the *Erya* in one *pian*? Zhang Yi did not explain explicitly in his memorial the importance of the *Erya* in interpreting the duke's institution.

Considering that 63 out of 211 regional words in the current *Erya* are from the first chapter,[482] it is reasonable to assume that there might have been a consensus circulating among the advocators of the duke's authorship that the duke composed the first chapter of the *Erya* for the purpose of helping speakers of inelegant languages to understand the rituals he was said to institute. In their discourse, the text was probably in great demand among those tribes living in peripheral areas when they attempted to enter into tributary

[481] Wang, *Guangya shuzheng*, ia.

[482] Hua, "Lun Erya fangyan ci de kaojian," 207-08.

relationship with the Zhou court. As can be seen in Zhang Yi's memorial, the leader of Yuechang, a southern state which was thought to be located in Indochinese Peninsula,[483] visited the capital and presented tributes because of the duke's virtues that had been spread to the far south and had affected the leader of this Southeastern Asian tribal state.

Concise although Zhang Yi's mentioning of the legend of the Yuechang leader's visit was, it referred to an allusion that was commonly shared by a variety of texts dated approximately to Zhang's time.[484] The fact that Zhang Yi did not explicitly talk about the legend implies that this legend was so well-known among his contemporaries that Zhang did not see the necessity to record it in detail. If the Yuechang leader dwelt in the area which was a great distance from the Zhou capital and used a language different from the elegant language being used in Haojing, how could he communicate with the Zhou ruling elites during his trip? In the biography dedicated to the southern and southwestern barbarians (*man* 蠻 and *yi* 夷) ("Nanman xinanyi liechuan" 南蠻西南夷列傳) of the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Later Han*) written by Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445) in the Liu Song dynasty (420-479), we read of a more detailed narrative of the Yuechang leader's visit:

> To the south of Jiaozhi was the State of Yuechang. During the sixth year of his regency, the Duke of Zhou instituted the rituals [of the dynasty] and made the music [played in ceremonies]. The world under Heaven was pacified as a result. [The leader of] Yuechang presented a white pheasant [to the duke] with the assistance of three *xiang* interpreters who relay-translated his following words, "the road [from Yuechang to the capital] is very long, and the mountains and rivers are full of dangers.

[483] Some have argued more accurately that Yuechang was located in modern-day Vietnam. Dake Liao, "The Portuguese Occupation of Malacca in 1511 and China's Response," in James K. Chin and Geoff Wade, eds., *China and Southeast Asia: Historical Interactions* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 132.

[484] See, for example, Wang, *Lunheng jiao shi* 論衡校釋, 8.375-76; Ying, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 5.222.

> Since our emissaries cannot understand [your language], we have to relay-translate our language [into your language] to visit your court." The King Cheng credited [the Yuechang leader's visit] to the Duke of Zhou.
>
> 交址之南有越裳國。周公居攝六年，制禮作樂，天下和平，越裳以三象重譯而獻白雉，曰：「道路悠遠，山川岨深，音使不通，故重譯而朝。」成王以歸周公。[485]

Due to the language barrier, the Yuechang leader was originally unable to communicate with the Zhou ruling house and understand their messages. Thus, he had to rely on three *xiang* interpreters to relay-translate his language (*chongyi* 重譯) to arrive at mutual understanding.[486] The expression *chongyi* (relay-translation), the occurrences of which can be seen not only in the above *Hou Hanshu*'s narrative of the Duke of Zhou but also many other Chinese texts, can well explain the Sinocentric attitude towards transforming cultural others mentioned. As Wang Zijin 王子今 has argued, the idea of multiple retranslations was to emphasize and celebrate the cultural achievement of the dynasty whose influence could extend to the areas which were outside its territory. The more times tribal leaders

[485] Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 76.2835. A parallel is also seen in the lost *Taikang diji* 太康地記 (*Geographical Records of the Taikang Reign*), whose fragment was recorded in the early Tang *Yiwen Leiju* 藝文類聚 (*Classified Collection Based on the Classics and Other Literature*). It was said in the *Taikang diji* that the Yuechang leader translated his language nine times to achieve effective communication with the Zhou ruling house, "Jiaozhou was originally part of Yangzhou. It is named after Jiaozhi because it is the far south of Yu. When the Zhou held possession of the world under Heaven, the Yuechang clan yearned for the virtue of the sage (i.e., the Duke of Zhou). [Therefore, the leader of the Yuechang clan] had his language retranslated ninefold and presented a white pheasant" 交州本屬楊州，取交阯以為名，虞之南極也。周有天下，越裳氏慕聖人之德，重九譯，貢白雉. See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, *Yiwen Leiju* 藝文類聚 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), 6.116.

[486] Wang Zijin 王子今, "*Chongyi*: Handai minzu shi yu waijiao shi zhong de yizhong wenhua xianxiang"「重譯」：漢代民族史與外交史中的一種文化現象, *Hebei xuekan* 河北學刊 30.4 (2010): 52-56. See also Eva Hung, "Translation in China: An Analytical Survey: First Century B.C.E. to Early Twentieth Century," in Eva Hung and Judy Wakabayashi, eds., *Asian Translation Traditions* (London: Routledge, 2014), 67-107.

had to take to translate their languages into the elegant language used at the capital, the farther the educational transformation of a ruler could extend.[487]

Why did the Yuechang leader have to work with relay translation? The geographical distance between the Zhou capital and the State of Yuechang also suggested the linguistic distance between both places. To shorten their linguistic distance, the *xiang* translators should first translate the Yuechang language into another closely related language within one branch within their language family. Same step was repeated until the translators reached the elegant language. Thus, the process of relay translations was a process of "approaching correctness." While the expression "approaching correctness" manifested the standard for transforming cultural Others, "relay-translation" illustrated the specific, detailed process of transformation. Through relay-translation, a tribal leader could finally acquire the basic capability to comprehend the elegant language and assimilate themselves into the superior culture defined by the Confucian classical tradition.

The three *xiang* who assisted the Yuechang leader in doing the translation corresponded to the officials who were responsible for translating the languages of the barbarians dwelling in the four directions surrounding the Central States recorded in two ritual Classics, viz. the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) and the *Zhouli*. The following excerpt is from the "Wangzhi" 王制 chapter of the *Liji*, in which we can see a sophisticated scheme of the officials responsible for translation:

> As for the people living in the Central States and those *rong* and *yi* people, they were what we called the people of the five directions. Each of them had their respective

[487] Sometimes it was called *leiyi* 累譯, accumulated translations, instead. See Ban, *Hanshu*, 12.348 Yan Shigu's 顏師古 (581 – 645) commentary; Fan, *Hou Hanshu*, 86.2860.

> dispositions that cannot be changed or transformed.… As for the people of the five directions, their languages were mutually unintelligible, and their hobbies and desires were also different from each other. To realize their intentions and make their desires intelligible, there were: officials called *ji* for the people to the east; officials called *xiang* for the people to the south; officials called *didi* for the people to the west; and officials called *yi* for the people to the north.
>
> 中國戎夷，五方之民，皆有其性也，不可推移……五方之民，言語不通，嗜欲不同。達其志，通其欲：東方曰寄，南方曰象，西方曰狄鞮，北方曰譯。[488]

According to the sub-commentary composed by Kong Yingda and the fellows in his team, these officials were messengers (*chuanyu zhi ren* 傳語之人) whose major duty was to interpret and present the languages of the inner (*nei* 內) and the outer (*wai* 外) so that the intentions and desires of all people, regardless of their geographical origins, could be apprehended.[489] What is worth noting in the *Liji* citation is that the title of the official translators who communicated with the southern barbarians was also *xiang*, conforming with the responsible officials in the above excerpt from the *Hou Hanshu*. In the *Zhouli*, an umbrella term *xiangxu* 象胥 (representationists-discriminators)[490] was used to refer to all official translators in charge. It was said in the *Zhouli* that *xiangxu* should deliver the rulers' messages to the leaders of the barbarian tribes who during their visits to the capital would

[488] Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏, in Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., Shisanjing zhushu 十三經注疏, (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan yinhang, 2001), 12.248a.

[489] Ibid, 12.248b.

[490] See Wolfgang Behr's gloss for the phrase. See Wolfgang Behr, "To translate' is 'to exchange' 譯者言易也--- Linguistic diversity and the terms for translation in ancient China," in Michael Lackner and Natascha Vittinghoff, eds., *Mapping Meanings: The Field of New Learning in Late Qing China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 212.

present tributes to the sons of Heaven; during such visits, *xiangxu* also needed to assist the barbarian leaders in properly practicing the etiquette that was set up by the Duke of Zhou.[491]

Examining how reliable both texts were in reconstructing the early history of the translation officials in the Western Zhou dynasty would be a pointless task, because the bureaucratic systems in both the "Wangzhi" and the *Zhouli* were no more than later scholars' imaginations. Putting aside the difference in their narratives of the official interpreters of the Zhou bureaucracy,[492] the word *xiang* was used consistently in both ritual Classics and the *Hou Hanshu*'s narrative to refer to the title of the official interpreters. This consistency suggests that this word was conceived during the early stage of China's imperial history as the title of those polyglots who could translate one language into another before the word *yi* 譯 was consistently used to designate the official interpreters (*yiguan* 譯官).[493] The official interpreters in the imagined ancient bureaucracies were assumed to have a good mastery of both the elegant language and its inelegant or barbarian equivalents.

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[491] Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, ed., *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, 38.581b.

[492] The difference in the titles of the official interpreters in both ritual classics might imply that both classical texts were from different traditions.

[493] Zan Ning 贊寧 (919-1001), a Song Buddhist monk, explained that it was because the translation officials since the Han Dynasty served primarily northern barbarians that the word *yi* became more famous than others, particularly the word *xiang*:

> Today, among the officials in charge of the four regions, the *yi* are the best known. Why is this the case? The reason could be that since the Han Dynasty [206 BCE–220 CE], serious trouble always came from the north, and so the name *yi* has come to be known throughout the country.
>
> 今四方之官，唯譯官顯著者，何也？疑漢已來多事北方，故譯名爛熟矣。

See Zan Ning 贊寧, *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Beijing, Zhonghua shu ju, 1987), 3.52. For the English translation, see Martha P. Y. Chueng, *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation, Volume One: From Earliest Times to the Buddhist Project* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2006), 177.

Advocates of the Duke of Zhou's authorship might have regarded the *Erya* as a text that could help the official interpreters to complete their translation tasks. By putting regional words sharing the same meaning together, the *Erya* was particularly useful when tribal leaders visited the capital and had to have their languages translated into the elegant language with the assistance of the official translators.

Who did the Zhou court recruit as official translators, according to both ritual Classics? What training were the official interpreters supposed to receive? This chapter does not aim to examine in-depth the early history of Chinese translators, which another scholar has provided.[494] Nevertheless, both questions are still relevant in the sense that they can help explain how the elegant culture the Classics treasured, embodied, and illustrated was promoted to the cultural others. According to Wang Wenjin's 王文錦 annotation of a statement elsewhere in the "Wangzhi" chapter of the *Liji*,[495] the titles of official translators corresponded to the names of specific areas or places in the cardinal direction for which they were responsible.[496] For instance, there was a place *Ji* in the East, and thus the official translators who worked with the eastern barbarians also had *ji* their shared title. As modern scholars have suggested, this correspondence implies that the ancient official translators mentioned in both ritual Classics were likely to have a barbarian origin.[497] Barbarian origin

[494] For comprehensive studies of Chinese translation history and Chinese translators, see Rachel Lung, *Interpreters in Early Imperial China* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 2011).

[495] Kong, *Liji zhushu*, 12.248a.

[496] Wang Wenjin 王文錦, *Liji yijie* 禮記譯解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 176-77.

[497] Elsewhere in the "Wangzhi" chapter, there was a place called *ji* 棘 in the West, which was different from *Didi* 狄鞮, the title of the official interpreters who were responsible for communicating with the western barbarians. See Kong, *Liji zhushu*, 13.256b. Chen Jianhong 陳建紅 and Miao Wei 苗威 propose that both *ji* and *didi* shared the same rhyme and thus referred to the name of a western place. See Chen Jianhong 陳建

was further confirmed by a paragraph from the same chapter of the *Zhouli* where the title *xiangxu* appeared; every seven years, the son of Heaven summoned translators for different vassal states to the capital and offered them intensive training in language appropriate to public and official occasions.[498]

Although we cannot determine the authenticity of both ritual Classics' accounts of the ancient official translators, the institutions of the official translators in the Han-Tang period continued this practice of the imagined ancient times. Modern scholars have noticed that many known official translators in the Han-Tang period were mainly foreigners of non-Han Chinese and Inner Asian ethnic origins.[499] An exception was Zhou Kan 周堪 (n.d.), an Erudite (*boshi* 博士) in the Western Han dynasty. In his biography included in the

紅 and Miao Wei 苗威, "Dongya tongjiao zhong de yiyuren kaoshu" 東亞通交中的譯語人考述, *Hanguo yanjiu luncong* 韓國研究論叢 37.1 (2019): 168.

[498] Jia, *Zhouli zhushu*, 37.561b. In the *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the States*), it was said that the texts which we now call the Confucian Classics were used as textbooks to train the official interpreters from those barbarian areas. See Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, *Guoyu* 國語 (Shanghai: Shanghai shifan daxue chubanshe, 1998), 17.528.

[499] This phenomenon was particularly obvious in the Tang dynasty. A famous example comes from a Sogdian Shi Hedan's 史訶耽 (fl. 7th century) epitaph discovered in 1986, in which we read of Shi Hedan's decades-long career as an official interpreter of the Tang court. For studies of the epitaph and Shi Hedan's life, see Shōji Yamashita 山下将司, "Shin shutsudo shiryo yori mita hokuchomatsu to sho kan sogudojin no sonzai keitai kogen shutsudoshi shi boshi o chushin ni," 新出土史料より見た北朝末・唐初ソグド人存在形態——以固原出土史氏墓誌を中心に, *Tōdaishi-kenkyū* 唐代史研究 7 (2004): 60-77. See also Lung, *Interpreters in Early Imperial China*, 62.

Early official histories contained only a dearth of records of the translation officials in the Han dynasty. Nevertheless, the examples we can find tend to confirm the above argument. For instance, among Zhang Qian's 張騫 (d. 114 B.C.E.) entourage, there was Tangyi Fu 堂邑父 (Ganfu 甘父) acting as Zhang Qian's interpreter when Zhang was sent to Rouzhi. Tangyi Fu, as the *Shiji* 史記 mentioned, was originally a *hu* 胡 person who submitted to the Han Empire when Zhang Qian successfully escaped from a Xiongnu prison when the Xiongnu were engaged in civil war. Another example comes from Fu Jiezi 傅介子 (d. 65 B.C.E.) who assassinated the Loulan King Angui 安歸 (d. 77 B.C.E.). As his biography of the *Hanshu* recorded, Fu Jiezi was accompanied by an interpreter (*yi*) when he was in Loulan to assassinate the Loulan king.

"Rulin zhuan" of the *Hanshu*, Zhou Kan was first appointed as the Director of Interpreters' Office (*Yi Guan Ling* 譯官令) and was soon promoted as the Junior Tutor of the Heir Apparent (*Taizi Shaofu* 太子少傅) because of his incomparable mastery of the Classics at the conference held at the Shiqu 石渠 Hall in 53 B.C.E. It was his following political career, instead of his experience working as the Director of Interpreters' Office, that constituted the main body of his biography.[500] However, the title the Director of Interpreters' Office appeared rarely in the materials dated back to the Han dynasty, and thus the major duties of this official remain uncertain.[501] Was Zhou Kan involved in the translation of official documents? How many languages had Zhou Kan acquired before his first official appointment? As his title "Director" may suggest, did he simply supervise the official translators, rather than undertaking any actual translation projects? No definite answer can be given to these questions. Zhou Kan's case was inadequate to prove that imperial scholars valued bilingualism or multilingualism and considered being official translators their main career goal.

The central government (at least of the Han dynasty) did not find it necessary to put training in translation skills into the imperial curriculum or to regard translation ability as one of the crucial criteria for selecting scholar-officials from the students who devoted

[500] See Ban, *Hanshu*, 88.3604-05.

[501] Another occurrence is from the "Baiguan gongqing biao" 百官公卿表 of the *Hanshu*, where we also see an official bearing the title of the Director of Nine Times Translation (*jiuyi ling* 九譯令). See Ban, *Hanshu*, 19a: 730, 735. We know from this table that the Director of Interpreters' Office was responsible for managing surrendered barbarians, and was under the supervision of the Great Herald's Office (*dahonglu* 大鴻臚), whose title before 104 B.C.E. was Official Receiving Visitors (*dian ke* 典客) or Official Receiving the Subordinated Kingdoms (*dian shuguo* 典屬國). However, the table did not mention whether the director participated in any translation activity.

themselves to the classical scholarship. As Christoph Harbsmeier has suggested, Chinese people showed "no deep intellectual curiosity with respect to foreign languages."[502] In fact, being bilingual was not recommended in Yan Zhitui's writing.[503] This general disinterest in non-Sinistic languages accounted for the phenomenon that many known Han-Tang official translators were of non-Han Chinese origins. As the legend of the Yuechang leader's visit suggested, it was the responsibility of those cultural others to take the initiative to study the rituals initiated by the sage (Duke of Zhou) after being affected by the duke's spontaneous virtuous transformation (*dehua*). In explaining the name of Yuechang, Zhang Yan 張晏 (fl. 3rd century) said: "Yue [people] did not wear upper and lower garments. They yearned for the transformation from the Central States and therefore came to the Central States with translators in order to [learn how to] wear clothes. They are called Yuechang ('Traversing Skirt') as a result" 越不著衣裳，慕中國化，遣譯來著衣裳也，故曰「越裳」也.[504] Although his interpretation of the name of Yuechang was later refuted by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581-645),[505] his understanding that Yue people visited the capital because of their hope to be transformed by the Central States indicated that it

[502] Joseph Needham, ed., *Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 7, The Social Background. Part 2, General Conclusions and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 83. However, we can see from Buddhist tradition that certain monks were interested and even proficient in Indian language. One example is Xuanzang 玄裝 (602-664) who even made a pilgrimage to India to ask for Buddhist scriptures and translated them after his journey. See Richard McBride II, "How Did Xuanzang Understand Dhāraṇī? A View from His Translations," *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3.1 (2020): 315-44. However, in traditional Chinese historiography, one's bi- or multilingualism was not generally emphasized; this implies that such ability was not a common pursuit unless people had religious purposes.

[503] Yan, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie*, 1.21.

[504] Ban, *Hanshu*, 64B.2831.

[505] Ibid.

was thought in the early centuries of our era that it was the responsibility of those uncivilized people to take the initiative to study and delve into the culture the ancient sages had handed down. The historical records of the other Inner Asian (e.g., Xiongnu 匈奴) and East Asian (e.g., Japan and Korea) political entities sending their members to study at the capitals of Chinese empires also suggest that the foresaid Sinocentric idea was the guiding principle of educational transformation.[506] Along with the idea about the integration of the elegant language and the correct meanings of the Classics, Sinocentric attitudes provide hint about the significance of the *Erya* in China's cultural history. As long as the cultural others could acquire the capability to understand the elegant language, they could be transformed without translating the Classics into other inelegant languages that might distort the correct meanings of the classical texts. Thus, the crux of the matter was not to ask those who already had proficiency in the elegant language to study other inelegant languages and promote the classical traditions to the cultural others by translating the Classics into other languages. Rather, what was crucial was to ask cultural others to study the Classics in the original language of the Classics. Therefore, the *Erya* not only helped later scholars to understand the elegant ancient language, but also represented this ideal principle of educational transformation.

5.5 Emperor Xiaowen's Reforms and the Earliest Extant Translated Classics

This chapter's analysis has explained why only a few non-Han Chinese translations of the Confucian Classics are mentioned in traditional Chinese historiography. Given that

[506] In Fan, *Hou Hanshu*, 79A.2546.

language translation between two cultural communities was supposed to be unilateral, it was the responsibility of the cultural inferior to translate their language into the that of the cultural superior, but not the other way round. Translating a culturally inferior language into a cultural superior language, i.e., the elegant language, in relays (*chongyi*) was a gradual process of approaching correctness. This section will use the cultural reforms issued by Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471-499) of the Northern Wei, which have been labelled as policies of Sinicization (*hanhua* 漢化) in modern scholarship,[507] to exemplify the Sinocentric attitude toward the concept of elegant language and Confucian educational transformation. My major reason to discuss Emperor Xiaowen's reforms is that one of his cultural reforms was to produce a Xianbei translation of the *Xiaojing*. A close reading of the destiny of this translation in later history and the emperor's attitude toward the culture defined by the Confucian textual tradition will further support my argument in this chapter.

As the prototype of a *hu* (Tuoba Xianbei) ruler who was fascinated by the culture defined by Confucian textual tradition, Emperor Xiaowen was said to have implemented a series of thoroughgoing and radical policies to transform the Xianbei-led state into a state closer to the *hua* standard. The major motivation for his cultural reforms was more a political one, which was to strengthen his political power and authority as a ruler by whittling away the privilege and power of the tribal peoples, i.e., the *guoren* 國人[508] and

[507] Studies of the Emperor Xiaowen's polices of "Sinicization," see, for example, Horiuchi Jun'ichi 堀内淳一, "Hokugi Koubuntei no 'kara ka seisaku' to sono sizisya ni tui te" 北魏孝文帝の「漢化政策」とその支持者について, *Kōgakkan shigaku* 皇學館史學 61 (1986): 1-22; Li Kejian 李克建 and Chen Yuping 陳玉屏, "Zailun Bei Wei Xiaowendi gaige——Jiantan gaige dui minzu ronghe guilu de qishi" 再論北魏孝文帝改革——兼談改革對民族融合規律的啟示, *Heilongjiang minzu congkan* 黑龍江民族叢刊 2 (2007): 79-86.

[508] As Kang Le 康樂 argued, in the mid-second century, *guoren* referred primarily to the ten clans who

the men of Dai (*Dairen* 代人) who were the foundation of the Northern Wei.[509] Despite his political motivation and the fact that his reforms finally led to the rapid collapse of the Northern Wei,[510] Emperor Xiaowen was extolled in the official histories of the dynasty because of his deep commitment to *wen*. In the concluding remarks in his biography in the dynastic history's annals, the emperor's cultural achievements were said to be unprecedented in the dynasty, while the negative consequences of his reforms were not mentioned.[511]

As recorded in the *Weishu* 魏書 (*Book of Wei*) and the *Beishi* 北史 (*History of the Northern Dynasties*), one of the examples of Emperor Xiaowen's commitment to *wen* was

left the Lake Hulun in a southward migration. However, the semantic spectrum of *guoren* became unclear in later generations. What can be determined, Kang Le further demonstrated, is that *guoren* referred not only to the ten clans but also to other non-Han Chinese members. See Kang Le 康樂, *Cong xijiao dao nanjiao: Guojia jidian yu BeiWei zhengzhi* 從西郊到南郊：國家祭典與北魏政治 (Taibei: Daohe chubanshe, 1995), 47-49.

[509] Scott Pearce, "Northern Wei," in Albert E. Dien and Keith Knapp, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 2, The Six Dynasties, 220–589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 175. The men of Dai were mainly the nomads of northern Asia who dwelt in Pingcheng and its adjacent areas. Regardless of their ethnic origins, many men of Dai played important roles in the politics of the Northern Wei. See Kang, *Cong xijiao dao nanjiao*, 53-60.

[510] For the historical background of Emperor Xiaowen's reforms as well as his reforms' consequences, see Kang, *Cong xijiao dao nanjiao: Guojia jidian yu BeiWei zhengzhi*. Also see Hao Songzhi 郝松枝, "Quanpan hanhua yu Bei Wei wangchao de suwang——Bei Wei Xiaowendi gaige de jingyan yu jiaoxun" 全盤漢化與北魏王朝的速亡——北魏孝文帝改革的經驗與教訓, *Shanxi shifan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 陝西師範大學學報（哲學社會科學版） 32.1 (2003): 73-77.

[511] In concluding Emperor's Xiaowen biography, the *Weishu* monolithically praised the emperor's commitment to the civilizing mission. See Wei Shou 魏收, *Weishu* 魏書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 7B.162; Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Beishi* 北史(Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 7B.187; Parallel praise is seen in Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Beishi* 北史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 3.122.

his edict to abandon all music which did not comply with the elegant standard (*fei yazhe chu zhi* 非雅者除之).[512] But what was considered inelegant?

Among many of his cultural reforms, his policies to promote the virtue of *xiao* 孝 (filial piety) were of particular importance because of their long-term influence on his dynasty and the two dynasties that followed.[513] Aware of the potential benefits the value of filial piety might bring to the state and his monarchical power,[514] Emperor Xiaowen encouraged the *guoren* in his day to study the *Xiaojing* and even issued an edict to translate the classic into Tuoba-Xianbei language, as the bibliographic treatise of the *Suishu* recorded:

> Also, when the [Northern] Wei clan moved its capital to Luoyang, [its members] could not completely understand *hua* language. [As a result,] Emperor Xiaowen commended Houfuhou Kexiling to translate the major ideas of the *Xiaojing* in *yi* language and use [the translation] to teach the Tuoba-Xianbei people. [The translation] was called the *Guoyu Xiaojing*.
>
> 又雲魏氏遷洛，未達華語，孝文帝命侯伏侯可悉陵，以夷言譯《孝經》之旨，教於國人，謂之《國語孝經》。[515]

The expression *guoyu* 國語 (state language) in the title of the translation of the *Xiaojing* referred to the Tuoba-Xianbei language commonly used by the Tuoba-Xianbei people.[516]

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[512] Wei, *Weishu*, 7B.162; Li, *Beishi*, 3.102.

[513] Three rulers of the dynasty followed Emperor Xiaowen in having the word *xiao* part of their posthumous titles, including Emperor Xiaoming (r. 515-528), Emperor Xiaozhuang (r. 528-531), and Emperor Xiaowu (r. 532-535).

[514] As Kang Le suggested, the reasons for the ruling house of the Northern Wei to promote filial piety were to strengthen the social basis and, more importantly, to transform one's filial piety to their parents into loyalty to their rulers. See Kang, *Cong xijiao dao nanjiao*, 231-45.

[515] Wei Zheng 魏徵, *Suishu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 32.935.

[516] Zheng Qinren 鄭欽仁, "Yiren yu guanliao jigou: Beiwei zhengzhi zhidu shi yanjiu de qianti zhi yi" 譯人與官僚機構：北魏政治制度史研究的前提之一, *Taida lishi xuebao* 臺大歷史學報 3 (1976): 90. For

Elsewhere in the same bibliographic treatise, we read: "Later on, when the Later Wei first pacified the Central Plain, all military disciplines and commands were delivered in the *yi* language. Later, when they were influenced by the *hua* customs, many of them could not understand [the earlier commands written in the *yi* language]. As a result, they recorded their original language, transmitted, and taught it [to their following generations]. They call it the state language" 又後魏初定中原，軍容號令，皆經夷語，後染華俗，多不能通，故錄其本言，相傳教習，謂之「國語」.[517] We have no evidence to conclude that the *Guoyu Xiaojing* 國語孝經 (*The Classic of filial piety translated in our state language*), mentioned in the "Jingji zhi," was the only Tuoba-Xianbei language translation of a Confucian Classic at the time. In the same bibliographic treatise, we have entries of other (no longer extant) texts in Tuoba-Xianbei language, including the Tuoba-Xianbei language dictionary *Guoyu wuming* 國語物名 (*The names of things in state language*),[518] which was also composed by Houfuhou Kexiling 侯伏侯可悉陵, and other collections of imperial commands and music.[519]

As the treatise demonstrated, Emperor Xiaowen's reason for producing a Tuoba-Xianbei translation of the classic was that many *guoren* did not understand *hua* language when the capital of the Northern Wei was relocated from Pingcheng to Luoyang in 494.

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the language being used in the Northern Dynasties Period, see also Miao Yue 繆鉞, "Beichao zhi Xianbei yu" 北朝之鮮卑語, in *Dushi cungao* 讀史存稿 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1962), 53-77.

[517] Wei, *Suishu*, 32.947.

[518] Ibid.

[519] These Tuoba-Xianbei texts were recorded mainly in Wei, *Suishu*, 32.945.

However, the translation was not a verbatim translation of the original text of the Classic; rather, it was a translation of the major ideas of the *Xiaojing*. This Tuoba-Xianbei translation was perhaps based on Cui Hao's 崔浩 (381-450) earlier interpretations made in the first year of Emperor Mingyuan's (r. 409-423) reign.[520] Why was Houfuhou Kexiling's work not a verbatim translation of the *Xiaojing*? If his translation was indeed based on Cui Hao's earlier interpretation, this translation would fit perfectly with Emperor Xiaowen's intention to constrain the privileges of the *guoren* and the men of Dai of the Northern Wei. One reason for Cui Hao's execution was that, as exemplified by Zhangsun Song 長孫嵩 (358-437), Tuoba-Xianbei noblemen condemned him for discriminating against the tribal clans which supported "Tuoba-Xianbeization" (*guohua* 國化), i.e., the promotion of Tuoba-Xianbei culture within the territory.[521] If so, in the official histories, the Tuoba-Xianbei translation of the *Xiaojing* might embody the Emperor Xiaowen's wish to completely clean away the Tuoba-Xianbei cultural factors shared among the Tuoba-Xianbei people, the *guoren*.

Given that this Tuoba-Xianbei translation has already been lost, we cannot determine if this translation bore this cultural-political purpose. What we can say with more certainty is that this Tuoba-Xianbei translation was no more than an expediency which aimed primarily to help those who lacked the mastery of *hua* language, in which the classic was first written, to study the classic during the earliest stage of the emperor's reforms. In a conversation between Emperor Xiaowen and Wang Xi 王禧 (fl. 5th century) recorded in

[520] Wei, *Weishu*, 35.825.

[521] The phrase *guohua* was used ibid 38.875; Li, *Beishi*, 35.1288.

Wang Xi's biography, the emperor expressed his awareness of the imperative to use the correct language:

> Gaozu met the introduced courtiers and presented them with an imperial decree in which he said: "Do you all, my ministers, want to compare the time of the [Northern] Wei with the Shang and the Zhou, or do you want the Han and the Jin [dynasties] to monopolize previous generations?" [Wang] Xi answered, "Your Majesty, you have enlighteningly and brilliantly managed the operation [of the world], and you actually wish to follow the former kings." Gaozu said, "If this is the case, by what means could I accomplish it? Should I cultivate my person and correct the customs, or should I pass it down to my offspring?" [Wang] Xi answered, "To make the fortune of the state perpetual, you should hope to pass it down to the forthcoming generations." Gaozu said, "If this is the case, we must make innovations, and you all, my ministers, should obey the innovations without any violations." [Wang] Xi answered, "Subordinates following what their superior's orders can be compared with grass being blown by the wind." Gaozu said, "Since the ancient times to various Classics and texts, has there been any case when rituals could be practiced without first rectifying names? Now, I want to stop using all northern languages[522] and completely follow the correct sounds. For those who are above thirty, their habits and characteristics have been practiced for a long time, so perhaps they cannot undergo a radical change. For those who are below thirty, when they are present at court, their language and pronunciations should not follow the old standard. If there is someone doing so intentionally, he must suffer a degradation of his title and must be dismissed from his official position. It is appropriate for everyone to be deeply cautious. After gradually becoming accustomed to them, the decencies can be renewed. If we still follow the old customs, I am afraid that people living south of the Yi River and Luo River will after several generations again become those who wear their hair unbound. My nobles and officials, do you all agree with that?" [Wang] Xi answered, "It is indeed as the sacred edict said, it is appropriate to change [old customs]." Gaozu said, "I have discussed this issue with Li Chong, but [Li] Chong] said: 'As for the languages of the four directions, how can we know which is correct

[522] The northern languages (*beiyu* 北語) here referred to all languages used by the *hu* people, the barbarians, at that time. However, the phrase *beiyu* was used in a different way in the Southern Dynasties. According to Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969), the phrase *beiyu* referred instead to the regional language used in the Luoyang area in the last years of the Western Jin (266-316). In association with the *beiyu* was the *wuyu* 吳語, the Wu language. Chen argued that the use of different languages was a criterion for determining one's social ranking: the northern language was used by high-ranking members, while the Wu language was used by low-ranking people. See Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, "Dongjin Nanchao zhi wuyu" 東晉南朝之吳語, *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 7.1 (1936): 1-4. Saying that Chen Yinke saw the issue from a sociolinguistic perspective, He Daan 何大安 looked into the Wu language in the Six Dynasties Period from a more historical linguistic perspective and divided the Wu language into four layers. See He Daan 何大安, "Liuchao wuyu de cengci" 六朝吳語的層次, *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 64.4 (1993): 867-75.

in the end? The language that the emperor speaks is the correct language. There is no need to change the old [language] and follow the new one.' [Li] Chong deserves execution because of this statement."

高祖引見朝臣，詔之曰：「卿等欲令魏朝齊美於殷周，為令漢晉獨擅於上代？」禧曰：「陛下聖明御運，實願邁迹前王。」高祖曰：「若然，將以何事致之？為欲修身改俗，為欲仍染前事？」禧對曰：「宜應改舊，以成日新之美。」高祖曰：「為欲止在一身，為欲傳之子孫？」禧對曰：「既卜世靈長，願欲傳之來葉。」高祖曰：「若然，必須改作，卿等當各從之，不得違也。」禧對曰：「上命下從，如風靡草。」高祖曰：「自上古以來及諸經籍，焉有不先正名，而得行禮乎？今欲斷諸北語，一從正音。年三十以上，習性已久，容或不可卒革；三十以下，見在朝廷之人，語音不聽仍舊。若有故為，當降爵黜官。各宜深戒。如此漸習，風化可新。若仍舊俗，恐數世之後，伊洛之下復成被髮之人。王公卿士，咸以然不？」禧對曰：「實如聖旨，宜應改易。」高祖曰：「朕嘗與李沖論此，沖言：『四方之語，竟知誰是？帝者言之，即為正矣，何必改舊從新。』沖之此言，應合死罪。」[523]

Accentuating the concept of rectifying names or proper use of language (*zhengming* 正名),[524] the emperor demonstrated the importance of having the correct language and the correct pronunciations used at court. The consequence of following the old custom, which was the use of the northern or the Tuoba-Xianbei language, would be the "barbarization" of the people dwelling in the Central Plain; this statement implied the Tuoba-Xianbei language's destructive power on the correct or the elegant language and its culture. However, the emperor also admitted the difficulty people above thirty encountered when learning a non-native language. Therefore, an accommodation was made to allow those seniors to make change in their use of language in a gradual manner. Those under thirty, in contrast, were asked to change instantaneously without any concessions. Despite the

[523] Wei, *Weishu*, 21A.535-36. A parallel of the conversation also appears in Li, *Beishi*, 19.689-90.

[524] For the translation of *zhengming* as proper use of language, see Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011), 100.

difference in speed that the emperor approved, his final goal was to transform all Tuoba people, or court officials, into native users of the *hua* language, which he considered to be the correct language.

Linking the Tuoba-Xianbei translation of the *Xiaojing* to this conversation between Emperor Xiaowen and Wang Xi, we have reason to assume that the translation was only a provisional and expedient text. As the "Jingji zhi" implied, the translation was meant to help those seniors who had difficulty in learning the *hua* language as beginners and other *guoren* without background in *hua* language to read the Classic when the emperor started to implement his cultural reforms. Putting aside the resistance of certain men of Dai living on the northern frontier of the nomadic empire to Emperor Xiaowen's reforms,[525] the translated *Xiaojing* was, in principle, valid only for a very short transitional period, after which all *guoren* were expected to be proficient in the *hua* language and read the original Classics in the language in which they were first written. Only when the *guoren* could read the original texts of the Classics written in the correct or elegant language, could they assimilate into the culture defined by the Confucian textual tradition. The fact that this Tuoba-Xianbei translation of the *Xiaojing* was not mentioned in the basic annal of Emperor Xiaowen's biography but only briefly mentioned as an appendix in the "Jingji zhi" of the *Suishu* and finally lost also indicates the irrelevance of the translation to later imperial classical scholars. Later scholars neglected of this translation probably because they

[525] Kang Le argued that after the emperor relocated the capital to Luoyang, the norther frontier again was dominated by the North Asian culture because the men of Dai living there did not participate in the emperor's reforms. Therefore, the gap widened between those northern men of Dai and the ruling elites at Luoyang , and finally led to the Six Garrisons Rebellion in 524. See Kang, *Cong xijiao dao nanjiao*, 197-206.

regarded the translation as downgrading the Classics, which were originally written in the correct or elegant language, to texts in incorrect language and thus undermining the meaning and principles the Classics were thought to deliver and embody.

5.6 Conclusion

The *Erya*, which was never inclusive in the sense that it does not cover words created in the ages after the Han dynasty. However, this dictionary-like collection was esteemed by scholars, whom we identified as Confucians, due not to its practical value, but to its Sinocentric stance. As its title suggested, the *Erya* represented an idea that one should gain mastery of the elegant language in which the Classics were written in order to correctly access the teachings the Classics, the repository of the ancient culture. Putting this idea into the context of educational transformation (*jiaohua*) and cultural assimilation, this chapter tried to examine how, from a Sinocentric perspective, the cultural Others—those who spoke languages different from the Sinitic language and not under the direct control of China's empires—were expected to study the Confucian Classics and the culture they represented to achieve their transformation. This Sinocentric perspective, therefore, discloses how Confucian scholars and the governments which upheld the Confucian tradition (in different degrees) positioned themselves in the multicultural world.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In the fourth century, a Buddhist monk Dao'an 道安 (312-385) argued that only with the assistance of state power could advocates of the Confucian tradition achieve their goals.[526] Although Dao'an's work intended to prioritize Buddhism over Confucianism, his work provided food for thought to understand how imperial Confucian intellectuals positioned themselves. It is in this cultural-political assumption that this project examines the formation of Confucianism in relation to power in early history of China. Through a close reading of the materials which have been widely used in modern scholarship, I illustrate the respective driving forces behind these materials and discuss how the materials may have shaped our conventional understanding of the invention of Confucianism as an intellectual tradition. Despites their particular foci, the chapters of this dissertation demonstrate how the studied materials agreed that the Confucian Classics and the teachings therein were beneficial for kingly transformation (*wanghua* 王化) or educational transformation (*jiaohua* 教化) of rulers, and thus emphasized the inextricable connection between Confucian and state power.

It was on the basis of the contribution to rulers' educational transformation that Confucianism was invented and how the Confucian Classics were characterized. In

[526] Dao'an 道安, "Erjiao lun" 二教論, in Daoxuan 道宣, ed., *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, T (CEBTA 2011) 2103, 52: 138.b4. See also Fu Yang 傅揚, "Siwen busang: Zhonggu ruxue zhuantong yu Suidai Tangchu de zhengzhi wenhua" 斯文不喪──中古儒學傳統與隋代唐初的政治文化, *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 33.4 (2015): 182-84 for a discussion on Dao'an writing.

Chapter Three, I explored how Liu Xin and Liu Xiang imagined how the ancestors of their own contemporary Confucians had assisted ancient kings in educating the populace with the use of the proto-Classics which had been created by other royal officials, who were the ancestors of later masters (*zi* 子). Chapter Four and Chapter Five discussed from a linguistic perspective how the Classics could be correctly utilized to educate people regardless of their social ranks and ethnicity. My discussion also indicates a shared devolutionary view on the ancient knowledge preserved in the Classics. It was only through Confucian interpretations of the Classics that the Classics could be retrieved despite that degeneracy. Thus, this devolutionary view stimulated the rise of Confucianism and the ensuing development of the Confucian tradition.

However, the relationship between Confucianism and state power has never been monolithic throughout China's history. We can witness several examples of the tension between Confucianism and governments in China's history. In Chapter Two, I discussed the *Shiji*'s presentation of the Qin's suppression of classical knowledge; that presentation exerted heavy influence on the traditional narratives of the burning of books and executing of scholars by the Qin. Although I have suggested that the Qin emperor's hostility toward the Classics and ancient knowledge was exaggerated in the *Shiji* in order to construct the grand historian's imagined ideal *ru* community, the well-known but controversial Qin suppression became a prototype for describing later emperors' attitude against Confucian teachings. An example comes from Emperor Hongwu of the Ming (r. 1368-1398), under whose reign an abbreviation of *Mengzi*—i.e., the *Mengzi jiewen* 孟子節文 (*The Abbreviation of* Mengzi)—was composed. Since a significant part of the *Mengzi* was omitted because the emperor thought that the deleted passages threatened his political

authority, Confucians blamed the abbreviation for destroying the integrity of the Classic and undermining Confucian culture.[527] However, scholars have recently shown that the destructive power of the abbreviation was not as strong and thorough as previous scholarship suggested.[528] The narrative of Emperor Hongwu's attitude against the *Mengzi* is reminiscent of the traditional narrative of the burning of books and executing of scholars during the Qin dynasty. Whenever emperors showed their dissatisfaction with Confucian teachings and implemented policies to interfere in the transmission and influence of the teachings, the traditional narrative would compare them to the First Emperor of the Qin in order to characterize them as anti-traditional or even uncivilized rulers.

Although not all China's emperors were as hostile to Confucian teachings as the First Emperor of the Qin was presented in the *Shiji*, Confucian dominance was never stable and unchallenged. For instance, there is a consensus among scholars that Confucianism became less important in the Tang dynasty, when the ruling house claimed themselves to be descendants of Laozi, the progenitor of Daoism.[529] Despite imperial rulers' various attitudes toward Confucian teachings, the enduring worship of Confucius and other

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[527] Zhu Ronggui 朱榮貴, "Cong Liu Sanwu *Mengzi jiewen* lun junquan de xianzhi yu zhishi fenzi zhi zizhuxing" 從劉三吾《孟子節文》論君權的限制與知識份子之自主性, *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 6 (1995): 173-98.

[528] Bernhard Fuehrer, "State Power and the Confucian Classics: Observations on the *Mengzi jiewen* and Truth Management under the First Ming Emperor," in Roger T. Ames and Peter D. Hershock, eds., *Confucianisms for a Changing World Cultural Order* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 235-51.

[529] For the Tang ruling house's patronage of Daoism and how Daoism offered the ruling house political authority, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Time After Time: Taoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T'ang Dynasty," *Asia Major* 3rd series, 7.1 (1994): 59-88. The Tang ruling house's prioritizing of Daoism did not mean that Confucianism remained absent and did not play a significant role in Tang's political world. For a more detailed discussion, see David McMullen, S*tate and Scholars in T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

important figures within the Confucian tradition, such as Zhu Xi (1130-1200), in different dynasties in China's imperial history indicates the subtle and dynamic relationship between the Confucian tradition and imperial governments in pre-modern China. This interplay is noteworthy in contemporary China as well. Confucianism is now part of China's Dream (*Zhongguo Meng* 中國夢), which claims to achieve the great revival of the Chinese nation and Chinese patriotic nationalism,[530] because it proclaimed to be the essential way through which one can understand the national character of the Chinese. Ironically, in the last century, particularly in the Cultural Revolution from1966 through 1976, Confucius was condemned as representing the landlord class and feudalism; therefore, Confucius and his teachings were harshly criticized.[531] Such dynamics between Confucian culture and state power have a long history in China.

In addition, although governmental interference should never be downplayed as negligible in terms of the formation of Confucianism and the subsequent development of

[530] As Suisheng Zhao suggests, after the political turmoil in the 1980s, the Chinese Communist Party has fused pragmatic nationalism with blind patriotism and reiterated the glory of the Chinese nation which the Party has claimed has around five thousand years of history. By so doing, the Party has stressed the importance of political reunification so that the glory of the Chinese nation can be revived. See Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 214. Daniel A. Bell also maintained that Confucianism was used by the Party to fill the "ideology vacuum" of the country. See Daniel A. Bell, "China's leaders rediscover Confucianism," *International Herald Tribune*, 14 September 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/14/opinion/14iht-edbell.2807200.html (accessed 16 May 2022).

[531] As one of the "Fours Old" (*sijiu* 四舊), Confucianism was thought to represented ancient Chinese culture which must be eliminated during the Cultural Revolution. As a result, the Confucian Temple in Qufu County was seriously damaged. See Wang Liang, Curtis Dean Smith trans., "The Confucius Temple Tragedy of the Cultural Revolution," in Thomas A. Wilson, ed., *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center 2003), 376-98. See also K.T. Fran, "Why China Criticizes Confucius," *Critica Sociologica* 35 (1975): 89-96; Louie Kam, *Critiques of Confucius in Contemporary China* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); Merle Goldman, "China's Anti-Confucian Campaign, 1973-74," *The China Quarterly* 63 (1975): 435-62; and Tong Zhang and Barry Schwartz, "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 11.2 (1997): 189-212.

this intellectual tradition, the patronage or the suppression by the ruling houses in China's history should not be the lone factor in determining the significance of Confucianism. As I showed in Chapter Three, both Lius' blueprint of the ancient official system was their response to other intellectual claims, such as that advocated by Li Xun, in their times. Although the Lius' theory was widely accepted in the following millennia probably because of the imperial sponsorship they received from the Han court, the power negotiation between both Lius and other scholars also determined how their original theories of various masters (*zhuzi* 諸子) and the Confucian claim on its interpretative authority over the Classics and ancient wisdom therein were formed, elaborated, and manipulated. The Lius, in turn, influenced the Han court's understanding of world knowledge and the way they classified books treasured in the imperial library. In studying the history of the Song dynasty, James T.C. Liu emphasized the significance of state power in shaping the intellectual landscape of the Song, while Peter K. Bol focuses on the interaction between scholars and discounts the influence and power of emperors.[532] The discussion of this dissertation serves as a lens through which we can study scholars' multidimensional and multi-layered power dynamics with other stakeholders—for example, both Lius, the Han court, Li Xun, and others in Chapter Three.

This project studies the invention and circulation of Confucianism in East Asia in pre-Tang China from the inside, that is to say, the texts are contextualized within the mainstream Confucian framework. Thus, this dissertation does not provide final

[532] James T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1989); Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) and *Localizing Learning: The Literati Enterprise in Wuzhou, 1100-1600* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2022).

conclusions about how we should define Confucianism in history. How did cultural outsiders understand Confucianism? Why did the ruling houses of the so-called conquest dynasties strive to study and translate the Confucian Classics? Was it because, as the nationalistic narrative has arbitrary suggested, they admired the culture defined by the Confucian tradition because they were aware of their cultural inferiority? How did the conquest dynasties understand the Classics in ways different from traditional Chinese historiography? For example, the dissertation culminates with the case of Emperor Xiaowen of the Norther Wei. However, what we can know about the emperor and the Tuoba-Xianbei translation of the *Xiaojing* is primarily based on sources from traditional Chinese historiography. What about materials from other traditions written in other languages, like Manchu during the Qing dynasty? These questions suggest a path for my future research.

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