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Merging Horizons:
Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Zuo Tradition
from Western Han to Western Jin (2nd c. BCE –3rd c. CE)

By

Pauli Wai

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

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in

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Robert Ashmore, Chair
Professor Michael Nylan
Professor Mark Csikszentmihalyi

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Abstract

Merging Horizons: Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Zuo Tradition from Western Han to Western Jin (2nd c. BCE–3rd c. CE)

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Doctor of Philosophy in Chinese

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Robert Ashmore, Chair

This dissertation examines the central forms of exegetical authority from early to early medieval China, focusing on the reception history of the Zuo Tradition 左傳 from Western Han to Western Jin (2nd c. BCE–3rd c. CE). Most modern scholarly works treat the Zuo Tradition as a historical narrative of great literary value about China's Spring and Autumn period (722–468 BCE). My research, however, studies the value and status of this text as an exegetical tradition from the perspective of classicists spanning five centuries. These early scholars on the Zuo Tradition measured its worth according to how well it preserved and explicated the visions of Confucius as lodged in the wording of *Annals* 春秋 the Classic. Conceptions about the Zuo Tradition evolved through a series of debates and arguments in expository letters, memorials, and essays, as well as commentaries on the *Annals* and Zuo Tradition.

During the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE), the *Shiji* 史記 advanced the conception of the Zuo Tradition as a corrective to the divergent interpretations of the *Annals*. In late Western Han, Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–23 CE) vied to establish the Zuo Tradition on equal footing with officially sponsored exegetical traditions. But during early Eastern Han (25–220 CE), the Fan Sheng 范升 (fl. 29 CE) versus Chen Yuan 陳元 (fl. 29 CE) debate showed that doubts remained about the authority of the text as an interpretation of Confucius' messages. Implicitly responding to such doubts, Ban Gu's 班固 (32–92) writings elaborated on previous accounts about the authorship, transmission, and official precedence of the Zuo Tradition. During the mid-Eastern Han, Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101) represented the Zuo Tradition as a source of legitimization for the imperial house, while other scholars added to the myths about the Zuo Tradition. The Western Jin (265–317) scholar Du Yu 杜預 (222–284) worked to further shore up the text's authority by both redefining conceptions about the *Annals* and privileging the Zuo Tradition as an exclusive system of interpretation of the Classic.

In the period under study, successive generations of Zuo Tradition scholars made steps to secure its status in a range of ways, all of them aiming to strengthen the text's relationship to the Classic. These incremental steps enabled the Zuo Tradition to attain definitive authority in the early Tang (7th c. CE), allowing us to observe a process fraught with conflicting ideas about the text. Thus

the study of this historical process helps to merge the intellectual horizons of modern scholars with those of classicists.

For my

mother and father

sister Christine

brother-in-law Vu Hong

husband Eric Tashima

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ABBREVIATIONS

- CHC *Cambridge History of China Vol. I*
- ECT *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*
- HFHD *History of the Former Han Dynasty*
- HHS *Hou Hanshu*
- HS *Hanshu*
- HSBZ *Hanshu buzhu*
- SJ *Shiji*
- SSJZS *Shisanjing zhushu: Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi*
Edition used: Du Yu 杜預 (W. Jin), Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (Tang), comps.
Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi 春秋左傳正義. Vols. 13–16, *Shisanjing zhushu fenduan biaodian* 十三經注疏分段標點, ed. Shen Qiuxiong 沈秋雄. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 2001.
- ZY *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義. Vols. 16–19, *Shisanjing zhushu zhengli ben* 十三經注疏整理本, ed. Li Xueqin 李學勤. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000.

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Introduction

In its current form, the *Zuo Tradition* is a narrative that chronicles China's political history during the Spring and Autumn period (722–468 BCE). This work narrates the battles, interstate relations, and domestic affairs of large and small states that belonged to a loose political confederation under the nominal rule of the Zhou state. The *Zuo Tradition* dramatizes historical events through the use of characterization, dialogue, and plot construction. In terms of the *Zuo Tradition*'s literary medium, this work recounts history mostly through narrative prose. While the *Zuo Tradition* presents its history in a roughly chronological order, the use of flashbacks and predictions is common as well. Since the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), many readers have regarded this text as the most comprehensive, detailed, and multifaceted narrative of two and a half centuries of China's ancient history.¹

Although many readers have high regard for the *Zuo Tradition*, scholars of the pre-modern period did not always value this text as a rich historical narrative. In the particular period under study, from the late Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE) to the Western Jin dynasty (265–317), scholars considered the *Zuo Tradition* less as an independent text and more as a companion text to the *Annals*, otherwise known as the *Annals*, comprised of brief notices of political events recorded from the kingdom of Lu's perspective. From the Western Han, the *Annals* enjoyed the status of a Classic—one of the Five Classics associated with Confucius as author or editor, or distinguished texts with unparalleled authority in Chinese classical scholarship. This acknowledgment means that scholars treated the *Annals* as a Classic that expresses the Sage's political visions and ethical judgments. Since the *Annals* was elevated to that of a Classic, problems of interpretation arose, causing a split among scholars examining the language of the text versus the meanings beneath its literal surface. Scholars responded to this perceived rift by producing interpretations of the *Annals* that treat individual words and phrases as coded ethical pronouncements on historical figures and events. Thus these early scholars' analysis represents their attempts to decode Confucius' judgments: interpretation is a matter of deciphering both the original judgment and its implications.

In light of these circumstances, the *Annals* should have developed complex and dense exegetical traditions. I use the phrase “exegetical traditions” as a translation of *zhuan* 傳 to refer to the bodies of explanations and commentaries devoted to deciphering Confucius' thought in the authoritative Classics. Two notable exegetical traditions of the *Annals* in the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE) were the Gongyang Tradition 公羊傳 and Guliang Tradition 穀梁傳, both of which contain word-for-word analysis on the Classic text along with some narrative. These traditions are said to have originated in the context of master-to-disciple lectures, with the

¹ The early Tang historical critic Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661–721) famously affirmed the crucial role that the work plays in illuminating the history of this period. In his essay “In Support of Zuo” 申左, he says, “If Master Zuo had not established his tradition, one would not have the wherewithal to understand [the events]. Had the many generations of scholars studying the *Annals* only availed themselves of the other two traditions [Gongyang and Guliang], then the deeds and events of the two hundred and forty years of the [Spring and Autumn] period would have become murky and dim, with the result that later scholars would have become blankly deaf and dumb” 若無左氏立傳，其事無由獲知。然設使世人習春秋而唯取兩傳也，則當其時二百四十年行事茫然闕如，俾後來學者兀一成聾瞽者矣。Liu Zhiji 劉知幾, *Shitong tongshi* 史通通釋, 421.

texts of these traditions retaining the characteristics of oral discourse. Early and medieval scholarly communities judged exegetical traditions according to how effective they were in deciphering, explicating, and representing Confucius' thinking. These scholars broadly interpreted exegesis as scholarly traditions rather than necessarily fixed texts. Hence, for the purposes of this thesis, I do not mark exegetical traditions as book titles in order to retain the early and medieval understanding that these traditions represented different routes for understanding Confucius, rather than necessarily fixed texts.

The precise origins of the text we know as the “Zuo Tradition” remain a mystery, and the nature and degree of its relation to the *Annals* is a particularly open question. In the Han to Jin period (206 BCE–420 CE), early advocates position the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition, and as with existing exegetical traditions both oral and written at the time, is a tradition indispensable for understanding the *Annals*. These champions do not seem overtly interested in positioning this newest tradition as a fixed text. For this reason, the Zuo Tradition will henceforth serve as the designation of this text. During the Western Han, Wudi 武帝 (140–86 BCE), established official academicians (*boshi*) for the study of the Gongyang Tradition while Xuandi 宣帝 (73–48 BCE) did the same for the Guliang Tradition. The Zuo Tradition, on the other hand, did not receive the court's official patronage until the early Tang, when Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) and others were imperially commissioned to compile the *Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義 (Correct significance of the Five Classics) in 635 CE. This definitive moment secured the status of the Zuo Tradition as the most ‘correct’ and reliable interpretive guide to the Classic, *Annals*, now canonized as one of the Five Classics.²

This marks the moment when Zuo Tradition was conceived of as possessing greater authority than the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. However, this moment was short-lived, for as early as the mid-Tang (8th c. CE), scholarly voices emerged, questioning the authority of the Zuo Tradition, and all exegetical traditions for that matter, as the only valid means through which to understand the *Annals*. These doubts persisted into the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), as the *Siku quanshu* editors felt compelled to defend the Zuo Tradition against a long tradition of doubt about its authority as a recapitulation of Confucius' teachings.³

This present thesis concentrates on questions about the authority, status, and prestige of the Zuo Tradition during the early period of its circulation, from Western Han to the Western Jin dynasties (2nd c. BCE–3rd c. CE). Questions about the Zuo Tradition's textual, moral, political, and social authority all came into play as early medieval scholars measured the status of the Zuo Tradition against that of other exegetical traditions attached to the *Annals*. At any given particular historical moment, who or what conferred authority on the Zuo Tradition and what

² In the context of Tang times, the idea of canonization involves the formation of a ‘canon’ defined as a corpus of stable and fixed texts, “unchangeable” and “inerrant,” in Michael Nylan's words. This definition is narrower than the idea of a classic or Classic based on a mastery of practices or knowledge. See Nylan's essay “Classics without Canonization,” 721–75.

³ The following is cited from the *Siku quanshu zongmu* 欽定四庫全書總目: “In the Tang dynasty, Zhao Kuang [classicist on the *Annals*, fl. 766–79] first posited that Mr. Zuo was not [Zuo] Qiuming, with the thought, one may suppose, that one wishing to attack an exegetical tradition as not being in keeping with its classic must first attack the author of that tradition as not having received it from Confucius. Just as with Wang Bo's [classicist, 1197–1274] wish to attack the Mao Tradition of the *Odes* by first charging that it was not transmitted from Zixia, their thinking was the same” 至唐趙匡始謂左氏非丘明，蓋欲攻傳之不合經必先攻作傳之人非受經於孔子，與王柏欲攻毛詩，先攻毛詩不傳於子夏，其智一也。 *Siku quanshu* 143.9.

made it prestigious? The answer to this question involves a number of considerations beyond the conceptual frameworks of classical scholarship itself. As noted above, imperial institutions also played a role in lending credibility to some exegetical traditions while denying it to others. Such official sanction gave prestige, status, and salaries to men studying these exegetical traditions sponsored by the court. Before the Tang, advocates for treating the Zuo Tradition in this way presented a succession of arguments but never achieved lasting success. Since official approval could both reflect and contribute to perceived authority, it is difficult for us to gauge the level of authority ascribed to the Zuo Tradition, because it lacks a history of official endorsement in this period. Nonetheless, the uncertainty of the Zuo Tradition's status allows us to study the range of assumptions, narratives, language, and conceptions that early medieval scholars relied on to stake out their positions about the authority of the Zuo Tradition.

These debates about exegetical authority took place against a background of shifting political landscapes. Around Han Wudi's 漢武帝 reign (140–86 BCE), a source attributed to Sima Qian, the *Shiji* 史記 14, “Table of the Twelve Feudal Lords,” establishes the Zuo Tradition as a way to read the *Annals* as cryptic praise and criticism of the ruling classes. A reference to the Zuo Tradition in the “Table” explicitly links the figure of Zuo Qiuming to the correct interpretation of the *Annals*. During the reigns of Yuandi 元帝 (48–32 BCE) and Chengdi 成帝 (32–6 BCE), as Michael Loewe has demonstrated, the court's turn away from expansionist politics led to a heightened evaluation of classical scholarship and ritual reforms.⁴ In this atmosphere, one of the Zuo Tradition's most important early advocates, Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–23 CE), promoted it as one of the sources that could help to restore teachings perceived to be in a state of cultural loss and disintegration. Subsequently, during the Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BCE–23 CE) period of regency over Pingdi 平帝 (1 BCE–6 CE), the Zuo Tradition was said to have received official sponsorship along with other texts that Wang favored, according to a later source, the *Hanshu*. However, Guangwudi's 光武帝 (25–58 CE) establishment of the Eastern Han empire prompted a contentious series of debates about the Zuo Tradition in 28 CE. Both proponents and challengers vied to win over the emperor, as he settled decisions on whether to continue with or depart from the Western Han precedents as the basis of his political authority. Half a century later, in 79 CE, Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101) directly appealed to Zhangdi's 章帝 (76–89) interest in omenology by connecting the Zuo Tradition to apocryphal traditions, which the emperor viewed as authoritative as far as they legitimated his rule. Such are the examples of imperial events shaping court discussions about the Zuo Tradition.

Not all debates about the Zuo Tradition, however, directly tie to politics. Writing in the same generation as Jia Kui, Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) highlights the state of loss and decline of Confucius' teachings, emphasizing the importance of scholastic lineages with a clear history of transmission. In particular, Ban Gu's argument for the authority of the Zuo Tradition emphasizes the claim that it is the only exegetical tradition concerning the *Annals* to have originated from an author with direct contact with Confucius. This emphasis on the Zuo Tradition's traceability to an intimate of Confucius also appears in the writings of other scholars of this era, such as Wang Chong 王充 (27–97 CE) and Xu Shen 許慎 (58–120), both of whom subscribed to beliefs about this sacred origin of the Zuo Tradition.

⁴ See Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu*, 16–30.

The next, and most extensive, discussion of the Zuo Tradition extant from the early medieval period is Du Yu's 杜預 (222–284) preface to his commentarial work on the Zuo Tradition, the *Collected Explanations of the Classic and Tradition of the Annals* (*Chunqiu jingzhuān jiji* 春秋經傳集解), compiled in 283 CE. Du Yu developed innovative approaches to the Zuo Tradition, such as correlating the texts of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition by year, systematizing interpretive principles, and pointing out the pleasures of reading the two texts together. These innovations appear to have further solidified the exegetical authority of the Zuo Tradition.

Key Terms

This section addresses the key terms employed here relating to interpretive and textual authority, and more broadly, hermeneutics. So far the key term “exegetical tradition” has been applied to the three major scholarly traditions associated with the *Annals* in the period under study, insofar as they consist of exegesis on the *Annals*—one of the recognized Classics. Michael Nylan describes the set of criteria Han classicists employed to determine whether a classic or text could be considered as a “Classic,” a designation that accorded it higher status over that of other texts considered “classics.” In summary, the criteria for considering a text a “Classic,” as opposed to a “classic,” consisted of these five broad aspects of the classical or textual tradition in question: its breadth of moral wisdom, conduciveness to understanding, contemporary relevancy, provision of ethical models, and finally, emotional and aesthetic appeal.⁵ An exegetical tradition represents an attempt to reconstruct and interpret the messages of Confucius in a text deemed to be a Classic in Han times.⁶

The next consideration is whether to employ the term “commentarial tradition” or “exegetical tradition” to refer to the first layer of explanations on the *Annals*. Most scholars on Chinese exegesis and commentaries, such as John Henderson, Steven Van Zoeren, Sarah Queen, and John Makeham,⁷ refrain from making hard and fast distinctions between exegetical and commentarial traditions. In early China, the terms *zhuān* 傳, *zhu* 注/註, *zhāngjù* 章句, *ji* 記, *jie* 解, *gu* 故/詁, *xun* 訓, *shuo* 說, and combinations of the aforementioned terms were employed to denote particular kinds of commentaries as well. Among the Han writers who discussed the Zuo Tradition in surviving works, Ban Gu (32–92 CE) was the earliest writer to almost always refer

⁵ See Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, 12–13. Between the covers of this thesis, the *Annals* will not be designated as ‘Scripture’ even though Sarah Queen qualifies the usage of this term in the Confucian context vis-à-vis other religious contexts of the world. Queen employs the term ‘Scripture’ to better capture the elements in Dong Zhongshu’s treatment of the *Annals*, which encompasses a “religious experience—one grounded in a unitary vision of Heaven and humanity.” See Queen, Sarah, *From Chronicle to Canon*, 10. Reviewers of Queen’s book have commented on her characterization of the religious dimensions of Dong Zhongshu’s thought as it relates to the sacredness of the Classics. See, for example, Michael Nylan’s review in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 634–5. See also Stephen Durrant’s review in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 493.

⁶ This terminological application excludes consideration of the outgrowth of exegetical material in *Chunqiu fanlu* and the “Treatise on the Five Phases” (*Wuxing zhi* 五行志) of the *Hanshu*. The latter correlates interpretations of divinatory omens appearing in the three exegetical traditions, and thus could be construed as religious in character.

⁷ See Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*, 1991; Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 1991; and Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators*, 2003.

to it as “*Zuoshi zhuan*” 左氏傳. Perhaps not so coincidentally, he was also the first to expand the legend about the simultaneity of its origin with the *Annals*. Likewise, he consistently refers to the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions with the term “*zhuan*” instead of any other designation for exegesis or commentary.

Ban Gu also expended much effort to expand narratives about the origins of these exegetical traditions, treating them with special reverence. In his “*Yiwen zhi*” 藝文志 (Bibliographical treatise), for example, he avoids the term “*zhuan*” when referring to subcommentaries or works of commentaries on the three main *Annals* exegetical traditions, suggesting a categorical distinction between works that exclusively interpret the words of the *Annals* itself and those that explicate the exegetical traditions.⁸ To reflect such usage by early and medieval writers, this study will adopt “exegetical tradition” to refer to the Gongyang, Guliang, and Zuo Traditions, put forward for debate during the period under study. As for texts that comment on the exegetical traditions, these writings shall be referred as “commentaries” or “commentarial traditions.”⁹

Hermeneutics

The central concern of exegetical traditions is, of course, hermeneutics. Steven Van Zoeren and John Makeham have written extensively on the hermeneutical dimensions of interpretive traditions of the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Analects*. Van Zoeren, in particular, draws distinctions among several types of hermeneutics,¹⁰ singling out one type, “authoritative hermeneutics,” which he defines as “the hermeneutics that comes into play when certain texts become authoritative within the culture.”¹¹ He identifies the dominant hermeneutic of the *Odes* as lying in the formulation given in the “Great Preface” of the Mao Tradition of the *Odes*—“The *Odes* articulate aims” 詩言志.¹² In Van Zoeren’s view, this guide for interpreters on “what to look for” in an ode proved to be an enduring feature of *Odes* interpretation up to the Song period (960–1279 CE).

An analogy between the hermeneutics of *Odes* and *Annals* can be drawn. If the dominant hermeneutic of the *Odes* involves the uncovering of the “aims” (*zhi* 志) lodged in the odes, then that of the *Annals* demands the exposure of the “significance” or “judgment” (*yi* 義 and *dayi* 大義) lodged in the wording of this Classic. If, as Van Zoeren lays out, exegetes of the *Odes* attributed to their poet-authors the intention to “remonstrate” (*jian* 諫) or “encourage” (*quan* 勸) their ruler by “praising” (*mei* 美) or “goad” and “satirizing” (*ci* 刺) him,¹³ then the exegetes

⁸ For example, his bibliography of works in the “*Chunqiu*” 春秋 category includes the titles *Zuoshi wei* 左氏微, *Gongyang zhangju* 公羊章句, *Guliang zhangju* 穀梁章句, *Gongyang zaji* 公羊雜記, and *Gongyang Yanshi ji* 公羊顏氏記. Fragments of these commentaries are collected in Ma Guohan’s 馬國翰 (Qing) *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu* 玉函山房輯佚書.

⁹ Thereupon, Du Yu’s third-century commentary, the *Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie*, will serve as a prime example of a commentarial tradition rather than an exegetical tradition.

¹⁰ Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 3–7.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 6.

¹² *Ibid.* 11.

¹³ *Ibid.* 13.

of the *Annals*, attributed to Confucius, the putative author of that Classic, the intention to “praise” and “approve” (*bao* 褒) or “criticize” and “blame” (*bian* 貶) rulers and ministers. The slight differences between these two sets of terms point to a disparity in timing of the two kinds of authorial intent: the *Odes* poets used poems to “influence” the future behavior of their rulers, whereas Confucius, as author of *Annals*, was believed to have used it to “judge” the past behavior of the ruler in question. The distinction is not as clear-cut as it may appear, however, since according to the Mao Tradition, the poets expressed their judgments on the past acts of a historical ruler in hopes of reforming his successors in the future, while according to the early readers of the *Annals*, Confucius passed his judgments on past rulers in hopes of influencing their successors. The elements of influence and judgment are present in both formulations.

Other types of hermeneutics can also enter into the interpretation of the *Annals*. In focusing on “authoritative hermeneutics,” Steven Van Zoeren eliminates from sustained focus what he terms “textual hermeneutics,” “theoretical or normative hermeneutics,” “programmatically hermeneutics” and “philosophical hermeneutics.” Each of these deemphasized categories, however, may be found at work in *Annals* interpretation between the Han and Jin period (2nd c. BCE–5th c. CE). In Van Zoeren’s definition, “textual hermeneutics” is concerned with the “rules or principles that guide the interpretation of text,” an apt description of the exegetical enterprise beginning with the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions.¹⁴ Exegetes of these traditions conceive of the *Annals* as a deliberately warped version of a perfectly systematic matrix of set formulas and templates for entering essential data into the scribal records.¹⁵ Among the Gongyang and Guliang exegetes, the starting assumption was often that such a hypothetical system existed: departures from this ideal system represent the gaps that allow for the interpretation of Confucius’ messages.¹⁶ Thus, these exegetes involve themselves with this reconstruction of what Van Zoeren calls the “tacit rules and principles,” so as to make both the ideal universal system and the departures from this system transparent to the readers of their exegesis. The present study recognizes that “textual hermeneutics” constitute the basic nature and practice of exegetical traditions of the *Annals*, from the standpoint of early and medieval classicists.

Another type of hermeneutics at play involves the exegete’s attempts to retrieve the ‘original’ meaning they think the author intended his utterances to have. In Steven Van Zoeren’s schematics, these attempts belong to the branch of “programmatically hermeneutics” in the human sciences, in that they share “an emphasis on the recovery of the animating intentions behind literary and other cultural texts.”¹⁷ The idea is that such a recovery is feasible, achieved through the sympathetic bond between the interpreter and the author of the work being interpreted. Early exegetes of the *Annals* shared this premise, for they were mostly confident about the possibility of recovering the intended meanings, provided that the right path is employed to reveal them. Scholars of the Han to Jin periods exhibit this confidence that exegetical traditions serve as the bridges connecting the reader back to the composer of the text, inhabiting the mental horizon of the author. For the Zuo Tradition to be regarded as an exegetical tradition, scholars had to demonstrate that it is a gate that led to the minds of Confucius and Zuo Qiuming. To these

¹⁴ Ibid p. 3–4

¹⁵ Newell Ann Van Auken gives a thorough examination of these scribal conventions in her dissertation, *A Formal Analysis of the Chuenchiou (Annals Classic)*, 2006.

¹⁶ Joachim Gentz’s study analyzes the exegetical premises, practices, and methods of the Gongyang Tradition in his article Gentz, “Close(d) Reading of the *Chunqiu*,” 27–40.

¹⁷ Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 4.

scholars, connecting with the mind of Confucius is a realizable goal; it is only a matter of choosing the right conduit to be successfully transported back to the Sage's mind. In the early arguments (Western Han, 206 BCE–9 CE) made about the Zuo Tradition, scholars positioned it as one of the viable routes to Confucius' thought process, on a par with the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. Toward the middle of the period under study (Eastern Han, 25–220 CE), proponents began to suggest the advantages of the Zuo Tradition over those of the other two traditions, regarding the Zuo as a more reliable means for understanding the designs of Confucius as he wrote the *Annals*. By the end of the period under study (Western Jin, 265–317), Du Yu asserted the definitive superiority of the Zuo Tradition over its two competitors, still based on the criteria of how correctly each interprets the aspirations of Confucius.

Another type of hermeneutics characterizes the nature of Du Yu's commentarial tradition of the Zuo Tradition in the Western Jin. Steven Van Zoeren categorizes "theoretical or normative" hermeneutics as the type that is a "theory or body of teachings concerning interpretation," and which "are systematic and comprehensive attempts to specify the principles which should govern reading."¹⁸ Du Yu specifies a system of guidelines whereby readers can accomplish this goal on their own—to understand the *Annals* by following his stated guidelines. He systematically interweaved the Zuo Tradition and the Classic in order to enable readers to extrapolate general principles from particular expressions. Du Yu, like his contemporaries, would have found it inconceivable to understand the Classics without recourse to the exegetical traditions. In fact, his contribution lies in privileging the Zuo Tradition as the interpreter's strongest ally in reading the mind of Confucius. Du Yu practiced a kind of "theoretical or normative" hermeneutics in drawing up an organized universe of rules and guidelines for readers to utilize. This map presumes a theoretical vision of the limited meanings that Confucius could have lodged in his *Annals*. Placing parameters around the possible interpretations of the Sage's words, Du Yu promoted a normative system that was meant to replace the unsystematic and adhoc interpretations of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. Insofar as Du Yu created a program of interpretation, or a hermeneutical system, he also could be said to have elevated the "textual hermeneutics," practiced by all exegetical traditions of the *Annals*, to "theoretical or normative" hermeneutics. In Du Yu's conception, the Zuo Tradition not only generates principles on a case-by-case basis, as the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions did, but it also systematizes and universalizes those principles.

In sum, different types of hermeneutics were at play in the early and early medieval interpretation of the *Annals*, as can be seen in the alternation and overlapping of these types, both in general discussions of the Classics as well as in debates over the merits of the Zuo Tradition. For example, the three exegetical traditions and Du Yu's commentarial tradition all participate in the creation of interpretive rules and guidelines ("textual hermeneutics") and the recovery of Confucius' original words ("programmatically hermeneutics"). But only Du Yu's commentarial tradition may qualify as an attempt to systematize these rules, which he promotes as a normative system ("theoretical" or "normative" hermeneutics). None of these exegetes and commentators, however, can be characterized as participating in what Van Zoeren termed "philosophical hermeneutics," which is concerned with Gadamer's notion of "historical understanding."¹⁹ Early

¹⁸ With this formulation, Van Zoeren had in mind the Reformation theologians and Song Neoconfucians who attempted to outline the principles by which individuals could read scriptural and canonical texts, independent of exegetical authorities. Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid p. 5

Chinese scholars treated their exegetical traditions not as a historically specific perspective, but rather, as the timeless ethical perspective of the Sage. Thus, while this project, like Van Zoeren's, aims to provide historical contexts to aid our understanding of early to medieval "authoritative hermeneutics," this study also recognizes that exegetes of the period were interested in promulgating normative and authoritative values transcending specific historical changes.

Chapter Summaries

The first chapter examines the basic dominant hermeneutic of the *Annals* first established in *Mencius*, then elaborated in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (?145–?86 BCE) autobiographical preface (*Shiji* 史記 130), and subsequently applied to the conception of the Zuo Tradition in the "Table of the Twelve Feudal Lords" 十二諸侯年表 (*Shiji* 14). The last of these sources is instrumental in connecting the Zuo Tradition to the interpretation of praise and blame believed to have been encoded in the *Annals*. The *Shiji* 14 places the Zuo Tradition in a historical context in which Confucius' messages were in danger of being lost and divergent, and presents the Zuo Tradition as the only remedy to this situation. This chapter traces the formation of the dominant hermeneutic for the interpretation of the *Annals*, then examines early attempts to place the Zuo Tradition in this hermeneutical framework to establish the Zuo Tradition's authority.

The second chapter focuses on the late Western Han to early Eastern Han period, when two contentious sets of debates reveal schisms in opinions regarding the authority of the Zuo Tradition. Liu Xin's 劉歆 (46 BC –23 CE) "Letter to the Academicians," a fundamental document in the early history of the Zuo Tradition reception, offers a defense of the text's status during Aidi's 哀帝 reign (7–1 BCE). With increasing encouragement for classical and textual scholarship under the reformist governments of Yuandi 元帝 (48–33) and Chengdi 成帝 (33–7), Liu Xin argued the value of the Zuo Tradition in the cultural, ritual, and textual projects his father, Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE), oversaw. By the early years of Guangwudi's 光武帝 reign (25–58 CE), the question of the Zuo Tradition's authority was still largely unsettled, as reflected in a series of debates between the Zuo Tradition skeptic Fan Sheng 范升 (fl. 28 CE) and its advocate Chen Yuan 陳元 (fl. 28 CE). In Fan's argument, only those exegetical traditions officially established in the Western Han were authoritative; Chen, in contrast, holds that the Zuo Tradition was authoritative, insofar as it gives the reader access to a personal understanding of the Sage.

The third chapter turns to the second quarter of the Eastern Han, when Ban Gu's 班固 (32–92 CE) writings represent his consistent attempts to quell doubts about the authority of the Zuo Tradition as a reliable route to the mind of Confucius. His arguments appear in various chapters of the *Hanshu* 漢書: in the biography of Liu Xin (HS 36), in the "Yiwen zhi" (HS 30), and in the "Rulin zhuan" 儒林傳 (HS 88, Biographies of classicists). In Liu Xin's biography, Ban attributes Liu with his study of the Zuo Tradition as exegesis on the *Annals*. In the "Yiwen zhi," Ban elaborates upon the legends about Zuo Qiuming's personal contact and collaboration with Confucius to establish the unity of vision between Zuo the exegete and Confucius the Sage author. To resolve the seeming paradox that the Zuo Tradition purportedly originated during

Confucius' time, and yet had been virtually unknown since then, Ban argues that the text is analogous to Confucius' veiled criticisms within the *Annals*. Finally, in the "Rulin zhuan," Ban creates a coherent narrative establishing clear lines of transmission for the Zuo Tradition from the early Western Han. Additionally, he went so far as to lay down the institutional history of the Zuo Tradition by stating that the Zuo Tradition was officially established in Pingdi's reign. Although scattered in different chapters of the *Hanshu*, these passages form a composite narrative about the origins, transmission, and institutional dissemination of the Zuo Tradition. Such concerted efforts appear to have been effective in settling disputes about the validity of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition, as no further court debate seems to have erupted over this issue.²⁰

The fourth chapter shows that other arguments about the Zuo Tradition, simultaneous with Ban Gu, did not focus on its genesis and transmission. Instead, scholars turned to other areas of interest. Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101) argued for the utility of the Zuo Tradition in bolstering the imperial family's legitimacy, rather than reiterating the value of accessing Confucius' ethical and political vision. In this way, Jia facilitated the appropriation of the Zuo Tradition for political purposes. Wang Chong and Xu Shen, on the other hand, displayed no such overt political interests, and instead expressed keen interest in the accounts of the Zuo Tradition emergence, ascribing even older dates of discovery to the text than Liu Xin has done. These scholars expanded the bases of authority for the Zuo Tradition to wider discussions about political and textual authority current during their lifetimes.

The fifth and sixth chapters focus on Du Yu's "Preface" to the *Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie* of the Western Jin. This preface helped to seal the authority of the Zuo Tradition, marking it as surpassing that of other exegetical traditions of the *Annals*. Before his discussion of the Zuo Tradition itself, he first redefined the hermeneutic of the *Annals* by emphasizing Confucius' preservation of the Lu annals rather than his modification of it. Du's argument recast the *Annals* as a repository of institutional and bureaucratic history of Western Zhou culture, rather than purely as a storehouse of Confucius' judgments. This new emphasis created the need for an exegetical tradition that could distinguish between the changed and unchanged portions of text in the *Annals*. Du proposed that the strongest candidate for fulfilling this role was the Zuo Tradition while the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions were incapable of doing so. He transformed the Zuo Tradition into a hermeneutical system that could explicate the full range of ways in which Confucius retained, modified, and created principles for expressing judgment through his *Annals*. He ascribed the authority of the Zuo Tradition to the light it sheds on both sides of the compositional and interpretive processes, allowing readers to better understand the mind of Confucius.

²⁰ According to Hans Van Ess, both Xu Shen's *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義 (Different meanings of the Five Classics) and Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (127–200) *Bo Wujing yiyi* 駁五經異義 (Refutations on the different meanings of the five classics) cite the Zuo Tradition to settle institutional issues around a pre-existing political debate between the "modernists" who supported the "old" policies of Wudi and Xuandi versus the "reformists" who supported those "new" ones begun under Yuandi. While Xu supported the so-called "old" opinions, Zheng synthesized "old" and "new" opinions. In neither case did Xu or Zheng reject the Zuo Tradition as a wholly invalid tradition unassociated with the Five Classics. See Van Ess's work on the *Wujing yiyi* in "Apocryphal Texts of the Han Dynasty," 29–46.

Literature Review

In late Western Han to early Tang (1st c. BCE–7th c. CE), the arguments about the Zuo Tradition centered on whether it represents an exegetical tradition of the *Annals* or not. However, in the Qing dynasty, the scholar Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776–1829) wrote *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng* 左氏春秋考證 to repudiate the status of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition and to argue for its value as a historical work instead. Liu Fenglu accused Liu Xin of forging the exegetical comments within the Zuo Tradition with the ulterior motive of hoping to bolster its status as an exegetical tradition of the *Annals*. In retrospect, he seems to have taken up an unending feud between classicists who continued to treat the Zuo Tradition as exegesis and scholars who studied it as a valuable historical document.

The historicization of the Zuo Tradition, begun in the Qing dynasty, stretched into the modern period. The prolific “antiquity doubters” Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980),²¹ Zhou Yutong 周予同 (1898–1981),²² and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1904–1982),²³ for example, treated the Zuo Tradition as authoritative history in and of itself rather than exegesis attached to the *Annals*. At the other extreme, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927) denied the authenticity of the Zuo Tradition as an ancient historical work, claiming that Liu Xin forged the entire text. In turn, Bernard Karlgren responded to this charge by reasserting the value of the Zuo Tradition as a bona fide ancient text with great historical value.²⁴

²¹ For Gu Jiegang’s summary of the arguments concerning Zuo Tradition’s origins, see his chapter “*Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan zhuzuo shidai de gejia shuo*” 春秋左氏傳著作時代的各家說 in his *Gushi lunwenji* 古史論文集. He compared the *Shiji*’s and *Hanshu*’s accounts about the Prince Xian of Hejian, and concluded that the *Hanshu*’s additional passage about the presentation of “*guwen*” texts to the prince was an interpolation that was part of the overall construction and elaboration of scholarly lineages to lend respectability to the study of texts with a shorter or no history of imperial patronage. It is Gu Jiegang’s supposition that Liu Xin was responsible for creating the so-called “*guwen*” movement by attaching a genealogies to archived texts that could have served as nothing but supplementary material to existing learning without the elaborate history of transmission to go with it. See “*Gushi bian di wuce zixu*” 古史辨第五冊自序, 246–56. Liu Qiyu’s inheritance of Gu Jiegang’s legacy is presented in Liu’s *Chunqiu sanzhuo ji Guoyu zhi zonghe yanjiu* 春秋三傳及國語之綜合研究. The application of this historicizing impulse is demonstrated in Tong Shuye’s 童書業 *Chunqiu Zuozhuan yanjiu* 春秋左傳研究. This work uses the Zuo Tradition as pieces of historical material sewn together to present a ‘factual’ picture of the politics, society, thought, and institutions of the Spring and Autumn period. Another such example is Barry Blakely’s article “Socio-Political Traditions of Spring and Autumn China: Part I, Lu and Ch’i,” 208–243. The work of Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought*, takes the Zuo Tradition as an early source that allows scholars to trace the development of Confucian philosophical concepts in the Eastern Zhou. In discipline of the history of science, David Pankenier uses the Zuo Tradition as textual evidence for astrological thought in his article “Applied Field-Allocation Astrology in Zhou China,” 261–79.

²² Zhou Yutong wrote a particularly polemical piece on the “absurdities” of inscribing political and moral visions into the *Annals*. See his essay “*Chunqiu yu Chunqiu xue*” 春秋與春秋學, 492–507.

²³ For Xu Fuguan’s different formulation of the Zuo Tradition’s position within the context of these slippery arbitrations of scholarly and textual filiations, see his section “You guwen dao guxue: Liu Xin’s ‘Rang Taichang Boshi shu’” 由古文到古學—劉歆〈讓太常博士書〉 in *Xu Fuguan lun jingxue shi erzhong* 徐復觀論經學史二種, Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 157–164.

²⁴ It was against Kang Youwei’s extreme doubt that Bernard Karlgren set out to ‘prove’ the authenticity of the Zuo Tradition and its pre-Liu Xin date of composition. For a brief summary of arguments that alternately vilify, then rehabilitate the image of Liu Xin, see chapter 8 of Nils Göran David Malmqvist’s book *Bernard Karlgren*, 2011.

Meanwhile, other notable scholars opposed the historicizing movement by maintaining that the Zuo Tradition still held authority as a guide to the ethical messages of Confucius in the *Annals*. Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936) and Liu Shipei 劉師培 (1884–1919) isolated exegetical passages within the Zuo Tradition that explicitly point to Confucius’ judgments undergirding his Classic.²⁵ These scholars cited other ancient texts to corroborate their explications of the Zuo Tradition’s links to the *Annals*. Many later scholars are equally reluctant to relinquish the conception of the Zuo Tradition as a conduit to the ethical world of the *Annals*. This can be seen in the scholarship on the “*sanzhuan*” 三傳 (three exegetical traditions), for it remains a considerable trend in Zuo Tradition studies today.²⁶

Literary and rhetorical perspectives offer another approach to the study of the Zuo Tradition, rooted in the Zuo Tradition of literary criticism of late imperial China. This body of literature, indigenously known as *pingdian* 評點 (literary criticism), treats the text as an intricately constructed narrative, analyzing its literary techniques and structure.²⁷ At the same time that these critics expressed their insight into the literary and rhetorical workings of the Zuo Tradition, they did not lose sight of its textual and moral relationship to the Classic. The same could not be said of modern scholars who focus exclusively on the Zuo Tradition as a finely wrought piece of literature,²⁸ with its connection to the *Annals* a peripheral concern.

The current project lies outside of the mid-Qing to modern (18th–20th c.) debate about whether the Zuo Tradition is exegesis or simply a historical and literary narrative. As representatives of the latter camp, Gu Jiegang sought to place Chinese classical texts within the modern disciplines of history, and John C.Y. Wang, within those growing out of the Western liberal arts tradition. Other modern scholars rejected the either/or alternatives, proposing that the narratives of the Zuo Tradition can function as exegetical material that explains Confucius’

Karlgren joined the chorus of modern scholars seeking to overturn Kang Youwei’s imputation that the Zuo Tradition was Liu Xin’s spurious creation. See: Karlgren, *On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan*, 1–59.

²⁵ See Liu Shipei 劉師培 and Zhu Guanhua 朱冠華, *Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan dawen yanjiu* 春秋左氏傳答問研究, 1998; Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan du* 春秋左傳讀; *Chunqiu Zuozhuan xulu*: 春秋左傳敍錄; *Bo Zhen gaohuang ping* 駁箴膏肓評, 1984.

²⁶ The typical format of these works involves the presentation of parallel passages from the “three exegetical traditions” that relate to each *Annals* entry. Splicing the comments of the three traditions together, the compiler usually adds his annotations to clarify the points of comparison and contrast between the passages. A typical example is Fu Lipu 傅隸樸, *Chunqiu Sanzhuan biyi* 春秋三傳比義, 2006. Another comprehensive work is Zhao Youlin 趙友林, *Chunqiu sanzhuang shufa yili yanjiu* 春秋三傳書法義例研究, 2010.

²⁷ The following extant works form the main corpus of such *pingdian* literature: Mu Wenxi’s 穆文熙 (Ming) *Chunqiu Zuozhuan pingyuan* 春秋左傳評苑; Zhong Xing’s 鍾惺 (Ming) *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳; Feng Li Hua’s 馮李驊 (Qing) *Zuo Xiu* 左繡; Wang Yuan’s 王源 (Qing) *Zuozhuan ping* 左傳評; Fang Bao’s 方苞 (Qing) *Zuozhuan yifa* 左傳義法; and Jiang Bingzhang’s 姜炳璋 (Qing) *Du Zuo buyi* 讀左補義.

²⁸ Chief among the scholars who delved into this field of literary appreciation in the Chinese-speaking world: Zhang Gaoping 張高評, Sun Luyi 孫綠怡, Guo Dan 郭丹, Jian Zongwu 簡宗梧, and Pan Wanmu 潘萬木. In the English-speaking world, these are the scholars who have so far written on the literary and rhetorical aspects of the Zuo Tradition: David Schaberg, Li Wai-Yee, Ronald Egan, John C.Y. Wang, Eric Henry, Kidder Smith, and Michael Nylan. The dissertation by Foong Janice Kam, *The Mandate of Heaven (tianming) and the Zuo Commentary*, may also fit into this category of works concerned with rhetorical structures and thematic issues within the Zuo Tradition as a free-standing text. Other authors who wrote in the philological tradition of Chinese textual critics are: Chauncey Goodrich, who wrote “Bow-and-Arrow Gifts in the *Tso chuan*,” 41–9; and C.N. Tay, who wrote “*Kung* (Duke?) in the *Tso-chuan*,” 550–5.

judgments as well.²⁹ Such studies broaden the definition of exegesis to include complex narratives instead of declarative statements only. Unlike the above scholarly projects, the present one does not adopt any of these positions on questions of discipline and genre.

Compared to the aforementioned studies, this study has more in common with modern studies on exegetical and commentarial traditions as cultural, intellectual, and political phenomena of particular historical periods. These studies analyze questions of a work's status and authority *through* the historical perspectives of scholars of the day.³⁰ Scholars engaged in this work are different from those who assembled fragments of exegesis into publishable editions, primarily in the Qing dynasty.³¹ They are also distinguishable from historians of exegetical and commentarial traditions who examine the life and work of the exegete, commentator, or editor, placing them in their general historical and intellectual context.³² Instead, I am interested in questions of hermeneutics—hermeneutical concerns, frameworks, and methods—that undergird the exegetical or commentarial tradition(s) selected for study.³³ Connected to this tradition of scholarship, the present work attempts to expand such inquiries into the Zuo Tradition and its commentarial traditions within the finite bounds of the Western Han to Western Jin period.

²⁹ How this would work is explained in Chang Su-qing 張素卿, *Xushi yu jieshi: Zuozhuan jiejing yanjiu* 敘事與解釋—左傳解經研究, 1997.

³⁰ For the Zuo Tradition, a first example that comes to mind is Stephen Durrant's article "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Conception of *Tso chuan*," 295–301.

³¹ The well-regarded examples of such Qing compilations of annotated commentaries are: Li Yide 李貽德, *Chunqiu Jia Fu zhu jishu* 春秋賈服注輯述, 1999; and Liu Wenqi 劉文淇, *Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan jiu zhu shuzheng* 春秋左氏傳舊注疏證, 2005. The other Qing compilation of commentaries not restricted to those on the Zuo Tradition is, of course, Ma Guohan 馬國翰, *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu* 玉函山房輯佚書, 2006. Based on these compilations, the studies that thematically reorganize and add new annotations to the commentaries in these compilations are: Chen Pan 陳槃, *Zuoshi Chunqiu yili bian* 左氏春秋義例辯, 1947; Cheng Nanzhou 程南州, *Dong Han shidai zhi Chunqiu Zuoshi xue* 東漢時代之春秋左氏學, 1978, and his *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Jia Kui zhu yu Du Yu zhu zhi bijiao yanjiu* 春秋左傳賈逵注與杜預之比較研究, 1982; Ye Zhengxin's 葉政欣 *Du Yu ji qi Chunqiu Zuoshi xue* 杜預及其春秋左氏學, 1989.

³² An example of a work providing the history of commentaries and scholarship on the Zuo Tradition is William Hung, *Combined Indices to the Titles Quoted in the Commentaries on Ch'un-ch'iu, Kung-yang, Ku-liang and Tso-chuan*, 1966. A more extensive work is Shen Yucheng 沈玉成, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan xue shi gao* 春秋左傳學史稿, 1992. A recent offshoot of such a work is Huang Juehong 黃覺弘, *Zuozhuan zaoqi liubian yanjiu* 左傳學早期流變研究, 2010.

³³ We have Steven Van Zoeren for the exegetical traditions of the *Classic of Poetry*; Sarah Queen and Michael Loewe for the *Chunqiu fanlu*; Rudolf Wagner on Wang Bi's commentary for the *Daodejing*; John Makeham for the commentaries on the *Analects*; Joachim Gentz for the Gongyang Tradition; Michael Nylan on commentarial traditions of the *Documents*, on Yang Xiong, and on Han classicism; and John B. Henderson for a comparison of Confucian and Western exegesis and hermeneutics.

Chapter 1

Establishing the Hermeneutic of the *Annals* (Western Han)

Introduction

As conceptions of the *Annals* underwent changes in the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE), exegetical traditions attached to the text were influenced by these conceptual changes. At first, the term “Spring and Autumn,” was broadly applied to a general type of annals used in political education. In Western Han sources, the clear and unanimous attribution of the *Annals* to Confucius changed it to a specific text with precise moral meanings he determined. When the Zuo Tradition first appeared in a Western Han text, the *Shiji*,¹ exegetical traditions had already emerged to explicate the fixed ethical judgments that, as believed, Confucius embedded in the *Annals*. For example, the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions were regarded as exegesis produced in response to the elevation of the annals to a Classic. Therefore, for the Zuo Tradition to be considered as an exegetical tradition as well, its proponents had to fit it into the same hermeneutical framework. In the course of arguing for the Zuo Tradition’s advantages over other existing exegetical traditions, these arguments also modified the basic understanding of the nature of the *Annals*.

In the Western Han, the first mention of the Zuo Tradition appears in the “Table of the Twelve Feudal Lords,” or *Shiji* 14, which asserts that the Zuo Tradition is the authoritative interpretation of Confucius’ teachings.² The idea of the Sage’s authorship is central to differentiating the generic from the proper designation of the term “Spring and Autumn” in the Western Han, when the text began to be associated with Confucius.³ Scholars have long striven to clarify the distinction between the general and particular usages of “Spring and Autumn” as referring to two different kinds of texts.⁴ In these writers’ views, the general term “Spring and Autumn” refers to a larger class of state annals, whereas the specific use of the *Annals* refers to the title of a particular text emerging in conjunction with the myth of Confucius’ compilation of *the* annals of Lu. In other words, the real core significance of the latter conception resides in the text’s relation to Confucius’ production of it. At this juncture, the Zuo Tradition is presented as a

¹ SJ 14.510.

² SJ 14.509–10.

³ That hermeneutic rests on the core notion of Confucius’ personal compilation of the *Annals*, first attested in *Mencius*, *Huainanzi*, *Shiji* 130, and other Western Han sources. Liang Cai tabulates the Han sources that advance or reinforce the claim that Confucius composed the *Annals*. The texts of the Gongyang, Guliang, and Zuo Traditions themselves fail to contain such a claim. See the appendix table in her article: Liang, “Who Said, ‘Confucius Composed the *Chunqiu*,’ “ 382.

⁴ For example, Sarah Queen defines the two sets of features of the text as the “exoteric” versus the “esoteric” versions of the *Annals*. The “exoteric” version refers to the superficial form and contents of the annalistic chronicle, whereas the “esoteric” version was invested with profound significance that required interpretation. It is her view that the “esoteric” reading of the text had its roots “centuries before the Han,” as seen in the philosophical texts from the early fourth to the early second century BCE, and a passage in the *Lushi chunqiu* recounting a scholar pondering over the meaning of the *Annals*. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, 116–8.

work designed to meet the hermeneutical demands that arose with specific accounts about the origins of the *Annals*.

The general and specific “*Annals*” in *Mencius*

We can trace the development from the general and specific senses of the term “*Annals*” by contrasting two passages in the *Mencius* where the term appears. This pair of passages do not reflect the same view of the *Annals*, as they suggest different views of this same designation in the Mencian tradition. *Mencius* 4B.21 quotes Confucius as saying that he interpreted scribal records from various states, including the official Lu annals. In *Mencius* 3B.9, the *Annals* is mentioned as a specific work that Confucius personally compiled. Thus, even though both passages invoke the title *Annals*, they refer to different texts with different statuses.

Confucius as interpreter of historical annals

In *Mencius* 4B.21, Mencius treats the Lu *Annals* as one among other state annals regarded as a substitute for the way of kingship. He attributes the creation of the “*Annals*” to its necessity as a textual substitute for dying traditions inherited from the exemplary kings. The passage below places the *Annals* within a general corpus of scribal records that stood in place of songs, which themselves stood in the place of Sage-kings:

王者之跡熄而詩亡，詩亡然後春秋作。晉之乘，楚之檮杌，魯之春秋，一也。其事則齊桓、晉文，其文則史。孔子曰：其義則丘竊取之矣。⁵

After the traces of the kings vanished, the songs were no longer composed.⁶ When the songs were no longer composed,⁷ then and only then was the *Annals* made.⁸ The *Sheng* of Jin, the *Daowu* of Chu, the *Annals* of Lu are the same kind of work. The events recorded concern Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin,⁹

⁵ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注, 295.

⁶ The Han commentator Zhao Qi (d. 201) says “*wang*” 王 refers to “Sage kings” 聖王, without specifying which specific kings and which period. Jiao Xun (ed) 焦循, *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義, 573. In contrast, Zhu Xi says, “the traces of the kings vanished” refers to the historical event of “the Eastern relocation of King Ping [of Zhou]” 平王東遷, in 770 BCE. Zhu Xi, 8.295.

⁷ Zhao Qi specifies that *shi* 詩 refers to the “Hymns,” (*Song* 頌), while Zhu Xi says they refer to the “Elegantiae” (*Ya* 雅). This difference can be traced back to Zhao’s identification of the “kings” as “Sage kings” and Zhu’s identification of the “kings” as the Western Zhou kings. (See note above). The translation “songs were no longer composed” is borrowed from D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, 92.

⁸ Both Zhao Qi and Zhu Xi identify this *Annals* with the title designating scribal records. Zhao Qi says, “This is the title of the record of the ten thousand affairs” 記萬事之名. Jiao Xun, 574. Zhu Xi further specifies that it is the scribal records of Lu on which Confucius based himself. Zhu Xi, 295.

⁹ Zhao Qi explains that the two dukes were metonyms for the five hegemonies and their political achievements. Jiao Xun, 574. By this definition, the state annals became hagiographic accounts, to a certain extent, of the reigns of the hegemonies.

and their language is that of the scribes.¹⁰ Confucius said, “I have humbly appropriated their principles.”¹¹

Mencius points out the necessary circumstances behind the appearance of the state annals (“*Sheng* of Jin, the *Daowu* of Chu, the *Annals* of Lu”): these texts all arose as a result of the songs having died out, since the songs represented the vestiges of the kings’ influence. Though at two removes, the *Annals* is thus conceived of as the indispensable link to the age of the Sage kings. As presented here, the *Annals* was but one of the state annals,¹² which, from Mencius’ perspective, collectively helped to forestall complete political and cultural disintegration. The possessive pronoun “their” (*qi* 其) refers back to the contents and expressions (the “events,” “language,” and “meaning”) of the general corpus of official state annals. Mencius speaks of them as originating from the same bureaucratic need: to record the deeds of the hegemons (“The events recorded concern Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin”). In this representation, Confucius figures primarily as an interpreter of this pre-existing corpus, rather than of the Lu *Annals* only. He is portrayed as responding to the group of texts, drawing significance from all of them (“I have humbly appropriated their principles”). This conception of the *Annals* as referring to state records—rather than something from the hand of Confucius—lay largely dormant until Du Yu reemphasizes its predominantly scribal and annalistic nature in the Western Jin.

Confucius as compiler of the *Annals*

In *Mencius* 3B.9, the conception of the *Annals* speaks more to the hermeneutic specific to the exegetical traditions built around it since the Han period. Whereas *Mencius* 4B.21, as we saw above, treats the *Annals* as a member of a class, *Mencius* 3B.9 speaks of this work as a specific text privately compiled by Confucius. Whereas the former entry features Confucius’ interpretation of re-existing material, the latter, as we see below, highlights his act of creating a new work:

¹⁰ Zhu Xi defines *shi* 史 as “scribal officers” 史官也. Ibid. Qing commentators judge these scribal records as inferior to the edited version by Confucius, insofar as the presence of special moral meaning is concerned. As Wan Sida 萬斯大 (1633-83) says: “The various scribal records had no significance, but the *Annals* did” 諸史無義，而《春秋》有義. This reading of *shi* as essentially amoral is not clearly implied in the Mencius quotation itself.

¹¹ Zhao Qi explains that Confucius had to adopt a deferential position as he interpreted the meaning of the scribal records, because he was not explicitly commissioned by the ruler to do so: “Confucius was a minister, did not receive the command from the ruler, and privately made it [his version of the *Annals*]. Therefore the passage uses the word ‘humbly,’ for these are the modest words of the Sage” 孔子人臣，不受君命，私作之，故言竊，亦聖人之謙辭. Jiao Xun p. 574. Whereas Zhao Qi does not interpret the word *qu* 取, Zhu interprets it as “make his own judgments about it [the meaning of the scribal records]” 斷之在己. Zhu Xi, 295. The word “appropriated” for *qu* 取 is taken from Lau’s translation. He renders *yi* 義 as “didactic principles.” Lau, *Mencius*, 92.

¹² At this point there seems to be no hard and fast distinctions between “scribal records” and “state annals” throughout the sources looked for the time period under study. I therefore use these terms interchangeably to refer to the *shiji* 史記 stored in state archives.

世衰道微，邪說暴行有作，臣弑其君者有之，子弑其父者有之。孔子懼，作春秋。春秋，天子之事也。是故孔子曰：知我者其惟春秋乎！罪我者其惟春秋乎！¹³

When the world declined and the way fell into obscurity,¹⁴ heretical sayings and violent deeds arose. There were in fact ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and sons who murdered their fathers. Trembling,¹⁵ Confucius made the *Annals*.¹⁶ Since this was the prerogative of the Son of Heaven,¹⁷ Confucius said, “Those who understand me will do so through the *Annals*, while those who condemn me will also do so because of the *Annals*.”¹⁸

Here, the text *Annals* serves as a compilation of judgments specifically applied by Confucius (as virtual stand-in for the Son of Heaven) to insubordinate or wicked subjects. *Mencius* 4B.21 depicts the scribal records, including the Lu *Annals*, as a substitute of the *Odes*, themselves a substitute for lost vestiges of the former kings. But in this case, it was not so much the disappearance of the royal legacy, but the breakdown in political and moral order that compelled Confucius to compose his own *Annals*.¹⁹ The specific hermeneutic of the *Annals* takes shape in

¹³ Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 6.272.

¹⁴ Again, Zhao Qi points to a more general period of decline than Zhu Xi. Zhao simply says this was the “period of the Zhou’s decline” 周衰之時, whereas Zhu specifies the period to have begun in the Eastern Zhou (*ci Zhou shi dongqian zhihou* 此周室東遷之後). Jiao Xun, 452.

¹⁵ As with his commentary for *Mencius* 3B.9 earlier, Zhao Qi takes the overall disappearance of the kingly way (*Kongzi ju wangdao sui mie* 孔子懼王道遂滅) to be the focal point of Confucius’ understanding. *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Here Zhao Qi interpolates that Confucius wrote the *Annals* by adhering to the Lu scribal records (*yin Lu shiji* 因魯史記), the ones first mentioned in *Mencius* 4B.21. In this immediate passage of *Mencius* 3B.9, there is no mention of the basis upon which Confucius made his work, but Zhao Qi fills in this fuller account of the Confucius’ process, an account solidified from the Western to Eastern Han, as addressed in subsequent chapters. *Ibid*.

¹⁷ Both Zhao Qi and Zhu Xi are in agreement about “the concern of the Son of Heaven” as the creation of permanent regulations, as Zhao says that Confucius “established the regulations of the unseptrred king” 設素王之法 and Zhu says he “left behind the regulations of ultimate rulership in the myriad affairs” 致治之法垂於萬事. Jiao Xun, 452 and Zhu Xi, 272.

¹⁸ Translation adapted from D.C. Lau, *Mencius*, 72. Zhao Qi identifies those who “condemn” Confucius as the contemporaries who saw themselves in his criticisms (*wei shiren jian tanbian zhe* 謂時人見彈貶者), for they resented Confucius’ disapproval of their crimes and guilty consciences. Taking a different tack, Master Hu (as cited by Zhu Xi) attributes the condemnation to those concerned about the proper roles of ruler and subject, and hence would take issue with Confucius arrogating himself the Son of Heaven’s prerogative. *Ibid*.

¹⁹ However, it must be noted that, in the context of the rest of *Mencius*’s argument in 3B.9, he was not out to make a statement about the authorship of the *Annals*. He speaks of Confucius “making the *Annals*” as if it were a widely accepted fact, only to move on to press another more important point. Throughout *Mencius* 3B.9, *Mencius*’s main rhetorical purpose is decidedly not to establish the authorship of *Annals*, but to establish himself as the world’s savior whose disputatiousness should be understood as an integral aspect of his mission: “Gongduzi says: ‘Outsiders all say that you are fond of disputing, may I venture to ask why?’ *Mencius* replied: ‘Can it be said I am really fond of it? No, I simply cannot do otherwise.’” Whether Confucius truly penned the *Annals*, and whether it was for the purpose of pacifying the rebellious ministers and sons or not, is beside the point for *Mencius*. By the time he touches on Confucius, he is only raising one more example in a long list of Sagely world saviors in which *Mencius* was placing himself. The references to Confucius’ relation to the *Annals* appear, by *Mencius*’s time, to be traditional assumptions. In the vast majority of secondary scholarship, this passage has been quoted as the *locus classicus* for Confucius’ authorship of the *Annals*, in isolation of *Mencius*’ larger argument.

Mencius's characterization of Confucius as a judge of the highest authority; far from being an interpreter only, he assumed the privilege of the Zhou king ("prerogative of the Son of Heaven") to become the ultimate legislator of morality.

The depiction of historical decline, beginning with the Spring and Autumn period, also differs in both entries, such that Confucius emerges more strongly as an authoritative figure in *Mencius* 3B.9. The decline depicted here consists of visible symptoms, such as the "heretical sayings and violent deeds" of murderous ministers and sons, rather than general indications of decline in *Mencius* 4B.21. According to the *Mencius* 3B.9, Confucius made the *Annals* as a form of active response to violent behavior. This key difference elevates Confucius' work to one endowed with much higher moral and political significance than the *Annals* that belonged to the corpus of state annals.

Mencius 3B.9 also gives Confucius' composition of the *Annals* a more emotional tenor. The driving force behind his authorship was a deeply personal one: he was "trembling" with trepidation as he "made the *Annals*," fearful he would be criticized. This detail reveals the nature of his trepidation on two counts: on the one hand, he was anxious about the malicious developments of his age; on the other hand, he was excruciatingly aware of the way he would be judged by others after him. His final exclamation—"I may be understood! . . . I may be condemned!"—proclaims his hyper-awareness of others' assessment of his self-appointed role as a judge. With Confucius bordering on desperation, this moment of intensity calls out for exegetes to uncover something not only ethically-laden, but also emotionally charged, under the surface of the language. Exegetical traditions of the text would later lay claim to their sensitivity to Confucius' personal visions and sentiments as a hermeneutical achievement.

Taken together, *Mencius* 4B.21 and 3B.9 suggest the duality of Confucius' role. In the first instance, Confucius is an interpreter of the meaning in pre-existing scribal records; in the second instance, he is the creator of meaning who leaves himself open to others' interpretation of him. As featured in *Mencius* 3B.9, Confucius was sensitive to others' interpretation of his arrogation of authority but not his particular linguistic utterances. Nevertheless, here lay the foundations of the hermeneutic applied to the interpretation of the *Annals*, shaping the scholarly discourse over which exegetical traditions could be deemed authoritative in the Han to Jin period. This hermeneutic relies more heavily on the conception of Confucius as author in *Mencius* 3B.9, as compared with the conception of the Sage as the reader/interpreter of pre-existing texts in 4B.21. The conception of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition thus depends on claims that it could discover the Sage's authoritative pronouncements.

Textual embedment in *Shiji* 130

Sima Qian's autobiographical postface (*Shiji* 130) contains a lengthy elaboration of the ideas, roughly sketched out in *Mencius* 3B.9, about Confucius' compilation of the *Annals*.²⁰ The Mencian passages may have the powers of suggestion, but it is *Shiji* 130 that draws from the ill-

²⁰ This section continues to explore the changes and refinement of the conception of the *Annals*, as exemplified by *Shiji* 130. In this particular chapter, the Zuo Tradition is not mentioned, while a person named Zuo Qiu is given as the author of the *Guoyu*: "Zuo Qiu lost his sight, and there was the *Guoyu*." 左丘失明，厥有國語. SJ 130.3300. For a discussion of the relationship between the attributions of the *Guoyu* and the Zuo Tradition, see Durrant, "Ssuma Ch'ien's Conception," 300–1.

defined concepts in *Mencius* 4B.21 and 3B.9 a fuller picture of the relation between the Sage and the *Annals*. Other than positioning Confucius as a judge with greater authority than the Son of Heaven, Mencius does not further elaborate.²¹ Sima Qian delves further in clarifying the guiding principles behind the *Spring Autumn*, introducing new key terms that were to be established in later Spring and Autumn exegesis. In the portion of *Shiji* 130 below, Sima Qian gives an extensive reply to his interlocutor's question about Confucius' intentions in creating the *Annals*:²²

上大夫壺遂曰：「昔孔子何為而作春秋哉？」太史公曰：「余聞董生曰：『周道衰廢，孔子為魯司寇，諸侯害之，大夫壅之。孔子知言之不用，道之不行也，是非二百四十二年之中，以為天下儀表，貶天子，退諸侯，討大夫，以達王事而已矣。子曰：「我欲載之空言，不如見之於行事之深切著明也。」』」

Senior Counsellor Hu Sui said,²³ “For what purpose did Confucius in the past make the *Annals*?”²⁴ The Grand Historian replied, “I have heard Dong Sheng say,²⁵ ‘The way of the Zhou declined and fell into disuse. Confucius was the Chief Minister of Justice of Lu, the vassal lords persecuted him, and the ministers blocked him. Confucius knew that his words were not put into effect and the way was not practiced. Thereupon he used these judgments of right and wrong within the two hundred and forty-two years²⁶ to form the standard for rules and ceremonies for all under heaven,²⁷ to criticize the Son of Heaven,²⁸ drive back the vassal lords, denounce the ministers, and by doing so bring the affairs of

²¹ Two other sources, the *Chunqiu fanlu* and the *Huainanzi*, also underline the prosecutorial powers Confucius exercised to place society back the ideal way of government. But these sources likewise failed to address the finer operations of his text. The passages from these sources, *Chunqiu fanlu* 4.109 and *Huainanzi* 9.313, will be quoted later (see n. 31 and 36). As noted earlier, Liang Cai observed the increasingly pronounced trend in which Western Han texts began to refer to Confucius as the author of the *Annals*, especially around the time the *Shiji* was being compiled. The texts that “eulogize Confucius as the writer of the *Chunqiu*” include the *Huainanzi*, *Chunqiu fanlu*, *Yantie lun*, *Kongcongzi*, and *Shuoyuan*. Cai, 372.

²² The following translation was done in consultation with Burton Watson, *Ssu-Ma Ch'ien*, 50–3.

²³ Official title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 761. Hui Sui was one ordered, along with Sima Qian, to advise on the adjustment of the calendar, introduced with effect in 104 BCE. Loewe, 161.

²⁴ Both Debary and Watson translate *zuo* 作 as “make.” Debary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 370. Watson, *Ssu-Ma Ch'ien*, 50.

²⁵ According to Loewe, “Dong Sheng is cited in the *Shiji* (SJ 86) as an informant who knew the circumstances of Jing Ke's” attempted assassination of the king of Qin. Loewe adds, “There is no evidence to prove that he is to be identified with Dong Zhongshu.” Loewe, 67. It is also unclear that the Dong Sheng of this description could be the same person as the one cited here in SJ 130, unless when Sima Qian says “I have heard,” he means “I have read.”

²⁶ The *Shiji Suoyin* specifies that the *shifei* 是非 specifically refers to the “praise and blame of vassal lords' successes and failures” 褒貶諸侯之得失. Takigawa, *Shiji huizhu kaozheng*, 2067.

²⁷ This translation for *yibiao* 儀表 is adopted from Watson, 51.

²⁸ Significantly, the *Hanshu* version of this passage does not contain the characters “criticize the Son of Heaven” 貶天子, leaving the passage to read “degrade the vassal lords” 貶諸侯 only. Takigawa, 2067. The idea of Confucius criticizing or blaming the Son of Heaven may have been excised because it was too subversive or indecorous for Ban Gu the compiler of the *Hanshu* to include it.

kingly governance to completion.²⁹ The Master said, “Had I wished to convey these [judgments] through empty pronouncements,³⁰ that would not have been as good as illustrating them through the profundity and incisiveness of deeds and events.”³¹

The passage above opens with the question of Confucius’ authorship of the *Annals*. Confucius’ reply centers on the efficacy of offering his judgments within historical events rather than expressing them plainly.

夫春秋，上明三王之道，下辨人事之紀，別嫌疑，明是非，定猶豫，善善惡惡，賢賢賤不肖，存亡國，繼絕世，補敝起廢，王道之大者也。...春秋辯是非，故長於治人。是故...春秋以道義。撥亂世反之正，莫近於春秋。春秋文成數萬，其指數千。萬物之散聚皆在春秋。春秋之中，弑君三十六，亡國五十二，諸侯奔走不得保其社稷者不可勝數，察其所以，皆失其本已。故易曰：『失之豪釐，差以千里』。故曰：『臣弑君，子弑父，非一旦一夕之故也，其漸久矣。』

As for the *Annals*, above, it manifests the way of the Three Kings, and below, it distinguishes the principles of human affairs. It resolves doubt and suspicions, clarifies right from wrong, and settles uncertainties. It endorses good and repels evil, honors the worthy and demotes the unfilial. It preserves the states [on the verge] of extinction and restores the families with their lineages cut off. It repairs what was damaged and revives what was abandoned. It is a great manifestation of

²⁹ The *Suoyin* commentators define the “kingly affairs” as “supporting the ruler, suppressing the ministers, and maintaining distinctions between superiors and inferiors” 扶君抑臣，明上下之分。Ibid.

³⁰ The commentators of *Suoyin* took *kongyan* 空言 to mean what Confucius might have written had he “emptily established his writings” 空立此文。Ibid. In all the citations of Confucius’ *kongyan* 空言 in the *Suoyin* commentary to this *Shiji* passage, in the *Chunqiu fanlu*, and in Zhao Qi’s annotation to *Mencius*, the term is both interpreted as referring to “praise and blame” 褒貶是非, or summary judgments and pronouncements, and used as a foil to the historical “deeds and events” 行事 through which Confucius embodies his judgments. Takigawa, 2067. Watson also translates the term as “theoretical judgments.” Watson, 51.

³¹ One of the commentators cited by Takigawa determines that Confucius’ quote should be embedded within Sima Qian’s quotation of Dong and that Dong’s quoted speech ends here. Takigawa, 2067. The chapter “Yu’s Preface” 俞序 chapter of the *Chunqiu fanlu* contains a close paraphrase of this section of *Shiji* 130: “As for Confucius’ composition of the *Annals*, he explored the rectification of the positions of heaven-appointed kings and dukes above and the wishes of the ten thousand people, clarified successes and failures below, recommended the worthy and talented, and awaited latter-day Sages. Therefore he drew from the scribal records, organized past events, rectified right and wrong, and presented kings and lords. The scribal records of the twelve dukes contained the events of an age of decline, whereupon his disciples were confused. Confucius said, ‘I follow upon with the deeds and events [in the scribal records], adding to them with the mind of a king. I consider manifesting them with empty pronouncements to be unequal to doing so with the comprehensiveness, incisiveness, and clarity of deeds and events.’” 仲尼之作《春秋》也，上探正天端王公之位，萬民之所欲，下明得失，起賢才，以待後聖，故引史記，理往事，正是非，見王公，史記十二公之間，皆衰世之事，故門人惑，孔子曰：吾因其行事，而加乎王心焉，以為見之空言，不如行事博深切明。Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, 6.158–9.

the way of kingship.³² . . . The *Annals* distinguishes right from wrong, therefore it is strongest with regard to governing people.³³ . . . For this reason . . . the *Annals* is used for expressing duty.³⁴ For rectifying a rebellious age and returning it to correct standards, there is no readier means than the *Annals*. The words of the *Annals* reach ten thousand, and its tenets reach several thousands.³⁵ The dispersal and gathering of the ten thousand affairs are all in the *Annals*. The *Annals* records 36 regicides and 52 fallen kingdoms.³⁶ Countless were the vassal lords who fled and failed to protect their altars of soil and grain. Upon investigating why this is so, it is all due to their losing their root. Therefore the *Changes* says: ‘The error of a millimeter will lead to a difference of a thousand miles.’³⁷ Therefore it is said, ‘When ministers murder their rulers, and sons murder their fathers, these are not the results of a single morning or evening but something that has gradually developed over a long period.’³⁸

The passage above connects the *Annals* to matters of governance, especially those related to the maintenance of ritual relations. The *Annals* provides lessons for ministers and sons on how to fulfill their ritual duties as appropriate to their stations.

故有國者不可以不知春秋，前有讒而弗見，後有賊而不知。為人臣者不可以不知春秋，守經事而不知其宜，遭變事而不知其權。為人君父而不通於春秋之義者，必蒙首惡之名。為人臣子而不通於春秋之義者，必陷篡弑之誅，死罪之名。其實皆以為善，為之不知其義，被之空言而不敢辭。

³² Cf. the chapter “The Kingly Way” 王道 of *Chunqiu fanlu*: “The *Annals* highlights strange anomalies, using them to manifest the omens of disorder. Confucius clarified successes and failures, distinguished the honorable from the lowly, and returned to the root of the kingly way. He ridiculed the Son of Heaven for using them [extorting bribes from the feudal states] to establish universal peace. He criticized evil and examined the subtle, neglecting nothing no matter how large or small. There was no good too minor for him to not commend and no evil too insignificant for him to not condemn. He rewarded good and punished evil, cut off evil at their root, and that was all” 春秋異之，以此見悖亂之徵。孔子明得失，差貴賤，反王道之本。譏天王以致太平。刺惡譏微，不遺小大，善無細而不舉，惡無細而不去，進善誅惡，絕諸本而已矣。Ibid 4.109.

³³ Translation of this line adapted from Durrant, *Cloudy Mirror*, 63.

³⁴ Takigawa glosses *dao* 道 as *yan* 言. Takigawa, 2067. Watson takes *yi* 義 as what is “right” in this instance. Watson, 51. In light of the importance given to fulfilling one’s ritual role further down the passage, I have chosen “duty” as a related translation of what is right and proper.

³⁵ Commentators disagree as to whether *shuwan* 數萬 means “tens of thousands” and *shuqian* 數千 means “thousands,” with *shu* 數 taken as “multiple, numerous,” or “come up to,” “counted to,” or “calculated to be.” My translation reflects the more conservative estimate of “ten thousand” words for the *Annals*, which according to *Suoyin* commentators, contain ten thousand and eight thousand characters during their time. Takigawa, 2067.

³⁶ Cf. the chapter “The Principles of the Art of Rulership” 主術訓 of *Huainanzi* 9.313: “In the *Annals*, there were 52 extinguished states and 36 regicides. It commends good and uproots evil to complete the king way. Its discussions are broad indeed. . . [Confucius] was the Minister of Justice of Lu. Presiding over cases, he never failed to pronounce his judgments. He composed the *Annals*, never spoke about ghosts and spirits, nor presumed to rely on his own opinions” 春秋二百四十二年，亡國五十二，弑君三十六，采善鉅醜，以成王道，論亦博矣。 . . . 為魯司寇，聽獄必為斷，作為春秋，不道鬼神，不敢專己。Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie*, 9.313.

³⁷ The translation of this quote is indebted to Watson, 52.

³⁸ Neither quotation could be found in the extant *Changes*.

Therefore rulers cannot [afford to] not understand the *Annals*. [Otherwise,] there would be slanders behind their backs, and they will be unaware of them. Ministers cannot [afford to] not understand the *Annals*. [Otherwise,] they would not understand what is proper while carrying out their normal duties, nor would they know what provisional strategies [should be taken] when encountering contingencies. Those who act as rulers and fathers of others, yet fail to comprehend the duties [laid out] in the *Annals*,³⁹ will certainly have the reputation for being the greatest evil. Those who serve as ministers and sons of others, yet fail to comprehend the duties [laid out] in the *Annals*, will certainly be entrapped in punishment for usurpation and regicide and the reputation for capital crime. In actuality,⁴⁰ they may all think they are doing good, yet they do so without knowing their duties. When they are incriminated with empty pronouncements,⁴¹ they will not dare to reject them.⁴²

This section above reveals the importance for rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, to understand the *Annals*, as it spells out the duties they ought to carry out. As characterized here, the *Annals* is an indispensable aid for those who would recognize their proper roles. Their failure to fulfill these roles subjects them to the judgments contained in the text.

夫不通禮義之旨，至於君不君，臣不臣，父不父，子不子。夫君不君則犯，臣不臣則誅，父不父則無道，子不子則不孝。此四行者，天下之大過也。以天下之大過予之，則受而弗敢辭。故春秋者，禮義之大宗也。夫禮禁未然之前，法施已然之後；法之所為用者易見，而禮之所為禁者難知。」

Failure to understand the meanings of ritual and duty leads rulers to not fulfill their roles as rulers,⁴³ ministers as ministers, fathers as fathers, and sons as sons. Rulers who do not serve as rulers violate [ritual propriety],⁴⁴ ministers who do not serve as ministers are punished, fathers who do not father are [deemed] deprived, and sons who do not behave as sons are [deemed] unfilial. These four kinds of conduct are the gravest faults of all under heaven. Subjected to the gravest accusations of all under heaven, they will accept without daring to reject them. Therefore the *Annals* is the fountainhead of ritual and duty. The rites restrain that which has not yet become so. Laws are applied to what has already become so.⁴⁵

³⁹ In this instance, both Watson and Durrant render *yi* 義 as “principles.” Ibid. Durrant, 64.

⁴⁰ These are Durrant’s words. Ibid.

⁴¹ Here Watson translates *kongyan* 空言 as “moral judgments.” Watson, 52. My translation modifies this to reflect the sense of judgments that need substantiation through deeds and events.

⁴² Durrant renders this sentence as “If you cover them with theoretical words (i.e., judgments), they will not dare speak out.” Durrant, 64.

⁴³ This translation of *liyi* 禮義 is owed to Michael Nylan’s comment on my draft, Watson, 52, and Durrant, 64.

⁴⁴ The *Suoyin* supplies *liyi* 禮義 as the object of “violate” 犯. Takigawa, 2068. Durrant translates this character as “offenses.” Durrant, 64.

⁴⁵ I follow Watson’s translation of the character *li* 禮 by itself as “rites” here.

That which is applied by the laws is easy to discern; but that which is restrained by the rites is difficult to know.”

Above, Sima Qian depicts the *Annals* as the most important guide to behavior. At the same time, he recognizes the difficulty of learning the codes of ritual propriety before one violates them. By contrast, the laws are visible because they are applied when the violations have already occurred for all to see.

壺遂曰：「孔子之時，上無明君，下不得任用，故作春秋，垂空文以斷禮義，當一王之法。……」⁴⁶

Hu Sui said, “During the time of Confucius, there were no bright rulers above and he was not gainfully employed below. Therefore he made the *Annals*, leaving behind empty writings for determining ritual and duty and to serve as the laws for a king. . . .”⁴⁷

The reply of Sima Qian’s interlocutor above invokes the term “empty writings” as a description of the *Annals*. This usage raises the question of whether “empty writings” is distinguishable from the “empty pronouncements” (*kongyan* 空言) that Confucius said he lodged in “deeds and events.” In either case, the claim here seems to be that because rulers could not readily identify the codes of behavior to follow, Confucius made the *Annals* to help them along.

Confucius’ textualized judgments

The above excerpt from *Shiji* 130 begins by directly probing Confucius’ motivations for composing the *Annals*. The response centers on Confucius’ desire to use his text as a substitute for his verbal judgments. According to the explanation of Dong Sheng cited by Sima Qian, Confucius was compelled to write the *Annals* only after rulers of his time ignored his verbal judgments and criticisms (“his words were not put into effect”). Confucius’ motivations sprang from his desire to express his moral evaluations (“judgments of right and wrong”) textually instead of orally. The expression “within the two hundred and forty-two years” is a metonym for the text spanning this period of time. In contradistinction to his oral advice, this text was something he hoped could enact his political will (“to form the standard for rules and ceremonies for all under heaven, to criticize the Son of Heaven, to drive back the vassal lords, denounce the ministers, and by doing so bring the affairs of kingly governance to completion.”).

The conversion of Confucius’ thought from the oral to textual form has other far-reaching implications. The text itself becomes a hermeneutical tool for readers to form judgments: The *Annals* supposedly “clarifies right from wrong” and “distinguishes right from wrong.” It appears

⁴⁶ SJ 130.3297–8.

⁴⁷ As with *kongyan* 空言, Watson translates *kongwen* 空文 as “theoretical judgments.” Watson, 53. Cf. “theoretical words” in Durrant, 11. Since the term appears after the reference to the *Annals* as a text Confucius made, the translation “writings” hopefully captures the textual sense of the word. Watson translates *fa* 法 as “model,” while I takes it as “laws,” in keeping with the sense of “judgments” or “pronouncements” provided in Confucius’ work. Durrant also uses “law” (11).

that Sima Qian does not technically state that Confucius makes the distinctions, but that the *Annals* does. In other words, the text requires the reader to first decipher Confucius' judgments, then to apply his standards for judging other people and events the reader encounters. The fact that Confucius included judgments into the text, instead of pronouncing them, necessitates this hermeneutical process as a precondition for both understanding and extrapolating meaning from the text.

Sima Qian also gives prominence to the embeddedness of Confucius' thought in the *Annals*. Sima quotes Confucius as proclaiming that he was expressly disinterested in delivering judgments only, for he thought they were not as effective as using historical processes to reveal his notions about justice: "The Master said, 'Had I wished to convey these [judgments] through empty pronouncements (空言), that would not have been as good as illustrating them through the profundity and incisiveness of deeds and events (行事).' " By making implicit comments, he claims he would end up illuminating more clearly (with "profundity and incisiveness") than he could with explicit verdicts. In order for Confucius' idea to work, he would have to rely on an interpreter to extract his message from the maze of records. As presented here, this process requires a leap of confidence that future readers could adequately construe Confucius' thought from the details of his chronicle. Confucius' literary and rhetorical choices are thus predicated upon his confidence that one can infer these implicit judgments from his *Annals*. These implications become part and parcel of Sima Qian's conception of the *Annals*.

The *Annals* as embedded standards

Further on in *Shiji* 130, Sima Qian focuses on the nature and function of the *Annals* instead. In Sima Qian's formulation, the *Annals* is not a book of answers, but the means and processes by which rulers in power could govern their states, enforce ritual relations, and protect their posthumous reputations. Several times, Sima Qian invokes the term *yi* 義, which is of indeterminate denotation and carries different connotations. When he states that "the *Annals* is used for expressing duty," it points to the process and reasons, namely role violations, by which political and ritual disorder developed. Thereupon, the practical function of the text rests on its ability to reorder government and society ("for rectifying a rebellious age and returning it to correct standards"). One recognizes this function best by first understanding the incremental process by which the political world and ritual relations fell apart in the first place. This passage highlights the necessity to inquire into the origins and reasons ("why this is so") for longstanding political decline ("something that has gradually developed over a long period"). Sima Qian depicts this developmental process with a well-worn metaphor: divergence from the root by a miniscule distance ("millimeter") eventually leads to an enormous difference (of "a thousand miles"). He suggests that the *Annals* does not simply chronicle the facts that would demonstrate widespread political and ritual disintegration ("36 regicides and 52 fallen kingdoms"; "vassal lords who fled and failed to protect their altars of soil and grain") Rather, the text conveys the centrality of fulfilling duties associated with one's role in the preservation of the family state. In short, this type of significance requires interpretation not of the political phenomena themselves, but of the historical processes shaping such phenomena.

Specifically, Sima Qian obliges those who wield power to understand the logic governing *how* judgments are made. He articulates the obligations of "duty" (*yi* 義) as the rules, principles, and processes by which the text establishes a person's moral reputation. In this sense, the *yi* does

not only concern the implications of a person's act, but also the ways through which his reputation comes into being. As Sima Qian posits, those who occupy the positions of authority ("rulers and fathers") will inevitably receive a damaging reputation ("have the reputation for being the greatest evil"), due both to the particular acts they had committed and to their ignorance of *how* the text formulates and applies judgments on them.

Likewise, insubordinate subjects ("ministers and sons") who refuse to acknowledge this set of rules governing their behavior ("fail to comprehend the duties [laid out] in the *Annals*") will suffer the consequences of having their reputations marred in the *Annals*, regardless of their personal judgments (even if "they may all think they are doing good"). This passage advances the idea that having different varying sets of standards is inadmissible, since the *Annals* set universal standards of duty. The claim that everyone would submit to Confucius' authority ("dare not reject" his verdicts) means that the readers would accept not only Confucius' particular judgments, but also his standards for determining guilt or innocence. This idea demands that readers look beyond Confucius' specific judgments to discern generalizable standards instead.

The next segments of *Shiji* 130, however, do acknowledge the limits of understanding, despite Confucius' implied confidence that general standards of behavior will be discernible in the literary medium he chose. Sima Qian addresses the issue of understanding the paradigmatic "ritual and duty" (*liyi* 禮義) that determine the various instances of meaning in the *Annals*. The problem he depicts is that patriarchs and subordinates flouted the unspoken role distinctions and fulfillment (the "four kinds of conduct"). Sima Qian traces this problem back to a situation before actual deeds violated the rules of restraint and control ("The rites restrain that which has not yet become so"). He defines the *Annals* as the source containing principles of correct ritual action ("the fountainhead of ritual and duty"), so consequently, ignoring the text is tantamount to disregarding rules for proper behavior.

However, the passage does acknowledge that what has not happened is not evident ("That which is applied by the laws is easy to discern; but that which is restrained by the rites is difficult to know"). This difficulty of knowing the future is addressed when Hu Sui, Sima Qian's interlocutor, states that Confucius made the *Annals* with an eye toward creating models for proper behavior. As it appears here, the term "empty writings" 空文 points to the text of the *Annals* as such a guide: Confucius was "leaving behind empty writings for determining ritual and duty" 垂空文以斷禮義. Hu Sui's statement speaks of the *Annals* as an "empty" text, strangely contradicting what Confucius is quoted earlier as saying he did not want to make. As we will recall, in an earlier instance, Confucius characterizes his work as consisting of actual records ("deeds and events" 行事), a more substantive vehicle for his lessons, as opposed to his "empty pronouncements" 空言. Yet here, Hu Sui interestingly recalls ideas about emptiness again as he refers to the text which, according to Confucius, has supposedly filled in the details that would substantiate his otherwise "empty" (perhaps unsubstantiated) judgments. Hu Sui's term for the *Annals* demonstrates that issues of interpretation never go away, for it seems that the text will always be perceived as missing clarity, or even substance, in an important way, without the aid of interpretation. The need to bridge the lessons and facts thus lies at the center of the specific hermeneutic of the *Annals*.

As demonstrated above, the conception of the *Annals* in the *Shiji* 130 is far more complex and nuanced than the conceptions in *Mencius*. Whereas *Mencius* constructs the image of

Confucius as a political savior who became the arbiter of good and evil in the world, *Shiji* 130 pushes the implications of converting his judgments from the verbal to textual forms. Sima Qian demands that the reader/interpreter examine not only the details recorded in the text alone, but also the processes linking those details together into a larger picture. Explaining Confucius' choice of the written medium, Sima Qian voices Confucius' belief that the concreteness of the *Annals* serves to support the validity of his judgments. *Shiji* 130 also implies that the textual conversion makes it incumbent on the reader to understand the text not only as a series of fixed ideas, but also as wider processes of signification. While acknowledging the difficulties of reading the text in this way, Sima Qian nevertheless emphasizes the preventive measures regarding intentions and behaviors. In all these ways, the *Shiji* 130 either prepares or reflects the foundations for validating exegetical traditions, as shown in Sima Qian's conception of the *Annals*.

The Zuo Tradition as stand-in for Confucius in *Shiji* 14

The *Shiji* "Table for the Twelve Vassal lords" (*Shiji* 14), hereafter 14 for short, places the Zuo Tradition within the hermeneutic of the *Annals* established in *Mencius* 3B.9 and *Shiji* 130. Building on the elements from previous sources, the 14 presents the Zuo Tradition as faithful preservation of Confucius' visions, as it inhibits the decay and divergence of his messages. The 14 is also the earliest extant source to feature the figure of Zuo Qiuming as the author of the Zuo Tradition. Below are the introductory remarks to *Shiji* 14:

太史公讀春秋曆譜牒，至周厲王，未嘗不廢書而歎也。曰：嗚呼，師摯見之矣！紂為象箸而箕子唏。周道缺，詩人本之衽席，關雎作。仁義陵遲，鹿鳴刺焉。及至厲王，以惡聞其過，公卿懼誅而禍作，厲王遂奔于彘，亂自京師始，而共和行政焉。

Whenever the Grand Historian read the chronologies and genealogies of the Spring and Autumn [period],⁴⁸ and came to [the accounts of the] King Li of Zhou, he always invariably put aside the book and sighed, saying, "Alas, Master Zhi saw this coming [in the deterioration of musical styles]!"⁴⁹ When Zhou made ivory chopsticks, Jizi wept. As the way of Zhou suffered damage, the poets traced its cause to husband-and-wife relations [i.e. palace affairs] and composed the "Guanju."⁵⁰ When humanity and propriety were in decline, the "Luming" criticized [this] in it. When it came to King Li, because he disliked hearing his

⁴⁸ The *Suoyin* points out that "From ancient times, the students of *Annals* had theories on the annalistic chronologies and genealogies." 自古為春秋學者，有年曆、譜牒之說。Takigawa, 351. Grant Hardy inserted the phrase in brackets. Hardy, "The Interpretive Function of *Shih chi* 14," 20.

⁴⁹ According to Zheng Xuan, cited in the *Jijie*, Master Zhi is a music master in the Lu who, upon the Zhou decline, rearranged the music of Zheng and Wei "to set straight the sounds of the disorderly age" 首理其亂也。Takigawa, 351.

⁵⁰ As inserted here, the clarification "palace affairs" comes from Hardy's translation. Hardy, "Interpretive Function," 20.

[own] shortcomings, his ministers feared punishment [and so kept quiet], and disaster ensued. King Li thereupon fled to Zhi. Chaos began at the capital and the “Gonghe” [841–828 BCE] regents ran the government.⁵¹

The passage above demonstrates, in broad strokes, the circumstances of decline that prompted the writings critical of the last rulers of the Shang and Western Zhou periods. This background serves to later highlight the similar circumstances out of which the *Annals* emerged and the role it played to rectify the decline:

是後或力政，彊乘弱，興師不請天子。然挾王室之義，以討伐為會盟主，政由五伯，諸侯恣行，淫侈不軌，賊臣篡子滋起矣。齊、晉、秦、楚其在成周微甚，封或百里或五十里。晉阻三河，齊負東海，楚介江淮，秦因雍州之固，四國迭興，更為伯主，文武所褒大封，皆威而服焉。

Thereafter, some [of the vassal lords] ruled by strength, the strong dominated the weak, and troops were raised without requesting permission from the Son of Heaven. That being so, they took over the prerogatives of the royal house, and with punitive attacks, became the leaders of diplomatic meetings and summits. It was the rulership of the Five Hegemons. The vassal lords behaved wantonly, and their excesses and ostentations were without restraint.⁵² Rebellious ministers and usurping sons grew legion. Qi, Jin, Qin, and Chu—their existence in the Cheng-Zhou period [i.e. when Duke of Zhou built the Luo city] was small to the extreme.⁵³ Among the enfeoffments, some were a hundred *li*, others were fifty *li*. Jin was cut off by the three rivers. Qi was backed up against the eastern sea. Chu bordered the Jiang and Huai rivers.⁵⁴ Qin leaned against the strong defense of Yongzhou. These four states flourished in turn, and alternated as the leader of the hegemons. The [once] great enfeoffments that Wen and Wu praised all feared and submitted to them.

According to Sima Qian above, rule by might is one manifestation of decline in the Spring and Autumn period, which is the particular background shaping Confucius’ composition of the *Annals*.

是以孔子明王道，干七十餘君，莫能用，故西觀周室，論史記舊聞，興於魯而次春秋，上記隱，下至哀之獲麟，約其辭文，去其煩重，以制義法，王道備，人事浹。七十子之徒口受其傳指，為有所刺譏褒諱挹損之文辭，不可以

⁵¹ This sentence is adapted from the Hardy’s translation. Ibid.

⁵² The phrase “were without restraint” are Hardy’s words. Ibid.

⁵³ Takigawa identifies the Cheng-Zhou 成周 period as “the flourishing times of the Zhou dynasty” 蓋言周盛時. Takigawa, 352.

⁵⁴ *Suoyin* glossed *jie* 介 as “taking the rivers as its border” 以江淮為界 whereas other commentators cited by Takigawa glossed it as “to rely upon the Yangzi and Huai rivers as its defense” 恃江淮之險也. Ibid.

書見也。魯君子左丘明懼弟子人人異端，各安其意，失其真，故因孔子史記具論其語，成左氏春秋。

For this reason, Confucius illumined the way of the kings. He asked for employment from seventy-odd rulers, but none of them placed him in service. Therefore, he looked west to the ruling house of the Zhou, arrayed the scribal records and old traditions,⁵⁵ and beginning in Lu, arranged the *Annals*. It recorded [events] as far back as those in the reign of Duke Yin, down to the capture of the unicorn in the reign of Duke Ai. He condensed their phrases and words,⁵⁶ removed what was unwieldy and duplicative. By doing so, he instituted principles and methods,⁵⁷ [such that] the way of the kings was complete, and human affairs were embraced in it.⁵⁸ The seventy disciples orally taught his transmitted tenets.⁵⁹ Because they contained words or phrases that criticized, rebuked, praised, tabooed, and belittled, they could not be presented in writing. A gentleman of Lu, Zuo Qiuming, was afraid that the disciples each had divergent ideas [about the meaning of the *Annals*], would be satisfied with his own conceptions, and lose the true meaning [of Confucius' messages].⁶⁰ Therefore he

⁵⁵ The Takigawa commentary does not include any glosses for *lun* 論. Ibid. Both Durrant and Hardy give a similar translation of *lun* 論 as “arranged,” and *jiuwen* 舊聞 as “old traditions.” Durrant, *Cloudy Mirror*, 66. Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo*, 56.

⁵⁶ In the Suoyin's paraphrase, “this is saying that he condensed the scribal records” 言約史記, the referent “their” 其 points back to the “scribal records” 史記. Takigawa, 352.

⁵⁷ Takigawa points out that the term *yifa* 義法 makes its first appearance in extant literature here in this source. My translation of this term as “the standards of judgment” reflects the underlying principles for inferring the judgments Confucius embedded in his work. Although the term *yi* 義 could be more broadly construed as “meaning/significance,” what Confucius was thought of as having inscribed into his text would necessarily be ethical, critical, and judgmental in nature. Ibid. Durrant omits the translation of the *yizhi yifa* 以制義法 in this passage. Durrant, *Cloudy Mirror*, 66. Hardy renders it as “establish the rule of righteousness,” a translation that perhaps does not fully capture the sense of a system of standards or judgments. Hardy, 57.

⁵⁸ My translation of *jia* 決 follows the annotation by Takigawa: “Qian Daxin says: *jia* has the same definition as ‘completely encircled’ “ 錢大昕曰：決與匝同. Takigawa, 352. Durrant translates it as “made complete” (66) , and Hardy, as “came full circle” (56).

⁵⁹ The Takigawa commentary did not gloss *qi zhuan zhi* 其傳指. Takigawa, 352. I take the possessive pronoun referent *qi* 其 to belong to Confucius. According to the narrative, the disciples' appearance is tied to their responsibility in transmitting the central import, ideas, tenets of the Zuo Tradition produced by Confucius, which is inclusive of “principles of judgment,” the “way of the kings,” and all “human affairs.” Stephen Durrant takes *shou* 受 as “receive” oral teachings from Confucius. Durrant, “Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Conception of *Tso chuan*,” 297. The teachings that disciples both received and transmitted are certainly oral, according to this passage here, for they are critical in nature.

⁶⁰ My translation is roughly based on Bernard Karlgren's version of this section of the passage: “A Sage from Lu, Zuo Qiuming feared that the various disciples should diverge in their ideas (of the meaning of the *Chunqiu*) and each of them follow his own opinion and miss the truth of the matter, therefore he based himself on Confucius' historical annotations and completely discussed its wordings and made the *Zuoshi Chunqiu*.” Karlgren, “The Early History of the *Chou Li* and *Tso Chuan* Texts,” 8. However, I diverge from Karlgren's translation of *Kongzi shiji* 孔子史記 and *julun qiyu* 具論其語. See note below.

based himself on Confucius' scribal records, fully arrayed their words,⁶¹ and completed the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*.

Above is the key passage about the authorship of both the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition. In this account, Confucius' authorship of the *Annals* consists of editing older materials and embedding his pronouncements in his edits. The first mention of Zuo Qiuming and Zuo Tradition in our extant records occurs here, with Zuo presented as the preserver of the correct interpretations of Confucius' critical judgments.

The *Shiji* 14 above situates the genesis of the *Annals* and Zuo Tradition historically by first broadly illustrating political and moral decline. Echoing the depiction of *Mencius* 3B.9 that there were many regicides and parricides during the time of Confucius, the *Shiji* 14 also says that the period was rife with such upheavals ("rebellious ministers and usurping sons grew legion"). But whereas *Mencius* 3B.9 portrays a general picture of decline, the *Shiji* 14 elaborates on the specific phenomena of the vassal lords' political ascendancy as symptoms of decline:⁶² "Thereafter, some [of the vassal lords] ruled by strength, the strong dominated the weak, and troops were raised without requesting permission from the Son of Heaven." As the *Shiji* 14 displays here, the gravity of this political situation incited Confucius to compose his *Annals*. This passage increases the magnitude of decline from role violations to the geopolitical problem of vassal lords wielding too much power and influence, for the breakdown in ritual leads to a breakdown in political roles as well. The aggrandizement of their territories was problematic insofar as the hegemon flouted the authority of the Zhou king. Whereas both in *Mencius* 3B.9 and *Shiji* 130, the source of the problem was located in the behavior of rulers and their failure to understand the invisible "ritual and duty," here the *Shiji* 14 spotlights the raw military strength that became the dominating force of governance. In this way, the 14 presents the political sea changes as being more dire and irrevocable than the correction of individual behaviors could remedy.

Against this larger backdrop, the *Shiji* 14 introduces the reasons and process for Confucius' composition of the *Annals*. The *Shiji* 14 uses the foregoing scene of the hegemon's dominance as the context against which to highlight Confucius' mission to serve as an advisor in the governments of the vassal lords ("For this reason, Confucius illumined the way of the kings. He asked for employment from seventy-odd rulers, but none of them placed him in service").

⁶¹ If the referent of *qi* 其 in "fully arrayed their words" 具論其語 follows from the immediately preceding noun, then *qi* 其 should point back to "Confucius' scribal records" 孔子史記. As for what these scribal records consist of, Zhang Binglin and Liu Shippei propose that they are the larger pool of archived historical materials that Confucius viewed, read, and drew from as he wrote the *Annals* classic. See Liu Shippei 劉師培, "Shiji shu Zuozhuan kao zixu 史記述左傳考自序," in *Zuoan ji* 左龠集, 2.17 a-b. See also Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, "Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan yiyi dawen 春秋左氏傳疑義答問," in *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集, 250. Durrant translates *julun qiyu* 具論其語 as "thoroughly discussed its words." Durrant, "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Conception," 297. Grant Hardy translates it as "scrutinized their sayings." Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo*, 56. I settle upon "array" for *lun* 論, to bring out Zuo Qiuming's role as a compiler of the archival material used by Confucius.

⁶² Elsewhere, in other entries, *Mencius* elaborates on the questionable morality of the hegemonic lords (*ba wang* 霸王), who were a step down from true kings. Cf. *Mencius* 2A.2 (*Mengzi zhengyi*, 187), 2A.3 (221–2), 3B.1 (409–15), 6B.7 (839–49), and 7A.13 (894–6).

Both *Shiji* 130 and 14 adopt the same depiction of Confucius as a rejected advisor: the former source says “vassal lords persecuted him, and the ministers blocked him,” and “his words were not put into effect”; the latter source says “[none of the rulers] placed him in service.” The theme of Confucius’ sense of futility threads through both of these accounts. Both sources argue that his frustration compelled him to turn to writing to gain acceptance for his thinking, thereby reinforcing the claim that writing has more persuasive power and authority than spoken words. Thus even though the historical backdrop shifted from the breakdown of ritual and social relations between individuals in *Shiji* 130 to the breakdown of political relations between states here in *Shiji* 14, both chapters explore the issue of the textualization of Confucius’ words as the genesis of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition.

Elaborating Confucius’ role as editor-compiler

At this point, the *Shiji* 14 turns to a narrative about the actions Confucius took to institute his standards to compensate for his rejection by the rulers. In greater detail than in *Mencius*, the passage delves into Confucius’ compositional process of the *Annals*, arguing that he turned to the past for material, setting his sights on the future for the implementation of his vision and standards. Here the 14 addresses the source materials and the editorial choices that Confucius employed when making his text. Whereas both *Mencius* 3B.9 and *Shiji* 130 simply declare that Confucius “made” the *Annals* and then explained the text’s intended purposes and consequences, the 14 devotes attention to the process of bringing the text to existence. Several features may be noted in this passage. First, this account portrays Confucius as basing himself on the exemplary models of the past (“looked west to the ruling house of the Zhou”). This period (Western Zhou) contrasts with the period (Eastern Zhou) when vassal lords defied the Zhou king, overrunning the central states, as depicted earlier in the “Table.” This statement about Confucius’ nostalgia for an ideal past places his sentiments within the particular context of decline given earlier in the “Table.”

Secondly, the *Shiji* 14 gives greater prominence to Confucius’ role as an editor than previous accounts in *Mencius* and *Shiji* 130. This passage features the source materials that Confucius drew upon (“arrayed the scribal records and old traditions”), harking back to *Mencius* 4B.21, which quotes Confucius’ statement that he interpreted the meaning of the various state chronicles (“I have humbly appropriated their meaning” 其義則丘竊取之). In contrast to this prior example, the *Shiji* 14 figures Confucius not as a reader and interpreter of the state annals, but as an editor/compiler making his own decisions over the selection of material that would go into his new work. In this account, he made the choice to establish the state of Lu as the work’s central point of view (“beginning in Lu, arranged the *Annals*”). According to this narrative, he also set the temporal framework for his work: “It recorded [events] as far back as those in the reign of Duke Yin, down to the capture of the unicorn in the reign of Duke Ai.” His role as an editor is more pronounced here than in previous accounts, as he cut out and streamlined material from the archives (“He condensed their phrases and words, removed what was unwieldy and duplicative”). Hitherto, *Mencius* presents Confucius as someone interpreting the state annals and creating the *Annals*, but no specific details accompany these acts of interpretation and composition. The *Shiji* 14 passage here, however, portrays Confucius’ involvement in specific editorial tasks.

Thirdly, the *Shiji* 14 conceives of these editorial tasks as the very means through which Confucius pronounced his judgments. As the passage above narrates, Confucius devoted himself to editorial tasks in order to accomplish the larger goal of establishing a uniform set of rules (“By doing so, he instituted principles and methods” 以制義法). Previously, in *Shiji* 130, the character *yi* 義 occurs either by itself or in the compound *liyi* 禮義 (ritual and duty); here the compound *yifa* 義法 takes on the valence of something more regulated, rule-bound, and systematic than previously indicated.⁶³ The term for “rites” (*li* 禮) fails to appear in this *Shiji* 14 preface, suggesting that it is not solely concerned with the ritual norms enforcing the role fulfillment of rulers/fathers and ministers/sons, as is the case in *Shiji* 130. The term “principles and methods” here appears to have broader applicability and systematic coverage, especially since the verb “instituted” 制 elicits the idea that Confucius meant to implement broader normative models beyond those pertaining to conforming to ritual and political roles.

In other ways, the passage in the *Shiji* 14 preserves older ideas about the function of the *Annals* as a guide for kingship. The idea that Confucius institutionalized comprehensive standards accords with earlier pre-Qin conceptions of the “Spring and Autumn” annals. As the 14 passage describes, Confucius’ forgoing actions—the editorial activities and decisions, and establishment of critical standards—produced the universal and highest model of human governance (“the way of the kings was complete, and human affairs were embraced in it”). Building upon an earlier notion in *Zhuangzi*,⁶⁴ the *Shiji* 14 passage constructs conceives of the *Annals* as the exemplar of the “way of the kings.” In this way, the passage attaches Confucius as both an editor and an organizer of ideas to an older tradition of considering the *Annals* as a handbook of governance before his name was attached to it.⁶⁵ He not only had specific targets for criticism, but also a larger constructive project, as he created a universal code of ethics for rulers and subjects alike. The *Shiji* 14 thus incorporates his technical role as an editor/compiler into the larger narrative about his ideological role as a grand regulator of the political and human universe. In this way, the *Shiji* 14 seamlessly connects the newer and narrower conception of Confucius’ text as an editorial project to older and broader conceptions about the *Annals*.

⁶³ Yugen Wang gives an extended review of the semantic range of *fa* 法 as understood by different scholars of early Chinese intellectual and political history, such as Frederick W. Mote, Herrlee G. Creel, and Roger T. Ames. The range includes translations of the term as “model,” “standard,” “rule,” and “law,” all of which could apply to the meaning of “*fa*” as it occurs in the current context. See the section “*Fa* in Historical Perspective” in Wang, *Ten Thousand Scrolls*, 22–9.

⁶⁴ The term *Chunqiu* 春秋 appears in the “*Qiwu lun*” 齊物論 chapter of the *Zhuangzi* in the following way: “As for annals that embody the aspirations of former kings who administered the successive generations, the Sage debates without making distinctions” 春秋經世先王之志，聖人議而不辯。Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, 2.83. Another example of the *Chunqiu* treated as a handbook for governance is found in a chapter almost certainly dating from the Han, the “The Turning of Heaven” 天運: “Confucius said to Old Dan: “I studied the six classics, the *Odes*, *Documents*, *Rites*, *Music*, *Changes*, and *Annals* for long enough it seems to me, and I know their contents through and through. I presented myself to the seventy-two rulers, discoursing on the way of the ancient kings and clarifying the traces of the dukes of Zhao and Shao, but not one ruler took anything up for his use.” 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迹，一君無所鈎用。甚矣夫！人之難說也，道之難明邪」。Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 14.531.

⁶⁵ Sarah Queen discusses the politics and hermeneutics of ascribing Confucian views to the *Annals* in her book *From Chronicle to Canon*, 117–26.

Transmission of criticisms

Sima Qian intertwines the histories of the Classic and Zuo Tradition together in the same narrative about their formation, establishing them both upon the hermeneutic generated out of the issues of transmission and concealment. Among the sources explicitly attributing the *Annals* to Confucius up to this point, *Mencius* 3B.9 simply states that Confucius “made” it, while *Shiji* 130 (and *Chunqiu fanlu* 6.158–9) cites his wish to convey his judgments through “deeds and events.” But one passage in the *Shiji* 14 states a direct cause and effect relationship between the presence of Confucius’ criticisms and the need to withhold them from direct written expression: “because they [Confucius’ teachings] contained words or phrases that criticized, rebuked, praised, tabooed, and belittled, they could not be presented in writing.” This statement introduces a twist to previous narratives, for they have failed to specify whether the textual tradition of the *Annals* concealed messages or not. But this passage explains that Confucius could not express his critiques openly in writing due to the danger of retribution.

The alleged concealment of his critical messages led to other implications treated in the *Shiji* 14. According to this new narrative, because Confucius left out explicit words of censure from his written document, he left them up to his disciples to articulate his criticisms. His disciples become the main exponents of his central messages: “The seventy disciples orally taught his transmitted tenets.” The disciple figures are conceived of as having privileged understanding of the totality of ethical and political thought (the “principles and methods,” “way of the kings,” and “human affairs”) encompassed within Confucius’ written work. As Confucius’ disciples had direct access to him, they had the privilege of listening to Confucius’ oral explications of the *Annals* in his personal presence, and in turn, the disciples could orally pass them on to others. In short, the *Shiji* 14 also constructs the text that is by its very nature meaningless without the exegesis of Confucius and his disciples.

At the same time, the *Shiji* 14 recognizes the inherent weakness of oral transmission, creating the need for the Zuo Tradition to exist. The ensuing text of the *Shiji* 14 gives an account about the Zuo Tradition’s creation, within a larger narrative about the decay of Confucius’ messages. With transmission comes the problems of unreliability, as the divergence in interpretations began immediately with the seventy disciples: “A gentleman of Lu, Zuo Qiuming, was afraid that the disciples each had divergent ideas [about the meaning of the *Annals*], would be satisfied with his own conceptions, and lose the true meaning [of Confucius’ messages]” On the one hand, the 14 constructs the *Annals* as something whose concealed messages require interpretation; on the other hand, the passage also indicates interpretation as something inherently unstable and vulnerable to immediate decay.

In this situation, the *Shiji* 14 positions the Zuo Tradition as the solution to this problem. According to this narrative, even though explicit criticisms had to be passed down from master to disciples (“could not be presented in writing”), it was allowable for the “Lu gentleman Zuo Qiuming” to convey these censures through other means. The passage suggests that he organized the original archival material that Confucius edited to form his *Annals* (“he based himself on Confucius’ scribal records, fully arrayed their words”).⁶⁶ In other words, the passage illustrates Zuo Qiuming guaranteeing the authenticity of the material before it suffered the corrosive effects of transmission. The Zuo Tradition hence comes to occupy the unique position of a text that fully

⁶⁶ See footnote 56 on p. 21.

illustrates the original material Confucius drew upon. The *Shiji* 14 thereby establishes the identity of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition that could preserve the correct interpretations. This clever conception of the Zuo Tradition implicitly contrasts it to the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, for their masters presumably did not have access to the scribal materials utilized by Confucius the same way Zuo Qiuming did.

Conclusion

The conceptions of the *Annals* presented in *Mencius* and the *Shiji* have shaped the conception of the Zuo Tradition. The later narratives about the Zuo Tradition will mold themselves around the basic conception of the *Annals* as Confucius' work, first appearing in *Mencius* 3B.9. With this conception tied to ethics, this entry of *Mencius* establishes the basic praise-and-blame hermeneutic of the *Annals*. The *Shiji* 130 builds from *Mencius* 3B.9, adding more layers of complexity to the core hermeneutic of the *Annals* while raising questions of interpretation. Expanding on the previous notion of the text as a book of judgments, Sima Qian further demonstrates the implications of textualizing these judgments. For example, he argues that the textual form of judgments both enables and requires interpretation.

The *Shiji* 14 further refines these conceptions of the *Annals* to incorporate the idea of editorship into Confucius' project. In this account, the problems of transmitting Confucius' judgments come to a head, whereupon the narrative introduces the Zuo Tradition as a solution in providing the correct interpretation of Confucius' hidden criticisms. This representation of the Zuo Tradition then utilizes the idea of Confucius' editorship to claim that the Zuo Tradition utilized the archival materials he had discarded. The first conception of the Zuo Tradition is thus inseparable from the nuanced arguments made about the *Annals*.

Chapter 2

Struggle for Status as an Exegetical Tradition (Late W. Han to Early E. Han)

Introduction

From the late Western Han to early Eastern Han (1st c. BCE–1st c. CE), two central figures, Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–23 CE) and Chen Yuan 陳元 (fl. 29 CE), continued to speak to the unresolved questions about the status of the Zuo Tradition as the focal point of heated disputes. The most notable champions for the Zuo Tradition were Liu Xin, during the reign of Aidi 哀帝 (6–1 BCE), and Chen Yuan, during the early years of Guangwudi’s reign 光武帝 (25–58 CE). Both scholars, however, faced strong opposition from the community of Academicians.

In the historical and intellectual context of the mid- to late Western Han, Liu Xin’s activities centered on his engagement in imperial library projects.⁶⁷ Liu’s role, as a court bibliographer appointed to collate texts for the palace library,⁶⁸ thus set him apart from Academicians focused on the transmission of received texts. Liu Xin’s father, Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE), led the commission appointed by Chengdi in 26 BCE to “identify lacunae in the imperial collection, locate copies of the missing texts, produce better recensions through collation and editing, and classify all the versions produced for the official imperial collections.”⁶⁹ Between 28 and 25 BCE, Liu Xin was ordered to collaborate with his father in this project, and completed Liu Xiang’s tasks at his death.⁷⁰ As for Chen Yuan, he wrote after Wang Mang’s reign (9–23 CE) during the first few years of the new Eastern Han empire, during which time the court searched for models from the Western Han to follow, while distancing itself from the delegitimized rule of Wang Mang. This desire gave Academicians of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, established in Wudi’s (141–87) and Xuandi’s reigns (73–48) respectively, ammunition to oppose traditions with no Western Han official precedents, such as the Zuo Tradition.⁷¹

Our two source texts for these discussions are in the standard histories, the *Hanshu* and the *Hou Hanshu*. The history of the Western Han excerpts the “Letter to the Academicians” that Liu Xin wrote to the Academicians,⁷² criticizing them for refusing to recognize the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition of the *Annals*. The history of the Eastern Han excerpts a pair of memorials submitted in 28 CE,⁷³ one from Fan Sheng 范升 (fl. 28 CE), an Academician opposed to the Zuo Tradition, and another from Chen Yuan, a high official in its defense.

⁶⁷ For the significance of the transition from archives to integrated palace libraries during this period, see Nylan, *Yang Xiong and Pleasures*, 40–7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 383.

⁷¹ For a detailed discussion of evidence in *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu* attesting to these political shifts, see Chen Suzhen 陳蘇鎮, *Handai zhengzhi yu Chunqiu xue* 漢代政治與春秋學, 413–4.

⁷² HS 36.1968–71.

⁷³ HS 36.1230–3.

Whereas Liu Xin's letter is a one-sided presentation of the issues, the Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan exchange allows us to observe detailed arguments set forth by both Zuo Tradition advocates and opponents. The impasse between the two opposing sides show them arguing on fundamentally different terms about exegetical authority.

Interestingly, whereas Liu Xin's "Letter to the Academicians" shows him simply assuming that the Zuo Tradition was a valid interpretation of the *Annals*, Chen Yuan's memorial shows him having to justify such a claim. But when Liu Xin brought forward the proposal to establish the Zuo Tradition, the arguments both for and against it appear less well thought out than they were in Chen Yuan's time. In short, even though Liu Xin introduced a controversial subject that elicited strong reactions from his opponents, Chen Yuan advanced the controversy more fully. Faced with the predicament of advocating a tradition with no authority under the old definition, Chen Yuan developed an alternative conception of authority not in terms of institutional precedents but in terms of personal judgment.

The Zuo Tradition in Liu Xin's "Letter to the Academicians"

As a pivotal figure in the early history of Zuo Tradition scholarship in the late Western Han, Liu Xin claims to have found a manuscript of the Zuo Tradition in the imperial palace library, which he identified as one of the scholarly traditions circulating outside of court circles. He sought palace patronage for the Zuo Tradition, pushing Academicians to accept the establishment of an Academicians' Chair for its study, sometime during the reign of Aidi (7–1 BCE). Because the Academicians met Liu with stony resistance, he wrote a letter to them, chiding them while laying out the benefits of establishing the Zuo Tradition and these other traditions.

In his "Letter to the Academicians under the Superintendent of Ceremonial" 移書太常博士,⁷⁴ Liu Xin excoriates the Academicians for their reluctance to give official recognition to the Zuo Tradition:

昔唐虞既衰，而三代迭興，聖帝明王，累起相襲，其道甚著。周室既微而禮樂不正，道之難全也如此。是故孔子憂道之不行，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。

In the past, after Tang and Yu had declined, the Three Ages rose and fell in succession. Sagely emperors and enlightened kings ascended and succeeded one another, and their way was exceedingly manifest. [But] once the Zhou house fell into decline, the rites and music were set askew—such is the difficulty of maintaining the way in its completeness. For this reason, Confucius was anxious that the way was no longer practiced. So he traveled to states one by one to take up employment [in the government]. From Wei he returned to Lu, only then was music rectified and the *Ya* and *Song* odes put in their proper places. He compiled

⁷⁴ HS 36.1968–1971. The *Wenxuan* 文選 entitles Liu Xin's letter in a way that emphasizes the aggressiveness with which Liu Xin openly inveigles the Academicians: "The Letter to Denounce the Academicians under the Superintendent of Ceremonial" 移書讓太常博士.

the *Changes*, put in order the *Documents*, and made the *Annals*,⁷⁵ so as to record the way of the emperors and kings.⁷⁶

Liu Xin opens his letter by describing the decline of the Zhou house, beginning with the Eastern Zhou. He sets up this background to explain the impetus behind Confucius' rectification of culture and compilation of texts, including the *Annals*.

及夫子沒而微言絕，七十子終而大義乖。重遭戰國棄籩豆之禮，理軍旅之陳，孔氏之道抑，而孫吳之術興。陵夷至于暴秦燔經書，殺儒士，設挾書之法，行是古之罪，道術由是遂滅。

When the Master passed away, his subtle words were cut off; when the seventy disciples died, there was a turn away from their great principles.⁷⁷ On top of that came the calamitous era of the Warring States, when the rituals with their wooden or bamboo vessels were cast aside in favor of arraying the formation of army regiments. The way of Confucius was suppressed, and the arts of Sun[zi] and Wu [Qi] flourished.⁷⁸ The decline reached to a point when the oppressive Qin [empire] burnt the Classics and books,⁷⁹ put to death specialists in traditional learning,⁸⁰ established the law forbidding the [private] possession of books, and imposed punishment on those who agreed with the ancients.⁸¹ With this, the techniques of the way were utterly obliterated.

This excerpt above contains the key idea that the “subtle words” died soon after with Confucius' death. The seventy disciples, who had direct contact with him, once taught and practiced the “great principles” taught by Confucius, but people turned away from these principles with the disciples' demise. This highlights the importance of personal presence of the Sage and his disciples as they propagated their messages.

漢興，去聖帝明王遐遠，仲尼之道又絕，法度無所因襲。時獨有一叔孫通略定禮儀，天下唯有易卜，未有它書。至孝惠之世，乃除挾書之律，然公卿大臣絳、灌之屬咸介冑武夫，莫以為意。

⁷⁵ Michael Loewe translates *zhizuo* 製作 as “compiled.” Loewe, “Appendix: Lin Xin's Letter,” forthcoming. Subsequent citations of his translation of this letter comes from this work. For consistency, it is translated as “made” here, as it is elsewhere in this thesis.

⁷⁶ HSBZ notes that textual variant of *ji* 紀 for *ji* 記 in the *Wenxuan* version of this letter. HSBZ 36.32a.

⁷⁷ This last phrase is adapted from Loewe's translation.

⁷⁸ The works of Sunzi 孫子 and Wu Qi 吳起 are listed in the “Yiwen zhi,” HS 1756–7.

⁷⁹ Loewe renders *jingshu* 經書 as “texts that had been held in such honor.”

⁸⁰ From here on, the translation of *rushi* 儒士 follows Loewe's. In his words, they were the ones “who were familiar with the old cultured way of life.”

⁸¹ As Loewe elaborates in his translation, the last phrase is “it was nothing less than a crime to praise the old way of life at the expense of the present.”

[When] the Han arose, it was distant in time from [the age of] the sagely emperors and enlightened kings. Moreover, the way of Confucius was cut off, and there were no precedents on which to call to build the institutions [of the empire].⁸² At the time there was only one Shusun Tong [fl. 195 BCE],⁸³ who generally fixed the rites and protocols.⁸⁴ In all under heaven [virtually] no other writings existed other than the *Changes* and those on divination [by turtle carapaces]. Only with the age of Huidi [195–188 BCE] was the statute against the possession of books abrogated. However, the lords and important ministers Captain Jiang [i.e. Zhou Bo],⁸⁵ Guan [Ying, d. 201],⁸⁶ and their kind were all armor-wearing martial types, so none of them gave such things much thought.

The passage above continues showing progressive decline even with the establishment of the Han empire. Here Liu Xin illustrates the near absence of both texts and experts on cultural and literary matters.

至孝文皇帝，始使掌故朝錯從伏生受尚書。尚書初出于屋壁，朽折散絕，今其書見在，時師傳讀而已。詩始萌芽。天下眾書往往頗出，皆諸子傳說，猶廣立於學官，為置博士。在漢朝之儒，唯賈生而已。

Only in the reign of Wendi [180–157 BCE] was the Recorder of Precedent, Chao Cuo [d. 154 BCE],⁸⁷ sent to receive instruction in the *Documents* from Fu Sheng. The *Documents* first emerged from the wall of a house. Much of it was rotted, broken, scattered, or lost. Today the book survives, but back then the teachers transmitted it by reciting it and nothing more.⁸⁸ The *Odes* began to crop up. The myriad written works of the world frequently emerged bit by bit, all of them transmitted sayings of the various masters, or explanations of other writings, and still they were widely established in the offices of learning, for posts of Academicians were set up for them. As for specialists in traditional learning in the Han court, there was only Mr. Jia [Yi] and that was it.⁸⁹

⁸² The last phrase is put into these words by Loewe.

⁸³ Shusun Tong was once ordered to stand by for appointment as an Academician (*daizhao boshi* 待詔博士) in Qin times. In the reign of Han Gaodi 高帝 (202–195 BCE), he advised on codes of behavior proper for the court. In 200, he staged a demonstration of correct procedure and deportment with great ceremony. Later Yang Xiong approved of his judgment. Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 482–3.

⁸⁴ Loewe renders *liyi* 禮儀 as “the code of conduct.”

⁸⁵ Jiang Hou 降侯 was the title of Zhou Bo 周勃. Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 192; 729; 758. He was appointed in 201 BCE. Together with Guan Ying, Zhou Bo took a lead in removing the Lü family (730).

⁸⁶ Guan Ying 灌嬰 was one of Liu Bang’s 劉邦 “successful and loyal commanders” (136).

⁸⁷ Title from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 764. Chao’s biographical details can be found in Loewe, 27–9.

⁸⁸ Loewe reads the last phrase as “all that the teachers of our time do is to transmit it by reading it out loud.”

⁸⁹ The HSBZ cites Qian Daxin as clarifying that whereas the other scholars mentioned by Liu Xin, such as Fu Sheng, were scholars from the pre-Qin feudal states, only Jia Yi 賈誼 (201–169 BCE) was born in Luoyang, within the fifteen commanderies of the Han court. HSBZ 36.32b.

This portion of the “Letter” above narrates a gradual sea change, when texts began to resurface in the world, first with the *Documents*, then the *Odes*. As Liu Xin notes, even though these writings were mostly “sayings” and “explanations,” they were nevertheless sponsored by the Han court.

至孝武皇帝，然後鄒、魯、梁、趙頗有詩、禮、春秋先師，皆起於建元之間。當此之時，一人不能獨盡其經，或為雅，或為頌，相合而成。泰誓後得，博士集而讀之。故詔書稱曰：「禮壞樂崩，書缺簡脫，朕甚閔焉。」時漢興已七八十年，離於全經，固已遠矣。

Only during the reign of Wudi [r. 141–87 BCE] did rather significant numbers of teachers in the *Odes*, rites,⁹⁰ and *Annals* appear in Zou, Lu, Liang, and Zhao.⁹¹ They all emerged during the Jianyuan reign [140–135 BCE]. At this time, one person could not thoroughly master a classic by himself. Some of them studied the “Ya,” others studied the “Song,” and they had to combine efforts when working on the whole text of any one of these texts.⁹² When the “Great Oath” [chapter of the *Documents*] was obtained later, the Academicians gathered together and read it. Therefore the edict read:⁹³ “The rites are damaged,⁹⁴ and [proper] music is gone. The documents are incomplete and the bamboo slips have missing strips. I am exceedingly troubled by this.” This was when the Han had been established for seventy to eighty years, long after the time when a complete copy of these texts had existed.⁹⁵

In this section above, Liu Xin continues his narrative about the slow process of restoring the Classics. He states that even as the number of teachers on these texts increased, and many of them came forward during the Jianyuan reign of Wudi, it was still difficult to assemble together complete texts, as reflected in the sentiments expressed in the emperor’s decree.

及魯恭王壞孔子宅，欲以為宮，而得古文於壞壁之中，逸禮有三十九，書十六篇。天漢之後，孔安國獻之，遭巫蠱倉卒之難，未及施行。及春秋左氏，丘明所修，皆古文舊書，多者二十餘通，臧於祕府，伏而未發。

When King Gong of Lu [r. 153–128 BCE] destroyed Confucius’ house,⁹⁶ wishing to build a palace, he found texts in the archaic script in the destroyed wall. There

⁹⁰ In his translation, Loewe clarifies that these were “an earlier style of learning for the *Odes*,” and “the texts on ritual.”

⁹¹ As Loewe annotates, “Lu, Liang, and Zhao” were kingdoms of the Han empire. Zou is a “county near Lu.”

⁹² The HSBZ says the object of “complete” 成 is “one classic” 一經. HSBZ 36.33a.

⁹³ Loewe notes that this is possibly the “decree of 124 BCE,” although no mention of this “poor state of writings” is mentioned.

⁹⁴ Loewe has “rules of conduct have been broken” for this line.

⁹⁵ The rendering of *quanjing* 全經 follows Loewe’s.

⁹⁶ This is, as Loewe specifies, the posthumous title “King of Lu styled the ‘Venerable’ ” for Liu Yu 劉餘. See Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 402.

were thirty-nine chapters of the *Missing Rites* and sixteen chapters of the *Documents*.⁹⁷ After the Tianhan reign [of Wudi 100–97 BCE], Kong Anguo presented these to the throne, but due to the sudden onset of the crisis of sorcery,⁹⁸ the texts did not make it into circulation. In addition there was the *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition, compiled by [Zuo] Qiuming.⁹⁹ All of these texts were ancient writings in the archaic script,¹⁰⁰ with the more voluminous of them numbering twenty-odd items.¹⁰¹ They were all stored in the palace library,¹⁰² resting in obscurity and not promulgated.

This passage above marks the turning point in Liu Xin’s narrative as he describes the discovery of a cache of additional texts, specifically the thirty-nine chapters of the *Missing Rites* and sixteen of the *Documents*. Liu also isolates the mention of the Zuo Tradition, grouping it with the wall texts and other texts that, valuable as they are in his view, were not circulated at first. This is the first setback the texts suffered, even though they could have been an invaluable aid to the assembly of whole texts, as described earlier.

孝成皇帝閱學殘文缺，稍離其真，乃陳發祕藏，校理舊文，得此三事，以考學官所傳，經或脫簡，傳或間編。傳問民間，則有魯國(柏)[桓]公、趙國貫公、膠東庸生之遺學與此同，抑而未施。此乃有識者之所惜閱，士君子之所嗟痛也。

Chengdi [32–6 BCE] lamented that learning had declined and the texts were incomplete, that they had gradually diverged from their true state. So he had the palace library opened,¹⁰³ and the ancient texts collated and organized, and it was

⁹⁷ Translation of *Yili* 逸禮 adopted from Loewe.

⁹⁸ As Loewe clarifies in his translation, this was the “highly critical incident when rumours of witchcraft filled the court.”

⁹⁹ Wang Xianqian sees the “three items” 三事 in the subsequent passage as the indication that Liu Xin conjoined the Zuo Tradition with the aforementioned “thirty-nine chapters of the *Missing Rites* and sixteen chapters of the *Documents*” as belonging to the same cache of texts. HSBZ 36.33b.

¹⁰⁰ Gu Jiegang admires Liu Xin as the master discoverer and fabricator of these texts. For his argument supporting this view, see Gu Jiegang, “Gushi bian,” 249–262.

¹⁰¹ In classical usage, it is left vague what one *tong* 通 consists of as a measure word for books and documents. Bernard Karlgren translates it as “envelopes.” Karlgren, “Chou Li and Tso Chuan Texts,” 9. Another *Hanshu* reference indicates the number of copies of a particular text or set of texts, as occurs in Jia Kui’s biography: “Jia Kui submitted the memorial and the emperor thought well of him. The emperor bestowed upon him five hundred rolls of cloth and a suit of clothing, ordering him to select the highly-talented ones of his own choosing from among the students of the Yan and Yan lines of interpretation of the Gongyang, teach them the Zuo Tradition, and give them each bamboo slips and paper, as well as a *copy* of the classic and commentary.” 書奏，帝嘉之，賜布五百匹，衣一襲，令逵自選公羊嚴、顏諸生高才者二十人，教以左氏，與簡紙經傳各一通。HHS 36.1239.

¹⁰² The *mifu* 祕府 is the “depository for reserved books,” in Loewe’s translation.

¹⁰³ In this case, Loewe renders *micang* 祕藏 the “reserved store.” The action of opening the library is narrated as belonging to the emperor’s. However, materially speaking, as scholar Charles S. Gardner notes, as part of the stylistic conventions of Chinese historiography, “any action taken on direct behalf of the emperor, irrespective of his actual participation, is ordinarily reported as his own.” Gardner, *Chinese Traditional Historiography*, 66.

then that these three items were obtained.¹⁰⁴ With these texts, we checked them against the received copies in the offices of learning.¹⁰⁵ Some of the Classics had missing bamboo strips and some of the explanatory writings had disordered strips. When we sent out inquiries among the populace,¹⁰⁶ we discovered the surviving traces of the experts of classical learning, such as those of Huan *Gong* in Lu, Guan *Gong* in Zhao, and Yong *Sheng* in Jiaodong,¹⁰⁷ were just as with these [the three items], suppressed and not disseminated. This is what perceptive people lamented about and what men-in-service and gentlemen were pained by.¹⁰⁸

At this juncture above, as Liu Xin reveals, learning transmitted among the people suffered the same fate as the texts brought to light from the palace library. Hence, according to him, both the text of the Zuo Tradition, and possibly its transmitted counterpart (according to the *Hanshu*), passed down through experts, share the status of being valuable traditions that have been kept out of circulation.

往者綴學之士不思廢絕之闕，苟因陋就寡，分文析字，煩言碎辭，學者罷老且不能究其一藝。信口說而背傳記，是末師而非往古，至於國家將有大事，若立辟雍封禪巡狩之儀，則幽冥而莫知其原。猶欲保殘守缺，挾恐見破之私意，而無從善服義之公心，或懷妬嫉，不考情實，雷同相從，隨聲是非，抑此三學，以尚書為備，謂左氏為不傳春秋，豈不哀哉！

In the past, men who gathered learning did not preoccupy themselves with the gaps caused by the abandonment [of texts].¹⁰⁹ These men conveniently followed the imprecise and inadequate, dissected words and analyzed characters, proliferated words and truncated phrases, [such that] learned men, worn out and old, were unable to study to the end any of the classics. They placed faith in oral explanations, but turned their backs to written records,¹¹⁰ agreeing with recent

¹⁰⁴ Wang Xianqian identifies the *sanshi* 三事 as the above mentioned *Zuoshi Chunqiu*, *Guwen Shangshu*, and *Yili*. HSBZ 36.33b.

¹⁰⁵ As Loewe makes clear in his translation, these were “copies” circulating among these “offices of learning.” Liu Xin implies here that the copies he found in the palace library were in better shape.

¹⁰⁶ Wang Xianqian notes that the textual variant for *zhuan* 傳 in the *Wenxuan* version is *bo* 博, which would make the phrase read more smoothly as “Widely consulting the people, it turned out that” 博問民間則 the scholarship of the three masters were the same as the archived traditions. HSBZ 36.33b.

¹⁰⁷ According to the *Hanshu*’s “Rulin zhuan,” Huan *Gong* of Lu studied the *Rites* (88.3614), Guan *Gong* of Zhao received instruction on the Zuo Tradition from Jia Yi (HS 88.3620), and Yong *Sheng* of Jiaodong was a scholar of the Archaic Script *Shangshu* (HS 88.3607).

¹⁰⁸ I have adopted here Loewe’s rendering for *shi junzi* 士君子.

¹⁰⁹ According to Wang Xianqian’s annotations, the term “men who gathered learning” 綴學之士 refers deprecatingly to those who collected knowledge of the past. The “Xiaobian” 小辨 chapter of the *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記 says: “The Master said, ‘Only the officiants of the altars of soil and grain know of loyalty and trustworthiness. Someone such as myself, Qiu, I am one of those men who gather learning, what should I know about loyalty and trustworthiness?’ ” 子曰：唯社稷之主，實知忠信。若丘，綴學之徒，安知忠信也。 HSBZ 36.33b. Loewe renders the term “those who had been piling up bits and pieces of learning.”

¹¹⁰ This rendering of *zhuanji* 傳記 follows Loewe’s.

teachers and disagreeing with what is really old. But when the ruling house was about to have great events, such as the construction of the Circular Moat, the performance of the *feng* and *shan* [sacrifices], and imperial tour inspections, the Academicians were in the dark—none of them knew the original ways [of carrying out these ceremonies].¹¹¹ Still they wished to protect what is tattered and guard what is incomplete, harboring private worry that their imposture might be seen through, and lacking the public spirit to adopt what is good and follow what is right.¹¹² Some of them harbored jealousies, refusing to investigate the reality of the situation. They exactly followed one another, echoing each other’s opinions of right and wrong. They suppressed these three texts, considered the *Documents* to be complete,¹¹³ and contended that Zuo Tradition does not transmit the *Annals*. Isn’t this lamentable!

The use of strong language above shows Liu Xin accusing Academicians of an unwillingness to consider the discovered ancient texts as valid sources for both understanding the classics and carrying out imperial projects and events. He portrays Academicians as stubborn defenders of learning isolated among themselves, and protecting, for example, the *Annals* from being exposed to alternative interpretations supplied by the Zuo Tradition.

今聖上德通神明，繼統揚業，亦閔文學錯亂，學士若茲，雖昭其情，猶依違謙讓，樂與士君子同之。故下明詔，試左氏可立不，遣近臣奉指銜命，將以輔弱扶微，與二三君子比意同力，冀得廢遺。今則不然，深閉固距，而不肯試，猥以不誦絕之，欲以杜塞餘道，絕滅微學。夫可與樂成，難與慮始，此乃眾庶之所為耳，非所望士君子也。且此數家之事，皆先帝所親論，今上所考視，其古文舊書，皆有徵驗，外內相應，豈苟而已哉！

Now that our sagely ruler [i.e. Aidi], connected with the spirits, is [devoted to] maintaining unity and expanding his legacy, he, for his part, lamented that literature is disordered and learning is chaotic, and that men of learning is like this [i.e. of the type described above].¹¹⁴ Although he [already] manifested his intention,¹¹⁵ he still [acted as if he] is undecided and deferent,¹¹⁶ delighting in

¹¹¹ This translated sentence is an adaptation of Loewe’s.

¹¹² Loewe’s rendering is as follows: “They had no thought of adopting anything that would be better or of following what others took to be right.” The HSBZ citation of the following from the *Yantielun* helps to construe the syntax of the phrase *wu congshan fuyi zhi gongxin* 無從善服義之公心: “Those who discuss things support one another with duty and enlighten each other with the way. When following good, one does not seek to dominate, and when submitting to duty, one is not ashamed by being blocked” 論者相扶以義，相喻以道，從善不求勝，服義不恥窮. HSBZ 36.34a.

¹¹³ A commentator cited by Yan Shigu says that these scholars accepted the *Shangshu* that “only had twenty-eight chapters, not knowing that originally there were a hundred chapters” 唯有二十八篇，不知本（存）有百篇也. Ibid. Loewe supplies in his translation that the *Documents* were “in the form in which they had received it.”

¹¹⁴ This sentence is an adaptation of Loewe’s translation.

¹¹⁵ Loewe renders this as “Although He clearly understands their situation.”

¹¹⁶ Yan Shigu glosses *yiwei* 依違 as “he did not want to take charge alone” 不專決也. This is my construal of the tone and rhetoric of Liu Xin, as he portrays the emperor as showing outward deference to the Academicians with

making common cause with men-in-service and gentlemen.¹¹⁷ Therefore he issued a manifest edict to put to test whether the Zuo Tradition could be established or not.¹¹⁸ He sent his trusted ministers with a commission and commands to succor the weak and support the feeble. Together with a few of you gentlemen,¹¹⁹ you were to unite in purpose and strength,¹²⁰ in hopes of obtaining what had been abandoned and left behind.¹²¹ But this was not to be. You close yourselves off deeply and stubbornly resist it, unwilling to investigate [the Zuo Tradition]. You casually cut it off [i.e. dismiss it] because it is not recited,¹²² hoping to block the other ways, and to cut off and obliterate feeble [traditions of] learning.¹²³ With the common masses, it is possible to complete something together in joy but difficult to begin something together in anxiety. But this is not what is expected of men-in-service and gentlemen. Moreover, the affairs concerning these several traditions are all what the previous emperor [Chengdi] personally took an interest in and what our present emperor [Aidi] is investigating.¹²⁴ Could it be nothing but a trifling matter [i.e. coincidence] that these ancient writings in the archaic script all have corroborations,¹²⁵ as [the set of

respectful formality despite his stated wishes, while the Academicians, in contrast, fail to reciprocate his good will in remaining stubbornly against the official acceptance of the three traditions. HSBZ 36.34a.

¹¹⁷ The translation “make common cause” for *tongzhi* 同之 is Loewe’s.

¹¹⁸ That is, to see about if, in Loewe’s words, “official provision should be made for Mr. Zuo’s writings.”

¹¹⁹ In the Zuo Tradition and the *Analects*, *ersan zi* 二三子 appears as a second-person address. In the Zuo Tradition, 24th year of Duke Xi, Jie Zitui criticizes the followers of Duke Wen of Jin for accepting rewards for their loyalty and support: “As for the one to preside over the ancestral sacrifices [i.e. be the ruler], who else could it be other than our lord [Duke Wen]? Heaven has already ordained him, yet you take his destiny to be the result of your efforts, is that not a deception?” 主晉祀者，非君而誰？天實置之，而二三子以為己力，不亦誣乎。Yang Bojun, 418. In *Analects* 3.24, Confucius says, “Sirs, you must not be disheartened by his failure” 二三子何患於喪乎。Waley, 100. From here Liu Xin speaks to the Academicians directly, criticizing them for the kinds of behavior he enumerates below.

¹²⁰ Yan Shigu glosses *bi* 比 as “to unite” 合也。HSBZ 36.34b.

¹²¹ In the context of Liu Xin’s letter and from his perspective, the “weak,” the “feeble,” the “abandoned,” and the “left behind” all refer to the once missing and now ‘found’ texts. Yan Shigu glosses *feiyi* 廢遺 as “those among the Classics and the arts that have parts of them abandoned and left behind.” Yan elaborates that according to Liu Xin, these were what “the emperor hoped to establish” 冀得興立之也。HSBZ 36.34b. Loewe translates the last phrase as “in the hope of finding some of the texts that had been discarded or gone missing.”

¹²² Yan Shigu interprets these lines to mean that, as Liu Xin suggests, the Academicians ignored these studies with indifference and unconcern by not taking them up. Wang Xianqian takes the subject of “not recite them” 不誦習之” to be the Academicians themselves (*ji bu songxi zhi* 己不誦習之。HSBZ 36.34b. With this interpretation then, it is not that the Academicians wished to cut off these scholarly traditions on account of the fact that they have never been transmitted orally and recited in the past, but that the Academicians refused to recite them in order to eliminate further attention to these texts. However, Loewe’s translation reads: “a work is excluded simply because nobody recites it.”

¹²³ Or, in Loewe’s words, “to bar the growth of other ways of thought, and close down the sort of scholarship that they see as outmoded.”

¹²⁴ The *shi* 事 here links back to the “three texts” 三事 mentioned earlier, which Wang Xianqian thinks refers to the *Zuoshi Chunqiu*, *Guwen Shangshu*, and *Yili*. HSBZ 36.34b. Loewe renders *shujia zhi shi* 數家之事 as “the activities of those many schools of old.”

¹²⁵ Neither Liu Xin nor the commentators shed much light on the specifics of what these “corroborations” 徵驗 consist of. Perhaps this statement could be taken as Liu Xin’s general statement about the reliability of these texts

sources brought in from] the outside matches with [the copies that came out of the imperial reserve collection on] the inside?¹²⁶

In this penultimate section to his “Letter” above, Liu Xin invokes the interest and authority of the emperors, illustrating imperial backing for the official sponsorship of the Zuo Tradition. He also reiterates the correspondence between the version of the Zuo Tradition found in the palace library and the one found through the public inquiry in order to underscore that the discovery of this ancient text is not an aberration, but rather, is substantiated by other texts collected elsewhere.

夫禮失求之於野，古文不猶愈於野乎？往者博士書有歐陽，春秋公羊，易則施、孟，然孝宣皇帝猶復廣立穀梁春秋，梁丘易，大小夏侯尚書，義雖相反，猶並置之。何則？與其過而廢之也，寧過而立之。傳曰：「文武之道未墜於地，在人；賢者志其大者，不賢者志其小者。」今此數家之言，所以兼包大小之義，豈可偏絕哉！若必專己守殘，黨同門，妬道真，違明詔，失聖意，以陷於文吏之議，甚為二三君子不取也。

“When the rites are lost, one seeks for them among the rustic.”¹²⁷ Are not old writings better than the rustic? In the past, the Academicians’ *Documents* had the Ouyang Tradition,¹²⁸ the *Annals* had the Gongyang Tradition, the *Changes* had the Shi and Meng Traditions.¹²⁹ Yet Xuandi still widely established the Guliang Tradition for the *Annals*, the Liangqiu Tradition for the *Changes*, Elder and Younger Xiahou Traditions for the *Documents*. Though their principles were in conflict with each other, the emperor still established Academicians’ posts for them. Why was that so? Rather than to err in abandoning them, he preferred to err in establishing them. The received wisdom says,¹³⁰ “The way of Wen and Wu has not dropped to the ground, it is to be found among people. Worthy men set their minds on its greater [principles]; unworthy men, on its minor [principles].”¹³¹ Now the words of these several [newly discovered] traditions are the means by which we can encompass and embrace [both] great and minor meanings,¹³² how

discovered in the palace library, for they match with the traditions of learning that had been circulated outside the library. This is at least what one commentator cited in the HSBZ, He Zhuo 何焯, specifies is the case: “‘Inside’ refers to the palace library that was opened; ‘outside’ refers to the surviving learning of Huan Gong, Guan Gong, and Yong Sheng among the common people” 內謂陳發祕藏，外謂民間桓公貫公庸生遺學. HSBZ 36.34b.

¹²⁶ The bracketed contents are supplied in Loewe’s translation.

¹²⁷ This is a saying attributed to Confucius in HS 30.1746.

¹²⁸ Ouyang Sheng 歐陽生 (HS 88.3603).

¹²⁹ Shi Chou 施讎 (HS 88.3598) and Meng Xi 孟喜 (88.3599).

¹³⁰ Loewe renders this as “What do those tales that we have received say?”

¹³¹ This is a citation of *Analects* 19.22, where the textual variant for *zhi* 志 is *shi* 識. HSBZ 36.34b. The bracketed “principles” supplied in my translation derives from Arthur Waley’s interpretation. Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 228.

¹³² Loewe’s interpretation of these lines are as follows: “The ways in which members of those many schools talk is to lump everything, great or small, together in one category.”

could they be selectively cut off?¹³³ Must these people stubbornly stick to their ideas and protect what is incomplete [i.e. fragments of texts], banding together in their cliques, apprehensive of the truth of the way?¹³⁴ They turn their backs to [i.e. disobey] the manifest edict and lose sight of the sagely intentions [of the emperor]. That is how they may fall into the hands of an official who is investigating criminal matters.¹³⁵ Verily this would not be accepted by a few of you gentlemen.¹³⁶

Liu Xin closes his letter with a reference to precedents established in the past, such as when Xuandi (73–48 BCE) established Academicians' posts for additional interpretive traditions of several Classics, irrespective of the conflicting views held by their proponents. He urges Academicians of his day to adopt this example as the model for embracing the texts found in the palace stockpile, especially the Zuo Tradition, for which Aidi specifically considered official sponsorship.

As compared with the anxiety expressed in later sources, Liu Xin's letter displays a remarkable degree of confidence in the status and function of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition. Much of his letter does not focus on the Zuo Tradition specifically, as most of the letter's content articulates concerns about the general state of cultural and scholarly decline. But in the only two times in which he does refer to the Zuo Tradition by title, Liu speaks of it as an exegetical tradition of the *Annals*:

春秋左氏，丘明所修...

The *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition, compiled by [Zuo] Qiuming

謂左氏為不傳春秋，豈不哀哉！

[The Academicians] contended that Zuo Tradition does not transmit the *Annals*.

Isn't this lamentable!

In both of these instances, Liu mentions the Zuo Tradition as a given fact, as if there was no controversy over whether or not scholars could treat it as an interpretation of the Classic. In the first instance, he references the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition as one unit, using the “Zuo Tradition” to specify a particular tradition of the Classic. Liu Xin attributes this specific tradition

¹³³ Taking into account the parallel construction, set in opposition to “all or complete” 兼 is *pian* 偏, or being selective in what one hears and see. Loewe translates the rhetorical question thus: “Surely it cannot be right to reject even one set of the [newly found] items that are of concern?”

¹³⁴ The word “jealous” 妬 is better understood, as one of the OED definitions would apply here, as “in respect of success or advantage: Apprehensive of losing some desired benefit through the rivalry of another; feeling ill-will towards another on account of some advantage or superiority which he possesses or may possess; grudging, envious.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “jealous.”

¹³⁵ Translation of this line is Loewe's. Nylan's interpretation is “render them fit for little else save citation by trial judges.” Nylan, *Yang Xiong and Pleasure*, 125.

¹³⁶ The last lines are adapted from Loewe's translation: “Must these people stick to what they themselves think and simply cleave to what are no more than fragments of literature, banding together in their closely associated cliques, envious of real truth? They disobey our Emperor's decree and lose sight of what those illustrious men of old had in mind. That is how they may fall into the hands of an official who is investigating criminal matters—hardly a course that any man of quality would choose.”

to Zuo Qiuming (“compiled by Qiuming”), and while failing to elaborate further who this compiler was or what status he occupied, he mentions the name Zuo Qiuming as though it calls for no further remark, as a universally known fact. Further down in his letter, Liu Xin represents the Academicians’ objection that the Zuo Tradition did not have an interpretive relationship to the Classic. Responding to the Academicians’ position, he expresses regret that anyone could consider the Zuo as anything but an exegetical tradition (“Isn’t this lamentable!”). In short, Liu Xin does not explain how or why the Zuo Tradition could serve as a companion tradition that interprets the Classic. He treats the Zuo Tradition as if it was an assumption that needs no further justification because to him, the Zuo Tradition, along the other texts in the cache (the “texts in the archaic script”), are as valid as the transmitted texts (“the received copies in the offices of learning”) in collating better editions.

As a backdrop to the main issues concerning new exegetical traditions, Liu Xin depicts overall political and cultural decline from one historical stage to the next. Liu uses the following temporal eras and moments to structure his characterization of each stage of decline: the Sage emperors (“Tang and Yu”), the Zhou dynasty (“once the Zhou house fell into decline”), the death of Confucius (“When the Master passed away”), and down the Western Han reigns (“When the Han arose”; “Wendi”; and “Wudi”). For each of these major periods, Liu details progressive decline and highlights a handful of figures who sought to stall the decay (“[Confucius] made the *Annals*”; “[Shusun Tong] generally fixed the rites and protocols”; “there was only Mr. Jia [Yi] and that was it”). Liu draws an arc of ineluctable decline that temporary interventions did nothing to halt. Thus, for most of his letter, he narrates the course of larger cultural, political, and historical decline rather than immediately tackling the issue of the Zuo Tradition.

Liu Xin refers to the Zuo Tradition in the context of a cultural and moral project he mounted in order to forestall the relentless decline he depicted so unrelentingly. His sense of moral decline is linked to the perception of the loss of understanding of Confucius’ true messages in the Classics.¹³⁷ Whereas earlier the *Shiji* 14 depicts Zuo Qiuming’s concern over the faithful representation of Confucius’ values, Liu Xin’s letter expresses concern with the demise of Confucius’ morality, with the divergence of his messages, as he says:

夫子沒而微言絕，七十子終而大義乖。

When the Master passed away, his subtle words were cut off. When the seventy disciples died, there was a turn away from their great principles.

Compared to the *Shiji* passage, Liu Xin’s letter registers a precise moment in which the moral crisis was thought to have begun. Whereas earlier, the seventy disciples were the ones who were weakening the coherence of Confucius’ teachings, Liu Xin depicts Confucius and the disciples as a moral core, such that their deaths also meant that the morality they represented was no longer adhered to. This passage emphasizes the idea of the personal presence of not only the Sage, but

¹³⁷ This sentiment was pervasively felt as early as Xuandi’s time, when he convened the Stone Canal discussions to unify the divergence of interpretations threatening the direct and reliable connection to Confucius’ thought. Xuandi commanded “the various scholars on the Five Classics to compare the similarities and differences [between the Classics], then memorialize their responses” 五經諸儒雜論同異於石渠閣，條奏其對. HS 73.2108. The earliest extant work possibly containing such responses is compiled by Liu Xiang, entitled *Wujing tongyi* 五經通義. The fragments of these work are found in Ma Guohan, *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu*, 1935.

also his disciples, as a guiding moment of interpretation. In Liu Xin's story of doom and gloom, the Zuo Tradition would serve as a corrective to this stark decline in morality, because it is a veritable substitution of Confucius' and the disciples' presence and moral guidelines, referred to as the "great principles" here. Against a backdrop of moral depravity and cultural decline, Liu's focus on the correct teachings of Confucius' thought within Zuo Tradition marks a departure from the *Shiji*'s focus on Zuo Qiuming the person. This shift of emphasis implies that, as a text, Zuo Tradition is superior because it leads back to the personal presence of Confucius and disciples as the ultimate authorities.

Mutual corroboration of the Zuo Tradition and other traditions

In his letter, Liu Xin confirms that textual authority does not reside with the Academicians only, as he emphasizes the usefulness of textual verification through both library collections and living authorities. As depicted in the *Shiji*, both the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition resulted from the rearrangement of archival material. More specifically, as seen below, Liu Xin speaks of a manuscript version of the Zuo Tradition and its location. He speaks of the Zuo Tradition as a final physical edition rather than only a written version of Confucius' oral teachings. Liu asserts the existence of a Zuo Tradition manuscript found in the "palace library." Whereas the *Shiji* 14 only mentions Zuo's transcription of Confucius' full meanings into writing for the first time, Liu Xin brings attention to a physical manuscript copy of the Zuo Tradition. As a contrast to *Shiji*'s emphasis on the origins of the Zuo Tradition, Liu emphasizes the text as a tangible manuscript (with "missing bamboo strips" and "disordered strips"). This difference in emphasis shifts attention from issues of authorial intent to those of textual integrity.

Liu Xin treats the Zuo Tradition as one of the received traditions, for in his view, these new textual finds could repair the integrity of the classics and commentaries in a state of disrepair. If the *Shiji* 14 asserts the compatibility of Zuo Qiuming's work with Confucius' value system, then Liu Xin suggests a methodology whereby scholars could verify the correspondences between the archived texts and the scholarly traditions passed down officially ("had . . . the ancient texts collated and organized" and "checked them against the received copies in the offices of learning"). He does not explicitly suggest that either the archived or received traditions were more valuable than the other. As an advocate for the Zuo Tradition at the periphery of the circle of Academicians, he seems careful neither to overestimate the value of the Zuo Tradition nor to dismiss the other exegetical traditions in transmission already. At this point, he asserts the importance of using all available versions to mutually reinforce each other, inside and outside of Academicians' channels.

In fact, Liu Xin points to circulating scholarly traditions that corresponded with the textual traditions in the library. He makes reference to communities of scholarship that espoused their own exegetical traditions but had not been institutionalized at the imperial level:

When we sent out inquiries among the populace, we discovered the surviving traces of the experts of classical learning, such as those of Huan *Gong* in Lu, Guan *Gong* in Zhao, and Yong *Sheng* in Jiaodong, were just as with these [the three items], suppressed and not disseminated.

Liu Xin's reference to Guan Gong of Zhao, a Western Han scholar on the Zuo Tradition, is particularly telling. He does not assert the superiority of textual manuscripts because of their physical integrity, since he alleges that the Zuo Tradition was circulating "among the populace" under the leadership of Guan. Liu presents Guan as a figure to whom a received version of the Zuo Tradition could be traced, emphasizing the traceability of this scholastic line to an authority before Liu had discovered a manuscript version of it. Significantly, Liu Xin discusses the transmission of obscure ("suppressed and not yet disseminated") exegetical traditions within the pedagogical framework of master-pupil instruction, citing living authorities who transmitted counterparts to the archived texts he found.

Liu Xin's letter argues for the utility of making comparisons between exegetical traditions stored inside and those circulating outside of imperial library collections. Whether the versions of scholarly traditions were archived or transmitted, Liu Xin emphasizes that they be employed to corroborate each other's veracity. Thereupon, Liu Xin condemns the Academicians for rejecting traditions transmitted outside their own areas of expertise ("They suppressed these three texts, considered the *Documents* to be complete, and contended that Zuo Tradition does not transmit the *Annals*"). This charge represents Liu's critique of the Academicians' objections to new textual editions, which were, to them, peripheral scholastic traditions with shorter institutional pedigrees. Liu regards this refusal as an outrage because it denies the value of the Zuo Tradition as both the palace text and its transmitted counterpart (Guan's).¹³⁸ Liu Xin's bibliographical responsibilities and interests naturally inclined him toward manuscripts and peripheral traditions alike, since he saw them as new resources he could draw upon for textual redactions. His professional concern was checking the integrity of textual and scholarly traditions and repairing them to their best condition possible by comparing across available versions. Thus, Liu Xin is not explicitly arguing that palace texts were inherently superior; instead, he seeks to bring unsponsored traditions—textual or not—from the periphery to the academy. In particular, his letter demonstrates the value of the Zuo Tradition in terms of its utility for collation projects.

Liu Xin speaks of the Zuo Tradition as supplementing, and far from supplanting, the existing sponsored traditions. In his letter, he brings up Aidi's interest in adding more lines of interpretation to the study of the classics,¹³⁹ just as Xuandi (74–48) had earlier done.¹⁴⁰ He cites the examples of Xuandi's imperial mandates to establish multiple exegetical traditions for the same classic ("the Guliang Tradition for the *Annals*, the Liangqiu Tradition for the *Changes*, and Elder and Younger Xiahou Traditions for the *Documents*"). Liu Xin couches his appeal in terms of multiplying—and not replacing—the range of interpretations, even though they are by no means unified ("their principles were in conflict with each other"). He characterizes Xuandi's

¹³⁸ As mentioned in the *Hanshu*'s "Rulin zhuan," Guan Gong received instruction in the Zuo Tradition from Jia Yi HS 88.3620.

¹³⁹ Aidi could not have been more than around 25 years old at the time.

¹⁴⁰ Aidi's response to the Academicians' backlash against Liu Xin is: "[Liu] Xin wished to broaden the way of the arts, on what basis is this considered 'criticizing' and 'discrediting' [past precedents]?" 歆欲廣道術，亦何以為非毀哉。 (HS 36.1972). Many places in the *Hanshu* mention Xuandi's (74–49 BCE) repeated approvals to set up new Academicians' posts, thereby increasing the scholastic lines of classical interpretations. See the summaries to the bibliographies for *Yi* 易 (HS 30.1704), and *Shu* 書 (HS 30.1706) in the *Hanshu*'s "Yiwenzhi"; the biographies of *Yi* scholars (HS 88.3596) and Guliang scholars (HS 88.3618) in the appraisal of the "Rulin zhuan" (HS 88.3621).

willingness to officially sanction multiple traditions as analogous to the Sage's desire to preserve both "significant" and "minor" principles. Despite this appeal to embrace plural interpretations, the unspoken understanding was that the stakes were high for official Academicians. As established authorities, they might suffer a loss of authority over both the method and substance of their interpretations if other exegetical traditions also received palace patronage. Liu Xin's letter glosses over the possibility that admitting new traditions might change the status of some in the set of texts in the academy vis-à-vis the set in the palace library. By citing imperial precedents that supported the incorporation of new traditions, he seeks to minimize fears that the introduction of the Zuo Tradition, among others, may subvert existing power structures.

This preemptive strategy backfired, since Liu Xin's promotion of the new traditions in the name of the emperor did not go over well with the Academicians.¹⁴¹ Judging from their response, they did not buy into Liu Xin's appeal to past imperial policies, for they immediately faulted Liu for having "changed and disordered the old sections of texts, and discredited that which past emperors had established." This response reveals the Academicians' fear of possible intellectual and political changes, as those studying the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, for example, would have had to confront competing interpretations of the Zuo Tradition that might pose a threat to their authority. They had vested interests in protecting their authority from the reassessments that the comparison of multiple texts and traditions might occasion. Liu Xin's letter, and the angry response it provoked, reveal that this set of scholars was less focused on the Zuo Tradition *per se* and more concerned about the possible ramifications of imperial endorsement of additional traditions.

Restoration of fragmented traditions

In his letter, Liu Xin also turns attention to issues of cultural and ritual legacy as he highlights the usefulness of lesser known textual traditions. This is unsurprising, considering that Liu Xin was an official collating documents in the imperial library.¹⁴² For Liu Xin, the more traditions of learning he collected, the more resources he had at his disposal for determining ritual protocols and state ceremonies. He speaks from the perspective of one concerned about the breakdown of cultural institutions and fragmentation of knowledge ("none of them knew original ways [of carrying out these ceremonies]"). In this part of the letter, he chides the Academicians for denying that the unsponsored traditions (including the Zuo Tradition) could remedy this gap in knowledge in such events as "the construction of the Circular Moat, the performance of the *feng* and *shan* [sacrifices], and imperial tour inspections."

From Liu's perspective, the unofficial traditions he mentioned earlier could greatly contribute to the volume of past precedents the court could draw upon to prescribe rituals and make policy. Throughout his letter, Liu Xin has portrayed each stage of decline in terms of

¹⁴¹ Immediately following the quotation of Liu Xin's letter, his biographer Ban Gu narrates the Academicians' unfavorable reaction to Liu's proposal: "The specialist in traditional learning, Shi Dan, the Imperial Counsellor, was for his part greatly angered. He memorialized that [Liu] Xin changed and disordered the old sections of texts, and discredited that which past emperors had established" 及儒者師丹為大司空，亦大怒，奏欲改亂舊章，非毀先帝所立" (HS 36.1972). Shi Dan became an Academician towards the end of Yuandi's reign, and was reappointed between 38 and 34. Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 475.

¹⁴² During Aidi's reign, he was the Commandant, Imperial Carriages (*Fengju Duwei* 奉車都尉). Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 383.

disintegration of ritual culture: “once the Zhou house fell into decline, the rites and music were set aside”; “the Warring States, when the rituals with their wooden or bamboo vessels were cast aside”; “The Han arose, . . . there was only one Shusun Tong (fl. 195 BCE), who generally fixed the rites and protocols”; “In the reign of Wudi . . . the edict read: ‘The rites are damaged, and [proper] music is gone.’ ” Piecing together the continual loss of ritual practices, Liu highlights the momentous event of discovering palace texts. He makes the case that this collection of texts, together with their transmitted counterparts, could fill in the lacunae of ritual knowledge and halt the gradual cultural decline. By extension then, the Zuo Tradition would add to this corpus of traditions used for supplementing the repertoire of rituals used at court.

Liu Xin places his discovery of a Zuo Tradition manuscript in the context of this larger cultural vision on behalf of the imperial court. Strictly speaking, the letter itself does not argue about the authorship of the Zuo Tradition. Liu appears more interested in two things: establishing the connection between the palace library “lost” texts and the transmitted traditions that had received no sponsorship, and underlining their centrality in the revival of court rituals and culture. As stated in his letter, his abiding concern is to establish unrecognized traditions of the classics on equal footing with already sponsored ones. With more traditions recognized as valid, his letter argued, the overall state of scholarship and cultural outlook would significantly improve.

Questions raised in the E. Han about the Zuo Tradition

Among the extant sources from the early Eastern Han, the memorials of Fan Sheng (fl. 29) and Chen Yuan (fl. 29) preserve the fullest account of attitudes toward the Zuo Tradition in the early years of Guangwudi’s reign (25–58 CE). The Fan-Chen debate gives us a bird’s eye view of the political, scholastic, and intellectual issues surrounding the authority of the Zuo Tradition shortly after Wang Mang’s interregnum (9–23 CE). The debaters never commented on the political landscape of the Wang Mang era leading up to Guanwudi’s reign, preferring instead to dwell on the continuities between the Western and Eastern Han.

Fan’s and Chen’s memorials are quoted in their respective biographies in the single *Hou Hanshu* chapter “The Group Biographies of the Zheng, Fan, Chen, Jia, and Zhang Families” 鄭范陳賈張列傳. Fan Sheng’s memorial opposes establishing Academicians for the study of the Zuo Tradition while Chen Yuan’s memorial represents the arguments in favor of it. These two gentlemen exchanged more than ten rounds of oral arguments, but only their written memorials are quoted. The two men took different sides on the authorship, authority, and appreciation of the Zuo Tradition. Even though these figures submitted their memorials separately to the throne, when read side by side, they consist of an orderly set of propositions and rebuttals, wherein one scholar would try to turn a negative value in his opponent’s argument into a positive virtue in his own argument. In this respect, the Fan-Chen debate is unique among the preceding and succeeding writings about the Zuo Tradition in early and early medieval China.

The Zuo Tradition in the context of empire-building

The Fan-Chen debate took place against the backdrop of re-formation, as the first emperor of Eastern Han set about building his “restored” empire.¹⁴³ They vied to promote different compelling visions of the classicist contributions to rebuilding the imperial court. According to the *Hou Hanshu*, Fan Sheng presented his memorial in the fourth year of Guangwudi’s reign in 29 CE. At this point in history, Liu Xiu 劉秀 had just set himself up as the new emperor and was still a few years away from quelling the contending warlords for his empire.¹⁴⁴ One of Guangwudi’s priorities was to widely recruit officials to his court, regardless of their different intellectual affiliations. Garnering the support of scholars, he set to work reappointing the Academicians’ Chairs. The Zuo Tradition was one of the exegetical traditions considered for discussion regarding its merit for official sponsorship.

Before we turn to a critical analysis of the texts of Fan Sheng’s and Chen Yuan’s memorials, we will first study these men’s backgrounds, as given in the *Hou Hanshu*. Even though Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan held oral debates in front of Guangwudi, the two men belonged to distinct, if overlapping, circles. Fan and Chen occupied different official posts, studied with different teachers, and established their reputations through different personal associations. We have no conclusive evidence that these differences influenced Fan’s and Chen’s opposing positions with regard to accepting the Zuo Tradition as an imperially endorsed branch of learning. But perhaps we may note the possible correlations between their personal backgrounds and argumentative positions.

Our only available source on Chen Yuan, the *Hou Hanshu*, associates him with other notable recruits of Guangwudi who were operating outside of the Academicians’ network, of which Fan Sheng was a part. Placing Chen within the group of men comprised of Huan Tan 桓譚 (d. 28), Du Lin 杜林 (d. 47), and Zheng Xing 鄭興 (fl. 32), his biography states that Chen’s renown was equal to that of these three officials:

建武初，元與桓譚、杜林、鄭興俱為學者所宗。¹⁴⁵

At the beginning of the Jianwu reign [of Guangwudi, 25–56 CE], Chen Yuan and Huan Tan, Du Lin, and Zheng Xing were regarded by learned men as leaders.

According to the biographies of these three figures, they were socially and intellectually connected with each other: Huan Tan, Zheng Xing, and Chen Yuan’s father Chen Qin had all been associates of Liu Xin, and Du Lin had recommended Zheng Xing to higher office.¹⁴⁶ While these scholars were affiliated with each other in these ways, Fan Sheng, while having his own biography,¹⁴⁷ fails to be mentioned in any of their biographies. Either Fan Sheng was not in close contact with this circle, or Fan Ye, the compiler of the *Hou Hanshu*, deliberately groups these scholars together to give them a more defined group identity than they had in their own time.

¹⁴³ As Jack Dull states, “Emperor Kuang-wu’s primary concern was in establishing his empire, not in deciding issues in the scholarly world.” For Guangwudi’s interest in the Fan Sheng/ Chen Yuan debates as his way of gaining support from the scholarly world, see Dull, *Apocryphal Texts of the Han*, 353–4.

¹⁴⁴ See CHC 274–8.

¹⁴⁵ HHS 36.1230.

¹⁴⁶ See HHS 28.955–62 for Huan Tan and HHS 36.1217–23 for Zheng Xing.

¹⁴⁷ HS 36.1226–9.

Since the *Hou Hanshu* places Huan Tan and Chen Yuan as belonging to the same select circle of leaders in their day,¹⁴⁸ a comparison of Huan's and Chen's views will likely illuminate something about their shared beliefs concerning the authorship and function of the Zuo Tradition. Below is a passage from a textual fragment attributed to Huan Tan and cited in later sources.¹⁴⁹ Despite the possibility of distortion and false attribution, we can nevertheless catch a glimpse of the beliefs floating around the period just prior to the Fan-Chen debate. Below we examine Huan Tan's view of the Zuo Tradition, not only as an exegetical tradition of the *Annals*, but also one that stands superior to the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. The following quotation appears in the "Zhengjing pian" 正經篇 (Correcting the Classics chapter) of Huan Tan's *Xinlun* 新論:

左氏傳遭戰國寢廢，後百餘年，魯人穀梁赤為春秋，殘略多所遺失。又有齊人公羊高，緣經文作傳，彌失本事矣。左氏傳於經，猶衣之表裏，相持而成。經而無傳，使聖人閉門思之，十年不能知也。¹⁵⁰

The Zuo Tradition was abandoned during the Warring States. More than a hundred years later, Guliang Chi of Lu interpreted the *Annals*. It was damaged and incomplete, and much of the text was lost. There was also the Gongyang Gao of Qi, who followed along the text of the Classic to compose his exegetical tradition, which departed from the original events to a greater extent. The Zuo Tradition is to the Classic as outer garment is to inner lining; they rely on each other to form a complete whole. Without the [Zuo] Tradition, even were the Sage to close his doors and meditate on it [i.e. the Classic] for ten years, he would not be able to understand it.¹⁵¹

This fragment shows Huan Tan ascribing an earlier history to the Zuo Tradition (dating it to the "Warring States"), some hundred years earlier than the Guliang and Gongyang Traditions. This passage also strongly states the co-dependency between the Zuo Tradition and the *Annals* ("as outer garment is to inner"). Huan touts the Zuo Tradition as the only exegetical tradition that could offer insight into the Classic, while the other two traditions were either full of holes ("damaged and incomplete") or misinterpretations ("departed from the original events"). Huan suggests that the Zuo Tradition could boast of an earlier origin and superior interpretations to facilitate one's understanding of the Classic ("without the [Zuo] Tradition, even were the Sage to close his doors and meditate on it [i.e. the Classic] for ten years, he would not be able to understand it"). Such unequivocal assertions about the supremacy of the Zuo Tradition are not seen often in the extant works of Chen Yuan's era. As readers will recall, the *Shiji*'s "Table of the Twelve Feudal Lords" presents the Zuo Tradition as a correct interpretation of Confucius' messages, and Liu Xin speaks of the supplemental function of the Zuo Tradition. But none of these Han sources strongly declare, as Huan Tan does above, that both the Guliang and Gongyang Traditions were later and more unreliable exegetical traditions. Essentially, Huan is

¹⁴⁸ Yang Xiong was also a much admired teacher of Huan Tan. For Huan's relationship with and assessment of Yang, see Nylan, *Yang Xiong and Pleasure*, 24–7.

¹⁴⁹ For the textual history of Huan Tan's fragmented work, see ECT 158–60.

¹⁵⁰ Yan Kejun, 546a.

¹⁵¹ Translation completed in consultation with Pokora, *Hsin-Lun*, 94.

far more explicit and emphatic about the Zuo Tradition as the definitive, and only viable, option for scholars seeking to comprehend the subtle messages of the *Annals*.

However, at the time Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan submitted their memorials, enough doubt lingered for a debate on the question of the Zuo Tradition's authority. Evidently, as early as Huan Tan's time (d. 28), Liu Xin's conception of the Zuo Tradition already had already taken hold in some minds as the correct interpretation.¹⁵² However, judging from the contents of Fan Sheng's memorial, scholars achieved no consensus on the status of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition, for Fan continued to challenge the link between the Zuo Tradition and the *Annals* as basis for the Zuo Tradition's special authority.

Here let us note a general disparity in official status between the Zuo Tradition advocates and Fan Sheng, as their opponent. Besides Chen Yuan, there were also a few champions of the Zuo Tradition featured in the *Hou Hanshu*: Han Xin 韓歆 (d. ca. 39) and Xu Shu 許淑 (fl. 29), both of whom also orally debated with Fan Sheng at court. At the time Fan squared off against them, Han Xin was the Director of the Imperial Secretariat (*Shangshu ling* 尚書令) ranked at 1000 bushels, and Xu Shu was the Palace Counsellor (*Taizhong dafu* 太中大夫) at 2000 bushels,¹⁵³ while Fan occupied the post Academicians' Chair at a relatively meager 600 bushels. Yet when Han Xin forwarded the proposal to appoint Academicians for the Zuo Tradition to Guangwudi, Fan came forward to counter it ("to evaluate [Han Xin's proposal]"). As a lower-ranking official, Fan Sheng stood his grounds against the higher-ranking officials, Han Xin, Xu Shu, and others who supported the establishment of the Zuo Tradition. In the end, Guangwudi's final decision endorsed the position of Han's and Xu's camp, despite Fan Sheng's valiant stand as the only Academician voicing opposition to the Zuo Tradition. Below are the biographical narrative and text of Fan Sheng's memorial,¹⁵⁴ followed by those of Chen Yuan's memorial:¹⁵⁵

建武二年，光武徵詣懷宮，拜議郎，遷博士，上疏讓曰：「臣與博士梁恭、山陽太守呂羌俱修梁丘易。二臣年並耆艾，經學深明，而臣不以時退，與恭並立，深知羌學，又不能達，慚負二老，無顏於世。誦而不行，知而不言，不可開口以為人師，願推博士以避恭、羌。」帝不許，然由是重之，數詔引見，每有大議，輒見訪問。

In the second year of the Jianwu reign [27 CE], Guangwudi summoned Fan Sheng to the Huai Palace, appointed him the Consultant,¹⁵⁶ and promoted him to Academician. Fan wrote a memorial to decline [the post], saying: "Your humble servant, together with Academician Liang Gong and the Governor of Shanyang Lü Qiang,¹⁵⁷ studied the Liangqiu [tradition] of the *Changes*. The two ministers are both elderly, and their scholarship on the Classics is profound and clear. Yet

¹⁵² Huan Tan was one of Liu Xin's pupils. As noted in Liu's biographical notice, "Exceptionally Liu Xin was one of the few contemporaries who appreciated the qualities of Yang Xiong." Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 386.

¹⁵³ Titles taken from Rafe De Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 1239; 1240.

¹⁵⁴ HHS 36.1226–30.

¹⁵⁵ HHS 36.1230–33.

¹⁵⁶ Title taken from De Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 1240..

¹⁵⁷ The *Hou Hanshu* does not mention these two figures anywhere else, other than here in Fan Sheng's memorial.

rather than making a timely retreat, if I should stand shoulder to shoulder with [Liang] Gong, deeply understand the scholarship of [Lü] Qiang yet could not advance, then I would fail to do justice to the two elders and have no face in this generation. If I am able to pay lip service [to the scholarship of Liang and Lü] yet could not practice it, understand it yet could not explain to others, then I should not open my mouth to be the model of others. I wish to turn down the Academician appointment in order to recommend [Liang] Gong and [Lü] Qiang.” The emperor did not permit [the resignation]. Yet on account of [Fan’s deference], the emperor regarded him even more favorably. The emperor summoned him to court a few times. Every time there was an important court discussion, the emperor would ask him to appear before the court for consultation.

In Fan Sheng’s reply above, he makes a gesture of deference to other living authorities, in a show of respect for their seniority. According to the *Hou Hanshu*, for his outward submission to senior members of the text he studied, he gained the audience of the emperor. This respect for authority is presumably a prominent feature of Academicians’ culture.

時尚書令韓歆上疏，欲為費氏易、左氏春秋立博士，詔下其議。四年正月，朝公卿、大夫、博士，見於雲臺。帝曰：「范博士可前平說。」升起對曰：「左氏不祖孔子，而出於丘明，師徒相傳，又無其人，且非先帝所存，無因得立。」遂與韓歆及太中大夫許淑等互相辯難，日中乃罷。

At the time the Director of the Imperial Secretariat Han Xin submitted a memorial, wishing [the emperor] to set up Academicians’ Chairs for the Bi Tradition of *Changes* and the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*. The emperor decreed that the ministers discuss it. In the first month of the fourth month, the court Nobles and Ministers, Grand Masters, and Academicians were ordered to appear in Cloud Terrace. The emperor said: “Academician Fan may step forward to evaluate [Han Xin’s proposal].” Fan Sheng rose from his seat and replied, saying, “The Zuo Tradition does not have Confucius as its source;¹⁵⁸ instead it came from [Zuo] Qiuming.¹⁵⁹ As for transmission between masters and disciples, there were moreover no men of the proper sort. Moreover it is not that which past emperors have preserved, [so] there are no grounds upon which to establish it.”¹⁶⁰ Subsequently Fan, Han Xin as well as Superior Grand Master of the Palace Xu Shu and others debated and cross-examined each other, not ceasing until noon.

¹⁵⁸ In the absence of commentary, I take the verb *zu* 祖 in the sense of “to treat as the ancestor” or “to take as the model.”

¹⁵⁹ Jack Dull explains, in his summary of the Fan-Chen debate: “According to Fan Sheng, Tso Ch’iu-ming was not a direct disciple of Confucius and therefore could not really represent the views of the master himself, at least not from first hand knowledge.” Dull, *Apocryphal Texts of the Han*, 351.

¹⁶⁰ As Dull restates, “Fan Sheng warned the Emperor that since previous emperors have established Erudits for these classics neither should Emperor Kuang-wu.” Ibid.

In this round of the debate over the Zuo Tradition, Fan Sheng raises three objections about it: first, it could not be traced back to the teachings of Confucius; secondly, there are no demonstrable lineages passing it down from generation to generation; thirdly, there is no precedent for its official sponsorship in the past.

升退而奏曰：「臣聞主不稽古，無以承天；臣不述舊，無以奉君。陛下愍學微缺，勞心經藝，情存博聞，故異端競進。」

Fan Sheng retreated and memorialized, saying, “Your humble servant hears that if a ruler does not investigate the past, he has no means by which to carry on Heaven’s [mandate]. If a minister does not transmit the past, he has no means by which to serve the ruler. Your majesty feels sorrow over the deterioration of scholarship. He strains his mind over the Classics and the arts. And he harbors inner concern for [the need to have] broad-ranging opinions. Therefore [proponents of] divergent traditions compete with each other for advancement.

In the opening of Fan Sheng’s memorial above, he appeals to the Guangwudi’s interest in the history of matters of scholarship. This interest, he claims, encouraged the proponents of traditions he disapproved of—primarily the Bi and Zuo traditions—to vie for the emperor’s attention as well.

近有司請置京氏易博士，群下執事，莫能據正。京氏既立，費氏怨望，左氏春秋復以比類，亦希置立。京、費已行，次復高氏，春秋之家，又有騶、夾。如今左氏、費氏得置博士，高氏、騶、夾，五經奇異，並復求立，各有所執，乖戾分爭，從之則失道，不從則失人，將恐陛下必有厭倦之聽。

Recently officials have requested the establishment of Academicians for the Jing Tradition of *Changes*.¹⁶¹ Of the myriad officials below, no one could base [their arguments upon] the correct standards. Were the Jing Tradition to be established, the [proponents of the] Bi Tradition would be resentful.¹⁶² The Zuo Tradition of the *Annals* would follow suit and expect to be established as well. Once the Jing and Bi Traditions have been established, in turn the Gao Tradition too [will

¹⁶¹ According to the HS “Rulinzhuan,” Jing Fang’s 京房 (c. 140–c. 80 BCE) tradition of the *Changes* was established during the time of Yuandi of the Western Han. HS 88.3620-1. According to the summary to the bibliography of titles on the *Changes* in the HS “Yiwen zhi” also, the Jing Tradition had at one time Academicians’ Chairs established for its study while the Bi Tradition and Gao Tradition circulated outside among scholarly communities. As reported in this passage, only the version of the *Changes* that Bi Tradition commented on contains “archaic script.” The “Yiwen zhi” says: “Arriving at the reigns of Xuandi and Yuandi, the Shi, Meng, Liangqiu, and Jing traditions were all ranked among the offices of learning, while among the people there were the explanations of the Bi and Gao these two traditions” 訖于宣、元，有施、孟、梁丘、京氏列於學官，而民間有費、高二家之說. HS 30.1704. But judging from a later statement in Fan Sheng’s memorial, the Jing Tradition was abandoned sometime after its establishment in Yuandi’s reign, therefore the topic of its re-establishment apparently resurfaced as a topic of debate in the beginning of Guangwudi’s reign. Fan Sheng refers to this abandonment by “past emperors” 先帝, which by definition would have to be the Western Han emperors.

¹⁶² This was the tradition of Bi Zhi 費直 (?–?), a master of the *Changes*. HS 88.3602.

request establishment].¹⁶³ As for the Zuo Traditions of the *Annals*, there are moreover the Zou and Jia traditions.¹⁶⁴ If your majesty orders to have Academicians' Chairs set up for the Zuo and Bi traditions, then [the proponents of] the Gao, Zou, and Jia Traditions, and all sorts of bizarre traditions of the Five Classics, would also seek for establishment.¹⁶⁵ Each tradition has that which its proponents hold fast to; they will diverge and struggle with one another. If you go along with their wishes, then you will lose the Way. If you fail to go along with their wishes, then you will lose your people [i.e. their support and allegiance]. I am afraid that your majesty will surely have exhausting court discussions.

Fan Sheng offers a scenario of official traditions proliferating rapidly out of control, as he attempts to persuade the emperor to prevent further dissent. He urges the emperor to be more discriminating and conservative about which traditions he allows to be officially sponsored.

孔子曰：『博學約之，弗叛矣夫。』夫學而不約，必叛道也。顏淵曰：『博我以文，約我以禮。』孔子可謂知教，顏淵可謂善學矣。老子曰：『學道日損。』損猶約也。又曰：『絕學無憂。』絕末學也。

Confucius said: '[A gentleman] who is widely-versed in learning and submits his learning to the restraints of ritual is not likely to go far wrong.'¹⁶⁶ As for those who learn yet do not submit to ritual, without question [they] will run contrary to the Way. Yan Yuan said, 'Broaden me with the letters. Restrain me with ritual.' Confucius could be considered knowledgeable about teaching, and Yan Yuan considered good at learning. Laozi said, 'Learning the way, it [one's learning] diminishes by the day.' Diminishment is the same as getting hold of the main idea. Laozi also said, 'Cutting off one's learning, one will have no more worries.' This means one ought to eliminate the secondary forms of learning.

Above, Fan Sheng cites from *Analects* and Laozi to further illustrate the benefits of keeping scholarship to a few essentials only. He interprets these passages as support for his argument against the court sponsorship of more traditions of learning.

今費、左二學，無有本師，而多反異，先帝前世，有疑於此，故京氏雖立，輒復見廢。疑道不可由，疑事不可行。詩書之作，其來已久。孔子尚周流遊

¹⁶³ This was the Gao Xiang's 高相 (?-?) Tradition of the *Changes*. Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ The founders of the Zou and Jia traditions are not to be found in the HS "Rulin zhuan." They are, however, mentioned in the appraisal of the "Yiwen zhi," where Ban Gu writes, "In these latter days, oral explanations went into wide circulation, so there appeared the Gongyang, Guliang, Zou, and Jia Traditions [of the *Annals*]. Of the four traditions, Gongyang and Guliang were established as in the offices of learning, the Zou Tradition had no masters, and the Jia Tradition never had writings at all" 及末世口說流行，故有公羊、穀梁、鄒、夾之傳。四家之中，公羊、穀梁立於學官，鄒氏無師，夾氏未有書. HS 30.1715.

¹⁶⁵ As Dull explains, Fan "asserted that if these two versions [Zuo and Bi traditions] of the classics were recognized then others would also clamor for the same treatment and in the end there would be no orthodoxy, but confusion." Dull, 351.

¹⁶⁶ *Analects* 6.25. Translation adapted from Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 121.

觀，至于知命，自衛反魯，乃正雅、頌。今陛下草創天下，紀綱未定，雖設學官，無有弟子，詩書不講，禮樂不修，奏立左、費，非政急務。

Today the Bi and the Zuo, these two traditions of scholarship, have no authoritative teachers and in many cases what they teach are contradictory and strange. The past emperors of previous generations had their doubts about these traditions, therefore even though the Jing Tradition was established [at one point], it was soon abandoned. They doubted that the [right] way could be followed and the [right] actions could be performed. The creation of the *Odes* and *Documents* occurred long ago. Confucius was still roaming everywhere to make observations during his travels. When he reached [the age when] he knew his fate [fifty years old], he returned from the state of Wey to Lu, and only then did he standardize the ‘Elegantiae’ and ‘Hymns.’ Today, your majesty has from scratch created the realm [i.e. founded a new dynasty], protocols and institutions have not yet been fixed. [So] even though you have established Academicians, there are no students [to recruit]. The *Odes* and *Documents* are not being taught, ritual and music are not practiced. Yet they [Han Xin, Xu Shu] memorialize about establishing the Zuo and Bi Traditions—that is not the urgent task of your administration [at this moment].

In this section above, Fan Sheng focuses on the *Odes* and *Documents* as the fundamental Classics the emperor ought to attend to, rather than extraneous learning such as the Zuo Tradition, which along with the Bi Tradition, has no history of ever having been officially endorsed in the Western Han. He suggests to the emperor that appointing Academicians for its study should not be his priority as he sets out to restore the Han empire.

孔子曰：『攻乎異端，斯害也已。』傳曰：『聞疑傳疑，聞信傳信，而堯舜之道存。』願陛下疑先帝之所疑，信先帝之所信，以示反本，明不專己。天下之事所以異者，以不一本也。易曰：『天下之動，貞夫一也。』又曰：『正其本，萬事理。』五經之本自孔子始，謹奏左氏之失凡十四事。」

Confucius said, ‘To study errant principles—that is injurious indeed.’¹⁶⁷ The Tradition says, ‘Hear the suspect and pass it on [as something] suspect; hear the credible and pass it on [as something] credible;¹⁶⁸ and the way of Yao and Shun will be preserved.¹⁶⁹ I wish that your majesty would hold suspect that which past emperors have deemed suspect, and trust that which they had found trustworthy,

¹⁶⁷ *Analects* 2.16.

¹⁶⁸ This is a citation of the Guliang Tradition, fifth year of Duke Huan: “The meaning of the *Annals*: the trustworthy was passed on as the trusted; the suspect was passed on as the suspect.” 春秋之義：信以傳信，疑以傳疑。Fan Ning, *Chunqiu Guliang zhuan zhushu (Zhengliben)*, 48.

¹⁶⁹ According to the Li Xian commentary, this is a citation of the Gongyang Tradition even though it is nowhere to be found in the text today: “Why did the gentlemen make the *Annals*? Because they delighted in the way of Yao and Shun” 君子曷為春秋？樂堯舜之道也。Since this quote mentions the Gentlemen to have authored the *Chunqiu* I take it to mean the state annals, as differentiated from the *Annals* Classic attributed to Confucius. HHS 36.1228.

in order to demonstrate [to all] that he has returned to the root [of things] and to clarify that he does not hold himself to be the sole authority. The reason the affairs of the world are contradictory is that they are not [tied to] a single root. The *Changes* says: '[Despite] the stirrings of the world, the constant man is one [with the root].' It also says: 'By aligning with the root, the ten thousand things become well ordered.'¹⁷⁰ The root of the Five Classics originated with Confucius. I respectfully memorialize fourteen deficiencies of the Zuo Tradition."¹⁷¹

As he concludes his memorial above, Fan Sheng equates the "root" with the traditions of the Five Classics that first were approved by emperors of the past, and secondly, are based on the principles of Confucius. He places great emphasis on these two criteria that determine the validity of traditions under consideration in Guangwudi's reign, and so implies that the Zuo Tradition fails to meet these criteria.

時難者以太史公多引左氏，升又上太史公違戾五經，謬孔子言，及左氏春秋不可錄三十一事。詔以下博士。

At the time, those who challenged Fan Sheng brought up the fact that the Grand Historian frequently drew from the Zuo Tradition.¹⁷² Fan again memorialized, saying that the Grand Historian diverged from the Five Classics and distorted Confucius' words.¹⁷³ Fan also memorialized thirty-one events that the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals* could not have recorded.¹⁷⁴ [Subsequently] the emperor opened up [Fan Sheng's memorials] for discussion among the Academicians.

As recorded in the *Hou Hanshu*, the memorial of Fan Sheng cited above provoked more debates at court. At this point, the relationship between the Zuo Tradition and the writings of the Grand Historian became a point of contention between the two sides of the debate. Again, in another memorial, Fan Sheng essentially expresses the Zuo Tradition's incommensurability with the ideas of Confucius. Notwithstanding Fan's repeated appeals, no consensus was reached, as the emperor left the status of the Zuo Tradition up for further debate, to be continued by Chen Yuan below:

¹⁷⁰ Li Xian notes that the *Changes* of his time did not contain the text of this citation. HHS 36.1229.

¹⁷¹ Neither the *Yuhan shanfang jiyishu* nor the section on Fan Sheng's writings in Yan Kejun's compilation contains the text of these fourteen points. Yan Kejun, *Quan Houhan wen*, 19.1-3.

¹⁷² Within our extant version of the *Shiji* itself, the terms "Zuo Tradition" and the name Zuo Qiuming appear once each in SJ 14, the "Table of the Twelve Vassal lords." See discussion in chapter one. The name Zuo Qiu appears in SJ 130, mentioned there as the author of the *Guoyu*. See n. 20 in chapter one. As Stephen Durrant and Grant Hardy illustrate, Sima Qian used the Zuo Tradition as one of his important sources. Durrant, *Cloudy Mirror*, 33; Hardy, *Bamboo and Bronze*, 148-50. However, the *Shiji* fails to cite the Zuo Tradition by title whenever he borrows passages or episodes appearing in today's version of the Zuo Tradition.

¹⁷³ The *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi" places the work of the Grand Historian ("Taishi Gong 130 chapters" 太史公百三十篇) among "a total of twenty-three scholastic lines for the *Chunqiu*" 凡春秋二十三家, along with such titles as the *Guoyu*, *Zhanguoce*, Stone Canal Discussions, *Chu-Han Chunqiu*, etc. HS 30.1714.

¹⁷⁴ As Dull understands it, "the *Tso-chuan* was attacked for supposedly containing errors and when Fan's opponents tried to defend their position by reference to quotations of *Tso-chuan* in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Shih-chi*, Fan submitted another memorial accusing Ssu-ma Ch'ien of perverting the classics."

時議欲立左氏傳博士，范升奏以為左氏淺末，不宜立。元聞之，乃詣闕上疏曰：

At the time there was a court discussion about the desire to set up Academicians for the Zuo Tradition. [But] Fan Sheng memorialized that he considered the Zuo Tradition superficial and insignificant, and unsuitable for establishment. Chen Yuan heard this and henceforth went to the court and memorialized, saying:

陛下撥亂反正，文武並用，深愍經藝謬雜，真偽錯亂，每臨朝日，輒延群臣講論聖道。知丘明至賢，親受孔子，而公羊、穀梁傳聞於後世，故詔立左氏，博詢可否，示不專己，盡之群下也。

“Your majesty pacified the disorder and returned [things] to their correct standards, with both civil and military means. You are deeply concerned that the Classics and arts are confused and in disarray, the authentic and inauthentic are mixed up. Every time you preside over your court in the morning, the multitudes of ministers at court discourse and discuss the way of the Sages. Your majesty knows that Qiuming was very worthy and that he personally received teachings from Confucius, whereas the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions were transmitted in later generations. That is why your majesty issued an imperial edict to establish [an Academicians’ Chair for] the Zuo Tradition and inquired widely as to the acceptability [of this decision],¹⁷⁵ demonstrating that you do not treat yourself as the [sole] authority, and would leave it all to your subordinates.

In the opening to his memorial above, Chen Yuan makes the most crucial point in his argument: Zuo Qiuming had personal contact with Confucius as his student, in contrast to the masters of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, who enjoyed no such privilege. This is the striking distinction that Liu Xin implies in his “Letter to the Academicians” but that Chen directly states here.

今論者沈溺所習，翫守舊聞，固執虛言傳受之辭，以非親見實事之道。左氏孤學少與，遂為異家之所覆冒。夫至音不合眾聽，故伯牙絕弦；至寶不同眾好，故卞和泣血。仲尼聖德，而不容於世，況於竹帛餘文，其為雷同者所排，固其宜也。非陛下至明，孰能察之！

Nowadays, those who opine about such things are mired in what they are well-versed in, stubbornly guard old learning, willfully hold on to vain words and transmitted phrases,¹⁷⁶ and use [them] to criticize the way of true events that he [Zuo Qiuming] personally saw. Master Zuo learned alone and gave [his tradition]

¹⁷⁵ In Dull’s words, “Ch’en argued that the *Tso-chuan* deserved official sanction because its author had personally received instruction from Confucius.” Dull, 351.

¹⁷⁶ Even though *xuyan* 虛言 could be translated as “empty words” as well, I have translated it as such here to distinguish it from the “empty pronouncements” (*kongyan* 空言) of Confucius, which in the *Shiji* refers to his judgments. See n. 62 and 73 in chapter one.

to few [people]. Consequently, he was submerged and concealed by the divergent schools. The loftiest tone does not suit the common audience, and so Boya cut his strings.¹⁷⁷ The ultimate treasure does not accord with common tastes, and so Bian He cried blood.¹⁷⁸ The sagely virtue of Confucius was not accommodated by his generation, let alone the leftover writings on bamboo and silk. It is indeed fitting that they are rejected by those who echo the same opinions. If it were not for the ultimate brightness of your majesty, who would be able to discriminate it!

Chen Yuan raises Zuo Qiuming and Confucius as parallel examples of figures who were unappreciated in their own age. Chen emphasizes this parallel in order to first, associate Zuo Qiuming more closely with the Sage, and second, to account for the Zuo Tradition's obscurity while other traditions have been long in circulation.

臣元竊見博士范升等所議奏左氏春秋不可立，及太史公違戾凡四十五事。案升為所言，前後相違，皆斷截小文，媿黷微辭，以年數小差，掇為巨謬，遺脫纖微，指為大尤，抉瑕擿釁，掩其弘美，所謂『小辯破言，小言破道』者也。

I, Yuan, humbly read that which Academician Fan Sheng and others memorialized regarding the impermissibility of establishing the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*, as well as a total of forty-five points where the Grand Historian departed from and conflicted [with the Five Classics]. If I may note here, the places which Fan spoke of as being mutually contradictory are all passages taken out of context. He defiled and sullied subtle language and blew up minor discrepancies in calendrical calculation into enormous mistakes. As for fine gaps and small omissions, he criticized them as large errors. He picked out the imperfections and exposed the gaps, concealing their excellent points. This is what may be considered 'petty speech ruining the words and trifling discussions destroying the way.'¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ See the “Xiaoxing lan” 孝行覽 chapter of *Lüshi Chunqiu*: “Boya was strumming the zither, and Zhong Ziqi was listening to it. Just when he strummed the zither, his aspirations were set on Mount Tai. Zhong Ziqi said, ‘How excellent is the zither strumming! It is majestic and lofty like Mount Tai.’ In a little while, his aspirations were set on flowing water, and Zhong Ziqi said, ‘How excellent is the zither strumming, it rushes and seethes like the flowing water.’ Zhong Ziqi died, Boya destroyed the zither and broke the strings, and till the end of his life did not again play the zither, he considered that in all the world there was no one for whom it was worth playing the zither again” 伯牙鼓琴，鍾子期聽之，方鼓琴而志在太山，鍾子期曰：『善哉乎鼓琴，巍巍乎若太山。』少選之間，而志在流水，鍾子期又曰：『善哉乎鼓琴，湯湯乎若流水。』鍾子期死，伯牙破琴絕弦，終身不復鼓琴，以為世無足復為鼓琴者。Lu Buwei 呂不韋, *Lüshi Chunqiu xinjioshi* 呂氏春秋新校釋, 740.

¹⁷⁸ See the “Heshi” 和氏 chapter of *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋, 238.

¹⁷⁹ This is a citation of the “Xiaobian 小辯” chapter of the *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記: “Confucius said, ‘Trifling discussions ruin speech. Petty speech ruins meaning. Minor points ruins the way.’” 孔子曰：「小辯破言，小言破義，小義破道。HHS 36.1231.

Here above, Chen Yuan refutes Fan Sheng's arguments that, since the messages of the Zuo Tradition contradict proper ideas, the Zuo could not be officially sponsored. It is noteworthy that the Zuo Tradition is coupled with the Grand Historian's writings, presumably because of their similarities in narrative and historical content. Chen dismisses Fan's objections to this similarity as a minor concern not worth entertaining.

升等又曰：『先帝不以左氏為經，故不置博士，後主所宜因襲。』臣愚以為若先帝所行而後主必行者，則盤庚不當遷于殷，周公不當營洛邑，陛下不當都山東也。往者，孝武皇帝好公羊，衛太子好穀梁，有詔詔太子受公羊，不得受穀梁。孝宣皇帝在人間時，聞衛太子好穀梁，於是獨學之。及即位，為石渠論而穀梁氏興，至今與公羊並存。此先帝後帝各有所立，不必其相因也。

Fan Sheng and others also said, 'Past emperors did not consider the Zuo Tradition as [an interpretation of] the Classic, therefore they did not appoint Academicians for it: subsequent rulers should follow this.' Your humble servant is of the opinion that if what previous rulers enacted must always be what subsequent rulers must enact, then Pan Geng should never have moved the capital to Yin, the Duke of Zhou should never have built the Luo city, and your majesty should never have set up the capital east of the mountains. In the past, Wudi took a liking to the Gongyang Tradition, while [his heir] Wei heir apparent was fond of the Guliang Tradition.¹⁸⁰ But he issued an imperial edict to command the prince to learn the Gongyang Tradition and bar him from learning the Guliang Tradition. When Xuandi was living among the people [i.e. before he was enthroned], he heard that the prince was fond of the Guliang Tradition, thereupon he [also] received instruction in it. When he took the throne, he organized the Stone Canal discussions and the Guliang Tradition rose [in prominence]. To this day the Guliang and the Gongyang Traditions are jointly preserved. These are what previous and subsequent rulers each established, as it is unnecessary for them to follow in each other's footsteps.¹⁸¹

In the section above, Chen Yuan argues against the importance Fan Sheng attaches to Western Han precedents, when it comes to establishing new traditions such as the Zuo Tradition. Chen raises examples from the past to prove his point that rulers can depart from the decisions of their

¹⁸⁰ Wei *Taizi* is Liu Ju 劉據 (named in 128 BCE), the son of Wudi's and his empress Wei. He was nominated Heir Apparent at the age of seven *sui*. He received instruction in the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 321.

¹⁸¹ In essence, as Dull, recapitulates, Chen "said that Fan's argument that former emperors had not recognized the *Tso-chuan* and therefore that Emperor Kuang-wu should not do so was pointless since the Ku-liang commentary had not been recognized until after the Kung-yang commentary. If a later emperor could establish an Erudit for the Ku-liang text after an earlier ruler had recognized the Kung-yang version then there was no reason why a still later emperor could not also include instruction in the *Tso-chuan* as a part of the curriculum of the Imperial University." Dull, 352.

predecessors, thereby suggesting that even though the Zuo Tradition may never have been sponsored in the Western Han, Guangwudi should exercise his own judgment and sponsor it.

孔子曰，純，儉，吾從眾；至於拜下，則違之。夫明者獨見，不惑於朱紫，聽者獨聞，不謬於清濁，故離朱不為巧眩移目，師曠不為新聲易耳。方今干戈少弭，戎事略戰，留思聖藝，眷顧儒雅，採孔子拜下之義，卒淵聖獨見之旨，分明白黑，建立左氏，解釋先聖之積結，淘汰學者之累惑，使基業垂於萬世，後進無復狐疑，則天下幸甚。

Confucius said, ‘Wearing black silk is economical, [so] I follow the general practice. As for obeisance below the dais, I depart from it [the common practice of obeisance after mounting the dais].’¹⁸² Those with acute vision alone perceive [what is hard to perceive] and are not misled by the reds and purples. Those with acute hearing alone discern [what is hard to hear] and their hearing is not drowned out by [the mix of] clear and muffled tones.¹⁸³ For this reason, Li Zhu did not allow skillful magic to confuse his sight,¹⁸⁴ and Shi Kuang did not allow fashionable music notes to overpower his hearing.¹⁸⁵ Now that warfare has gradually ceased, and military battles are fewer, your majesty can devote your thoughts to the sagely arts and show your care and concern for specialists in the Classics. If you can appreciate the significance of Confucius’ obeisance below the dais, exhaust the profundities of the Sage’s independent insight, make distinctions between white and black, and establish the Zuo Tradition, untying and loosening the knots of understanding about the past sages, clearing away the long-held confusions of learned men, and allowing your foundational legacy to be passed down the ten thousand generations and future scholars to be free of doubts, then the world will be extremely fortunate.

As his memorial comes to a close above, Chen Yuan appeals to Guangwudi’s authority, independent of what Academicians such as Fan Sheng may have emphasized about the importance of following the precedents (i.e. only sponsoring the Zuo Traditions approved by

¹⁸² From *Analects* 9.3: “The Master said, ‘The hemp-thread crown is prescribed by ritual. Nowadays people wear black silk, which is economical. I follow the general practice. Obeisance below the dais is prescribed by ritual. Nowadays people make obeisance after mounting the dais. This is presumptuous, and though to do so is contrary to the general practice, I make a point of bowing while still down below.’” 子曰：「麻冕，禮也。今也，純儉，吾從眾。拜下，禮也。今拜乎上，泰也，雖違眾，吾從下。」. Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 138.

¹⁸³ C.f. *Analects* 17.18: “The Master said, ‘I hate to see purple killing vermilion. I hate to see the tunes of Zheng corrupting Court music. I hate to see sharp mouths overturning kingdoms and clans.’” 子曰：「惡紫之奪朱也，惡鄭聲之亂雅樂也，惡利口之覆邦家者。」. Translation adapted from Waley’s. *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸⁴ From *Zhuangzi*, “Webbed Toes” (*Pianmu* 駢拇): “He who is web-toed in eyesight will be confused by the five colors, bewitched by patterns and designs, by the dazzling hues of blue and yellow, of embroidery and brocade—am I wrong? So we have Li Zhu” 駢於明者，亂五色，淫文章，青黃黼黻之煌煌非乎？而離朱是已。 Translation from Burton Watson, *Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 98; Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi*, 314.

¹⁸⁵ “He who is overnice in hearing will be confused by the five notes, bewitched by the six tones, by the sounds of metal and stone, strings and woodwinds, the *huangzhong* and *dalu* pitch pipes—am I wrong? So we have Music Master Kuang” 多於聰者，亂五聲，淫六律，金石絲竹黃鐘大呂之聲非乎？而師曠是已。 *Ibid.*

emperors of the Western Han). Chen goes so far as to implicitly compare the emperor to legendary figures who possessed great powers of perception. By doing so, he encourages the emperor to sponsor the Zuo Tradition, whose value, as Chen claims, only those with great discernment will recognize.

臣元愚鄙，嘗傳師言，如得以褐衣召見，俯伏庭下，誦孔氏之正道，理丘明之宿冤；若辭不合經，事不稽古，退就重誅，雖死之日，生之年也。

Your humble servant Yuan is dimwitted and uncouth, and have transmitted the words of my teachers. If I am able to be summoned to court donning my coarse clothing, to prostrate myself below the court, recite the correct way of Confucius, and set right the long-standing injustices done to Zuo Qiuming, and yet the words do not accord with the Classics, the events do not agree with a carefully examined past, and I have to retreat and submit to heavy punishment, then though it may be the day of my death, it would be the [the allotted] years of my life.”

Capping off his memorial here, Chen Yuan reiterates his commitment to the ideas of Confucius to counter Fan Sheng’s charge that supporting the Zuo Tradition means turning away from the Sage’s principles. Most importantly, he characterizes the Zuo Tradition as a misunderstood tradition deserving of the right treatment.

Official vs. personal authority

One of the focal points of the Fan-Chen debate is the relative authority of precedents of the recent past versus those of the distant past. As Guangwudi formed his new court, he confronted choices about which Western Han precedents to follow, and which Classics and exegetical traditions to sponsor. Even though both Fan and Chen agree that, broadly speaking, the emperor needs to draw from past precedents to justify his continuance of the rulership of the Liu family, Fan argues that only those traditions formally recognized in the Western Han should be sponsored again, whereas Chen argues that those not recognized before, such as the Zuo Tradition, also deserve sponsorship.

In his memorial, Fan Sheng argues for fewer exegetical traditions to be established at the imperial court. Without explicitly targeting the Zuo Tradition from the outset, he proposes restricting and limiting the total number of scholastic traditions receiving imperial patronage. As an Academician of the Liangqiu Tradition of the *Changes* (*Liangqiu Yi* 梁丘易), Fan Sheng opposes the inclusion of the Jing 京 and Bi 費 Traditions of the *Changes*. Fan projects the fear onto Guangwudi, saying that the sovereign might lose control over the scholarly world, and be overwhelmed by the cacophony of voices from the scholars (“your majesty will surely have exhausting court discussions”). At the same time, he reminds Guangwudi to tread lightly between sanctioning new traditions to appease everyone (lest he “lose the Way,” as Fan Sheng euphemistically put it) and failing to attract scholars to his court (“lose your people”). Without displaying explicit partisanship to any one tradition, Fan suggests that the acceptance of one will set a precedents for all exegetical traditions (“Once the Jing and Bi Traditions have been established, in turn the Gao Tradition too [will request establishment]”). He calls for restraint as

Guangwudi stands poised to allocate more spots for Academicians from different traditions. Against this impending possibility, Fan Sheng presents himself as the prudent minister working to prevent the political chaos that will result from Guangwudi's attempt to garner support from all parts of the scholarly world.

In response to Fan Sheng, Chen Yuan takes a longer historical view instead of focusing on the specific sponsored traditions that Fan Sheng claimed were vying for the emperor's attention. Chen Yuan's memorial references the older traditions in the Western Han that were gradually added to the imperial curriculum, sidestepping the controversies over more recent scholastic traditions. Rather than addressing the advisability of establishing the Jing, Bi, Zuo, Zou, and Jia Traditions, Chen Yuan refers to the precedents that Wudi and Xuandi each established, when they set up Academicians' Chairs for the exegetical tradition they championed ("Wudi took a liking to the Gongyang Tradition"; under Xuandi "the Guliang Tradition rose [in prominence]"). Presenting Wudi as an emperor who barred the prince "from learning the Guliang Tradition," Chen portrays Xuandi as the more accepting sovereign who allowed both the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions to stand, such that they were "jointly preserved." Whereas Fan Sheng skirts the rival traditions of the Zuo Tradition, the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, Chen Yuan picks them as safe examples to demonstrate the Western Han precedents of allowing more traditions to be studied at court.

By focusing on traditions already established by the mid-Western Han (Xuandi's reign, 74–49 BCE), Chen Yuan circumvents the ambiguous status of the newer traditions Fan Sheng objected to. Since Fan Sheng declares that there were no grounds for establishing anything without precedents ("it is not that which past emperors have preserved, [so] there are no grounds upon which to establish it"), Chen Yuan counters that the lack of precedents should not inhibit the establishment of new traditions. He suggests that though "past emperors" may not have established the specific traditions in question, such as the Zuo or Bi traditions, the Western Han emperors did admit new traditions into the fold as a general practice ("These are what previous and subsequent rulers each established"). Thus, while Fan Sheng concentrates on the lack of precedents in setting up particular traditions, Chen Yuan speaks more broadly about Western Han emperors adopting new traditions as a general policy.

Chen Yuan frames the issue of precedents for the Zuo Tradition as a political consideration because the emperor's appointment of Academicians comprises part of his display of power in the cultural sphere. Particularly for the founder of the Eastern Han, the questions of precedents and continuity were politically sensitive for Guangwudi. Thereupon, Chen characterizes Fan Sheng's position as an overly cautious stance that runs contrary to the spirit of Guangwudi's imperial aims: "Fan Sheng and others also said, 'Past emperors did not consider the Zuo Tradition as [an interpretation of] the Classic, therefore they did not appoint Academicians for it: subsequent rulers should follow this.'" Here Chen Yuan attributes to Fan Sheng the idea that no emperor had recognized the Zuo Tradition as one of the exegetical traditions. Then Chen turns Fan's argument on its head by pointing out that the question of precedents was moot. Drawing an analogy between Guangwudi and other Sage-founders of new governments, Fan likens the emperor to Pan Geng (who "moved the capital to Yin") and the Duke of Zhou (who "built the Luo city"). Whereas Fan argues that Guangwudi ought to stay within the bounds of Western Han precedents, Chen takes the opposite tack in speaking to the emperor's imperial ambitions to establish new precedents for the Eastern Han (in having already "set up the capital east of the mountains"). Chen Yuan's memorial thus turns the Zuo Tradition's

lack of official status into an opportunity for Guangwudi to enact changes that would build his political legacy.

In the next part of his memorial, Fan Sheng urges the emperor to concentrate on reestablishing the cultural foundations of his empire while implying that Zuo Tradition was not part of these foundations. Rather than continuing with the debate over exegetical traditions, Fan highlights the *Odes*, *Documents*, ritual and music as the cultural pillars of the world overseen by the emperor. He brings the emperor's focus back to the Classics by analogizing him to Confucius, the rectifier of culture: "When he reached [the age when] he knew his fate [fifty years old], he returned from the state of Wey to Lu, and only then did he standardize the 'Elegantiae' and 'Hymns.'" Fan attempts to reduce the importance of the Zuo Tradition by arguing that its establishment was of less importance ("that is not the urgent task of your administration"), so long as higher priorities await the emperor's action ("the *Odes* and *Documents* are not being taught, ritual and music are not practiced"). This passage reveals that Fan Sheng thought Guangwudi's government was still in its infancy ("your majesty has barely created all under heaven"); in Fan's perspective, the emperor had yet to formulate his political agenda ("the policies and regulations have not yet been set"). By depicting the shaky state of the empire, Fan unwittingly plays down the emperor's achievements, making his governance appear more provisional and vulnerable than perhaps a dynastic founder would like to hear. Fan minimizes the emperor's stature by suggesting that *even* Confucius embarked on a quest for knowledge ("roaming everywhere and making observations") and waited until his vision had matured, before he set to work arranging the Classics. Rhetorically, Fan Sheng persuades Guangwudi to save his energy for more pressing tasks, as Fan presents the current moment as premature for the emperor to contemplate establishing new exegetical traditions such as the Zuo Tradition.

Standing at odds with Fan Sheng's perspective on the state of the empire, Chen Yuan portrays the new empire as ready for the establishment of the Zuo Tradition. Whereas Fan Sheng urges the emperor to proceed cautiously, Chen Yuan emboldened him to trust his independent judgment, regardless of precedents. Whereas Fan Shen earlier speaks of Guangwudi as just having founded a new dynasty ("has from scratch created the realm"), Chen Yuan portrays the world as having more or less been pacified ("warfare has gradually ceased, and military battles are fewer"). He declares that, given the peace, the emperor has already achieved the preconditions for turning his thoughts to cultural matters ("the sagely arts"). Rhetorically, Chen Yuan attributes a higher degree of political success to Guangwudi than Fan Sheng has done: whereas Fan Sheng suggests that it was premature to promote traditions lying outside the core curriculum comprised of (the *Odes*, *Documents*, rites, and music), Chen Yuan argues that the moment was ripe for sponsoring exegetical traditions ("establish the Zuo Tradition") as part of the emperor's personal legacy as well. Chen Yuan inspires Guangwudi to visualize his enduring legacy, one that would benefit generations of scholars (a "foundational legacy to be passed down the ten thousand generations"). At a moment when Fan Sheng expresses anxiety over the instability of old precedents, Chen Yuan favorably predisposes Guangwudi to new precedents such as the Zuo Tradition, by projecting a future political legacy that appeals to the first emperor of the Eastern Han.

Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan wrangled over the issue of whether the exegetical traditions derived greater authority from official transmission in latter-day lineages or from personal instruction between master and disciple in antiquity. As seen in their memorials, Fan Sheng

attaches greater importance to the masters of his day, whereas Chen Yuan endows more significance to the associates of Confucius in the Sage's own lifetime. Fan Sheng's writings rhetorically display his deep reverence for contemporary authorities on specific exegetical traditions such as the Liangqiu Tradition of the *Changes*. Made official sometime during the reigns of Xuandi (73-48 BCE) and Yuandi (48-32 BCE) in mid-Western Han, the Liangqiu Tradition had a longer history of imperial patronage than the other traditions rattled off by Fan Sheng earlier (i.e. Jing, Bi, Gao Traditions). According to the *Hou Hanshu*, when Guangwudi appointed Fan Sheng as an Academicians' Chair in 27 CE, he formally declined the honor out of deference to the two living experts on the Liangqiu Tradition. On the surface, Fan Sheng apologetically declines the emperor's appointment out of respect for his elders ("both senior in age"), as he expresses humility about how undeserving he is of the honor ("fail to do justice to the two elders and have no face in this generation"). The post would only be an empty title for him, as long as the other masters of the Zuo Tradition were still entrenched in their positions of authority ("If I am able to pay lip service [to the scholarship of Liang and Lü] yet could not practice it, . . . then I should not open my mouth to be the model of others"). Through his self-effacing rhetoric, Fan expresses his awareness that because there were experts more senior than he, students owed their allegiance to them. After this show of deference to living authorities, Fan Sheng rejects the Zuo Tradition on the grounds that it lacked a recognized master.

For both Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan, the authority of any exegetical tradition resided in its ties to Confucius. Given this assumption, Fan claims that the Zuo Tradition had no connection with Confucius, whereas Chen Yuan asserts that Zuo Qiuming, the putative author of the Zuo Tradition, was a direct student of Confucius, the master. When Guangwudi asks Fan Sheng to evaluate Han Xin's proposal to establish the Zuo Tradition, Fan Sheng states outright that he objects to the Zuo Tradition primarily because it fails to follow from Confucius' teachings: "The Zuo Tradition does not have Confucius as its source; instead it came from [Zuo] Qiuming." Notably, Fan Sheng grants that the founder of the Zuo Tradition was Zuo Qiuming,¹⁸⁶ but that was as far as Fan would agree on, for it was still unclear to him who Zuo was. For all he knew, the Zuo Tradition may have had a known founder/author, but he was unrelated to Confucius, hence the Zuo was not part of the corpus of exegetical traditions that could be traced to Confucius.¹⁸⁷ Fan's objection on these grounds reveals that scholars of his time had achieved no consensus about the relationship between Zuo Qiuming and Confucius.¹⁸⁸ Thus, Fan Sheng is

¹⁸⁶ Written at the same time that Fan Sheng wrote this memorial, Ban Biao's 班彪 (3-54 CE) "General Remarks [on Historiography]" (Lüe lun 略論) says that the authorship of the Zuo Tradition was commonly believed to be Zuo Qiuming. The following text is quoted in the biography of Ban Biao in the *Hou Hanshu*: "During the reigns of Duke Ding (r. 509-495 BCE) and Duke Ai (r. 494-468 BCE) of Lu, the Gentleman of Lu, Zuo Qiuming, arrayed and collected their writings [i.e. the Lu records], and made the Zuo Tradition in thirty chapters" 定哀之間，魯君子左丘明論集其文，作左氏傳三十篇。HHS 40A.1325.

¹⁸⁷ It is a different story by the mid-Eastern Han, when the figure of Zuo Qiuming has become so intimately tied to this corpus associated with Confucius that Wang Fu 王符 (c. 90-165), quite inexplicably, went so far as to make this attribution: "Zuo Qiuming's Five Classics" 左丘明五經. From Wang Fu 王符, *Qianfu lun jian* 潛夫論, 465.

¹⁸⁸ As discussed in chapter three, it was Ban Gu who, in the "Yiwen zhi," later elaborates upon the close relationship between Confucius and Zuo Qiuming. In his "Letter," Liu Xin only mentions that Zuo Qiuming was the compiler of the Zuo Tradition but does not provide any further details about his relations with Confucius.

able to reject the Zuo Tradition by virtue of its disconnection from Confucius, the ethical source of the Classics.

Chen Yuan, in his turn, rejects the basis of Fan Sheng's objection, asserting that Zuo Qiuming was not only associated with Confucius but also that he had personally received the teachings from the Sage. When Fan Sheng protests that Zuo Qiuming did not belong to the intellectual, cultural, and ethical genealogy of Confucius, Chen Yuan retorts that Zuo was a contemporary of Confucius who had received instruction from the master of Confucius' 'lineage.' Chen then ascribes to Guangwudi the opinion that no generational divide separated Zuo Qiuming and Confucius: "Your majesty knows that Qiuming was very worthy and that he personally received the teachings from Confucius." In his refutation of Fan Sheng, Chen Yuan avoids stating his own opinion, attributing it to the emperor instead. While nothing assures us that Guangwudi held this belief himself, Chen, as a rhetorical strategy, speaks as if he knows the emperor had already sided with the Zuo Tradition proponents, thus projecting confidence in the emperor's endorsement of the Zuo Tradition ("Your majesty knows . . . [the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions] were transmitted in later generations"). By appealing to the emperor's knowledge and beliefs instead of referring to his own, Chen Yuan heightens Guangwudi's interest in patronizing the scholars of the Zuo Tradition.

Chen's rhetoric compels the ruler to feel as though he is a participant of this debate with a vested interest in promoting the one tradition believed to represent, most authentically, the totality of Confucius' vision. As stated above, the emperor did appoint a Chair for the Zuo Tradition. We can only speculate that Chen's speech on behalf of the emperor reflected the sovereign's favorable disposition toward the Zuo Tradition, even before the debate began, since the Zuo proponents (e.g. Han Xin, Xu Shu, and Chen Yuan) were much higher-ranked court officials than the Academician Fan Sheng.

Mediation vs. immediacy of instruction from Confucius

The Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan debate offers competing visions of the value of mediated versus direct teachings. Even though both scholars treat Confucius as the original authority on his *Annals*, they disagree on which kind of exegetical traditions held greater authority: those transmitted through hearsay or those resulting from direct contact. As discussed earlier, Fan Sheng make a show of deference to the senior experts on the Liangqiu Tradition of the *Changes*, Liang Gong and Lü Qiang. Given his nominal submission to the current office-holders, it is not surprising that he would object to the Zuo Tradition because it lacked a long pedagogical and institutional history. He points out the obvious fact that no continuous line of scholars had transmitted the Zuo Tradition: "As for transmission between masters and disciples, there were moreover no men of the proper sort." For Fan Sheng, the absence of a clear pedigree is a major impediment to claims of authority. Because one could not identify a clear line of transmission from the founding master to the current practitioners of the Zuo Tradition, as one could for the Liangqiu Tradition since Western Han, Fan argues that no one could vouch for the Zuo Tradition in good faith.

To Chen Yuan, the absence of a demonstrable line of transmission poses no great difficulty for one's acceptance of a given exegetical tradition. On the very contrary, he considers latter-day transmission an obstacle to the proper reception of the original contents of Confucius' teachings. Chen Yuan denigrates the mediated transmission by equating it with blind obedience

to the old authorities: “Nowadays, those who opine about such things are mired in what they are well-versed in, stubbornly guard old learning, willfully hold on to vain words and transmitted phrases.” Chen Yuan uses the phrase “those who opine about such things” to refer to those who objected to the establishment of the Zuo Tradition, like Fan Sheng. He critiques these Academicians for being thoroughly satisfied with the interpretations that they had been trained in (“mired in what they are well-versed in”). Chen portrays them as close-minded and obstinate in protecting what their masters had taught them. This short passage echoes some of the language and sentiments in Liu Xin’s “Letter to the Academicians.”¹⁸⁹ For example, while Chen Yuan accuses the official Academicians for “stubbornly guard old learning” 翫守舊聞, Liu Xin said they “wished to protect what is tattered and guard what is incomplete” 欲保殘守缺. Both Chen Yuan and Liu Xin fault the Academicians for limiting their study to partial explanations and fragmented texts. Even though Academicians constantly generated new commentaries to supplement old ones, they were limited to the teachings officially sponsored, and hence, were overly narrow. By implication, Chen suggests that traditions transmitted outside the Academicians’ circle, like the Zuo Tradition, could correct this scholastic myopia.

Chen Yuan also expresses his dislike of scholars who were committed to interpretations passed down through generations of masters and disciples. In this regard, his sentiments echo Liu Xin’s complaints about the Academicians’ method of transmission. Chen dismisses the practice of transmitted interpretations as the only kind that Academicians subscribed to. Chen goes so far as to call their type of exegesis “vain words” 虛言, in a kind of mimicry of Liu Xin’s criticism of the Academicians misplaced trust in them (“faith in oral explanations” 信口說). Furthermore, the term *xuyan* 虛言 recalls Confucius’ statement, recorded in *Shiji* 130, about the inadequacy of “empty pronouncements” (*kongyan* 空言), as opposed to records of “deeds and events” 行事. Chen asserts the superiority of Zuo Tradition not necessarily because of its inherent advantages as a written text,¹⁹⁰ but more importantly, because the text transcribed the teachings of Confucius at an earlier stage. By this stage in time, personal instruction by Confucius had become a stronger indicator of authority than any mediated transmission with a several centuries’ gap between the Sage and the exegetical tradition.

In another parallel, Liu Xin and Chen Yuan both use the rhetoric of the substantiated versus the unsubstantiated exegetical tradition. With the Xin Dynasty (9–23 CE) separating them, both Liu and Chen censure the Academicians for their lack of interest in verifying matters. While Chen Yuan claims that the anti-Zuo scholars “criticize the way of true events that he [Zuo Qiuming] personally saw” 非親見實事之道, Liu Xin says that they “refused to investigate the reality of the situation” 不考情實, as they reiterated explanations heard within the Academicians’ circle (“echoing each other’s opinions of right and wrong”). In context, these lines have quite different referents. Chen Yuan’s line “the way of true events” could refer back to Zuo Qiuming’s discipleship under Confucius, when he witnessed many of the true events

¹⁸⁹ However, we do not know if Chen Yuan read or was aware of Liu Xin’s “Letter,” now cited in the *Hanshu*, because Ban Gu did not compile it until a generation after the Fan-Chen debate.

¹⁹⁰ For the complicated picture of the relative authority of written to oral transmission in the Han, see the analysis of Nylan, “Textual Authority,” 206–58. She writes that “writing in many areas enjoyed no special authority over and above either speech or public practice—though the tide probably began to turn in favor of writing’s role by roughly the first century A.D”. One of the earliest examples she adduces is Liu Xin’s argument “sharply distinguishing textual from oral transmission” (254).

recorded in the *Annals* (“he personally received teachings from Confucius”). Certainly, Zuo’s words gain credence from the fact that Zuo personally heard them from Confucius. In Liu’s case, however, the line “the reality of the situation” could also refer to the correspondence between the palace library texts and the transmitted teachings outside the court (“the surviving traces of the experts of classical learning, such as those of Huan *Gong* in Lu, Guan *Gong* in Zhao, and Yong *Sheng* in Jiaodong”). Regardless of the intended referents of the “true events” or “reality,” both proponents of the Zuo Tradition employ these terms rhetorically to heighten the value of the tradition they wish to promote.

The voices of Liu Xin and Chen Yuan seem to dominate any discussion about the Zuo Tradition’s value. The standard histories fail to cite the Academicians’ rebuttal to the above points of criticism, aside from Fan Sheng’s opening argument, even though at least one of them was reported to have written a memorial protesting against Liu Xin.¹⁹¹ By and large, both Liu Xin’s and Chen Yuan’s biographies portray the Academicians as angry and strident dissenters fuming in the background.¹⁹² Perhaps the latter-day biographers Ban Gu and Fan Ye sympathize with the Zuo Tradition proponents, and thus unfairly portray the Academicians by editing out their complete responses.¹⁹³ In any case, the linguistic and thematic echoes across Liu Xin’s and Chen Yuan’s arguments reinforce the image of Academicians as narrow-minded and uncritical scholars.

The problems vs. advantages: Zuo Tradition’s relationship to the Grand Historian

Despite the influence of Chen Yuan’s camp on the emperor, Fan Sheng sought to undermine the authority of the Zuo Tradition from yet another angle, on the basis of its connection to the writings of Sima Qian. After Fan Sheng presented his first memorial, he followed it up with a second memorial enumerating the points in which the Zuo Tradition departed from Confucius’ vision, as embodied in the Five Classics. Although the standard histories do not excerpt this document, Ban Biao’s 班彪 (3-54 CE) “*Lüelun*” 略論 (General Remarks [on Historiography]) offers glimpses into the central thesis and evidence adduced in Fan Sheng’s second memorial.

According to Fan Sheng, he disapproves of the Zuo Tradition mainly because the Zuo Tradition fails to conform to the tenets of Confucius: “The root of the Five Classics originated with Confucius. I respectfully memorialize fourteen deficiencies of the Zuo Tradition.” Fan Sheng provoked a response from his challengers; as shown below, they supported the Zuo Tradition in part due to the Grand Historian’s (*Taishigong* 太史公) frequent citation from the Zuo Tradition (the version available to scholars then): “At the time, those who challenged Fan Sheng brought up the fact that the Grand Historian frequently drew from the Zuo Tradition.” Fan Sheng in response: “Fan again memorialized, saying that the Grand Historian diverged from

¹⁹¹ In reaction to Liu Xin’s “Letter to the Academicians,” Master Dan 師丹 the Grand Minister of Works 大司空 “memorialized that [Liu] Xin changed and disordered the old models, and criticized and discredited that which past emperors had established.” 奏歆改亂舊章，非毀先帝所立。HS 36.1972.

¹⁹² The biography of Liu Xin in the *Hanshu* recorded that after he submitted his “Letter,” the “the various scholars were resentful.” 諸儒皆怨恨。HS 36.1972. After the Fan Sheng versus Chen Yuan debate, the *Hou Hanshu* records that “the discussions [of the various scholars] grew raucous” 論議譁譁。HHS 36.1233.

¹⁹³ Ban Gu only summarizes in two lines the gist of Shi Dan’s response. See p. 66 above.

the Five Classics and distorted Confucius' words. Fan also memorialized thirty-one events that the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals* should not have recorded." At the minimum, this passage reveals that the debaters on both sides shared the view, whether true or not, that the Grand Historian cited from the Zuo Tradition as a complete work.¹⁹⁴ The debaters disagreed on the ethical value of the Grand Historian's work; whereas the proponents of the Zuo Tradition hailed its appearance as a sign of strength, Fan Sheng took this same fact as one reason for the Zuo's weakness.

It is worth looking more closely at the underpinnings of these competing views. Another source from Fan Sheng's times lends insight into contemporary views on the ethical merits of the *Shiji*. Ban Biao faults the writings of the Grand Historian for much the same reasons that Fan object to the Zuo Tradition,¹⁹⁵ for Ban charges that Sima Qian espouses values that run contrary to those in the Five Classics:

其論術學，則崇黃老而薄五經；序貨殖，則輕仁義而羞貧窮；道游俠，則賤守節而貴俗功：此其大敝傷道，所以遇極刑之咎也。然善述序事理，辯而不華，質而不野，文質相稱，蓋良史之才也。誠令遷依五經之法言，同聖人之是非，意亦庶幾矣。¹⁹⁶

Sima Qian's discussions of the classics and learning valorize Huang-Lao [thought] and slight the Five Classics.¹⁹⁷ He gives a place to "Money-Makers,"¹⁹⁸ as he has a low view of humaneness and righteousness, and expresses shame for the poor and down-and-out.¹⁹⁹ He speaks of "Wandering Knights,"²⁰⁰ demeaning those

¹⁹⁴ For a study of the antecedent sources cited in the *Shiji*, see Jin Dejian 金德建, *Sima Qian suojian shukao* 司馬遷所見書考, 1963.

¹⁹⁵ Rather than using the latter-day title the *Shiji*, I follow Ban Biao's and Fan Sheng's usage of the *Taishi Gong* 太史公 to refer to the writings of Sima Qian/Tan the archivist, scribe, astronomer, astrologer, etc.

¹⁹⁶ HHS 40A.1325.

¹⁹⁷ Li Xian's commentary says: "[Sima] Qian's autobiographical postface says, 'The Dao family of experts unify a person's essence and spirit. Their stirrings and unity are without form. They supply and bring to completion the ten thousand things.' This is what is meant by 'valorized Huang-Lao [thought].' It also says, 'Specialists in traditional learning are wide-ranging [in their knowledge] but grasp few of the essentials. They expend much effort but achieve little.' This is what is meant by 'sighted the Five Classics.'" 遷序傳曰：「道家使人精神專一，動合無形，贍足萬物。」此謂崇黃老也。又曰：「儒者博而寡要，勞而少功。」此為薄五經也。HHS 40A.1325. The following translation is adapted from Anthony Clark's translation of Ban Biao's essay "Lüe lun," in Appendix D of Clark, *Ban Gu's History*, 199–201.

¹⁹⁸ *Shiji* 129.

¹⁹⁹ Li Xian's commentary says: "The preface to the 'Biographies of Money-makers' of the *Shiji* says, 'When the household is poor, the parents are elderly, the wife and children weak and vulnerable. They have nothing with which to offer as sacrifice seasonally, have no drink, viands, and clothing sufficient for making oneself comfortable. If being in such straits, they are not ashamed and humiliated, then there is nothing to which to compare them. Those who do not have the conduct of cave-dwelling extraordinary men [i.e. recluses], and are forever penurious and lowly, yet speak of humaneness and duty—they indeed ought to be ashamed.'" 史記貨殖傳序曰：家貧親老，妻子軟弱，歲時無以祭祀，飲食被服不足以自適，如此不慚恥，則無所比矣。無巖處奇士之行，而長貧賤，語仁義，亦足羞也。HHS 40A.1325. This is a slightly modified version of the text in SJ 129.3272.

²⁰⁰ *Shiji* 124.

who guard their honor and esteeming those with vulgar achievements.²⁰¹ The great harm he brought to the Way was the reason why he encountered the calamity of extreme punishment [i.e. castration]. Nevertheless, he was skilled at narrating events and ordering principles. His writings are persuasive but not flowery, substantive but not crude. Their ornamentation and substance are well-balanced. I suppose these are the talents of a good scribe. If only [Sima] Qian had adhered to the model sayings of the Five Classics and harmonized with the Sage's sense of right and wrong, his ideas would be nearly perfect.²⁰²

Ban Biao grants that the Sima Qian was an admirable historian (“he was skilled at narrating events and ordering principles; his writings were persuasive but not flowery, substantive but not crude, their ornamentation and substance were balanced”), but Ban Biao reserves his praise only for the outward style and expressive qualities of the Grand Historian. Ban speaks much more disparagingly about the ethical contents of his writings, which in Ban's view, flout the principles of the Classics associated with Confucius (“valorize Huang-Lao [thought] and slight the Five Classics”). As Ban Biao laments, the writings fail to reflect the moral teachings and values that the revered Five Classics and their Sagely authors embodied (“the model sayings of the Five Classics”; “the Sage's sense of right and wrong”). Ban Biao's discussion recalls Fan Sheng's memorial. Ban's essay shows that Fan Sheng was hardly alone in his judgment that the writings of Sima Qian represented a perversion of moral standards. For better or worse, the reputation of the Zuo Tradition was, at this particular historical moment, inextricably linked to the writings by Sima Qian.

Chen Yuan's memorial, in turn, criticizes Fan Sheng's critique, as Chen makes a rejoinder to Fan's statement about the Grand Historian and the list of thirty-one objections to the Zuo Tradition. Because Fan Sheng's itemized list has not survived, only Chen Yuan's characterization (or misrepresentation) remain. Chen characterizes Fan's objections as unfair and nitpicking: “the places which Fan spoke of as being mutually contradictory are all passages taken out of context. He defiled and sullied subtle language and blew up minor discrepancies in calendrical calculation into enormous mistakes.” Chen knew that some of Fan's objections dealt with technical mistakes such as “calendrical calculations.” However Chen considered these points to be insignificant (“fine gaps and small omissions”; “imperfections”), in the grand

²⁰¹ Li Xian's commentary says: “The ‘Biographies of Wandering Knights’ in the *Shiji* says, ‘Ji Ci and Yuan Xian practiced the virtue of gentlemen. In carrying out duties, they did not compromise with their age. Those in their age also laughed at them, for they lived in empty houses with thatched doors to the end of their days, wore coarse clothing, and ate sparingly without satisfaction. Now as for the wandering knights, though their conduct did not follow conform with correct duty, their speech was trustworthy, and their actions were carried out thoroughly. They came through on their promises, did not begrudge their lives, and hastened to other knights in trouble—there is much about them that is worthy of admiration. Now among those trapped in their learning, some of them held on to a narrow sense of duty, isolated for long in the world. How could they be compared to those who lower their discourse to suit the vulgar, and float and sink with the world to acquire a glorious reputation!’” 史記游俠傳序曰：「季次、原憲行君子之德，義不苟合當世，當世亦笑之。終身空室蓬戶，褐衣疏食不饜。今游俠，其行雖不軌於正義，然其言必信，於行必果，已諾必誠，不愛其軀，赴士之厄，蓋有足多者。今拘學或抱咫尺之義，久孤於世，豈若卑論齊俗，與世沈浮而取榮名哉。HHS 40A.1325. This is a slightly modified version of the text in SJ 124.3181–2.

²⁰² Clark renders the last line as “his intentions would not have been far from success.” Clark, 200.

scheme of things (“petty speech ruining the words and trifling discussions destroying the way”). The referent of *qi* 其 in the phrase “concealing its excellent points” is most likely the Zuo Tradition. However, the possessive pronoun could also be “their,” meaning both the Zuo Tradition and the *Shiji*, since Fan criticizes both for forsaking the principal tenets of Confucius’ teachings.

Because Fan uses overlapping terms to depict these two works, it is hard to tell whether the “thirty-one events” Fan Sheng said “should not be recorded” refer to the Grand Historian’s citations of the Zuo Tradition or to the defects in the Zuo Tradition itself.²⁰³ In either case, Chen refuses to refute Fan’s itemized criticisms, saying the merits of the two works far outweigh any blemishes. Both works, he contends, conform to the Five Classics.

For comparison, we can return to Ban Biao’s “General Remarks” to obtain some idea of the shortcomings that Fan Sheng possibly listed to discredit the Zuo Tradition and the *Shiji*. Ban criticizes the *Shiji* for its disorderliness and inconsistencies:

又進項羽、陳涉而黜淮南、衡山，細意委曲，條列不經。.... 一人之精，文重思煩，故其書刊落不盡，尚有盈辭，多不齊一。²⁰⁴

Moreover, Sima Qian advanced Xiang Yu and Chen She while demoting [the kings of] Huainan and Hengshan.²⁰⁵ His minor ideas were indirect, and his organized norms did not accord with the classics.²⁰⁶ . . . With the intense effort of a single man, the writings are repetitious and the thoughts complicated.

Accordingly, his book could be pared endlessly and there would still remain a surplus of words.²⁰⁷ There are many places [in the text] that are inconsistent.²⁰⁸

Ban Biao objects to the sprawling nature and disorganization of Sima Qian’s work, and Ban’s focus on details lends credence to Chen Yuan’s exasperation with Fan’s similar criticisms. Since scholars of this time never treated Sima Qian’s writings as an exegetical tradition to a Classic, the *Shiji* became a negative association for the Zuo Tradition. Did Fan Sheng take a better known work such as the *Shiji* to indirectly critique a lesser known text such as the Zuo Tradition? Fan Sheng chooses to denunciate the Zuo Tradition via the Grand Historian’s work. Fan Sheng’s choice of comparison indicates the Academicians’ uneasiness about the Zuo Tradition, insofar as it, like the *Shiji*, does not often explain the Classic via word-for-word exegesis.

The Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan debate shows how much uncertainty revolved around the Zuo Tradition’s relationship to the *Shiji*, on the one hand, and the *Annals* on the other.²⁰⁹ Not

²⁰³ Commentators of the *Hou Hanshu* do not shed any light on this matter.

²⁰⁴ HHS 40A.1327.

²⁰⁵ Anthony Clark renders *chu* 黜 as “devaluing.” Clark, *Ban Gu’s History*, 201.

²⁰⁶ Clark translates these lines as “his meticulous intentions became crooked, and his principles of organization were not standard.” Ibid.

²⁰⁷ These lines are as put into Clark’s words. Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Or as Clark translates, “and there would be many places where the text would not make a unified work.” Ibid.

²⁰⁹ At this point in history, scholars had not yet written commentaries to highlight the Zuo Tradition’s explication of the Classic’s specific wording. For the early Eastern Han period, we cannot even say for certain whether the Zuo Tradition included the sentences that read morality into the language of the *Annals*, since we do not

until later did surviving commentaries from the mid-Eastern Han (of Jia Kui, for example) systematically address the statements in the Zuo Tradition that purportedly interpret the language of the Classic. By then, the Zuo Tradition scholars consistently focus on the slivers of text in the Zuo Tradition that ascribe implicit judgments to the word choices of the Classic, just as the Gongyang and Guliang scholars were wont to do. Earlier however, when both sides debated the associations between the Zuo Tradition and the *Shiji*, perhaps they were arguing over whether to treat the Zuo Tradition as a companion text of the *Annals*, or as a stand-alone work, such as the *Shiji*.

Worth by established consensus vs. individual perception

The Fan-Chen debate also take on the issue of established consensus versus individual appreciation, insofar as the Zuo Tradition had yet to receive formal recognition. Fan Sheng's memorial charges that the Zuo Tradition had no identifiable master upon which to establish its legitimacy. He decries the Zuo Tradition and Bi Tradition (of the *Changes*) for two reasons, saying, "Today the Bi and the Zuo, these two traditions of scholarship, have no authoritative teachers and in many cases what they teach are contradictory and strange." This statement from Fan Sheng shows that in his time, no major figures were giving instruction in the Zuo Tradition. He implies that the reason for the anomalies in the Zuo Tradition was the absence of authorities who standardized and rectified its meaning.

By contrast, Chen Yuan attributes Zuo Qiuming and the Zuo Tradition with precisely those qualities that set it apart from the classical traditions passed down through court authorities. Responding to Fan's charge that the Zuo Tradition lacks a master-disciple lineage, Chen characterizes Zuo Qiuming as a diamond in the rough: "The loftiest tone does not suit the common audience, and so Boya cut his strings. The ultimate treasure does not accord with common tastes, and so Bian He cried blood." Chen Yuan touts the worthiness of Zuo Qiuming by comparing him to objects that were hidden to all but the most discerning eyes and ears. Chen Yuan also likens Master Zuo to Confucius, in that both men were rejected by people who failed to properly appreciate them ("not accommodated by his generation."). By invoking the theme of unappreciated worth, Chen neatly overturns Fan Sheng's assumption that traditional values are necessarily correct.

In another subtle move, Chen Yuan argues that if the common run of people fail to perceive Confucius' "sagely virtue," how much less can they be expected to value the "leftover writings on bamboo and silk." This allusion to the materiality of texts recalls Liu Xin's description of the Zuo Tradition as part of a cache of "ancient writings in the archaic script," which were found to be in a state of disrepair (with "missing bamboo strips").

In his memorial, Fan implies that opening the doors to other exegetical traditions might be detrimental to learning, as it would distract students from true learning: "Confucius said, '[A gentleman] who is widely-versed in learning and submits his learning to the restraints of ritual is not likely to go far wrong.' . . . Yan Yuan said, 'Broaden me with the letters; restrain me with ritual.'" Fan further cites Laozi: "'Learning the way, it [one's learning] diminishes by the day'; "'Cutting off one's learning, one will have no more worries.'" Fan Sheng interprets these

know if the version of the Zuo Tradition available to Fan Sheng and Chen contained such passages. The extant commentaries attributed to Liu Xin almost exclusively treat such sentences in the Zuo Tradition, but since Liu Xin's commentaries are lumped together with Jia Kui's (30-101), this might be a late attribution.

quotes as exhortations to limit the types of traditions to be learnt, characterizing the Zuo Tradition as useless learning (“one ought to eliminate the secondary forms of learning”). Whereas Chen Yuan seeks to tie the Zuo Tradition closer to the core values of Confucius, Fan Sheng attempts to push the Zuo Tradition off to the periphery, away from the center of authority represented by Confucius.

Fan Sheng’s memorial identifies Confucius as the sole unifying figure from which exegetical traditions derive their validity, in addition to imperial authority:

I wish that your majesty would hold suspect that which past emperors have deemed suspect, and trust that which they had found trustworthy, in order to demonstrate [to all] that he has returned to the root [of things] and to clarify that he does not hold himself to be the sole authority. The reason the affairs of the world are contradictory is that they are not [tied to] a single root. The *Changes* said: ‘[Despite] the stirrings of the world, the constant man is one [with the root].’ It also said: ‘By aligning with the root, the ten thousand things become principled.’²¹⁰ The root of the Five Classics originated with Confucius.

Fan Sheng deploys the key word “root” several times in this passage (“returned to the root”; “a single root”; “aligning with the root”), to assert that the Zuo Tradition could not qualify as a basic ethical source that stemmed from Confucius (“The root of the Five Classics originated with Confucius”). He urges the emperor to adopt the precedents established by rulers of the Western Han (“hold suspect that which past emperors have deemed suspect, and trust that which they had found trustworthy”), that is, to reject the Zuo Tradition because the emperor’s predecessors never officially recognized it.

Chen Yuan then formulates a counter-response. Instead of using the originary root as the main metaphor for authoritative traditions, Chen resorts to the analogies of extraordinary perception only the Sages could have. Chen places the appreciative readers of the Zuo Tradition in the same league with the legendary figures with uncommon powers of perception:

Confucius said, ‘Wearing black silk is economical, [so] I follow the general practice. As for obeisance below the dais, I depart from it [the common practice of obeisance after mounting the dais].’ Those with acute vision alone perceive [what is hard to perceive] and are not misled by the reds and purples. Those with acute hearing alone discern [what is hard to hear] and their hearing is not drowned out by [the mix of] clear and muffled tones. For this reason, Li Zhu did not allow skillful magic to confuse his sight, and Shi Kuang did not allow fashionable music notes to overpower his hearing.

For the second time in his memorial, Chen invokes the figure of Confucius as an authoritative figure of keen judgment and independent spirit who, rejected by the world, was defiant of popular custom (“I depart from it”). Continuing in this vein, Chen implicitly compares those who value the Zuo Tradition to archetypal figures of extraordinary perception, such as Li Zhu and Shi Kuang. By drawing these analogies, Chen suggests that the Zuo Tradition does not belong to

²¹⁰ Li Xian notes that the *Changes* of his time did not contain the text of this citation. HHS 36.1229.

improper strains of culture, such as “skillful magic” or “fashionable music notes,” while reinforcing his earlier comparison of the Zuo Tradition to Bian He’s jade and Zhong Ziqi’s zither playing. Thus Chen redirects the debate to the issue of the reader’s discrimination, penetration, and insight (“acute vision”; “acute hearing”), appealing to others’ subjectivity and sensibilities. In so doing, Chen Yuan diffuses the imagined ideological tension between the proponents and opponents of the Zuo Tradition, recasting it as a difference between the application and failure of perception. In other words, rather than directly assault the established practices and values cherished by Fan Sheng and the Academicians (as Liu Xin does in his “Letter”), Chen challenges them to make unprecedented choices.

Results of the debate

A temporary result of the Fan-Chen debate in early Eastern Han came after many more rounds of debate, when Guangwudi consented to appoint an Academicians’ Chair to oversee the official study of the Zuo Tradition. But because the wrangling over it persisted, Guangwudi discontinued the post soon afterwards, in order to quell the bitter disputes:

書奏，下其議，范升復與元相辯難，凡十餘上。帝卒立左氏學，太常選博士四人，元為第一。帝以元新忿爭，乃用其次司隸從事李封，於是諸儒以左氏之立，論議謹謹，自公卿以下，數廷爭之。會封病卒，左氏復廢。

After Chen Yuan’s memorial was submitted, the emperor ordered its discussion. Fan Sheng and Chen again debated each other for a total of more than ten rounds. In the end, the emperor established Zuo Tradition studies. The Superintendent of Ceremonial selected four candidates for Academicians’ Chair. Chen Yuan placed first among them. Because the emperor thought that Chen was fractious and contentious with his new views, he employed the next in place, Assistant Officer of Internal Security Li Feng.²¹¹ Subsequently, because of the establishment of the Zuo Tradition, discussions among the various scholars grew raucous. Nobles, ministers, and all those below repeatedly fought over it at court. It so happened that Li Feng died from illness, so the Zuo Tradition was again left to the wayside.

According to this account in the *Hou Hanshu*, Chen Yuan’s submission of his memorial was only the beginning of a series of on-going altercations over the Zuo Tradition (“of more than ten rounds”). Even after the emperor’s establishment of a Chair for the study of the Zuo Tradition, the debate remained unsettled. The debate only spread to a wider ring of scholars (“Nobles, ministers, and all those below repeatedly fought over it at court”).

The eventual ‘fate’ of the Zuo Tradition Chair’s appointment hints at Guangwudi’s lack of interest or commitment to scholarly issues. The Zuo Tradition was swiftly dismantled when it proved convenient (“It so happened that Li Feng died from illness, so the Zuo Tradition was again left to the wayside”). As recounted through the perspective of Fan Ye the historian, Guangwudi, as with Aidi (6–1 BCE) earlier, made no serious effort to adjudicate or influence the status of the Zuo Tradition. In fact, the *Hou Hanshu* portrays the incident as though these

²¹¹ Title taken from De Crespigny, 1237; 1239.

intellectual squabbles were beneath the lofty notice of an emperor concerned about other matters of state. The next emperor to take an active interest in the Zuo Tradition was Zhangdi a quarter century later.

Conclusion

After Liu Xin wrote the “Letter to the Academicians,” and Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan submitted their memorials, the official standing of the Zuo Tradition was little better off. Liu’s and Chen’s struggles to establish the Zuo Tradition on the same footing with the other *Annals* traditions did not bring about the desired results. The Fan-Chen debate now stands as the most significant discussion of the authority of the Zuo Tradition during the Han to Tang dynasties. The two men held incommensurate ideas about a common set of issues: precedents, official or personal authority, adherence to Confucius’ values. Both sides tied these issues to the imperial context of restoring the Han empire. But Fan and Chen had factual disagreements about the origins of the Zuo Tradition and the text’s relation to the Sage. In other ways, Chen Yuan’s memorial breaks new ground by introducing the issues of perception and appreciation, as a way of creating a space for considering the Zuo Tradition apart from the questions of institutionalization and transmission that so preoccupied Fan Sheng. Still, this absence of a pedigree for the Zuo Tradition is precisely the issue that Ban Gu seeks to remedy, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Elaborating Accounts about the Zuo Tradition (Ban Gu's Writings)

Introduction

This chapter explores multiple passages in the *Hanshu* that integrate and expand upon the earlier narratives regarding the Zuo Tradition, seen in the writings of Sima Qian, Liu Xin, and Chen Yuan. Ban Gu makes a personal meeting between Zuo Qiuming and Confucius the focal point of an argument meant to resolve the question of the Zuo Tradition's status, authorship, transmission, and institutional history. These relevant narratives are spread three chapters of the *Hanshu*, the "Biography of Liu Xin" (HS 36), the "Treatise on the Classics and Literature" (*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志, HS 30), and the "Biographies of Specialists in Traditional Learning" (*Rulin zhuan* 儒林傳, HS 88). In these chapters, Ban Gu borrows heavily from the *Shiji* passages cited earlier, Liu Xin's "Letter to the Academicians," and the bibliography of works he inherited from the two Lius.²¹² In some cases, Ban's language and ideas barely modified and extended discussions ascribed to Sima Qian and Liu Xin. Interestingly, however, Ban does not draw from the texts of Fan Sheng's and Chen Yuan's memorials submitted in the early Eastern Han, though he surely had access to them as a court historian, a compiler in the imperial library, or later, when appointed to the Orchid Terrace to compile the Basic Annals of Guangwudi's reign.²¹³ But while Ban bases his account entirely on sources inherited from the Western Han, in many cases he selectively responds to the questions raised in the Fan-Chen debate.

In his biography of Liu Xin, for example, Ban Gu portrays Liu as a passionate advocate of the Zuo Tradition. In the "Yiwen zhi," he elaborates the legends surrounding the figure of Zuo Qiuming, portraying him as Confucius' close collaborator. And in his "Rulin zhuan," Ban provides an impressive list of scholar-officials who transmitted the Zuo Tradition continuously throughout the entire Western Han period, a list culminating in its official sponsorship in the dynasty's final reign. The narratives Ban weaves together present the Zuo Tradition in a way that its former promoters would have delighted in: the narratives validate the position that the Zuo Tradition is a reliable means for bridging the hermeneutical gap between the formal features of the *Annals* and the contents of Confucius' ethical thought.

The ardent champion in Liu Xin's biography

²¹² The connection between the Ban and Liu families stretched back to the generation of Ban Gu's grandfather. Ban's grand-uncle, Ban You 班斿, was commanded to collate texts in the imperial library alongside Liu Xiang (79–8 BCE). Chengdi (32–6 BCE) gifted Ban a set of texts in the court's library holdings: "The emperor esteemed Ban You's abilities and gave him duplicate copies of [some?] works in the palace library. At that time, those books were not in general circulation" 上器其能，賜以秘書之副，時書不佈。HS 100A.4202. If this set of texts passed into Ban Gu's hands through family transmission, perhaps he would have seen material Liu Xin saw or collated. See Clark, *Ban Gu's History*, 78.

²¹³ Both of these appointments were made during Mingdi's reign (58–76). See Ban Gu's biography in De Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 6–7.

Ban Gu's biography of Liu Xin makes a stronger case than for the exegetical function of the Zuo Tradition, compared to the "Letter to the Academicians" Liu himself composed. As Ban compiled the biography of Liu Xin at least a quarter century after the Fan-Chen debate (28 CE), Ban's portrayal of Liu Xin answers many of the doubts raised about the nature of the Zuo Tradition earlier in Eastern Han. Ban Gu accomplishes this task by attributing several actions to Liu Xin. First, Ban portrays Liu as championing the Zuo Tradition above the other textual exegetical traditions, despite the more measured tone taken in Liu Xin's "Letter." As shown below, Ban also reinforces the image of Liu as a compiler, not only of several classical texts (as mentioned in Liu's "Letter"), but especially as a collator of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition as complements. Furthermore, Ban indicates that Liu harbored special interests in the ethical significance of the Zuo Tradition—something his "Letter" fails to emphasize. All in all, Ban Gu was instrumental in highlighting Liu Xin's ardent advocacy of the Zuo Tradition:

歆及向始皆治易，宣帝時，詔向受穀梁春秋，十餘年，大明習。及歆校秘書，見古文春秋左氏傳，歆大好之。時丞相史尹咸以能治左氏，與歆共校經傳。歆略從咸及丞相翟方進受，質問大義。初左氏傳多古字古言，學者傳訓故而已，及歆治左氏，引傳文以解經，轉相發明，由是章句義理備焉。

At first, both [Liu] Xin and [Liu] Xiang treated the *Changes*.²¹⁴ At the time of Xuandi [73–48 BCE], Liu Xiang was imperially commanded to study the Guliang Tradition of the *Annals*. In ten-odd years, he became greatly learned and well-versed in it. When [Liu] Xin collated the palace writings, he came across the *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition in the archaic script,²¹⁵ and became very fond of it. At the time, the Clerk to the Chancellor,²¹⁶ Yin Xian, due to his ability to treat the Zuo Tradition,²¹⁷ collated the Classics and commentaries together with [Liu] Xin. [Liu] Xin generally received instruction from Yin Xian and Chancellor Zhai

²¹⁴ In Michael Nylan's discussion of manuscript culture in the Han in mid to late Western Han, she poses several ways to understand *zhi* 治, in *zhishu* 治書: "Evidently, manuscripts were like natural organisms in being subject to cycles of florescence and decay; hence the occasional need for Sages or worthies to engage in therapeutic interventions, so as to restore balance. Thus to master a text, one had to 'put it in order,' 'master it,' or even 'heal' or even 'cure' it." Nylan, *Yang Xiong and Pleasure*, 46. The rendering of *zhi* as "treated" follows Karlgren, "Authenticity and Nature of *Tso Chuan*," 14.

²¹⁵ This was a time when Liu Xin and Liu Xiang were both working in the imperial library. Prior to this passage, Ban Gu writes that "during the Heping reign (of Chengdi 28-24 BCE), [Liu Xin] received an imperial command to lead the compilation of the palace writings together with his father" 河平中，受詔與父向領校秘書." HS 36.1967.

²¹⁶ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 650. Yin Xian was studying the Zuo Tradition at the time when Liu Xiang and Liu Xin were collating works of literature. HS 30.1701; 36.1967; 88.3618. His father was Yin Gengshi 尹更始, who was also purportedly trained in the Zuo Tradition and passed his teaching on to Zhai Fangjin. HS 88.3618; Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 647.

²¹⁷ The HSBZ commentary does not shed light on whether the implied object/subject in the pivot structure "due to [whose] ability" is Yin Xian or Liu Xin as the one possessing the skills to study the Zuo Tradition. Bernard Karlgren translates this line "At that time the prime minister and the historiographer Yin Hien, because they could treat (were well acquainted with) *Tso-shi*, examined along with Hin text and commentary." Karlgren, 14.

Fangjin,²¹⁸ seeking from them verification about the great principles.²¹⁹ Initially, the Zuo Tradition had many ancient characters and expressions,²²⁰ and its students transmitted glosses and explanations only.²²¹ [But] when Liu Xin studied the Zuo Tradition,²²² he drew from the text of the Zuo Tradition to explicate the Classic,²²³ such that each threw light on the other. On account of this, the chapter-and-verse commentaries and the principles of meaning were complete therein.²²⁴

In this passage above, Ban Gu narrates the history of Liu Xin's interest and training in the Zuo Tradition. In particular, Ban points out that when Liu read the Zuo Tradition, he read it against the *Annals*, which enabled him to bring out the central meanings of the Classic.

歆亦湛靖有謀，父子俱好古，博見彊志，過絕於人。歆以為左丘明好惡與聖人同，親見夫子，而公羊、穀梁在七十子後，傳聞之與親見之，其詳略不同。歆數以難向，向不能非間也，然猶自持其穀梁義。及歆親近，欲建立左氏春秋及毛詩、逸禮、古文尚書皆列於學官。哀帝令歆與五經博士講論其義，諸博士或不肯置對，歆因移書太常博士，責讓之。...

[Liu] Xin was indeed deeply contemplative and full of ideas. Father and son were both fond of [what is] ancient, and their wide knowledge and strengths in recording surpassed others.²²⁵ [Liu] Xin thought Zuo Qiuming had the same approbations and disapprobations as the Sage,²²⁶ that [Zuo] personally met Confucius, whereas Gongyang and Guliang lived after the [age of the] seventy

²¹⁸ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 669. According to the *Hanshu*, Zhai Fangjin instructed Liu Xin in the Zuo Tradition. HS 88.3620.

²¹⁹ Yan Shigu glossed *zhi* 質 as *zheng* 正 or to “rectify” and arrive at the correct meaning by appealing to the knowledge of Liu Xin’s mentors. HSBZ 36.31b. Karlgren renders these lines “Liu Hin in general took the meaning and main ideas from Hien and the minister Tse Fang-tsin.” Karlgren, 14.

²²⁰ In light of the next phrase, which states that the Zuo Tradition text necessitated the provision of “glosses and the general import” 訓故, my translation of *guzi guyan* 古字古言 need not limit the ideas it carries strictly to “characters” and “expressions,” for they could well refer to a range of linguistic and semantic units—characters, words, phrases, and longer expressions—that need to be deciphered, translated, or paraphrased, or summarized.

²²¹ Yan Shigu glosses *gu* 故 as “general import” 指趣. HSBZ 36.31b.

²²² The contrastive conjunction “But” is inserted here to underline Ban Gu’s rhetorical emphasis on the difference that Liu Xin made vis-à-vis the scholars preceding him.

²²³ Commentators in HSBZ do not furnish any suggestions on how to understand the line *yin zhuanwen yi jiejing* 引傳文以解經, even though this is the crucial point that Ban Gu made to differentiate Liu Xin from his predecessors. Karlgren understands the line as “he quoted the words of the commentary to explain the *King* text.” Karlgren, 15.

²²⁴ Karlgren glosses *yili* 義理 simply as “meanings.”

²²⁵ Yan Shigu glosses *zhi* 志 as “recording” 記也. HSBZ 36.31b.

²²⁶ Yan Shigu cites the only reference to Zuo Qiuming in the *Analec*s 5.24, which contains the famous quote of Confucius commending and deferring to Zuo Qiuming’s judgments: “The Master said, ‘Fine words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect—Zuo Qiuming was ashamed of them. I also am ashamed of them. To conceal resentment against a person, and appear friendly with him—Zuo Qiuming was ashamed of such conduct. I also am ashamed of it.’” 子曰：巧言、令色、足恭，左丘明恥之，丘亦恥之。匿怨而友其人，左丘明恥之，丘亦恥之。 Ibid; Waley, 113–4. In light of this citation, *hao* 好 and *wu* 惡 most likely specifically refers to ethical issues that call for approval or disapproval.

disciples. As for what had been passed along by hearsay versus what had been personally seen,²²⁷ these differ in the level of detailed knowledge [in the two types of texts, oral and written].²²⁸ [Liu] Xin repeatedly took [the Zuo Tradition] to refute [Liu] Xiang, and [Liu] Xiang could not find holes in his argument. Nevertheless, he [Liu Xiang] personally maintained his [views on the] meaning of the Guliang Tradition.²²⁹ When [Liu] Xin became a closer confidant [to Wang Mang], he wished to establish the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*, the Mao Tradition of the *Odes*, Missing *Rites*, the Archaic Script *Documents*, and rank them among the [those studied by] official academicians. Aidi commanded [Liu] Xin and the Academicians of the Five Classics to discuss and debate their meaning,²³⁰ but among the various Academicians, some were unwilling to give a response. Upon this, [Liu] Xin wrote a letter to the Academicians under the Superintendent of Ceremonial,²³¹ denouncing them. . . . [The text of the “Letter” is omitted here, see previous chapter.]

Above Ban Gu attributes to Liu Xin the idea that Zuo Qiuming not only shared the same principles as Confucius, but also had personal contact with the Sage, so that the Zuo Tradition had to contain a better and fuller account of Confucius’ teachings than either the Gongyang Tradition or the Guliang Tradition, whose masters never received the Sage’s teachings in his presence. When the Academicians did not accept this idea, as Ban says, Liu expressed his displeasure in a letter to them.

其言甚切，諸儒皆怨恨。是時名儒光祿大夫龔勝以歆移書上疏深自罪責，願乞骸骨罷。及儒者師丹為大司空，亦大怒，奏歆改亂舊章，非毀先帝所立。上曰：「歆欲廣道術，亦何以為非毀哉？」歆由是忤執政大臣，為眾儒所訕，懼誅，求出補吏，為河內太守。²³²

²²⁷ HSBZ cites Song Qi as noting that the object pronoun *zhi* 之 in *chuanwen zhi* 傳聞之 should be omitted, though no further explanation followed. HSBZ 36.31b. It is ambiguous which is the antecedent for the pronoun refers back to—Confucius or the “approbations and disapprobations”? The *zhi* 之 in “personally seen” 親見之 refers much more unambiguously to Confucius.

²²⁸ The translation of this sentence follows Michael Nylan’s in Nylan, “Textual Authority,” 254.

²²⁹ Lost in this translation, the character *jian* 間 is literally to come between Liu Xin and his stubbornly held opinion about the correctness of the Zuo Tradition.

²³⁰ It is again difficult to pin down the exact reference of the possessive pronoun *qi* 其 in “discuss and debate their meaning” 講論其義. Yan Shigu gives this following reading of the Academicians’ refusal to engage in a debate with Liu Xin: “They were not of the same opinion as Liu Xin, therefore they were unwilling to establish [Academicians for] their study [i.e. study of the four traditions]” 並不與歆意同，故不肯立其學也. HSBZ 36.31b. Given this reading, “their meaning” 其義 could refer to the meaning or significance of the four traditions that Liu Xin “wished to establish,”: “the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*, Mao Tradition of the *Odes*, Missing *Rites*, and Archaic Script *Documents*.” Alternatively “their meaning” 其義 could refer to the meanings of these four traditions and of the traditions of the Five Classics as compared against each other.

²³¹ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 762.

²³² HS 36.1967–72.

His language was incisive, and the various specialists in traditional learning were all resentful. At the time, the famous specialist Counsellor of the Palace Gong Sheng offered to resign from his post,²³³ on account of Liu Xin's submission of the letter deeply accusing himself of an offence.²³⁴ Another specialist, Shi Dan, the Imperial Counsellor,²³⁵ was also greatly angered. He memorialized that [Liu] Xin had changed and disordered the old models, and criticized and discredited that which past emperors had established. The emperor said, "[Liu] Xin wished to broaden the way of the Classics. On what basis is this considered 'criticizing' and 'discrediting' [past precedents]?" On account of this, [Liu] Xin rubbed the eminent ministers in power the wrong way and was calumniated by the various specialists in traditional learning. Fearing punishment, he requested reassignment as an alternate official,²³⁶ and became the Governor of Henei.²³⁷

Liu Xin's letter provoked an especially strong reaction from the ministers and specialists in traditional learning. Even though the Aidi defended Liu, the emperor did not override the critics' opinions, causing Liu to flee from the capital. In the end, Liu Xin did not succeed in persuading the official community to accept the Zuo Tradition.

Image of Liu Xin as ardent champion

Ban Gu positions Liu Xin vis-à-vis his father Liu Xiang in order to highlight their expertise in different traditions. The biography suggests father and son as initially sharing expertise in other Classics, but eventually split in their loyalties, with Liu Xiang preferring the Guliang Tradition, and Liu Xin, the Zuo Tradition. According to their biographies, Liu Xin and Liu Xiang both started with expertise on the *Changes*. It is clearer that Liu Xiang was then appointed to study the Guliang Tradition. In particular, Ban Gu emphasizes the passion Liu Xin developed for the Zuo Tradition ("became very fond of it"), as differentiated from the skill that Liu Xiang developed in the study of the Guliang Tradition under imperial command ("became greatly learned and well-versed in it"). But Ban says that Liu Xin reached his father's level of expertise, as demonstrated by Liu Xin's ability to lodge irrefutable arguments against the Guliang Tradition. This detail reinforces the overall impression that each possessed a strong sense of mastery in a particular exegetical tradition. In the case of Liu Xin, Ban Gu portrays Liu's more intense commitment to the Zuo Tradition than to the other archaic script texts. In short Ban Gu heightens Liu Xin's intellectual and personal commitment to the Zuo Tradition to a level that surpasses Liu's own "Letter to the Academicians."

Underlining the exegetical character of the Zuo Tradition

²³³ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 119.

²³⁴ Literally "to request relief from duty and be allowed to live out the end of his days and bury his bones back home" 願乞骸骨罷.

²³⁵ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 759.

²³⁶ Liu Xin requested to be "sent out" 出, in other words, demoted as an alternate official.

²³⁷ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 762.

Ban Gu's biography of Liu Xin emphasizes the exegetical character of the Zuo Tradition in another small but significant way, when he gives the text the title "The *Annals*' Zuo Tradition" 春秋左氏傳, with the character *zhuan* 傳 for "exegetical tradition" appearing in the full title.²³⁸ While the *Shiji* 14 refers to the Zuo Tradition as *Zuoshi Chunqiu* 左氏春秋, Ban Gu's new title reframes the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition.²³⁹ In this biographical passage, Ban also attaches the designation *Guwen* 古文 (archaic script) to the work so that the descriptive title reads *Guwen Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan* 古文春秋左氏傳. While Ban Gu may not have conceived of "*Guwen*" as an integral part of the work's title, the term nevertheless associates it with a particular group of palace library texts Liu Xin discovered, again designating the Zuo Tradition's interpretive function.

Ban Gu's biography of Liu Xin also molds him in the image of a textual scholar specifically devoted to compiling the *Annals* as a Classic and the Zuo Tradition as its accompanying exegetical tradition. This image deviates from the one presented in Liu's own "Letter to the Academicians," in which he pleaded with the Academicians to utilize the texts from the palace library as one resource, among others, to verify the accuracy of the transmitted traditions, textual or oral. In contrast, Ban Gu highlights Liu Xin's collation of the Zuo Tradition, along with the *Annals*, under the guidance of Yin Xian: "At the time, the Clerk to the Chancellor, Yin Xian, due to his ability to treat the Zuo Tradition, collated the Classics and commentaries together with [Liu] Xin." Here Ban Gu features Yin Xian as Liu Xin's tutor in the Zuo Tradition in particular. Whereas not even a spectre of Yin Xian appears in Liu's "Letter," Ban's biography of Liu speaks of the shared enterprise between Yin and Liu Xin.²⁴⁰ More specifically, the line—"due to his ability to treat the Zuo Tradition"—fails to specify who had the expertise first or in which direction it flowed.²⁴¹ On the one hand, considering the previous lines about Liu Xin's great interest for the Zuo Tradition, one might expect that it would be Liu Xin whom Yin saw as having expertise in the text. On the other hand, in light of the succeeding lines about Liu Xin's tutelage under Yin Xian and Zhai Fangjin ("received instruction from Yin Xian and Chancellor Zhai Fangjin"), it would seem probable that Yin was the one who knew the Zuo Tradition better. Given that the passage features the Zuo Tradition as the focal point of discussion, it would follow that *jingzhuan* 經傳 refers to specifically the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition, rather than to Classics and their exegetical traditions in general. Perhaps Ban Gu intends to leave the referent ambiguous: he first creates the impression that Liu Xin was uniquely learned in the Zuo Tradition, then he appears to give Liu a tutor.

²³⁸ Elsewhere in the *Hanshu*, this designation also appears in Liu Xin's memorial "Discussion on the [Proposed] Destruction of Wudi's temple" 毀武帝廟議, cited in the "Biography of Wei Xian" 韋賢傳: "The *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition says, 'Those with different titles and ranks should be accorded different rites'" 春秋左氏傳曰: 名位不同, 禮亦異數. HS 73.3126–7. This citation might feature the earliest occurrence of Zuo Tradition as a *zhuan* in the extant records. That is, if we assume that Ban Gu quoted memorials and other official writings *verbatim* as a rule, and never made emendations to reflect later usages. Wang Xianqian cites a commentator as saying that Liu's was the first citation from this title in Western Han memorials. HSBZ 73.18b.

²³⁹ The *Shiji* never once uses *Zuoshi zhuan*, while a few key word searches reveal that Ban Gu uses *Zuoshi zhuan* roughly twice as often as *Zuoshi*. Works compiled after the *Hanshu* seem to use both interchangeably.

²⁴⁰ The "Yiwen zhi" records that as Director, Astronomy (*Taishi Ling* 太史令), Chengdi commissioned Yin Xian to "collate texts on occult methods" 校數術. HS 30.1701. The "Rulin zhuan" mentions that "Liu Xin received instruction from Yin Xian and Zhai Fangjin" 劉歆從尹咸及翟方進受. HS 88.3618.

²⁴¹ See n. 217.

Additionally, Liu's biography advances the famous claim that Liu Xin played a seminal role in citing Zuo Tradition to explain the *Annals*. Now that Ban Gu has associated Liu Xin with Yin Xian, Ban then pulls the focus back on Liu as the primary exponent of the Zuo Tradition in relation to the *Annals*: "Initially, the Zuo Tradition had many ancient characters and expressions, and students transmitted glosses and explanations only. [But] when Liu Xin studied the Zuo Tradition, he drew from the text of the Zuo Tradition to explicate the Classic." Here, Ban claims that students prior to Liu Xin studied little more than the Zuo Tradition's literal meanings. Thus far, none of the sources examined indicates the existence of other figures studying the Zuo Tradition, including Liu Xin's "Letter" and Fan Sheng's/Chen Yuan's memorials, although Ban claims there were students before Liu Xin.²⁴²

At any rate, Ban names Liu Xin's achievement: he was the first one to read the Classic and Zuo Tradition against each other. That is, whereas his predecessors sought only to comprehend the surface meaning of the graphs ("ancient characters and expressions"), Liu Xin was interested in its deeper significance ("principles of meaning" 義理). These deeper levels of meaning refer specifically to the ones emerging from Liu's belief in the mutual referents between the Classic and Zuo Tradition ("each threw light on the other"), as opposed to the those contained only within the Zuo Tradition itself.

In yet other ways, Ban Gu strengthens the case for the exegetical character of the Zuo Tradition through his portrait of Liu Xin. The biography highlights Liu Xin's interest in the ethical significance with which Confucius imbued the *Annals*: he questioned Yin Xian and Zhai Fangjin, "seeking from them verification about the great principles (大義)." In line with the *Annals* hermeneutic, the term *dayi* 大義 presumably refers to the examples of moral significance that can be inferred from the Classic through the aid of the Zuo Tradition. Ban's invocation of this term directly echoes the language in Liu Xin's "Letter," where Liu used the same compound in these lines: "When the Master passed away, his subtle words were cut off; when the seventy disciples died, there was a turn away from their great principles." In its original context of the "Letter," these lines were part of Liu's initial remarks setting up the sweeping background of historical decline; this quote certainly does not pertain to the *Annals* or the Zuo Tradition. However, Ban applies the same terminology in his discussion of this pair of texts, connecting it back to the Zuo Tradition of Confucius' thought. Interestingly, Ban Gu cites Liu Xin's "Letter," ostensibly to forge linkages with Liu Xin's own writings in this biography. Yet it appears that Ban's larger aim is to establish the Zuo Tradition within the hermeneutic of the *Annals*, developed in *Mencius* and the *Shiji*, but underemphasized in the Fan-Chen debate. He makes a further claim when he describes Liu's study of the *Annals* and Zuo Tradition as two halves of a whole constituting Confucius' ethical universe: "the principles of meaning (義理) were complete therein." With the term "principles of meaning," Ban Gu signals that Liu intended to systematize and order meanings. This new dimension highlights the Zuo Tradition's capacity to unearth that implicit system of signification in the *Annals*.

The myth of Zuo Qiuming

²⁴² The other mentions of Zuo Tradition scholars are in the *Hanshu* "Rulin zhuan." See passage in later discussion on pp. 78–9 of chapter 3.

Further shoring up the Zuo Tradition's link to the *Annals*, the biography credits Liu Xin with his belief in Zuo Qiuming's and Confucius' spiritual compatibility. Ban says Liu believed in Zuo Qiuming's personal contact with Confucius, in contrast to the founders of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. Whereas the *Shiji* 14 claims that only Zuo Qiuming arranged the scribal records that Confucius utilized, and Liu Xin's "Letter" never discusses the figure of Zuo Qiuming much, Ban Gu portrays Zuo as a moral peer of Confucius: he "had the same approbations and disapprobations as the Sage." Most significantly, Ban emphasizes Zuo's intimate acquaintance with Confucius through direct encounter ("personally meeting him"), Chen Yuan's assertion that Zuo Qiuming received instruction from (*qinshou* 親受) Confucius. But Ban goes further than Chen, claiming Zuo Qiuming shared with—not just learned from—Confucius a single moral vision. Ban Gu's rearticulation of Liu's position shapes Zuo Qiuming into a historical figure able to share the same time, space, and mental orientation with Confucius because Zuo had direct contact with him.

Ban Gu further insists upon the notion that temporal distance from the age of Confucius affects the quality of interpretations transmitted from the Sage. Here Ban develops a distinction that the *Shiji* 14 has previously invoked concerning the authenticity of traditions transmitted in different manners. Whereas the *Shiji* sets up a hierarchy between oral and written transmission, Ban strikes a hierarchical distinction between mediated and personal transmission: "what had been passed along by hearsay versus what had been personally seen". These two sets of distinctions are related but not necessarily identical. Whereas previous sources posit the Zuo Tradition as a benchmark for divergent interpretations (*Shiji* 14) or as a supplement to not just incomplete but faulty traditions (Liu's "Letter"), here the biography privileges personal over mediated transmission, elevating the Zuo Tradition above the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. Earlier, the *Shiji* 14 contrasts the unreliability of the seventy disciples with the authority of Zuo Qiuming; but here, the biography sets Confucius and his disciples in opposition to Gongyang and Guliang, who lived "after the [age of the] seventy disciples." In a subtle move, Ban Gu shifts attention away from the moral disparity between the Confucius the disciples to that between the moral community comprised of Confucius, his disciples, Zuo Qiuming versus later exegetical traditions.

Ban Gu also voices the perspective that the Zuo Tradition's expansive material, perhaps referring to its length, results from Zuo Qiuming having personally met Confucius: as for hearsay versus personal witness, "these differ in the level of detailed knowledge." This phrase implicitly makes a virtue of the length of the Zuo Tradition, as opposed to the cursoriness of other traditions, whose founders only learned things through hearsay. Although the Ban Gu's intended critique of the other two traditions is clear, he is tactfully stating that mediated transmission was inherently problematic and faulty (as *Shiji* 14 does), he implies that it nonetheless provides less clarity and knowledge than first-hand accounts such as the Zuo Tradition.

In sum, through the biography of Liu Xin, Ban Gu voices the idea that direct contact and complete union with the Sage are essential to attaining the right interpretation of Confucius' ideas. Building upon the *Shiji*'s idea that Zuo Qiuming first stabilized Confucius' intended meaning in writing, the *Hanshu* further establishes the ideological unity between the alleged authors of the *Annals* and Zuo Tradition. Point by point, Ban gave more extended treatment to the ideas emerging in earlier sources, in order to intimate the Zuo Tradition's superiority over other exegetical traditions.

Historicizing the Zuo Tradition in the “Yiwen zhi”

Ban Gu’s “Yiwen zhi” supplies greater details regarding the authorship of both the *Annals* and Zuo Tradition. Scholars often cite both the *Shiji* 14 and the “Yiwen zhi” as largely uniform evidence about the Zuo Tradition’s authorship and relation to the *Annals*. These two pieces present many of the same characters, language, and narrative arcs that shaped basic ideas about the authorship of the two texts. But these surface resemblances belie finer distinctions between the two chapters. Synthesizing elements found in the sources examined thus far, the “Yiwen zhi” historicizes the compositional circumstances and purposes of both the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition.

Reconceiving degrees of separation

The *Shiji* and “Yiwen zhi” accounts give parallel yet different accounts of the splintering of exegetical traditions of the *Annals*. Both accounts describe the verbal dissemination of Confucius’ messages, destined to grow weaker with subsequent transmissions. As previously noted, *Shiji* 14 figures Confucius’ disciples as the point when Confucius’ teachings began to destabilize: “A gentleman of Lu, Zuo Qiuming, was afraid that the disciples each had divergent ideas, . . . and lose the true meaning [of Confucius’ messages].” This statement attributes the incongruence of messages to the disciples’ misdirected and dogmatic efforts to disseminate their masters’ teachings, and valorizes Zuo Qiuming as the stabilizer of meaning.

But as with Liu Xin’s “Letter,” the “Yiwen zhi” characterizes the disintegration of meaning as occurring only after the disciples’ death. Whereas the *Shiji* 14 depicts Zuo as being “afraid” 懼 of the potential for divergent interpretations, here the opening of the “Yiwen zhi” pronounces this possibility to be a reality:

昔仲尼沒而微言絕，七十子喪而大義乖。故春秋分爲五。²⁴³

In the past when Confucius passed away, his subtle words were cut off. When the seventy disciples died, there was a turn away from their great principles. Therefore the *Annals* split into five [traditions].

Borrowing from Liu Xin, Ban Gu redeploys a line in Liu’s “Letter” virtually verbatim: “when the seventy disciples died, there was a turn away from their great principles” 七十子終而大義乖. Sharing this line with Liu Xin, Ban Gu recasts the historical process. The “Yiwen zhi” portrays the disintegration as having reached its end already, since Confucius’ “subtle words” and “great principles” were no longer understood and adhered to. Earlier, the *Shiji* 14 centers on Zuo Qiuming, who observed the crisis during the disciples’ age and took it upon himself to forestall it on his own. But as the “Yiwen zhi” says, despite Zuo Qiuming’s initial best efforts to set things right, the faulty interpretations nonetheless multiplied (“split into five [traditions]”). Instead of presenting the disciples as a threat to the integrity of Confucius’ messages, the “Yiwen zhi”

²⁴³ HS 30.1701.

statement collapses the master and disciples into the last generation before meaning diverged. By implication, once the stage of divergence commenced, only one of the multiple traditions holds the right interpretations—the Zuo Tradition.

Establishing the unity of vision between Confucius and Zuo Qiuming

In the “Yiwen zhi” bibliography of works in the “Spring and Autumn” section (as one of the “Six Classics” 六藝), Ban Gu features Zuo Qiuming prominently while offering nothing about the masters of the other four of the five exegetical traditions mentioned in the opening remarks of the “Yiwen zhi”:

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。

The kings of antiquity had offices of the scribe for generations. The actions of rulers were invariably recorded. That was done so that rulers would be cautious in their speech and conduct, and manifest their paradigms and models.²⁴⁴ The Left Scribe recorded speech and the Right Scribe recorded events. Events were compiled into the annals while speeches were compiled into the *Documents*.²⁴⁵ None of the emperors and kings failed to have the same.

The “Yiwen zhi” introduces the works classified in the “Spring and Autumn” section by first setting up the ideal scenario of antiquity [i.e. before the age of Confucius], when there were no gaps in the historical record and the scribal offices were well-run.

周室既微，載籍殘缺，仲尼思存前聖之業，乃稱曰：「夏禮吾能言之，杞不足徵也；殷禮吾能言之，宋不足徵也。文獻不足故也，足則吾能徵之矣。」以魯周公之國，禮文備物、史官有法，故與左丘明觀其史記，據行事，仍人道，因興以立功，就敗以成罰，假日月以定曆數，藉朝聘以正禮樂。

Once the Zhou house declined, records were incomplete and documents had lacunae in them. Confucius longed to preserve the legacy of past sages, so he declared, “I could talk about the rites of Xia, but Qi supplies no adequate evidence. I could talk about the rites of Yin, but Song supplies no adequate evidence. This is because there is a lack both of documents and of worthy men.²⁴⁶ If those were adequate, then I could adduce them in support of my words.”²⁴⁷ As Lu was the kingdom of the Duke of Zhou, its ritual texts were complete with their

²⁴⁴ Wang Xianqian cites a number of places to support the textual variant of *shi* 式 for *jie* 戒 so that clause *zhao fashi* 昭法式 would read “manifest the models (for emulation) and warnings.” HSBZ 30.18b.

²⁴⁵ The commentator Ye Dehui 葉德輝 cited in HSBZ clarifies that the *Chunqiu* 春秋 here refers to the different state annals (“annals of the hundred states” 百國春秋) enumerated in *Mozi*. HSBZ 30.19a.

²⁴⁶ Yan Shigu glosses *xian* 獻 as “worthy.” Ibid.

²⁴⁷ *Analects* 3.9. Waley, 96.

corresponding implements, and its offices of scribes had good models.²⁴⁸ Therefore Confucius, together with Zuo Qiuming, perused the scribal records [i.e. the state annals],²⁴⁹ based themselves on the deeds and events, relied on the way of humanity, took instances of success as opportunities to establish merit, took instances of failures as opportunities to apply [retroactive or virtual] punishment, used historical dates as a vehicle for establishing calendrical standards, and drew from [episodes from history involving] the court protocols of diplomatic visits to rectify the rites and music.

This “Yiwen zhi” passage above first highlights the significance of Confucius’ and Zuo Qiuming’s collaborative efforts to halt decline. Particularly strong in this passage is the emphasis given to the condition of texts and documents as a sign of the times. Thereupon, Zuo Qiuming is portrayed as Confucius’ companion as they “perused” the relatively complete set of records stored in the state of Lu, utilizing them to restore culture.

有所褒諱貶損，不可書見，口授弟子，弟子退而異言。丘明恐弟子各安其意，以失其真，故論本事而作傳，明夫子不以空言說經也。春秋所貶損，大人當世君臣，有威權勢力，其事實皆形於傳，是以隱其書而不宣，所以免時難也。及末世口說流行，故有公羊、穀梁、鄒、夾之傳。四家之中，公羊、穀梁立於學官，鄒氏無師，夾氏未有書。²⁵⁰

Where there were judgments of praise, taboo, rebuke, and criticism that could not be presented in writing, Confucius orally transmitted them to his disciples, but upon returning home, each gave divergent accounts of them. [Zuo] Qiuming was afraid that each of the disciples would be satisfied with their own conceptions and lose the true meaning [of Confucius’ messages]. Therefore he arrayed the original events and made an exegetical tradition,²⁵¹ [so as] to clarify that Confucius never

²⁴⁸ The commentaries of Yan Shigu and Wang Xianqian are silent on how one might construe the phrase *liwen beiwu* 禮文備物.

²⁴⁹ A fragment from the Yan Tradition of the Gongyang *Annals* (Gongyang Yanshi *Chunqiu* 公羊嚴氏春秋) gives a similar account about Confucius’ and Zuo Qiuming’s perusal of documents: “Confucius was about to compile the *Annals*. Together with Zuo Qiuming, he rode in a carriage to Zhou to view the documents at the Zhou office of scribes. When they returned, Confucius compiled the Classic *Annals* and Qiuming made the Zuo Tradition. The two became the inner and outer lining of each other” 孔子將修春秋，與左丘明乘如周觀書於周史。歸而修春秋之經，丘明為之傳，共為表裏。 *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu* 47.414. In this fragment, a point of departure from Ban Gu’s account is that Confucius and Zuo Qiuming went to see the archives in the state of Zhou instead of Lu. It is striking that an account attributed to the Gongyang Tradition would contain a narrative about the genesis of the Zuo Tradition, and would further state that it became a *bona fide* exegetical tradition of Confucius’ Classic, such that the two became mutually dependent on each other. According to the *Hanshu* “Rulin zhuan,” Master Yan, or Yan Pengzu, was an Academician in the reign of Xuandi. HS 88.3616. My note: this fragment might be a misattribution or interpolation, as it is unlikely that the Zuo Qiuming should figure so prominently as early as Xuandi’s reign, unless Ban Gu bases his narrative here upon an earlier legend that had been circulating long before his time, or Yan’s students incorporated it into his tradition much later.

²⁵⁰ HS 30.1715.

²⁵¹ In the absence of commentary, I render *lun* 論 as “arrayed” to convey the idea of arranging, organizing, laying out the events, and *zuo* 作 as “made,” as consistent with the translation of Confucius *zuo Chunqiu* 作春秋 as

used empty pronouncements to explain his Classic. Those whom the *Annals* rebuked and criticized were the great men in their generation, the rulers and ministers who had authority and power. The truths about their affairs are formed in the [Zuo] Tradition.²⁵² For that reason [Zuo] Qiuming concealed his book and did not publicize it,²⁵³ and by that means he avoided trouble in his time. In these latter days, oral explanations went into wide circulation, so there appeared the Gongyang, Guliang, Zou, and Jia Traditions [of the *Annals*]. Of the four traditions, Gongyang and Guliang were established as [those studied by] official academicians, the Zou Tradition had no masters, and the Jia Tradition never had writings at all.

The concluding passage above repeats the language in *Shiji* 14 regarding Confucius' concealment of his criticisms in the *Annals*, his disciples' divergent interpretations of those messages, and Zuo Qiuming's attempt to preserve their true meanings. The "Yiwen zhi" adds to this tale details about the concealment of the Zuo Tradition itself, for the same reason that Confucius concealed his messages: they both expressed criticisms. This addition creates analogous circumstances behind the creation of the *Annals* and the circulation, or lack thereof, of the Zuo Tradition.

As will be seen below, the above "Yiwen zhi" passage borrows and paraphrases lines from *Shiji* 130, *Shiji* 14, Liu Xin's "Letter to the Academicians," and Liu Xin's biography in the *Hanshu*. In the "Yiwen zhi," Ban Gu builds a narrative about Confucius' and Zuo Qiuming's relationship to underscore their common mission and purpose as historians, reconfiguring the lines taken from previous sources to form new identities that appear in none of the aforementioned sources. For example, with the line describing Confucius' use of concrete historical affairs ("based themselves on the deeds and events" 據行事), Ban gestures at the line in *Shiji* 130 that specifies Confucius' choice of historical affairs serve as his vehicle of

"made the *Annals*." Another interpretation would be to take *lun* 論 as "discuss" about the events as the manner or way in which Zuo Qiuming created the new tradition. But this alternative reading would not highlight the importance of Zuo Qiuming as first and foremost a compiler of the "original events" lying behind the events recorded in the *Annals*, as opposed to an explicator of these events in the Zuo Traditions of oral explanations.

²⁵² More literally, *xing yu zhuan* 形於傳 is to "take shape" or "take form" in the Zuo Tradition.

²⁵³ The "Yiwen zhi" adds this statement to the narrative about the Zuo Tradition's textual history. The addition of this detail effectively supplies an explanation to why the Zuo Tradition was not taught and transmitted in official circles in the imperial academy up until Ban Gu's times. The claim in this passage that Zuo Qiuming "concealed his writings and did not publicize them" may seem to contradict statements, contained in the *Hanshu* biographies of Western Han scholars, that the Zuo Tradition manuscript was circulated among and read by scholars such as Jia Yi, Zhang Cang, and Zhang Yu. However, this "Yiwen zhi" claim can be considered as part of its narrative about the Zuo Tradition less as a stand-alone written manuscript but more as a potential academic office with paid experts studying and expounding upon it. At issue is not whether or why the Zuo Tradition was little known in the Western Han until Liu Xin brought it to light, but rather whether there are reasons that could account for the Zuo Tradition's unofficial status. In this context then, the emphasis on the fact that Zuo Qiuming "concealed his book and did not publicize it" 隱其書而不宣 can be understood, more importantly, as a reference to the Zuo Tradition not having gained official recognition, instead of simply that few people read or knew about it (though that was in some measure true as well).

judgments (“the profundity and incisiveness of deeds and events” 行事之深切著明); the line in Ban Gu’s “Yiwen zhi” that voices Confucius’ perception of cultural disintegration (“records were incomplete and documents had lacunae in them” 載籍殘缺) also echoes two assertions from Liu Xin’s “Letter,” when he voices Wudi’s concern that written records were in disarray (“The documents are incomplete and the bamboo slips have missing strips” 書缺簡脫) and Chengdi’s similar (“learning had declined and the texts were incomplete” 學殘文缺). In a similar vein, Ban Gu cites a quotation in the *Analects* that voices Confucius’ concerns about the dearth of historical documents: “[Confucius] declared, ‘I could talk about the rites of Xia, but Qi supplies no adequate evidence. I could talk about the rites of Yin, but Song supplies no adequate evidence. This is because there is a lack both of documents and of worthy men.’” In borrowing such lines, Ban emphasizes the textual collaboration between Confucius and Zuo Qiuming, also the reasons for restoring old institutions (establish “calendrical standards” and “rectify the rites and music”).

In his “Yiwen zhi,” Ban Gu elaborates upon such elements taken from previous sources to further elevate the figure of Zuo Qiuming close to that of Confucius. For example, he not only posits direct contact between Confucius and Zuo Qiuming, but also figures Zuo as his partner in compiling history: “Confucius, together with Zuo Qiuming, perused the scribal records.” By contrast, in the *Shiji*, Zuo Qiuming compiles historical materials out of the concern for diverging interpretations; in Chen Yuan’s memorial and Ban’s biography of Liu Xin, Zuo had direct contact with Confucius. Here, Ban Gu emphasizes Zuo’s unity with Confucius by depicting their collaboration as historians at the inception of the Classic.

A productive ambiguity also occurs in Ban Gu’s “Yiwen zhi” passage, leaving the impression that Confucius and Zuo Qiuming were involved in the one and the same enterprise, when Ban files to clarify whether the succeeding actions take Confucius or Zuo Qiuming as their subject, or whether, as a similar passage in the *Analects* would dictate,²⁵⁴ these acts refer to Confucius alone:

[Confucius or Zuo Qiuming, or both?] based themselves on the deeds and events, relied on the way of humanity, took instances of success as opportunities to establish merit, took instances of failures as opportunities to apply [retroactive or virtual] punishment, used historical dates as a vehicle for establishing calendrical standards, and drew from [episodes from history involving] the court protocols of diplomatic visits to rectify the rites and music.

This blurring of subjects collapses Confucius and Zuo Qiuming into one figure, as they both assigned value to past actions, corrected the calendar, and drew from ritual precedents. Ban Gu’s subtle maneuver places Zuo at the heart of Confucius’ moral, cultural, historiographical project, making Zuo preside over it from its inception through all its stages. By increasing the depth of Zuo’s involvement in Confucius’ visionary project, Ban virtually makes the Zuo Tradition one and the same project as the *Annals* of Confucius.

²⁵⁴ *Analects* 9.14 refers to Confucius’ cultural activities: “The Master said, ‘It was only after my return from Wei to Lu that music was made right, the “Elegantiae” and “Hymns” receiving their proper places” 子曰：「吾自衛反魯，然後樂正，雅頌各得其所。 Translation adapted from Waley, *Analects of Confucius*, 140.

In other ways, Ban Gu's "Yiwen zhi" echoes passages in the *Shiji* that describe Zuo Qiuming's authorial impulses and intentions:

The *Shiji* 14 says,

The seventy disciples orally taught his transmitted tenets. Because they contained words or phrases that criticized, rebuked, praised, tabooed, and belittled, they could not be presented in writing. A gentleman of Lu, Zuo Qiuming, was afraid that the disciples each had divergent ideas [about the meaning of the *Annals*], would be satisfied with his own conceptions, and lose the true meaning [of Confucius' messages].

The *Hanshu* "Yiwen zhi" says,

Where there were judgments of praise, taboo, rebuke, and criticism that could not be presented in writing, Confucius orally transmitted them to his disciples, but upon returning home, each gave divergent accounts of them. [Zuo] Qiuming was afraid that each of the disciples would be satisfied with their own conceptions and lose the true meaning [of Confucius' messages].

Ban Gu's version essentially imports the *Shiji* 14 passage to reinforce Qiuming's role as the ultimate standard bearer of Confucius' message. With respect to such sensitive material as the critical messages of Confucius, the "Yiwen zhi" adapts the *Shiji* narratives about Zuo Qiuming's transmission of Confucius' criticisms. In *Shiji* 130, Sima Qian asserts that Confucius spurned the use of abstract judgments ("empty pronouncements" 空言) in favor of concrete facts ("deeds and events" 行事); in *Shiji* 14, Sima adds the fact that Zuo Qiuming compiled the archival materials Confucius had utilized ("fully arrayed their words" 具論其語). Combining these two sources, Ban Gu uses a different phraseology to depict Zuo's act of authorship: "Therefore he arrayed the original events (本事) and made an exegetical tradition, [so as] to clarify that Confucius never used empty pronouncements to explain his Classic (說經)." As Ban rearticulates, the materials that Zuo ordered were not "their words" as in the *Shiji*, but the "original events" whose ultimate sources are understood to be other historical records that match the references in the *Annals*. Even though these two phrases essentially mean the same thing, the latter term reinforces the distinction between "empty pronouncements" and "deeds and events" supplied in *Shiji* 130. Moreover, Ban's deployment of the term *shuojing* 說經 raises the idea that Confucius both compiled and expounded on his *jing*, because it is not self-explanatory. These dual aspects of Confucius as both the compiler and interpreter of the implicit meanings in the text underscores the parallel capacity of Zuo Tradition to explicate the Classic's embedded messages.

Double concealment

Ban Gu also takes care to account for the long stretch of time when the Zuo Tradition remained largely unknown. Essentially, his "Yiwen zhi" provides a sequel to earlier narratives about the Zuo Tradition's birth and function, wherein the story about the Zuo Tradition's

concealment is explained by the situation Confucius confronted: Confucius concealed his book because it contained critiques; likewise, the Zuo Tradition had to be concealed because it made those critiques still clearer. As distinct from the *Mencius* definition of the *Annals*,²⁵⁵ Ban Gu's "Yiwen zhi" passage turns its attention to the superiors who wielded control ("rulers and ministers"), instead of the subordinates who tried to wrest that control away ("ministers and sons"), shifting somewhat the objects of Confucius' castigation to those capable of abusing their powers. This shift makes sense when we consider the next line describing the contents of the Zuo Tradition: "The truths about their affairs are formed in the [Zuo] Tradition." This line establishes that the Zuo Tradition supports Confucius in not sparing powerful wrongdoers his judgments. While the "Yiwen zhi" never directly contradicts *Mencius*' and *Shiji* 14, this passage here sharpens the critical edge ascribed to the Zuo Tradition.

Confucius' critique of powerful men leads to the rationale for the Zuo Tradition's relative obscurity. As stated in earlier sources, Confucius concealed his criticisms largely out of the fear of personal attack, but the very text that purports to explicate the suppressed criticisms in the *Annals* remained unknown for a long time: "[Zuo] Qiuming concealed his book and did not publicize it." That is, just as Confucius anticipated his condemnation, Zuo Qiuming sought to protect himself from retaliation ("by that means he avoided trouble in his time").²⁵⁶ Hence the Zuo Tradition's potency in exposing criticisms becomes the very rationale for its lack of recognition for generations.

Transmission and institution in the "Rulin zhuan"

This section treats the narratives about the Zuo Tradition's history of transmission in the "Rulin zhuan" chapter of Ban Gu's *Hanshu*. Writing from the first century of the Eastern Han, Ban Gu constructs a story about the study and transmission of the Zuo Tradition in the Western Han, both at court and within private scholarly circles.²⁵⁷ In the appraisal of the "Rulin zhuan," Ban Gu further alludes to Wang Mang's official sponsorship of the Zuo Tradition in late Western Han, during Pingdi's reign in 4 CE. By this, Ban manages to create a coherent story out of new statements previously unseen.

The account of transmission

In the *Hanshu* "Rulin zhuan," Ban attaches to the Zuo Tradition a history of transmission in the Western Han, reaching back to the early years of the dynasty, presenting a long line of

²⁵⁵ *Mencius* 3B.9 says: "Confucius completed the *Annals* and the rebellious ministers and upstart sons were terrified" 孔子成春秋而亂臣賊子懼. *Mengzi zhengyi*, 459.

²⁵⁶ This sentiment is of course not new, cf. *Mencius* 3B.9. Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, 452.

²⁵⁷ Most scholars use Ban Gu's account in the "Rulin zhuan" as a primary source of factual information about the individuals who studied the Zuo Tradition in a given time period. For example, Shen Yucheng heavily bases his early history of Zuo Tradition scholarship on the Ban Gu's "Rulin zhuan." Scholars such have written, however, about Ban Gu's construction of scholarly lineages to attach respectable histories to texts in order to define their status. See Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan, "Constructing Lineages," 59–99.

officials and scholars who upheld an unbroken transmission of the Zuo Tradition up to the reign of Pingd, whom neither Liu Xin's "Letter" nor the Chen Yuan's memorial mention:²⁵⁸

漢興，北平侯張蒼及梁太傅賈誼、京兆尹張敞、太中大夫劉公子皆修春秋左氏傳。誼為左氏傳訓故，授趙人貫公，為河間獻王博士，子長卿為蕩陰令，授清河張禹長子。禹與蕭望之同時為御史，數為望之言左氏，望之善之，上書數以稱說。後望之為太子太傅，薦禹於宣帝，徵禹待詔，未及問，會疾死。授尹更始，更始傳子咸及翟方進、胡常。常授黎陽賈護季君，哀帝時待詔為郎，授蒼梧陳欽子佚，以左氏授王莽，至將軍。而劉歆從尹咸及翟方進受。由是言左氏者本之賈護、劉歆。²⁵⁹

When the Han was established, the Captain of Beiping,²⁶⁰ Zhang Cang, as well as the Senior Tutor of the Liang Prince, Jia Yi,²⁶¹ the Governor of the Capital Zhang Chang,²⁶² and the Grand Counsellor of the Palace Liu Gongzi,²⁶³ all studied the *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition. [Jia] Yi wrote glosses and explanations for the Zuo Tradition. He taught Guan Gong, who was an Academician for King Xian of Hejian. [Guan's] son Changqing, the Magistrate of Dangyin,²⁶⁴ taught the eldest son of Zhang Yu of Qinghe.²⁶⁵ When [Zhang] Yu and Xiao Wangzhi served as Secretary to the Imperial Counsellor at the same time, [Zhang] repeatedly spoke of the Zuo Tradition to [Xiao] Wangzhi, and [Xiao] Wangzhi thought well of it and repeatedly wrote memorials in praise of it.²⁶⁶ Later when [Xiao] Wangzhi was the Senior Tutor of the crown prince, he recommended [Zhang] Yu to [the future] Xuandi [74–48 BCE], who then recruited [Zhang] Yu to await appointment, but before Zhang was appointed, he died of illness. [Zhang Yu previously] had taught Yin Gengshi,²⁶⁷ who transmitted it to his son Xian, as well as to Zhai Fangjin and Hu Chang. [Hu] Chang taught Jia Hu *Jijun* of Liyang, who at the time of Aidi was awaiting appointment as a Gentleman.²⁶⁸ Jia Hu taught [Chen] Yi, the son of Chen Qin of Cangwu, who then taught the Zuo Tradition to

²⁵⁸ Perhaps Liu Xin and Chen Yuan did not need to mention them because they were not writing a history of scholastic filiations. As discussed in chapter two, they used different strategies to lend prestige to their favorite traditions.

²⁵⁹ HS 88.3620.

²⁶⁰ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 760.

²⁶¹ Title from Loewe, 762. NB: Wang Xianqian points out the discrepancy between this statement about Jia Yi's and Zhang Cang's study of the Zuo Tradition and Wang Chong's statement that the Zuo Tradition emerged from the wall of Confucius' mansion later in Wudi's reign. HSBZ 88.25a.

²⁶² Title from Loewe, 760.

²⁶³ Title from Loewe, 762.

²⁶⁴ Title from Loewe, 761.

²⁶⁵ Commentator Ru Chen clarifies that this Zhang Yu is "not the teacher of Chengdi, Zhang Yu" 非成帝師張禹也。HSBZ 88.25a-b. There are two Zhang Yus whose biographical notices appear in Loewe's *Biographical Dictionary*. Cited here is Zhang Yu (1) in Loewe, 696.

²⁶⁶ The only sign of these is found in a summary of the Hebei Ding County finds in 1973. See *Wenwu* 12.5, 38. There, the name is given as Xiao Wangzhi 肖望之.

²⁶⁷ Yan Shigu clarifies here that "[Zhang Yu] had first taught [Yin] Gengshi" 禹先授更始。HSBZ 88.25b.

²⁶⁸ Title taken from Loewe, 760.

Wang Mang and reached the position of General. Meanwhile Liu Xin received instruction from Yin Xian and Zhai Fangjin. On account of this, those who discussed the Zuo Tradition based themselves on [the teachings of] Jia Hu and Liu Xin.

Notably, Ban Gu places the beginning of this scholarly lineage to the beginning of the Western Han dynasty. He claims that, at that time, the Zuo Tradition already had the distinction of having been studied by a figure as powerful as Zhang Cang, and other highly-ranked political figures.²⁶⁹ Ban portrays the transmission of the Zuo Tradition as generally taking place from fathers to sons, conjoining familial and scholarly lineages. As with other traditions, Ban Gu defines these lines of transmission with precision unseen in any earlier extant sources, portraying a continuous transmission in high official circles, through identifiable individuals.

The question of the Zuo's establishment during Pingdi's reign

The Zuo Tradition received court patronage sometime during the reign of Pingdi, according to Ban Gu. The appraisal or eulogy (*zan* 讚) at the end of Ban's "Rulin zhuan" contains the sole reference to the Zuo Tradition's establishment as an imperially approved text, with Academicians appointed to expound upon the text at the imperial court. Neither the memorials of Fan Sheng (fl. 29 CE), Chen Yuan (fl. 29 CE), and Jia Kui (30–101), nor Wang Chong's (27–97) writings mention this history of the Zuo Tradition's official status under Wang Mang's regency. The institutional status of the Zuo Tradition in the Western Han is therefore still open to question:²⁷⁰

贊曰：自武帝立五經博士，開弟子員，設科射策，勸以官祿，訖於元始，百有餘年，傳業者寢盛，支葉藩滋，一經說至百餘萬言，大師眾至千餘人，蓋祿利之路然也。

Since the time Wudi [140–86 BCE], when he established Academicians for the Five Classics, students were recruited, test questions designed, examinations created, and students encouraged with official emoluments. This happened up until the Yuanshi reign [of Pingdi, 1 BCE–6 CE] more than a hundred years later. Those traditions gradually proliferated, and their branches and leaves grew in profusion. The explanations of one Classic reached hundreds of thousands of words, and eminent masters had as disciples more than a thousand people. In my opinion this was caused by the paths to official emoluments and profit.

²⁶⁹ Scholars have noted the contradiction between the high-profile transmission of the Zuo Tradition early on in the Western Han and Liu Xin's characterization of it as "humble learning" in his "Letter." They take the "Rulin zhuan" account as mostly plausible and resolve the contradiction by introducing the notion that there were "two received versions" transmitted in the Han, one through the officials, and the other as the textual version Liu found in the palace library. For such a conceptualization, see works such as Huang Juehong, *Zuozhuan xue*, 144–66.

²⁷⁰ For Ban's sources and reliability of the Wang Mang account, see HFHD, vol. 3, 91–101; Clark, *Ban Gu's History*, 80–116.

初，書唯有歐陽，禮后，易楊，春秋公羊而已。至孝宣世，復立大小夏侯尚書，大小戴禮，施、孟、梁丘易，穀梁春秋。至元帝世，復立京氏易。平帝時，又立左氏春秋、毛詩、逸禮、古文尚書，所以罔羅遺失，兼而存之，是在其中矣。²⁷¹

In the beginning, the *Documents* only had the Ouyang Tradition; the *Rites*, the Hou Tradition;²⁷² the *Changes*, the Yang Tradition;²⁷³ and the *Annals*, the Gongyang Tradition. During the reign of Xuandi [74–48 BCE], he established the Elder and Younger Xiahou Traditions for the *Documents*; the Elder and Younger Dai Traditions for the *Rites*; the Shi, Meng, and Liangqiu Traditions for the *Changes*;²⁷⁴ and the Guliang Tradition for the *Annals*. During the reign of Yuandi [48–32], he further established the Jing Tradition for the *Changes*.²⁷⁵ **During the time of Pingdi [1 BCE–6 CE], he moreover established the Zuo Tradition for the *Annals*, the Mao Tradition for the *Odes*, the Missing *Rites*, and the Archaic Script *Documents*.**²⁷⁶ By this means, the court netted in what had been lost and ensnared what had been missing, combining and preserving them. What is correct lies within them [these traditions]²⁷⁷ [emphasis mine].

The last line of Ban Gu’s appraisal, “what is correct lies within them” conveys his approval of the scholarly traditions adopted, a conclusion giving due acknowledgment to the ‘diversification’ of scholarship at court. As the appraisal makes clear, the purpose of this ‘diversification’ was to ensure that official authorities collected and collated all the best textual traditions, whether oral or written (“By this means, the court netted in what had been lost and ensnared what had been missing, combining and preserving them”). In line with the vision expressed in Liu Xin’s

²⁷¹ HS 88.3620–1.

²⁷² Ouyang Sheng 歐陽生 is named as one of the pupils who attended Fu Sheng (an Academician of Qin). HS 88.3603. Loewe, *Biographical Dictionry*, 445. Hou Cang 后蒼 was an Academician in 72. His pupils included Xiao Wangzhi, Dai De, and Dai Sheng. HS 88.3599, 3613, 3615. Loewe, 157.

²⁷³ HSBZ commentator Shen Qinhan 沈欽韓 points out that Yang 楊 is a corruption of the character Tian 田 and that since the Han, scholars referred to the Tian Tradition of the *Changes*. HSBZ 88.25b. His name was Tian He 田何., and he may have lived until Jingdi’s reign. HS 88.3597, 3601. Loewe, 507.

²⁷⁴ Elder Xia is Xiahou Sheng 夏侯勝. HS 88.3604. Younger Xiahou is Xiahou Jian 夏侯建. HS 88.3605. An Academician’s post for each of their interpretations of the *Documents* was established at the Stone Canal conference of 51 BCE. Loewe, 595. Elder Dai is Dai De 戴德, the uncle of the Younger Dai, or Dai Sheng 戴聖. He took part in the Stone Canal discussions of 51 BCE. HS 88.3615. Loewe, 56. Shi Chou 施讎 too participated in the 51 BCE conference. HS 88.3598. Loewe, 474. Meng Xi 孟喜 was sent to take instruction in the *Changes* from Tian Wangsun 田王孫 during Xuandi’s reign. HS 88.3599. Loewe, 438. Liangqiu He 梁丘賀 was a fellow student of Meng Xi. HS 88.3600. Loewe, 239.

²⁷⁵ Jing Fang 京房 was the instructor of Liangqiu He. HS 88.3600. Loewe, 199.

²⁷⁶ We understand the agent of these actions to belong to Wang Mang, who was acting as the Regent of Pingdi.

²⁷⁷ As commentator Ru Chun explains this last phrase, “Even though there are empty and arbitrary explanations [within these established traditions], what is correct should lie within them” 雖有虛妄之說，是當在其中，故兼而存之. HSBZ 88.26a.

“Letter,” allegiances to specific traditions matter less than policies supporting the restoration of these textual traditions.

With this emphasis on preservation from loss and destruction in mind, we may reexamine the questionable “Rulin zhuan” reference about the establishment of the Zuo Tradition, in light of the passage by Ban Gu that has Pingdi supposedly adding four traditions to those already established by previous Western Han emperors (“During the time of Pingdi [1 BCE–6 CE], he moreover established the Zuo Tradition for the *Annals*, the Mao Tradition for the *Odes*, the Missing *Rites*, and the Archaic Script *Documents*”). If the official establishment of the Zuo Tradition in Pingdi’s reign were true, it is curious that neither Fan Sheng nor Chen Yuan marshaled this fact in their debate over precedents.

Given that Ban Gu’s “Rulin zhuan” places the imperial endorsement of the Zuo Tradition during the reign of Pingdi, Wang Mang’s role in this policy decision remains unclear. In the *Hanshu*, Ban’s biography of Wang Mang includes no reference to his sponsorship of Academicians for the Zuo Tradition in particular. Significantly, Wang’s biography only mentions that he appointed scholars for the study of the other three textual traditions associated with Liu Xin in his biography. Wang Mang’s biography does tell us that he was given plenary power (1 CE) and made the official Regent of Pingdi (6 CE).²⁷⁸ So most assume that Wang was the man behind the official sponsorship of the Zuo Tradition, on behalf of the young Pingdi, the emperor.

The fact remains, however, that the *Hanshu* biography of Wang Mang never once brings up his sponsorship of the Zuo Tradition, though we obtain a general picture of Wang Mang’s support for classical scholarship. Ban Gu paints, in broad strokes, the large-scale projects and generous policies he implemented to attract scholars to his court beginning with Pingdi’s reign. According to Ban’s biography of Wang Mang, in the fourth year of Pingdi’s reign, Wang submitted plans to build schools to house students, along with ritual centers and imperial warehouses:

莽奏起明堂、辟雍、靈臺，為學者築舍萬區，作市、常滿倉，制度甚盛。²⁷⁹

In this year, [Wang] Mang memorialized [his plans for] building a *Mingtang*, a *Biyong*, and a *Lingtai*, and for the students, to erect ten thousand houses and make a Market and a *Changman* Granary.²⁸⁰ His institutions were very grand.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Wang Mang’s supporters compelled the Empress Dowager to issue an imperial edict which states: “Since the Emperor is young in years, We are temporarily directing the government until he puts on the bonnet of virility” 令太后下詔曰：皇帝幼年，朕且統政，比加元服。HS 99A.4049. The powers granted Wang Mang are as follows: “From this time and henceforth, except for enfeoffments of noble titles, which shall nevertheless be reported [to Us], in all other matters, the Duke Giving Tranquillity to the Han Dynasty and the Four Coadjustors shall judge and decide” 自今以來，（非）〔惟〕封爵乃以聞。他事，安漢公、四輔平決。Ibid. Translation by Dubs, HFHD, vol. 3, 149–150.

²⁷⁹ HS 99A.4069.

²⁸⁰ As Sargent says, “The [first] Ming-T’ang was a building which was used for purposes of government and education. . . . during the first part of the Chou dynasty.” Sargent, *Wang Mang*, 125. Sargent notes that the construction of the *Biyong* in Han times “had been ordered by Imperial edict of Emperor Ch’eng in the first year of the Sui-ho (8 BCE), on the recommendation of Liu Xin, but the order was rescinded before construction took place.”

Wang was interested in providing a center for scholarly and ritual activities, as part of his wider cultural and political agendas.

Wang Mang's biography goes on to specify the branches of learning for which Pingdi's court appointed Academicians and students, but conspicuously, the Zuo Tradition fails to figure among the list of texts Wang favored:

立樂經，益博士員，經各五人。徵天下通一藝教授十一人以上，及有逸禮、古書、毛詩、周官、爾雅、天文、圖讖、鍾律、月令、兵法、史篇文字，通知其意者，皆詣公車。網羅天下異能之士，至者前後千數，皆令記說廷中，將令正乖繆，壹異說云。²⁸²

[Wang] established a *Classic of Music*, and increased the regular number of the Academicians, having five for each Classic. He summoned those from the empire who were versed in one Classic, having them teach [groups of] eleven persons or more,²⁸³ along with those who possessed the *Missing Rites*, the *Archaic Documents*, the Mao Tradition of the *Odes*, the *Zhou Offices*, the *Erya*, [books on] astronomy, charts and divinations, the musical pitches, the monthly ordinances, military methods, and the written characters in Shi [Zhou's] fascicles.²⁸⁴ Those scholars who thoroughly understood their meaning were all invited to Official Carriages.²⁸⁵ [Wang Mang] gathered the gentlemen of uncommon ability in the empire. Those who came, sooner or later, numbered in the thousands. All were ordered to record explanations at court, with the intention of making them correct discrepancies and errors, and harmonize divergent explanations.²⁸⁶

The *Missing Rites*, the *Archaic Documents*, the Mao Tradition of the *Odes* appear here, but not the Zuo Tradition. Yet in all of Wang Mang's biography, this is the only section that addresses his sponsorship of classical learning, asserting that Wang only “established a *Classic of Music*.”

Ibid. Yan Shigu says that the *Lingtai* was an astronomical observatory which was built by King Wen when he made his capital at Feng 豐. It was again Liu Xin who was behind the proposal to build this in Pingdi's reign: “With the title of *Xihe*, Liu Xin and three others were sent to build the *Mingtang*, *Biyong*, and brought it about that the Han had happy presages similar to those of King Wen [when he built] his Spiritual Tower and to those of the Duke of Zhou [when he built the city of] Luo” 羲和劉歆等四人使治明堂、辟廡，令漢與文王靈臺、周公作洛同符. HS 12.359. Translation adapted from HFHD, vol. 3, 83. Dubs construes *wanqu* 萬區 as “ten thousand houses,” and Sargent, as “ten thousand residences.” HFHD, vol. 3, 192; Sargent, *Wang Mang*, 125.

²⁸¹ Translation adapted from HFHD, vol. 3, 191–2. In his annotations, Dubs cites a quote from the *Sanfu Huangtu* 三輔皇圖 (3rd to 7th c.) in the *Chuxue ji* 初學記, which says that Wang Mang “built the Ming-t'ang, Pi-yung, made 30 residences for the Erudits, and made a market-place for meeting. . . . The Huai trees were in several hundred rows and the students would meet and hold market [there] on the first and fifteenth days of the month.”

²⁸² HS 99A.4069.

²⁸³ The bracketed words “groups of” are supplied in Sargent's translation. Sargent, 126.

²⁸⁴ Both commentators Meng Kang and Yan Shigu identify *Shi Pian* 史篇 as the writings of Shi Zhou 史籀 (Scribe Zhou). HSBZ 99.19a. Homer Dubs identifies “Shih Chou's Fascicles” as the earliest Chinese lexicographical work. HFHD, vol. 3, 192.

²⁸⁵ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 759.

²⁸⁶ Translation adapted from HFHD, vol. 3, 191.

This passage also says Wang increased the unknown existing “number of the Academicians” to a total of “five for each Classic.”²⁸⁷ Wang Mang sought to position himself as a high-profile patron of the classical and technical arts, according to this portrait,²⁸⁸ and bring to the capital communities of scholars with their own lines of transmission (“He summoned those from the empire who were versed in one Classic”). As typical of this era, neither Wang Mang nor Ban Gu seem to have distinguished textual traditions from their teachers.²⁸⁹

Furthermore, Wang Mang’s policy focused on resolving problems in interpretations by recruiting scholars to “record explanations at court.” Based on this description alone, the “thousands” of “gentlemen” flooding in may well have included scribes recording the lectures and copyists for manuscripts. Wang Mang’s attitude toward Zuo Tradition is a mystery, however, he did sponsor texts and build schools and ritual centers at Liu Xin’s behest.²⁹⁰

Therefore, the lone reference in the *Hanshu* creates as many problems as it resolves concerning the Zuo Tradition’s official establishment by the regent Wang Mang. We can nonetheless entertain a few possibilities to explain the isolated nature of this reference, which may have survived when other sources contemporary to the *Hanshu* have perished. Another less likely possibility is that the official status of the Zuo Tradition was considered so inconsequential in the context of Pingdi’s times that it merited no more than passing mention in a few characters in the *Hanshu*. These possibilities remain speculations.

Conclusion

As this chapter demonstrates, the official status of the Zuo Tradition during Pingdi’s reign may be questioned.²⁹¹ At the time Ban Gu compiled his *Hanshu*, the official status of the Zuo Tradition was in flux because the Academicians’ post for it had been swiftly abandoned in the first years of Guangwudi’s reign. Ban Gu’s writings could be construed as an attempt to lend the Zuo Tradition prestige and a pedigree. In the absence of more writings from Ban Gu’s generation narrating the early history of the Zuo Tradition’s transmission and sponsorship, it is difficult to know. The next chapter treats two of Ban Gu’s contemporaries, Jia Kui and Wang Chong, who did comment on the Zuo Tradition, but not in this respect. Ban Gu’s statements on

²⁸⁷ Wang Baoxuan interprets the line “increased the regular number of the Academicians” 益博士員，經各五人 to mean that before the days of Wang Mang in Chengdi’s reign, the number of Academicians for five Classics numbered at less than twenty-five, and Wang Mang increased the number to twenty-five. Wang, *Jinguwen*, 215.

²⁸⁸ As Dubs sums it up, Wang Mang “deliberated long and profoundly on geographical arrangements, rites, and music, endeavoring to make them accord with classical precedents. . . he surrounded himself with the best scholars he could find.” HFHD, vol. 3, 116.

²⁸⁹ As Nylan explains, the culture of transmission was such that: “relatively few editions of the individual texts now called the Five Classics had circulated among the early masters, many of whom, adopting the model of Confucius, relied on informal tutorials supplemented by occasional lectures to pass along their own distinctive traditions to students.” Nylan, *Five “Confucian” Classics*, 41.

²⁹⁰ As Chen Suzhen avers, the “*Guwen* classicists” advocated the gradual adoption of Western Zhou precedents in the Han, emphasizing the institution of rites and music (*zhili zuo yue* 制禮作樂). And in Pingdi’s reign, the construction of the *Mingtang* and *Biyong* exemplified the success of the agenda of the “*Guwen* classicists,” Chen believes. See his *Handai zhengzhi*, 381–6.

²⁹¹ Some modern scholars have taken Ban Gu’s short reference to Pingdi’s official establishment as evidence that the Wang Mang regime supported the Zuo Tradition, whereas the Eastern Han rulers rejected it. For instance, Chen Suzhen argued that the Eastern Han rulers rejected Wang Mang’s policies, which seems doubtful. See Chen Suzhen, 413.

Zuo Qiuming, along with those of Liu Xin and other enthusiasts in officialdom, may have firmly entrenched the idea of the Zuo Tradition's authority in the minds of later scholars.

Chapter 4

Omenology and Accounts of Discovery (Mid-Eastern Han)

Introduction

In writings dating to the Eastern Han reigns from Mingdi 明帝 to Andi 安帝 (i.e., the years 58–126 CE), writers ascribed authority to the Zuo Tradition in a range of ways that extend beyond the issues of authorship and transmission that had so consumed previous scholars. Jia Kui (30–101) wrote a memorial touting the value of the Zuo Tradition as omenological support for the legitimacy of the ruling family. Wang Chong (27–ca. 100) demonstrated the Zuo Tradition’s veracity and authenticity with absolute enthusiasm. Xu Shen (58–ca. 121) ranked the Zuo Tradition above all other exegetical and textual traditions, if below the Six Classics.²⁹² These scholars seemed no longer preoccupied with establishing the exegetical status of the Zuo Tradition, presumably because that was a settled issue. Consequently, too, references to the *Annals* and Confucius rarely accompany these scholars’ discussions of the Zuo Tradition. Instead we see thinkers and policymakers capitalizing on shared assumptions about its recognized status to advance their scholarly and political interests.

Another shared proclivity among these three scholars is their rewriting of the history of the Zuo Tradition’s reception. For example, the earlier champions or detractors of the Zuo Tradition became historical characters incorporated into these scholars’ narratives about their predecessors’ treatment of it. In other words, not only the legends about the Zuo Tradition itself, but also those about its adherents and critics took shape. Neither Jia Kui, Wang Chong, and Xu Shen were hesitant about adapting accounts about the Zuo Tradition’s reception history to advance their own projects. Giving pride of place to the Zuo Tradition, these three scholars (joined by many others, we presume) formed a force so powerful as to provoke resistance from He Xiu (129–182), a champion of the Gongyang Tradition. Some modern scholars argue that the Eastern Han court’s continued sponsorship of the Gongyang Tradition meant that it eclipsed the status of the Zuo Tradition.²⁹³ But judging from the activities and rhetoric of the scholars examined in this chapter, it would seem that many writings contributed to a substantial swell, bolstering the Zuo Tradition, which still might not have led to the use of the Zuo Tradition as the

²⁹² Several other scholars began to write commentaries on the Zuo Tradition in the Eastern Han, but because they are largely fragmentary, they fail to demonstrate the same argumentative and conceptual coherence as the writings of the above scholars. It is therefore difficult to characterize their stance with regard to the Zuo Tradition’s authority with any particularity. Preserved fragments of commentaries are attributed to major Eastern Han scholars such as Zheng Zhong (d. 83 CE), Ma Rong (79–166), Zheng Xuan (127–200), and Fu Qian (d. ca. 195).

²⁹³ For example, Chen Suzhen characterizes the state of *Chunqiu* scholarship in the Eastern Han as dominated by the Gongyang Tradition, with intellectual thought and political culture centered around this tradition: as he summarizes, “Gongyang scholarship obtained a privileged position” 公羊學獲得獨尊地位; Eastern Han scholar-officials “took the commanding influence of the Gongyang Tradition as their preeminent standard” 以公羊獨尊為標誌. See Chen, *Handai zhengzhi*, 400.

main source of political guidance in court circles.²⁹⁴ But during this period, the authority of the Zuo Tradition was evidently growing.

Shifting the bases of authority – Jia Kui

Background

Jia Kui, the next major proponent for the Zuo Tradition, submitted an official communication about the Zuo Tradition in 79 CE, precisely fifty years after Chen Yuan (fl. 29) submitted his. Jia Kui grew up under Guangwudi's reign (25–58) and presented memorials and commentaries to the throne during the reigns of Mingdi (58–76) and Zhangdi (76–89). By the time Jia Kui submitted his memorial to Zhangdi (in 79), apocryphal literature had come to influence the terms of discussion about the Zuo Tradition as well. The result was that Jia Kui characterizes the Zuo Tradition less as a route to the mind of Confucius than as a textual resource that could bolster the claims of imperial legitimacy.²⁹⁵

By the time Jia Kui emerged as an eminent scholar, no scholar could afford to ignore the body of apocryphal texts produced since before 25 CE, during the struggle for dominance among Guangwudi and other 'pretenders' to the Eastern Han throne.²⁹⁶ Jia Kui's support of the use of apocrypha serves as a contrast to the opposition by Huan Tan 桓譚 (43 BCE–28 CE) and Yin Min 尹敏 (fl. 30–60) to this class of texts decades earlier. During the Fan-Chen debate, Guangwudi's interest in apocrypha was not as strong as it would become in his final years. In 56 CE, shortly before his death, he issued an edict explicitly endorsing apocryphal texts as a matter of imperial policy: "he promulgated the prognosticative texts throughout the empire" 宣布圖讖於天下.²⁹⁷ As staunch opponents of this official policy, Huan Tan and Yin Mo refused to study apocrypha, as instructed, resulting in Huan's near execution and Yin's career troubles.²⁹⁸ Born a

²⁹⁴ For the political implications of using the Gongyang Tradition and Gongyang thought as the shaping force behind Eastern Han imperial policies, see Chen Suzhen, 399–445.

²⁹⁵ In Jack Dull's analysis, Jia Kui operated under pressures created by the legacy of Guangwudi, who decreed the acceptance of apocryphal literature. This decree had a formative impact on both Jia and Wang Chong because both men were in their twenties at the time the decree went into effect. See Dull, *Apocryphal Texts of the Han*, 368 and 408.

²⁹⁶ For Guangwudi's use of omens to compete with other pretenders, see CHC p. 255-6.

²⁹⁷ HHS 1B.84.

²⁹⁸ By the later years of his reign, Guangwudi was more concerned with the ideological basis for his empire, as derived from apocrypha; hence his intolerance to Huan Tan and other scholars who refused to honor the apocrypha. Dull, 354. The biography of Huan Tan in the *Hou Hanshu* gave the following account: "There was an imperial command to hold a meeting and discussion where the Spiritual Terrace was. The emperor addressed [Huan] Tan, saying, 'I wish to use apocrypha to decide on this, what do you think?' [Huan] Tan was silent for a long time before saying, 'I do not study apocrypha.' The emperor asked him his reason for this. [Huan] Tan repeatedly expressed that apocrypha ran contrary to the Classics. The emperor, enraged, said, 'Huan Tan criticized the Sages and disregarded the models. He is ordered to go down in execution.' [Huan] Tan knocked his head on the floor until it bled, and not until a long time after was he pardoned" 有詔會議靈臺所處，帝謂譚曰：「吾欲〔以〕讖決之，何如？」譚默然良久，曰：「臣不讀讖。」帝問其故，譚復極言讖之非經。帝大怒曰：「桓譚非聖無法，將下斬之。」譚叩頭流血，良久乃得解。HHS 28A.961. This is the *Hou Hanshu's* account about the Yin Min's similar fate: "The emperor considered [Yin] Min to be widely-versed in the classics and records, so he commanded him to collate apocrypha, and to eliminate the omens that had been written in support of Wang Mang. [Yin] Min replied, saying,

few decades later, Jia Kui was in his twenties at the time of Guangwudi's edict, young enough for the edict to have had a formative impact on his attitude toward omen interpretation. One can understand Jia's citation of apocrypha given the political climate fostered by Guangwudi, and his two successors, Mingdi and Zhangdi.

Apparently, in this new climate, the Classics and their exegetical traditions competed with the apocrypha for the throne's attention, prompting scholars to make textual connections among them all. With respect to the Zuo Tradition, Jia Kui completely elided questions of authorship, transmission, and the relation of Zuo Qiuming to Confucius, striking a different tone from that of Fan Sheng, Chen Yuan, or Ban Gu. One speculation I can offer is that, by the second quarter of the Eastern Han, so many apocryphal texts had been ascribed to Confucius that it became less useful to claim that Zuo Tradition embodies the correct vision of the Sage.²⁹⁹ The proliferation of weft texts (*weishu* 緯書) meant that there was no shortage of claims about the ability of these texts to supplement, explain, and expand upon the core Classics attributed to Confucius.³⁰⁰ Rather than dwelling on his predecessors' concerns about the Zuo Tradition's authorship and transmission, Jia Kui focuses instead on its practical utility in shoring up imperial authority.

If Guangwudi required the use of apocryphal texts to strengthen his legitimacy as the founder of the Eastern Han, one would think that by Zhangdi's reign, the dynasty would have required less overt support from the apocrypha. Perhaps scholars grew accustomed to the constant referencing (if not outright creation) of apocryphal texts, so that the exegetical traditions attached to the Classics had to compete with the apocrypha for political patronage. And so long as the reading of prognostications was considered helpful to the fortunes of the imperial family in power, the emperor could find no reason to object to the apocrypha. Zhangdi did not actively legislate against the apocrypha or their critics. In such a climate, Jia Kui found it productive to demonstrate the value of the Zuo Tradition in terms of support from the apocrypha.

Jia Kui also presented his case to an audience different from those addressed by Liu Xin, Fan Sheng, Chen Yuan, all of whom attended to the views of court scholars and officials, under imperial commands from Aidi and Guangwudi to hold court debates about the Zuo Tradition.³⁰¹ By contrast, Jia Kui largely spoke to the emperor only, and whereas Guangwudi was neutral about

'The apocryphal books were not composed by the Sages. Among them are vulgar split characters, as they are akin to the sayings of unrefined folk. I am afraid they will only confuse future generations.' The emperor did not accept this explanation. [Yin] Min supplemented missing text, saying, 'If one removes the "mouth" from the character "ruler," it becomes a Han official [i.e. the character for Yin's own family name].' The emperor saw this, thought it strange, and summoned him to question him about it. [Yin] Min replied, saying, 'I observed that men of the past supplemented and deleted the charts and documents. Therefore I thought I would try the same. I humbly request the tiniest sliver of your favor.' The emperor deeply reprimanded him. Though in the end Yin was not prosecuted, he nevertheless stagnated in his career on account of this' 帝以敏博通經記，令校圖讖，使蠲去崔發所為王莽著錄次比。敏對曰：「讖書非聖人所作，其中多近鄙別字，頗類世俗之辭，恐疑誤後生。」帝不納。敏因其闕文增之曰：「君無口，為漢輔。」帝見而怪之，召敏問其故。敏對曰：「臣見前人增損圖書，敢不自量，竊幸萬一。」帝深非之，雖竟不罪，而亦以此沈滯。HHS 79A.2558.

²⁹⁹ Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) and Xun Shuang 荀爽 (128–90) were rare examples of men of the mid- to late Eastern Han who proposed the eradication of apocrypha. They held the position, considered extreme in their times, that the apocryphal writings did not originate with Confucius or any other ancient figure. See Dull, 409.

³⁰⁰ In fact, as Michael Nylan observes, scholars of this period hardly made efforts to distinguish the "weftlike apocrypha" from the "warlike Classics." See Michael Nylan, "Classics without Canonization," 12.

³⁰¹ See HS 36.1967 and 36.1228, as discussed in chapters two and three.

the Zuo Tradition, Zhangdi expressed high interest in it. While Guangwudi deferred to the scholars' views as a political gesture designed to win support, Zhangdi was already favorably inclined toward the Zuo Tradition:

肅宗立，降意儒術，特好古文尚書、左氏傳。建初元年，詔逵入講北宮白虎觀、南宮雲臺。帝善逵說，使發出左氏傳大義長於二傳者。逵於是具條奏之³⁰²

When Emperor Suzong [Zhangdi] ascended to the throne, he was predisposed toward classical learning, and was particularly fond of the Archaic Script *Documents* and the Zuo Tradition. In the first year of the Jianchu reign [76 CE], he commanded Jia Kui to come in and discourse [on the texts] in the White Tiger Hall of the Northern Palace and Cloud Terrace Hall of the Southern Palace.³⁰³ The emperor thought well of Jia Kui's explanations and asked him to expound on the points where the great principles of the Zuo Tradition surpassed that of the other two traditions [the Gongyang and Guliang]. [Jia] thereupon prepared the complete list and submitted them

As we have seen earlier, Guangwudi had left the Academicians' Chair for the Zuo Tradition vacant when dissension erupted at court,³⁰⁴ showing a lack of commitment toward it.³⁰⁵ In contrast, Zhangdi expected Jia to provide him with the fine scholastic points that would validate his emperor's position; Jia was not summoned to question his sovereign's predilections.

Unlike the memorials of his predecessors Liu Xin, Fan Sheng, and Chen Yuan, Jia Kui's memorial did not cause an uproar among the scholar-officials, judging from the *Hou Hanshu*. Rather than speaking up on behalf of one side in an unsettled debate, Jia Kui's job was simply to reinforce the imperial opinion in an environment of political stability and consolidation. When Zhangdi summoned Jia to expound upon its virtues in a one-sided argument, he wrote the following memorial recorded in the *Hou Hanshu*:

臣謹擿出左氏三十事尤著明者，斯皆君臣之正義，父子之紀綱。其餘同公羊者什有七八，或文簡小異，無害大體。至如祭仲、紀季、伍子胥、叔術之屬，左氏義深於君父，公羊多任於權變，其相殊絕，固以甚遠，而冤抑積久，莫肯分明。

³⁰² HHS 36.1234.

³⁰³ One of Zhangdi's initiatives was his sponsorship of the White Tiger Hall conference. HHS 3.138. The *Baihu tong* 白虎通 (Comprehensive discussions in the White Tiger Hall) presumably records the discussions that took place there. It is ascribed to Ban Gu, with some arguments concerning his hand in the work as the compiler. For details, see ECT 347–56.

³⁰⁴ HHS 36.1233.

³⁰⁵ Jack Dull interprets Guangwudi's readiness to leave the Chairs' seats vacant as a sign that his concerns lie in establishing his empire by recruiting, not antagonizing scholars, and not in deliberating over scholarly issues. Dull, 353.

Your humble servant respectfully picked out thirty events in the Zuo Tradition that are particularly outstanding and vivid. They are all concerned with the correct principles concerning the ruler and his ministers and the regular bonds between father and son.³⁰⁶ Seventy to eighty percent of the Zuo Tradition is the same as the Gongyang Tradition. In some instances, their divergences lie in different degrees of elaborateness and simplicity and do not detract from the overall framework of the Zuo Tradition.³⁰⁷ As for cases such as Zhai Zhong,³⁰⁸ Ji Ji,³⁰⁹ Wu Zixu,³¹⁰ and Shu Shu,³¹¹ the Zuo Tradition is profound in its grasp of principles relating to ruler and father, whereas the Gongyang [Tradition] indulges in a proclivity for provisional strategies.³¹² Their difference from each other [on this point] is immense and indeed sets them very much apart. The resentments and injustices have been accumulating for long, yet nobody has been willing to sort things out.

In the opening to his memorial above, Jia Kui underlines the similarity between the Zuo Tradition and the Gongyang Tradition, downplaying their differences, but saying that they merely show that the Zuo Tradition does not conflict with the authority of sovereigns such as Zhangdi himself.

臣以永平中上言左氏與圖讖合者，先帝不遺芻蕘，省納臣言，寫其傳誥，藏之祕書。建平中，侍中劉歆欲立左氏，不先暴論大義，而輕移太常，恃其義長，詆挫諸儒，諸儒內懷不服，相與排之。孝哀皇帝重逆眾心，故出歆為河內太守。從是攻擊左氏，遂為重讎。至光武皇帝，奮獨見之明，興立左氏、穀梁，會二家先師不曉圖讖，故令中道而廢。

³⁰⁶ Jack Dull also translates *zhengyi* 正義 as “correct principles,” while he holds *jigang* 紀綱 to mean “bonds.” Dull, *Apocryphal Texts of the Han*, 377.

³⁰⁷ As Dull comments, “Chia was something of a synthesizer; while he emphasized what he considered to be the advantages of the Old Text classics he also argued that in manyways the two schools were not incompatible.” Dull, 355.

³⁰⁸ See Zuo Tradition, 11th year of Duke Huan. As Jack Dull best summarizes this reference: “The essential facts to be considered in this example [are that] in 700 B.C., the Duke of Cheng died and was succeeded by his elder son, Duke Chao with the given name of Hu. Shortly thereafter Chi Chung, a high minister of Cheng, was seized by the men of the state of Sung. The next entry in the *Annals* is that Tu, identified in the commentaries as a younger brother of Duke Chao, returned to Cheng. This series of events concludes with the statement that Duke Chao fled to another state. . . .The Kung-yang interpretation of this dethronement of duke Chao makes Chi Chung, the minister, a hero because he ‘knew circumstances.’ By acting contrary to what was right, the minister saved the life of the ruler; had he not deposed Duke Chao, the state of Sung would have attacked the state of Cheng and the Duke would have lost and life and the state itself would have perished. By acting according to circumstances, the minister preserved both the state and Duke Chao. The *Tso-chuan* view of this chain of events is entirely different. The minister was enticed into going to Sung where his life was threatened. He then set aside the elder son and established the younger son as Duke of Cheng. He is mentioned in order to reprehend him for the wrong he had committed.” Dull, 378.

³⁰⁹ See Zuo Tradition, 3rd year of Duke Zhuang.

³¹⁰ See Gongyang Tradition, 4th year of Duke Ding; and Zuo Tradition, 30th year of Duke Zhao.

³¹¹ See Zuo Tradition, 31st year of Duke Zhao.

³¹² Dull renders *quanbian* 權變 as “changes according to circumstances” and “adjustment to circumstances.” Dull, 379.

During the Yongping reign [of Mingdi, 58–76], your humble servant memorialized the points in the Zuo Tradition that correspond with the diagrams and prophecies. The past emperor did not cast out my shallow opinions but graciously accepted the words of your humble servant, ordering people to copy my commentaries and glosses and store them with the palace writings. During the Jianping reign [of Aidi, 7–1 BCE], the Palace Attendant Liu Xin wished to establish the Zuo Tradition,³¹³ but he did not openly discuss its great principles and instead rashly denounced the Superintendent of Ceremonial.³¹⁴ Relying on [what he thought was] the superiority of its principles, he criticized and humiliated the various classicists, who stood unconvinced in their minds and collectively had him ostracized. Aidi regarded going against the opinion of so many a serious matter, therefore he demoted Liu Xin to be Governor of Henei. From that incident on, they [the classicists] attacked the Zuo Tradition and became deeply antagonistic toward it. At the time of Guangwudi, the emperor, seizing his superlative insight, revived the establishment of the Zuo Tradition and Guliang Tradition. But it so happened that the past teachers of these two traditions were ignorant about the diagrams and prophecies [i.e. apocrypha], therefore his edict was abandoned mid-way through [his reign].

In this section, Jia Kui recounts two failed attempts to obtain court patronage for the Zuo Tradition, one by Liu Xin in late Western Han, and the second by Chen Yuan and Han Xin in early Eastern Han. In the first instance, Jia attributes the failure to Liu's contentiousness, and in the second, to a lack of knowledge about the compatibility of the Zuo Tradition with the apocryphal texts.

凡所以存先王之道者，要在安上理民也。今左氏崇君父，卑臣子，彊幹弱枝，勸善戒惡，至明至切，至直至順。且三代異物，損益隨時，故先帝博觀異家，各有所採。易有施、孟，復立梁丘，尚書歐陽，復有大小夏侯，今三傳之異亦猶是也。

Generally, of all the means by which to preserve the way of former kings, the key lies in securing the ruler and regulating his subjects.³¹⁵ Now the Zuo Tradition esteems rulers and fathers and degrades ministers and sons. It strengthens the trunk and weakens the branches. It encourages good and admonishes against evil. It reaches the ultimate in brightness, incisiveness, fairness, and smoothness.³¹⁶

³¹³ Title taken from Loewe, *Biographical Dictionary*, 762.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ Dull's translation reads: "Of all of those things which still exist from the Way of the former kings, the essentials lie in that which gives repose to the Superior One and which regulates the people." Dull, 377.

³¹⁶ The Li Xian annotation says: "The Zuo Tradition says, 'Protect the Son of Heaven and add respect to it.' (9th year of Duke Zhao) It also says, 'The command of the lord is heaven; how can heaven be equaled? Submit to the charge and avoid having two minds [i.e. being disloyal]. If the father teaches his son to be of two minds, with what will he serve the lord?' (23rd year of Duke Xi) This is to 'esteem rulers and fathers and degrade ministers and sons.' Even though in the Zuo Tradition the royal people were weak, their rank was above the vassal lords. It also says, 'The five kinds of close kin are not at the borders, the five kinds of next-of-kin are not at court. If the branches are

Moreover, the Three Ages differed, as they reduced or added to things with the passage of time. For this reason, past emperors broadly surveyed the different traditions and took away something from each of them. The Shi and Meng Traditions were already established for the *Changes* already, yet the Liangqiu Tradition was also established.³¹⁷ The Ouyang Tradition was established for the *Documents* already, yet the Elder and Younger Xiahou Traditions were also established. Today the differences between the three traditions [of the *Annals*] are no different from these [i.e. of the *Changes* and *Documents*].

Here above, Jia reiterates the support that the Zuo Tradition lends to the prerogatives of authorities. As with Liu Xin and Chen Yuan before, he also cites the precedent of sponsoring new traditions as something Zhangdi could follow.

又五經家皆無以證圖讖明劉氏為堯後者，而左氏獨有明文。五經家皆言顓頊代黃帝，而堯不得為火德。左氏以為少昊代黃帝，即圖讖所謂帝宣也。如今堯不得為火，則漢不得為赤。其所發明，補益實多。

Moreover, of all the experts of the Five Classics, none of them has the means by which to corroborate with the diagrams and prophecies that clarify the descent of the Liu family from Yao. Only the Zuo Tradition contains explicit language about this.³¹⁸ The experts of the Five Classics all declare that Zhuangxi succeeded the Yellow Emperor. But [if that were the case,] then Yao could not have assumed the power of Fire. The Zuo Tradition holds that Shaohao succeeded the Yellow Emperor, and Shaohao was none other than the Emperor Xuan referred to in the diagrams and prophecies.³¹⁹ If we decree that Yao could not represent Fire, then the Han [dynastic house] could not have represented [the color] red either. The things that it [the Zuo Tradition] articulates and illuminates supplement a great deal.

too big the trunk will certainly break. A tail that is great will not be able to wag’” 左傳曰：「翼戴天子，加之以恭。」又曰：「君命，天也，天可讎乎？委質策名，貳乃辟也。父教子貳，何以事君？」又曰：「棄父之命，惡用子矣，以有無父之國則可。」是崇君父，卑臣子也。左氏王人雖微，序在諸侯之上。又曰：「五大不在邊，五細不在庭，末大必折，尾大不掉。」是彊幹弱枝也。HHS 36.1237.

³¹⁷ The *Hanshu* “Rulin zhuan” says: “At the time of Jingdi [156–140 BCE], Wang Sun taught Shi Chou, Meng Xi, and Liangqiu He. From this the *Changes* had the learning of the Shi, Meng, and Liangqiu traditions” 景帝時... 王孫授施讎、孟喜、梁丘賀。繇是易有施、孟、梁丘之學。HS 88.3597–8.

³¹⁸ That is, as Dull paraphrases, “one of the advantages of the *Tso-chuan* was that, of all the classics and commentaries, it alone contained information which proved that the Han House descended from Emperor Yao.” Dull, 357–8.

³¹⁹ This mythical “Emperor Xuan” 帝宣 is not to be confused with “Xuandi” 宣帝 of the Western Han. Cited in the *Chuxueji* 初學記, one of the “River Diagram” 河圖 apocryphal works identifies Shaohao as Emperor Xuan: “Emperor Zhi was from the Shaohao clan. His mother was called Nüjie. There was a large rainbow-like star. It descended into the *Hua* islet. Soon she received it in her dreams. Nüjie conceived and gave birth to the White Emperor Zhuxuan” 帝摯少昊氏，母曰女節，大星如虹，下流華渚，既而夢接，女節意感，生白帝朱宣。From the commentary to Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun*, 382. The titles of these “River Diagram” works could be found in Yasui Kozan, *Isho*, 24.

Expanding upon Zuo Tradition's support for the Liu's above, Jia cites textual evidence that is consistent with what is contained in apocryphal texts. He highlights that among the classics and their commentaries, the Zuo Tradition is the only text with genealogical evidence that legitimizes Zhangdi's ruling family.

陛下通天然之明，建大聖之本，改元正歷，垂萬世則，是以麟鳳百數，嘉瑞雜遝。猶朝夕恪勤，遊情六藝，研機綜微，靡不審覈。若復留意廢學，以廣聖見，庶幾無所遺失矣。³²⁰

Your majesty connects with the illumination of heaven's nature, establishes the root of his great Sageliness, resets the year and rectifies the calendar,³²¹ leaves behind a legacy of fixed principles for ten thousand generations. For this reason, the unicorns and phoenixes number in the hundreds, and favorable omens are diverse and plentiful.³²² Nevertheless, your majesty still labors day and night, allows his nature to roam among the Six Classics, investigates the incipient and gathers the subtle, and there is nothing that he permits to go uninspected and unverified.³²³ If your majesty would pay attention again to abandoned learning [i.e. the Zuo Tradition] and with that broaden your Sagely insight, then it would be virtually as if you have left nothing behind.³²⁴

As Jia concludes his memorial above, he appeals to Zhangdi's sense of accomplishment and insight, just as Chen Yuan did with Guangwudi. Jia follows the pattern of his predecessors in arguing for the accommodation of multiple traditions, inclusive of the Zuo Tradition.

Rewriting the past

Kui's rhetoric was not a complete break from that of Liu Xin and Chen Yuan, even if Jia reconfigured the history and significance of the Zuo Tradition in his own way. Jia echoes earlier language about the Zuo Tradition as an undervalued object (e.g. Liu Xin accuses the Academicians of his time for "suppressing" 抑 the study of the Zuo Tradition, and Chen appeals to Guangwudi for a chance to "set right the long-standing injustices done to Zuo Qiuming" 理丘明之宿冤). Jia Kui notes the on-going debate about the Zuo Tradition: "The resentments and injustices have been accumulating for long, yet nobody has been willing to sort things out." Jia draws upon what is by now conventional rhetoric about the Zuo Tradition's unofficial status,

³²⁰ HHS 36.1234–8.

³²¹ Li Xian says, " 'Reset the year' refers to reset the ninth year of the Jianchu reign [of Zhangdi, 76–84] to the first year of the Yuanhe reign (84–87). 'Rectify the calendar' refers to the second year of the Yuanhe reign, when the 'si fun' calendar began to be used" 改元謂改建初九年為元和元年，正歷謂元和二年始用四分歷也。HHS 36.1238.

³²² Li Xian says, "zata means plentiful" 雜遝言多也。Ibid.

³²³ Li Xian glosses *jiao* 覈 as "true" 實也。Ibid.

³²⁴ Li Xian says, " 'Abandoned learning' refers to the Zuo Tradition" 廢學謂左氏傳也。Ibid.

despite the growing influence of Zuo Tradition scholars in the early Eastern Han. Jia appeals to the emperor's prerogative to dispense favors to the objects he appreciated.

Like some of his predecessors, Jia Kui prefers the rhetoric of accommodation to that of opposition when speaking of the Zuo Tradition in relation to the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. Like Chen, Jia refers to the precedents for expanding the number of posts for the exegetical traditions, and constructs the image of an ideal ruler who welcomes the accommodation of more traditions. To ameliorate any fear of change Jia Kui first speaks of cultural changes as part of the ebb and flow of history: "The Three Ages differed, as they reduced or added to things with the passage of time." He diminishes anxieties about the "differences between the three traditions," calling them inconsequential. Like Chen, Jia raises examples from a more distant, and hence safer, past, naming other traditions already established by Xuandi's reign in the Western Han, such as the Shi, Meng, and Liangqiu Traditions, as well as the Ouyang and Elder and Younger Xiahou Traditions,³²⁵ during the heyday of the Western Han.

In speaking of the Zuo as part of the "three traditions," Jia Kui silently passes over much of the turbulent political history, from the ascendancy of the Wang family in Chengdi's reign, to the struggle for legitimacy in Guangwudi's reign. Among our extant sources, Jia's invocation of the "three traditions" is among the earliest use of the term to refer to the Gongyang, Guliang, and Zuo Traditions collectively.³²⁶ This minimizes the perceived differences between Zuo Tradition and the other two traditions of the *Annals*.

As noted above, Jia Kui represents the past history of Zuo Tradition scholarship from his current perspective, when the apocrypha occupied an important place in textual scholarship. Speaking during Zhangdi's reign, Jia Kui effusively praises Guangwudi's "superlative insight" in his striking decision to imperially endorse, however briefly, what was the newest of the three exegetical traditions ("establish the Zuo Tradition"). And while the *Hou Hanshu* says that the debaters' contentiousness proved too great for Guangwudi to persist in his course, Jia Kui accounts for the termination of the Zuo chairs differently: he cites the reason for Guangwudi's abandonment of the Zuo Tradition as the failure of the court scholars to relate the text to apocrypha ("past teachers of these two traditions were ignorant about the diagrams and prophecies [i.e. apocrypha]"), neatly avoiding blame for the former emperor. By presenting himself as an expert on the apocrypha, Jia Kui refocuses the discussion about the Zuo Tradition on prognostic interpretations, and away from issues of authorship and transmission.³²⁷

³²⁵ See "Rulin zhuan" in HS 88.3620–1.

³²⁶ The next appearance of this collective title is in Ma Rong's work of commentary, the *Sanzhuan yitongshuo* 三傳異同說 mentioned in HHS 60A.1972. This work appeared a generation after Jia Kui, for Ma Rong (79–166) was born around the time of Jia Kui's presentation of this memorial.

³²⁷ Jia's biographer, Fan Ye, disparages Jia's blatant ingratiating, as he interprets the Zuo Tradition in ways that support the emperor's right to rule. The following is Fan Ye's appraisal of Jia Kui in the *Hou Hanshu*: "[Because] Jia Kui was able to bring different writings together to concoct ingenious and specious arguments, he was the most aware of distinctions of status and prominence. For the sovereign to discuss scholarship with this kind of criteria, that is lamentable indeed!" 賈逵能附會文致，最差貴顯。世主以此論學，悲矣哉。Li Xian's commentary: "This refers to Jia citing from the Zuo Tradition to clarify that the Han ruling house descended from Emperor Yao. Fan Ye meant that the sovereign [Zhangdi] did not place importance on the classics but on apocrypha instead" 謂引左氏明漢為堯後也。言時主不重經而重讖也。HHS 36.1241.

Jia Kui next presents a revisionist history of the past attempts to officially establish the Zuo Tradition, including that by Liu Xin, who by this time, had emerged as an important figure in the arguments about the Zuo Tradition. Jia Kui's memorial portrays Liu Xin as too confrontational, but at least Jia's comments about Liu indicate that his important role in discussions about the Zuo Tradition in the mid-Eastern Han.

Jia's representation of the Liu Xin episode fails to coincide with Ban Gu's biography of him on several points, even though the two texts are mainly in agreement.³²⁸ Jia Kui's memorial expresses mild disdain for Liu's willfulness, arrogance, and disrespect: "he did not openly discuss its [the Zuo Tradition's] great principles and instead rashly denounced the Superintendent of Ceremonial." In the *Hanshu* version, it is not the case that Liu Xin refused to, as Jia Kui said, "openly discuss" the Zuo Tradition. Rather, because the Academicians were reluctant to confront the issue, Liu wrote his "Letter to the Academicians" denouncing them. Secondly, Jia Kui places the blame squarely on Liu Xin, who deserved exile: "Aidi regarded going against the opinion of so many a serious matter, therefore he demoted Liu Xin to be Governor of Henei." Thus Jia explains Liu's demotion as a natural result of his unconciliatory stance, rather than the Academicians' obstinacy, in contrast to the the *Hanshu* account, which casts Liu's exile as voluntary escape to avoid further confrontation.³²⁹ Jia Kui accuses Liu Xin of presumptuousness and self-righteousness: "Relying on [what he thought was] the superiority of its principles, he criticized and humiliated the various classicists." Yet according to Ban Gu, Aidi had queried the Academicians' criticism of Liu Xin: "[Liu] Xin wished to broaden the way of the Classics, on what basis is this considered 'criticizing' and 'discrediting' [past precedents]?"³³⁰

Even though according to both accounts, Liu Xin offended the Academicians deeply, it is my private belief that part of Liu Xin's failure might stemmed less from thoughtless arrogance than from a sense of pride in his work as the imperial librarian and editor. In any case, Jia Kui strenuously tries to avoid such fallouts with the Academicians in his defense of the Zuo Tradition. All in all, Jia's distancing of himself from Liu Xin exhibits a general anxiety about smoldering resentment from the scholarly community toward the Zuo Tradition.

Shifting of authority: from Confucius to the sovereign

Jia Kui's memorial establishes the authority of the Zuo Tradition mainly on the grounds of its relevance to the legitimacy of the ruling house. In that latter regard, he illustrates specific

³²⁸ Information about Liu Xin might have come into Jia Kui's possession because he had access to the imperial library. Given that Mingdi appointed Jia to "collate documents in the palace library along with Ban Gu" 與班固並校祕書 (HHS 36.1235), the sources Ban Gu drew from to compile his biography of Liu Xin might also have served as Jia's basis of knowledge about the Liu Xin debacle. But in Jia's own representation of it, he exaggerates Liu Xin's aggressiveness and haughtiness, dissociating himself from Liu even though they were both Zuo Tradition advocates, possibly to preempt any opposition from the Academicians of Jia's own time. In other words, knowing what he knew of the Liu Xin story, Jia Kui might have decided to take precautions against offending Academicians or other high officials who may still have vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

³²⁹ As discussed in chapter three, Ban Gu narrates Liu Xin's resignation from his post this way: "On account of this, [Liu] Xin rubbed the eminent ministers in power the wrong way and was calumniated by the various specialists in traditional learning. Fearing punishment, he requested reassignment as an alternate official, and became the Governor of Henei" 敬由是忤執政大臣，為眾儒所訕，懼誅，求出補吏，為河內太守。HS 36.1972.

³³⁰ HS 36.1972.

points of ideological divergence between the Zuo and Gongyang Traditions in the way they each interpret the sovereign's authority. Several considerations are noteworthy here. First Jia did so under Zhangdi's command (the emperor ordered him to "expound on the points where the great principles of the Zuo Tradition surpassed that of the other two traditions"). Secondly, whereas Jia Kui's predecessors speak of the Zuo Tradition in terms of its general utility in textual revisions (Liu Xin), the dissensions its establishment would cause among scholars (Fan Sheng), its underappreciated worth (Chen Yuan), and its authoritative transmission (Ban Gu), Jia Kui zeroes in on points that differentiate the interpretations of the Zuo and Gongyang traditions. After all, Jia Kui was asked to supply a well-reasoned justification for Zhangdi's announced preference for the Zuo Tradition.

Jia Kui first asserts that the ideological divergences among the three traditions of the *Annals* were not so great as generally portrayed, for they agree "seventy to eighty percent." Then he proceeds to identify the key difference as one concerning the sovereign's ultimate authority. It goes without mention that Jia Kui's claims could not possibly be taken as a true representation of ideological differences between the Zuo and Gongyang traditions, since the characters in the Zuo Tradition also celebrate the art of dealing with contingencies ("provisional strategie" 權變), no less than in the Gongyang. But in Jia Kui's situation, overt support of the sovereign's expressed interest trumps fidelity to the actual positions espoused by the three exegetical traditions.

Judging from the *Hou Hanshu* records alone, it appears that no scholar countered Jia Kui's claims. There could be several reasons for this lack of response to Jia's exaggerated claims. The Zuo Tradition represents a range of positions without committing to any one of them necessarily.³³¹ Strictly speaking, scholars could only refute Jia's specific examples he raised, by introducing counter-examples. Perhaps the court scholars understood imperial backing; the emperor already announced his preference for the Zuo Tradition, making it unprofitable for anyone to contradict him. At the same time, scholars hostile to the Zuo Tradition may not have felt threatened by Jia Kui. Because the Zuo Tradition had failed to be awarded an Academicians' post time after time, these opponents might have figured that precedents would hold Zhangdi back from breaking new ground. Except for a brief, unspecified period of time at the beginning of Guangwudi's reign, these imperial reigns came and went without enacting many official changes to the Zuo Tradition's status. Hence contemporaries of Jia Kui perhaps had little fear that drastic changes would happen this time around. Nevertheless, we read of Jia Kui because the emperor expressed interest in texts not officially sponsored.³³²

In his memorial, Jia Kui recalls Mencius' conception of the *Annals* as rhetorical ammunition. In contrast to Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan, Jia Kui focuses squarely on Gongyang Tradition's opportunistic ideology. Describing the Zuo Tradition as a strong prop for the ruler's prerogatives as the highest authority of the land: "Now the Zuo Tradition esteems rulers and fathers and degrades ministers and sons." This passage echoes the Mencian idea of Confucius

³³¹ This is the underlying premise of Li Wai-ye's monograph on the Zuo Tradition as a complex world of ideas. Li Wai-ye, *The Readability of the Past*, 2007.

³³² Tjan Tjoe Som interprets this dynamic between the emperor and both official and unofficial texts in this way: "The Emperor seems to have been powerless against the band of Erudites, but nevertheless to have continued his sympathy for the Old Texts.... The old situation had practically remained unaltered, i.e., that official scholarship was supreme but desiccating, and Old Text scholarship full of energy but failing to achieve recognition in the state's curriculum." Tjoe, *Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, 164. In Tjan's usage, the "Old Texts" refer to texts in the archaic script, such as the Zuo Tradition, said to have been discovered in the palace library and Confucius' wall.

using the *Annals* to reinforce the authority of good political powerholders, threatened by usurpations and assassinations, in *Mencius* 3B.9: “There were in fact ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and sons who murdered their fathers. Trembling, Confucius made the *Annals*.” Jia Kui’s emperor would not have missed the implications of his reference to the original context and motivation behind Confucius’ composition of the *Annals*. His audience also would have registered Jia’s suggestion that the Zuo Tradition has the same function as the *Annals*, as both texts function as political handbooks designed for the supreme ruler (“the prerogative of the Son of Heaven”). No one can say whether Jia Kui consciously applied the Mencian conception of the *Annals*, but his claims that the Zuo Tradition rebuffs insubordination binds the Zuo Tradition closer to the Classic in its support for the ritual and political authority of the overlord.³³³ Thus in portraying the Zuo Tradition as a politically advantageous text, Jia Kui also establishes that it shares the same basis as the Classic was understood to have.

Application of apocrypha

Besides likening the Zuo Tradition to the *Annals* in political function, Jia Kui also links the Zuo Tradition’s correspondence with the apocryphal literature, then thought also to support the political and moral authority of the sovereign. By Jia Kui’s own account in his memorial, he once wrote commentaries to Mingdi laying out the Zuo Tradition’s points of convergence with apocrypha: “During the Yongping reign [of Mingdi, 58–76], your humble servant memorialized the points in the Zuo Tradition that correspond with the diagrams and prophecies.” Because surviving commentaries attributed to Jia Kui today lack any references to the apocrypha,³³⁴ no one can precisely know what those corresponding “points” consisted of. Leaving aside the specific nature of these citations (or borrowing of apocrypha) in the Zuo Tradition, the text of his memorial shows him making a bold case for the compatibility of the Zuo Tradition with the apocrypha.

In the last portion of his memorial, Jia Kui uses textual evidence from the Zuo Tradition to legitimize the sagely origins of the Liu ruling family, a concern of prime importance for the imperial throne. Drawing from the apocrypha, Jia presents two alternate versions of the genealogy of Sage emperors to show that the Zuo Tradition contains the version that confirms, rather than undercuts, the mandate of the Han house: “Moreover, of all the experts of the Five Classics, none of them has the means by which to corroborate with the diagrams and prophecies that clarify the descent of the Liu family from Yao.”³³⁵ In this instance, Jia Kui alludes to textual evidence within the Zuo Tradition consistent with the “apocrypha” that validate the Liu

³³³ Nylan notes that by Jia Kui’s time, for “Archaic Script” scholars it was “axiomatic” that the ruling family enjoyed a supreme position, whereas Gongyang adherents held the view the emperor and commoner were subject to the same rules of conduct. See Nylan, *Five Classics*, 45.

³³⁴ The fragments of Jia Kui’s commentaries are collected in the Ma Guohan’s *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu*. These fragments fail to show any trace of apocrypha at all. In contrast, the extant fragments of Zheng Xuan’s commentaries on the Zuo Tradition do incorporate apocrypha. These are in Zheng’s three rebuttals to He Xiu (*Zhen Zuoshi gaohuang* 箴左氏膏肓, *Shi Guliang feiji* 釋穀梁廢疾, and *Fa Gongyang moshou* 發公羊墨守). One wonders if Jia Kui was deliberately representing his work a certain way, if the fragments were falsely attributed to him, or the anti-apocrypha editorial policy for the Tang commentaries meant that the *Zuozhuan zhengyi* could not include commentaries that treat apocrypha, so the redactors edited them out of Jia’s commentaries.

³³⁵ For the historical development of this mandate based on hereditary succession from the Sage Emperor Yao, see Michael Loewe, *Faith, Myth and Reason*, 152–5.

family's descent from the lineage of Yao: in the 29th year of Duke Zhao, the Zuo Tradition does identify a figure surnamed Liu, Liu Lei, as belonging to the "Taotang clan" 陶唐氏,³³⁶ Emperor Yao's lineage. For Jia's purposes, it hardly matters that in the the Zuo Tradition, Liu Lei was a minor official who was a dragon-keeper, as long as Jia can rest his case upon textual evidence that links a member of the Liu clan, however humble, to the Emperor Yao's clan in antiquity. It is as though Jia Kui has mined the textual "database" of the Zuo Tradition for the slightest indication of any genealogical connection between the antique Sage-emperor and the Han ruling family.

Jia Kui's citation reflects a sizable trend since the mid-Western Han alleging that the Han ruling house possessed the mandate not by force or cunning, but by legitimate right.³³⁷ This idea of predestination received reinforcement during Wang Mang's era,³³⁸ and subsequently, mostly famously by the Eastern Han scholars Ban Biao (3–54 CE). Ban's "Essay on the the Kingly Mandate" 王命篇,³³⁹ justifies the clan's mandate as inherited from Emperor Yao, drawing textual support from the "Annals," by which Ban seems to refer to the Zuo Tradition.³⁴⁰ Jia Kui recycles the claims found in apocrypha, attributing them to the Zuo Tradition. Juxtaposing two cyclical series of the Five Phases next to each other, he claims that, as the lone exception among other textual traditions, the Zuo Tradition espouses the cycle that is consistent with the one found in the apocrypha:

The experts of the Five Classics all declare that Zhuanxu succeeded the Yellow Emperor. But [if that were the case,] then Yao could not have assumed the power of Fire. The Zuo Tradition holds that Shaohao succeeded the Yellow Emperor, and Shaohao was none other than Emperor Xuan referred to in the diagrams and

³³⁶ As the *Hou Hanshu* commentator, Li Xian, summarizes the Zuo Tradition passage from the 29th year of Duke Zhao: "In the *Chunqiu* period, the minister of Jin Cai Mo said, 'The Taotang clan [of Emperor Yao] was already in decline, among its descendants was Liu Lei. Liu Lei learned to tame dragons and served Kong Jia [a ruler of the Xia dynasty]. The Fan clan [of Jin] was Liu Lei's descendants.' Fan Hui returned from Qin to Jin. The dwellers there were from the Liu clan. This clarifies that the Han house descended from the progeny of Yao" 春秋晉大夫蔡墨曰：「陶唐氏既衰，其後有劉累，學擾龍，事孔甲，范氏其後也。」范會自秦還晉，其處者為劉氏。明漢承堯後也。HHS 36.1237.

³³⁷ In the reign of Zhaodi (86–73 BCE), Sui Hong submitted his ideas that there were omens, not brought forth by human endeavor, that a commoner would assume the position of the imperial ruler and that the Han House descended from Emperor Yao. For this, Sui was executed by Huo Guang, the regent of Zhangdi. Jack Dull states that Sui Hong's omen interpretation is the "earliest instance of the idea that the Han House . . . corresponded to Emperor Yao of an earlier cycle and therefore must have descended from him." See Dull, 37–9. For further detail, see Dull's appendix "Emperor Yao and Confucius in the Apocrypha," 508–34. For the text of Sui Hong's submission, see HS 75.3153–4.

³³⁸ See HS 99B, Dubs HFHD, vol . 3, 274 (the biography of Wang Mang): "Verily, the Wang clan are descendants of the Lord of Yu, [Shun], who was descended from the Lord, Ku, and the Liu clan are descendants of Yao, who was descended from Zhuanxu."

³³⁹ This essay is incorporated into Ban Gu's chapter on the Ban family, the "Postface" (*xuzhuan* 敘傳) to the *Hanshu*. Translation of title is Anthony Clark's. Clark, *Ban Gu's History*, 5.

³⁴⁰ See HS 100A.4207–12; *Wenxuan* 52 "Wangming pian" 王命篇: "The family of Liu inherited the blessing of Yao, as we see from its genealogy written in the *Annals*. . . There were five indications of Gaozu's rise to the throne. First, he was a descendant of emperor Yao."

prophecies. If we decree that Yao could not represent Fire, then the Han [dynastic house] could not have represented [the color] red either.³⁴¹

As the crux of Jia Kui's memorial, this passage is a highly compressed web of allusions to the *Shiji*, the Zuo Tradition, and the apocryphal literature. The *Shiji* is one of the early extant sources to say that Emperor Zhuangxu succeeded the Yellow Emperor, resulting in Emperor Yao assuming the power of wood instead of fire.³⁴² One genealogical system in the *Shiji* has the sequence of succession is as follows:³⁴³

Yellow Emperor 黃帝 (Earth) → Emperor Zhuangxu 帝顓頊 (Metal) → Emperor Ku 帝嚳 (Water) → Emperor Yao 堯 (Wood) → Emperor Shun 舜 (Fire)

Jia Kui claims that the Zuo Tradition subscribes to another genealogy upheld by apocrypha, in which Emperor Shaohao succeeded the Yellow Emperor. In this competing system, the succession cycles irrevocably lead to Yao's assumption of Fire in the sequence, as below:

Yellow Emperor 黃帝 (Earth) → Emperor Shaohao 少昊 (Metal) → Emperor Zhuangxu 帝顓頊 (Water) → Emperor Ku 帝嚳 (Wood) → Emperor Yao 堯 (Fire)

Despite this claim by Jia Kui, the post-Du Yu version of the Zuo Tradition fails to state anywhere that Shaohao descended from the Yellow Emperor.³⁴⁴ In the Zuo Tradition, Shaohao is portrayed as a historical figure who assigned bird names to his officials, because he came to power through an omen involving birds.³⁴⁵ Except for the insertion of Emperor Shaohao into the mythical genealogy, nothing in the Zuo Tradition identifies either Yao or Shaohao with Fire, or any other cosmic Phase for that matter. Yet, the fragmentary remains of Han works adopt this

³⁴¹ The Han house did not always rule by the color red. In 104 BCE, Wudi officially adopted the color yellow and the power of earth. Then, Dong Zhongshu suggested a theory by which the five phases each produces its successor. Liu Xiang developed this theory of production, so that it came to be seriously considered during the latter part of the Western Han, "now given the virtue of Fire." HFHD, vol. 3, 107–8.

³⁴² As the *Shiji*'s first "Basic Annals" says: "The Yellow Emperor died and was buried at Mount Qiao. His grandson and the son of Changyi, Gaoyang, acceded. This was Emperor Zhuangxu" 黃帝崩，葬橋山。其孫昌意之子高陽立，是為帝顓頊也。SJ 1.10.

³⁴³ Thanks to the help of the commentator of *Hou Hanshu*, we can reconstruct this cycle underlying Jia Kui's compressed references. Li Xian's commentary says: "The exegetical traditions of the Five Classics all accepted this theory [of genealogy]. Had Zhuangxu succeeded the Yellow Emperor, who used the Earth power to rule, then Zhuangxu would have belonged to the power of Metal, Gaoxin [Emperor Ku] the power of Water, and Yao the power of Wood. Since Han is a progeny of the descendants of Yao, from this Han would not belong to the power of Fire" 當時五經家同為此說。若以顓頊代黃帝以土德王，即顓頊當為金德，高辛為水德，堯為木德。漢承堯後，自然不得為火德也。HHS 36.1237.

³⁴⁴ There are two possibilities: After the Han, people deleted this scenario. Or the sequence was never in the Zuo Tradition proper, and only in the apocrypha or sayings attached to it.

³⁴⁵ In the 17th year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Tradition, the Viscount of Tan explains his ancestry thus: "When my ancestor Shaohao Zhi succeeded to the kingdom, there appeared at that time a phoenix, and therefore he arranged his government under the nomenclature of birds, making bird officers, and naming them after birds" 我高祖少皞摯之立也，鳳鳥適至，故紀於鳥，為鳥師而鳥名。Translation by Legge, 667.

alternative sequence: Liu Xin's *Passage of Generations* (*Shijing* 世經),³⁴⁶ the *Roots of Generations* (*Shiben* 世本),³⁴⁷ and the apocryphal work *Chunqiu wei* 春秋緯 all maintain that Shaohao succeeded the Yellow Emperor.³⁴⁸ Likewise, the Ban Biao's "Kingly Mandate" essay says that Yao and the Han house shared the same basis of power in Fire.³⁴⁹ As for the primary identification of Yao with the power of Fire, an apocryphal work, *The Annals: Encompasser of the Original Mandate* 春秋元命苞, explicitly states this association: "Yao was of the Fire essence. Therefore, Qingdu was quickened by a fiery dragon and gave birth [to Yao]."³⁵⁰ Evidently, Jia Kui concurs with the apocrypha in associating the Han dynastic house with the power of Fire.

In his bid to align the Zuo Tradition with the textual traditions supporting the Liu clan's place in imperial succession, Jia Kui combines textual citations from the Zuo Tradition and from the apocrypha. The way he intermingles sources makes us wonder whether the Zuo Tradition text he cited was the same versions known to Du Yu and Kong Yingda, or whether Jia is making false attributions to pull the wool over the emperor's eyes. Nevertheless, Jia Kui's memorial makes the strongest case yet for the compatibility of the Zuo Tradition with the apocrypha. Because the interest of mid-Eastern Han rulers in the apocrypha equaled or surpassed their interest in the Classics and their traditions, Jia Kui strongly signals the Zuo Tradition's alliance with the apocryphal teachings legitimizing the Han government. This political concern with prophetic signs overshadowed earlier concerns over the Zuo Tradition's compatibility with the Five Classics.

Assessing veracity and authenticity – Wang Chong

Contemporary with Jia Kui, Wang Chong (27–97 CE) represents another aspect in the evolving narrative about the Zuo Tradition. Like Jia Kui, Wang assesses the Zuo Tradition in light of other traditions that, in his view, legitimized the Han house. But unlike Jia Kui, Wang Chong reveres rather than disparages earlier scholars and commentators on the Zuo Tradition. Wang not only casts Liu Xin as the patron saint of the Zuo Tradition, he also introduces the

³⁴⁶ Ban Gu incorporates part or all of *Shijing* 世經, a title attributed to Liu Xin, into the "Lüli zhi" 律曆志 chapter of the *Hanshu*. Liu Xin comments on the passage spoken by Viscount Tan in the forgoing Zuo Tradition passage as follows: "This says that Viscount Tan relied on Shaohao to receive the rulership from the Yellow Emperor. The Yellow Emperor received it from Yandi, Yandi from Gonggong, and Gonggong from Taihao. Therefore it first speaks of the Yellow Emperor and traces it back to Taihao" 言鄭子據少昊受黃帝，黃帝受炎帝，炎帝受共工，共工受太昊，故先言黃帝，上及太昊. HS 21B.1011.

³⁴⁷ This title appears in the *Suishu*'s bibliography "Jingji zhi" 經籍志 (Treatise on Classics and books). It reports that the earliest person to compile a work of this title is Liang Xiang. *Suishu* 33.988.

³⁴⁸ Cited in compilations such as the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, the fragments say that "The *Shiben* and *Chunqiu wei* both identify Qingyang as Shaohao, the son of the Yellow Emperor. He succeeded the Yellow Emperor and possessed all under heaven. His hao was Jintian clan. Shaohao clan was his personal hao and Jintian clan was his alternate hao" 《世本》及《春秋緯》皆言青陽即是少暉，黃帝之子，代黃帝而有天下，號曰金天氏。少暉氏身號，金天氏代號也. *Zuozhuan zhengyi* 48.2158.

³⁴⁹ See HS 100A.4211.

³⁵⁰ See Dull, 510; Huang Shi 黃爽, *Huanghi yishukao* 黃氏逸書考, 69a.

figures Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan into his account, thus giving further shape to the meta-narrative about the Zuo Tradition, and increasing the renown of its champions and detractors.

Text as artifact and omen

In his *Lunheng* 論衡, Wang Chong's treats the Zuo Tradition as an auspicious artifact, insisting that the physical origins of the text make it an omen of political authority. Wang places the Zuo Tradition among the texts he read or heard emerged from the wall of Confucius' house during the reign of Han Wudi.³⁵¹ Earlier, Liu Xin had made the reference to a find on the site of the destroyed residence of Confucius during the Tianhan reign (100–96 BCE) of Wudi.³⁵² But whereas Liu only cites the *Missing Rites* and *Documents* texts recovered from a wall, Wang Chong claims the Zuo Tradition was also discovered in the wall, in his chapter "Critical Remarks on Various Writings" 案書:³⁵³

春秋左氏傳者，蓋出孔子壁中。孝武皇帝時，魯共王壞孔子教授堂以為宮，得佚春秋三十篇，左氏傳也。³⁵⁴

The Zuo Tradition of the *Annals* apparently emerged from the wall of Confucius' [house]. During Wudi's reign, King Gong of Lu [r. 153–128 BCE] destroyed the lecture hall of Confucius to make a palace, and [in the wall he] found thirty chapters of the *Annals*—these were the Zuo Tradition.³⁵⁵

Wang Chong explicitly designates the Zuo Tradition an exegetical tradition (*zhuan* 傳) of the *Annals*, as had Liu Xin, Huan Tan, Chen Yuan, and Ban Gu before him. In that respect, Wang agrees with these advocates of the Zuo Tradition. However, Wang departs from them in that he associates the Zuo Tradition with a collection of archaic script texts alleged to have once belonged to Confucius' family. Whereas none of the previous scholars went so far as to locate the Zuo Tradition among this collection, the passage suggests that Wang thought the authority of the Zuo Tradition lay in its direct physical link to Confucius' possessions. While Chen Yuan and Ban Gu had strained mightily to establish a connection between the Zuo Tradition and Confucius, Wang Chong accepted the text as an artifact of the Sage's legacy. In effect, Wang's writings move the discovery of a physical manuscript of the Zuo Tradition from Chengdi's time (in Liu

³⁵¹ Wang Chong's informal education involved his browsing of books at the marketplace. See HHS 49.1629.

³⁵² As we recall, Liu Xin's "Letter" says: "When King Gong of Lu (r. 153–128 BCE) destroyed Confucius' house, wishing to build a palace, he found texts in archaic script in the destroyed wall. There were thirty-nine chapters of the *Missing Rites* and sixteen chapters of the *Documents*" 及魯恭王壞孔子宅，欲以為宮，而得古文於壞壁之中，逸禮有三十九，書十六篇。HS 36.1969.

³⁵³ This is Alfred Forke's translation of the title. Forke, 461.

³⁵⁴ *Lunheng* 29.1161.

³⁵⁵ Commentator Huang Hui points out that Wang Chong is the only extant Han source that states that the Zuo Tradition belonged to the cache of wall texts. Huang cites that the *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi" and Xu Shen's "Postface" to the *Shuowen jiezi* to show that the Zuo Tradition did not figure among the list of books. LH 20.1162. As Forke says, "In the opinion of most Chinese critics the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, as we have it, has not been preserved, but was reconstructed from the *Tso-chuan* or from the other commentaries. This view is supported by what Wang Ch'ung says here." Forke, 462.

Xin's "Letter") to Wudi's time. Equally important, Wang's account makes the Zuo Tradition an unmediated legacy bequeathed by Confucius, relatively unaffected by the vagaries of transmission.

In the "Lost Writings" (Yiwen 佚文) chapter of the *Lunheng*, Wang Chong also groups the Zuo Tradition along with the other texts he accepts as the physical traces of Confucius' heritage. Elaborating upon Liu Xin's report on the finds, Wang Chong here added both the Zuo Tradition and the *Analects* to the cache of "rediscovered" texts transcribed in the archaic script.³⁵⁶ Notably, Wang's count of the rediscovered chapters diverges from Liu's:

孝武皇帝封弟為魯恭王。恭王壞孔子宅以為宮，得佚尚書百篇、禮三百、春秋三十篇、論語二十一篇。³⁵⁷

Wudi enfeoffed his younger brother as King Gong of Lu. When King Gong destroyed the house of Confucius to build his palace, he found a hundred chapters of the lost [portions of the] *Documents*,³⁵⁸ three hundred chapters of the *Rites*,³⁵⁹ thirty chapters of the [Zuo Tradition of the] *Annals*,³⁶⁰ and twenty-one chapters of the *Analects*.

Wang's count greatly exceeds Liu's total count of fifty-five archaic script chapters, by a factor of nine. This numerical discrepancy may seem minor, but it is not. Wang's main point was to ascribe clear origins to Confucius' physical legacy, while basing the authority of the Zuo Tradition on its superb textual preservation, rather than transmission through well-known masters.³⁶¹

In "Lost Writings," Wang writes that when Prince Gong of Lu first punctured the wall, music uncannily emanated from the opening:

閩(聞)絃歌之聲，懼復封塗。上言武帝，武帝遣吏發取。古經、論語，此時皆出，經傳也，而有閩(聞)絃歌之聲：文當興於漢，喜樂得閩之祥也。當傳

³⁵⁶ For the history behind the sudden appearance of these texts, see Nylan's *Five Classics*, 44.

³⁵⁷ LH 20.860-1.

³⁵⁸ Commentator Huang Hui quotes Yan Ruoqu as determining that Wang Chong's number of a hundred chapters of *Shangshu* belongs to hearsay (*chuanwen zhishuo* 傳聞之說), because it contradicts with the sixteen lost chapters consistently given by Liu Xin, Yang Xiong, Huan Tan, and Ban Gu. LH 21.860.

³⁵⁹ Here too, Huang Hui says the same of Wang Chong's three hundred chapters of the *Rites*, that this number is extraordinary, and fails to tally with known sources such as Liu Xin's and Ban Gu's accounts. LH 21.861.

³⁶⁰ Huang determines that the "Annals" in thirty chapters matches with the Zuo Tradition in thirty *juan* recorded in the *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi," and thus the former must be referring to the latter. Ibid. Wang Chong collapses the Zuo Tradition with the Classic by directly referring to the former as the *Annals* (in "thirty" chapters). This is nothing new, since Sima Qian is wont to do the same when he cites from the Zuo Tradition. Examples of this usage in the *Shiji* are discussed in Durrant, "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Conception of *Tso chuan*," 297.

³⁶¹ As Jack Dull points out, the status of Confucius as a prophet and seer developed with the proliferation of apocrypha. For Wang Chong's acceptance of apocrypha, see Dull, 366. Confucius was remade into a figure who predicted the rise of the Han. See also Nylan, *Lives of Confucius*, 97. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Wang Chong would collapse the discovery of cache of texts reputed to belong to Confucius, and associate it with the political resurgence of the Han empire.

於漢，寢藏牆壁之中。恭王聞之，聖王感動絃歌之象，此則古文不當掩，漢俟以為符也。³⁶²

King Gong heard the sound of stringed instruments and singing. Frightened, he sealed and plastered over the hole. He submitted a report [about this] to Wudi, who then sent officials to open the wall and take the texts out: the Old Classic (of the *Annals*) and the *Analects* came out at this time.³⁶³ These were the Classics and their exegetical traditions. And there were heard the sounds of stringed instruments and singing. Because culture ought to flourish in the Han, these were the auspicious omens of joyful music. These texts ought to be transmitted in the Han,³⁶⁴ yet they lay dormant and hidden inside the wall. When King Gong heard the omens, the sagely emperor was moved and stirred by the cosmic signs, the stringed instruments and songs. This means that old texts were not meant to be concealed, and the Han had been waiting for a tally [of legitimation].

Here Wang Chong expresses the idea that the physical remains revealed a cosmic purpose through miraculous music. This mythical account echoes Jia Kui's utilization of prophetic material within the text of the Zuo Tradition to support the legitimacy of the Han ruling family. Wang marks this discovery as an organic part of the revival of Han civilization ("culture ought to flourish in the Han"). Though this passage appears as a paean to the Han rulers, it is significant that Wang values the Zuo Tradition for its place in the overlapping textual, cosmic, and political spheres, as he lays down a larger argument about the role of new textual findings in the greater polity. In this instance, Wang does not place the Zuo Tradition under unique considerations as the other scholars have done, but conceives of the text's rediscovery as part of other natural cosmic and political processes that attested to the text's worth.

Textual correspondence as authority

Wang Chong vouchsafes the authenticity of the Zuo Tradition by asserting the text's correspondence with a range of received texts, not just the texts excavated from the wall. Wang declares that the Zuo Tradition agrees with both the *Shiji* and the *Liji* as the standards for good texts; he takes the correspondence of Zuo Tradition to the *Shiji* as a proof of strength rather than of weakness. Whereas some former scholars (such as Fan Sheng) treats the *Shiji* as a perversion of Confucius' messages (as discussed in chapter two), Wang Chong speaks of the *Shiji* quite as authoritative as the *Liji*, which he takes to be the direct words of Confucius:

³⁶² LH 20.861.

³⁶³ Huang Hui notes that, according to Ban Gu's and Zheng Xuan's accounts, the archaic script texts were either presented by Kong Anguo or King Xian of Hejian to Wudi. Huang also quotes Yan Ruoqu as noting that Wang Chong here instead says Wudi went to obtain the texts himself, again without known evidence. Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Liu Pansui says that the character *gu* 古 was mistakenly interpolated before *wen* 文 here, instead of belonging to the place before *jing* 經, as it does now in *gijing* 古經. Ibid.

公羊高、穀梁寘、胡母氏皆傳春秋，各門異戶，獨左氏傳為近得實。何以驗之？禮記造於孔子之堂，太史公漢之通人也，左氏之言與二書合，公羊高、穀梁寘、胡母氏不相合。³⁶⁵

Gongyang Gao, Guliang Zhi, and Master Huwu all interpreted the *Annals*, each upholding their own interpretations. But only the Zuo Tradition can be considered closely arriving at the truth.³⁶⁶ With what do we verify this? The *Record of the Rites* was created in the lecture halls of Confucius,³⁶⁷ and the Grand Historian was a man of comprehensive knowledge in the Han. Now the contents of the Zuo Tradition accord with these two books, while those of Gongyang Gao, Guliang Zhi, and Master Huwu do not.³⁶⁸

Wang Chong acknowledges the presence of other exegetical traditions, “Gongyang Gao, Guliang Zhi, and Master Huwu,” competing with the Zuo Tradition, as did advocates before him. But whereas previous champions of the Zuo Tradition were more circumspect in their praise, touting the benefits of *adding* it to the existing exegetical traditions, and so minimizing its differences, Wang Chong is more unequivocal about the supremacy of the Zuo Tradition, perhaps because he did not have to temper his argument for a court audience, unlike the other scholars. He considers the Zuo Tradition to be a vehicle conveying facts (“arriving at the truth”), a claim he makes for no other exegetical tradition. Juxtaposing Confucius and Sima Qian as equal sources of authority (“The *Liji* was created in the halls of Confucius, the Grand Historian was a man of comprehensive knowledge”), Wang Chong takes the Zuo Tradition’s congruity with the books to be a sign of reliability. He also mentions the good “fit” the Zuo Tradition has with the *Liji* and the *Shiji* (“the contents of the Zuo Tradition accord with these two books”) while those of Gongyang Gao, Guliang Zhi, and Master Huwu do not. Similarly, Wang Chong stresses the Zuo Tradition’s compatibility with the *Lüshi Chunqiu* and the *Guoyu*, in a new bid to demonstrate the Zuo Tradition’s harmony with these texts as well.³⁶⁹ In an act of reversal, Wang Chong places

³⁶⁵ LH 29.1163.

³⁶⁶ Forke translates this line thus: “the commentary of Tso Ch’iu Ming alone was in time nearest to Confucius and did embody the right views.” Forke, 462.

³⁶⁷ Huang Hui cites Ban Gu’s annotation of the “Yiwenzhi”: the *Record of the Rites* “was that which the seventy disciples and later scholars recorded” 七十子後學者所記也。Huang suggests that Wang Chong says the text was “created in the lecture halls of Confucius” on the basis that the disciples wrote down Confucius’ lectures on it. Huang notes that opponents of Fan Sheng had also used the correspondence of the *Shiji* and the Zuo Tradition to accord the Zuo Tradition higher esteem. LH 20.1163.

³⁶⁸ According to the HS “Rulin zhuan,” the Huwu Tradition is one of the earliest exegetical traditions of the *Annals*: “As for those who discoursed on the *Annals*, in the state of Qi there was Master Huwu, and in the state of Zhao, there was Dong Zhongshu” 言春秋，於齊則胡毋生，於趙則董仲舒。HS 88.3593.

³⁶⁹ Further down in this chapter, Wang Chong writes: “The language of the Zuo Tradition contains many anomalies and seems to be at odds with Confucius’ silence on strange monstrosities and feats of strength. The *Lüshi Chunqiu* is similar to this as well. The *Guoyu* is the outer tradition of the Zuo Tradition. The Zuo Tradition transmits the Classic [the *Annals*] and esteems economy in its words and language, therefore Zuo went back to select and record the words of the *Guoyu* to fill in the substance. That being the case then, the Zuo Tradition and the *Guoyu* are the truthful books for generations of classicists” 言多怪，頗與孔子不語怪力相違返也。呂氏春秋亦如此焉。國語，左氏之外傳也，左氏傳經，辭語尚略，故復選錄國語之辭以實。然則左氏、國語，世儒之實書也。Commentator Liu Pansui says that the Yuan-dynasty recension has the character *bao* 寶 for *shi* 實。LH 29.1164.

the competing exegetical traditions outside of this group of privileged texts rather than replicating his predecessors' arguments for accommodating the Zuo Tradition within the official traditions.

Moving away from the rhetoric of accommodation, Wang Chong reiterates Chen Yuan's and Ban Gu's narratives about the Zuo Qiuming's role as the student and collaborator of Confucius. But neither of them puts it as starkly as Wang did in the following lines, thereby invoking the effects of distance versus proximity to the Sage:

又諸家去孔子遠，遠不如近，聞不如見。³⁷⁰

Moreover these various experts are remote from Confucius. It is much better to be near than to be remote, and better to see than to know by hearsay.³⁷¹

The “various traditions” refer to the aforementioned Gongyang Gao, Guliang Zhi, and Master Huwu Traditions of the *Annals*. But Wang is more forthright than any predecessors in stating the precise value of the proximity of the Zuo Tradition's founder to Confucius (“It is much better to be near than to be remote, and better to see than to know by hearsay”), unambiguously maintaining the greater authority of founders in Confucius' time over those who came afterwards. Granted, the importance Wang attaches to the personal presence of Confucius is far from radical in his time, but no one has pronounced, as unequivocally as Wang Chong does here, the superiority of personal encounters over mediated transmission, on behalf of the Zuo Tradition.

Legends about students of the Zuo Tradition

Wang Chong builds his argument about the authenticity of the Zuo Tradition from the prior statements, placing Liu Xiang at center stage, while adapting the stories about Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan. First, Wang remakes Liu Xiang into a passionate devotee of the Zuo Tradition, in a passage that prefigures Du Yu's more extended treatment of the pleasures offered by the Zuo Tradition:

劉子政玩弄左氏，童僕妻子皆呻吟之。³⁷²

Liu Zizheng [Xiang] savored and delighted in the Zuo Tradition. His child-servants, wives, and children all recited and intoned it.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ *Lunheng* 29.1163.

³⁷¹ Translation adapted from Forke, 462.

³⁷² *Lunheng* 29.1164.

³⁷³ According to Huang's annotation, Huan Tan's *Xinlun* contains a parallel account: “Liu Zizheng [Xiang], Zijun [Xin], and Boyu, the three of them, especially prized the Zuo Tradition. They taught it to their sons and grandsons, and even to their women. There was no one who did not intone and recite it” 劉子政、子駿、伯玉三人，尤珍重左氏，教子孫，下婦女，無不誦讀. LH 20.1164. Huang also notes that despite the direct echoes between Wang Chong's and Huan Tan's accounts, the *Hanshu* biography of Liu Xiang only mentions that he studied the Guliang Tradition, not the Zuo Tradition. However, Huang thinks it likely that Huan Tan's account was not necessarily untrue, for it could be the case that Ban Gu omitted mention of Liu Xiang's study of the Zuo Tradition because Liu Xin's interest overshadowed his father's. It is not inconceivable that Ban Gu is invested in attaching the name of an individual sponsor for each exegetical tradition to construct distinct scholarly lineages, and so Liu Xiang and Liu Xin could not have been experts in the same textual tradition.

In this instance, Wang Chong focuses on Liu Xiang's immersion in the Zuo Tradition rather than in the Guliang tradition.³⁷⁴ Wang's almost certainly apocryphal tale of Liu Xiang thus establishes the notion of pleasure as central to one's encounter with the Zuo Tradition. Moreover, Wang highlights the dimension of the Zuo Tradition as an experience to be enjoyed ("savored"). He either conceives this by himself or, more likely, adopts the new way of talking about deriving pleasure from reading and reciting.³⁷⁵ By referring to the Zuo Tradition's literary and narrative charms, he obliquely suggests that such pleasures are largely unavailable in the other exegetical traditions of the *Annals*. Moreover, this conception of the Zuo Tradition as experience means that the exegetical master has less sway over the student than the overpowering effects of the Zuo Tradition's intrinsic allure.

As Wang Chong supports the veracity of the Zuo Tradition, he adds luster to the Zuo Tradition by naming scholars who apparently had reached great fame by his time to its roster of teachers. In his version of the celebrated history of the Zuo Tradition, he attributes the success of its official establishment to Chen Yuan and Fan Sheng in Guangwudi's reign:

光武皇帝之時，陳元、范叔(升)上書連屬，條事是非，左氏遂立。范叔(升)尋因罪罷。元、叔(升)天下極才，講論是非，有餘力矣。陳元言訥，范叔(升)章誦，左氏得實，明矣。³⁷⁶

At the time of Guangwudi, Chen Yuan and Fan Shu [Sheng] submitted memorials in succession. They outlined the correct and mistaken points of understanding,³⁷⁷ whereupon the Zuo Tradition was established. Fan Sheng was dismissed for an offence. Chen and Fan were the supreme talents in all under heaven then. Their vigor was more than up to the task of giving a thorough discussion of rights and wrongs.³⁷⁸ Chen Yuan's words was accepted,³⁷⁹ but Fan Sheng's writings were distortions.³⁸⁰ It is evident that the Zuo Tradition gives us the truth.³⁸¹

According to this account, Chen Yuan and Fan Sheng were instrumental in the establishment of the Zuo Tradition, but Wang offers only half the story, judging from the *Hou Hanshu*. Even

³⁷⁴ As readers will recall, Liu Xiang was an expert on the Guliang Tradition: "Liu Xiang was imperially commanded to study the Guliang Tradition of the *Annals*. In ten-odd years, he became greatly learned and well-versed in it." HS 36.1967.

³⁷⁵ The general theory of pleasure in reading was more fully developed by Yang Xiong. For a detailed discussion, see Nylan, *Yang Xiong and Pleasure*, 77–98.

³⁷⁶ LH 29.1164.

³⁷⁷ Forke translates this line thus: Fan and Chen "collect[ed] all the facts, giving their opinions on the pros and cons." Forke, 462.

³⁷⁸ As Forke translates, "In their arguments on the merits of the *Tso Chuan* they display a remarkable vigour." Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Commentator Liu Pansui glosses the character *ne* 訥 as a corruption of the graph *na* 納 (accepted). LH 29.1164.

³⁸⁰ Forke understands these lines differently, as he translates: "Ch'en Yuan used to express himself very cautiously and Fan Shu's criticisms were silenced." Forke, 462. This difference does not detract from the overall suggestion that Chen Yuan won with his words, while Fan Sheng's argument was inadequate in some way.

³⁸¹ I follow Forke's rendering of *deshi* 得實. Ibid.

though the Zuo Tradition did receive imperial endorsement after the Fan-Chen debate, Wang neglects to mention that the victory was short-lived, as Guangwudi soon left the Academicians' post unfilled. Wang Chong does mention Fan Sheng's ignominious fate ("dismissed for an offence"), insinuating that the Zuo Tradition's opponent was at fault. But irrespective of the debaters' positions, in Wang's understanding, the fact that the Zuo Tradition has moved respectable scholars ("supreme talents in all under heaven") to evaluate its merits and shortcomings confirmed its reliability ("It is evident that the Zuo Tradition gives us the truth").

In sum, Wang Chong bases his assessment of the Zuo Tradition upon its textual identity, political symbolism, and the learning and charisma of its advocates. The text's physical associations with Confucius, its role in predicting political rises, and the attitudes of the Zuo Tradition advocates are all equally important to him. Unlike Jia Kui, Wang does not attempt to fit strained interpretations of the Zuo Tradition into a framework conducive to consolidating imperial power. Rather, Wang Chong treats the discovery of the Zuo Tradition wall text as an omen of dynastic auspiciousness and various scholars' passionate interest in it as a sign of the Zuo Tradition's authority. Unlike the scholars before or contemporaneous with him, Wang seems to take for granted the Zuo Tradition's authority, for he uses these signs to exemplify—not to argue for—the text's significant status.

Ascribing antiquity – Xu Shen

Xu Shen (58–121) strengthens the association of the Zuo Tradition with the texts attributed to Confucius, yet in ways differently from Wang Chong. Alone among all the scholars examined up to now, Xu Shen ascribes the date of discovery of the Zuo Tradition to a time before the discovery of the wall texts. In this way, he lengthens the history of the text, creating yet another version of the narratives of discovery and transmission produced by Ban Gu and Wang Chong.

In the "Postface" to his *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字,³⁸² Xu Shen gives a broad typology of the graphs by which to classify the Classics and their interpretative traditions. The Zuo Tradition is the only exegetical tradition he categorizes under the same group as the texts attributed to Confucius:

及宣王太史籀，著大篆十五篇，與古文或異。至孔子書六經，左丘明述春秋傳，皆以古文，厥意可得而說也。³⁸³

At the time of King Xuan [827–782 BCE], the grand Shi Zhou wrote fifteen chapters listing the large seal graphs, which in some cases differ from the archaic script [we know].³⁸⁴ When Confucius recorded the Six Classics and Zuo

³⁸² Xu Shen's ad hoc interlinear comments on the Zuo Tradition are collected in his *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義, the fragments of which are preserved in Zheng Xuan's *Bo Wujing yiyi* 駁五經異義.

³⁸³ *Shuowen jiezi* 15A.594.

³⁸⁴ Translation of this passage adapted from Thern, *Postface of the Shuo-wen Chieh-tzu*, 11. His n. 17 says, "Guwen" here is an indefinite term probably meaning 'ancient writing of the Zhou dynasty and before.' For the

Qiuming transmitted his Tradition for the *Annals*,³⁸⁵ in both cases they used the archaic script, and they are intelligible [to us today].³⁸⁶

Xu Shen isolates the Six Classics and the Zuo Tradition as belonging to a special corpus of texts transcribed in the so-called “*guwen*,” or archaic script style.³⁸⁷ Using script to arrange his hierarchy of texts, Xu Shen places the Zuo Tradition second only to the highest order of texts, “the Six Classics.” These were prized less for their script *per se* than for the authority they supposedly possessed in the Western Zhou. It is remarkable that the Zuo Tradition would receive such high honor as the only text that Xu Shen deems sacred enough to be listed alongside the Six Classics, when none of the other exegetical traditions is mentioned.³⁸⁸ Elsewhere in his “Postface,” Xu lists the Zuo Tradition among the exegetical traditions whose archaic script characters he cites.³⁸⁹ This later reference reiterates the significance of Xu Shen’s initial grouping of the Zuo Tradition with the Six Classics as the most authoritative of writings in his estimation.

Further on in Xu Shen’s account about the development of script types, he writes about the discovery of the wall texts in Confucius’ mansion, and again, Xu singles out the Zuo Tradition for special mention after naming other classics. Xu Shen’s list of these wall texts parallels Wang Chong’s,³⁹⁰ except that Xu adds the *Classic of Filial Piety*:

various meanings of *guwen* see Wang Guowei, “Shuowen suowei guwen shuo” 說文所謂古文說 (Discussion of the Term *Guwen* in the *Shuowen*), *Guantangjilin* 觀堂集林 (Collected Works of Guantang), 1923.”

³⁸⁵ Thern renders *shu* 述 as “transcribed” (11). Qing commentator Duan Yucai employs the circular explanation that one knows Confucius transcribed the Six Classics in *guwen* because they were the wall texts. Likewise, one knows Zuo Qiuming transcribed his Tradition in *guwen* because Zhang Cang presented them. Both the discovery of the *Annals* as one of the wall texts and Zhang Cang’s presentation of the Zuo Tradition are statements Xu Shen himself put forth in this same colophon. In essence, Duan draws from Xu’s own assertions as ‘supportive evidence’ to define Xu’s other terms. Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15A.7.

³⁸⁶ The last line is put in Thern’s words (11).

³⁸⁷ Elsewhere in his “Postface,” Xu Shen defines his use of the term *guwen* as applying to the script found in the “wall texts”: “At that time [the Xin Dynasty], there were six styles of recording. The first was ‘archaic script,’ occurring in the wall texts in Confucius’ house” 時有六書：一曰古文，孔子壁中書也。Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi* 15A.595.

³⁸⁸ We may note that the *Shuowen jiezi* was presented in Xu Shen’s late years (in 121 CE), whereas his earlier work the *Wujing yiyi* 五經異議 (dated to 79 CE), collates various interpretative traditions including the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions for the White Tiger Hall discussions (79 CE). Given this fact, and also the fact that other scholarly giants such as Zheng Xuan, Ma Rong, and scholars from the Eastern Jin and the Sui Dynasty never draw from the Zuo Tradition the way Xu Shen does, it is still difficult to judge whether his privileging of the Zuo Tradition exemplifies his personal preference, his idea of textual authority, or a general elevation of the Zuo Tradition’s status in the four decades after the White Tiger Hall conference.

³⁸⁹ The last lines of Xu Shen’s “Postface” are: “My citations are from the *Changes* of the Meng Tradition, the *Documents* of the Kong Tradition, and the *Odes* of the Mao Tradition, the rituals of the *Zhouguan*, the *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition, the *Analects*, and the *Classic of Filial Piety*—all were transcribed in the archaic script” 其稱易孟氏、書孔氏、詩毛氏、禮周官、春秋左氏、論語、孝經，皆古文也。Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi* 15A.595. Thern notes that, in practice, Xu quotes text in both the “ancient and modern script.” Thern, 18, n. 35.

³⁹⁰ Cf. LH 20.61.

壁中書者，魯共王壞孔子宅，而得禮記、尚書、春秋、論語、孝經。又北平侯張蒼獻春秋左氏傳。³⁹¹

As for the wall texts, King Gong of Lu [r. 153–128 BCE] destroyed Confucius' house and found the *Record of the Rites*, the *Documents*, the *Annals*, the *Analects*, and the *Classic of Filial Piety*.³⁹² The Captain of Beiping, Zhang Cang, presented the *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition to the throne.³⁹³

Xu Shen dates the 'discovery' of the Zuo Tradition to a time much earlier than Wudi's reign (141–86 BCE).³⁹⁴ After referring to the wall discovery, Xu speaks of Zhang Cang's (d. 151 BCE) formal presentation of the Zuo Tradition to the throne.³⁹⁵ Xu takes a famous early Western Han figure who was not often associated with the Zuo Tradition, and associates him with the Zuo Tradition to give it an even longer history.

All Zuo Tradition adherents examined so far had agreed upon the compilation of the Zuo Tradition in Confucius' time. Liu Xin mentions a discovery of one version of the Zuo Tradition in Chengdi's reign (33–7 BCE), while Chen Yuan, Ban Gu, and Jia Kui never venture a date when the Zuo Tradition was brought to light. But now, first Wang Chong, then Xu Shen, gradually date the Zuo Tradition's discovery further back in time.

Interlude: The Zuo Tradition as Perceived Threat – He Xiu

³⁹¹ *Shuowen jiezi* 15A.595.

³⁹² Xu Shen displays his awareness that although he might have viewed these "wall texts" as authoritative, and the "archaic script" with which they were transcribed a reliable standard for the compilation of his dictionary, his contemporaries did not all agree with him. He felt compelled to defend this position against, according to him, redoubtable foes who dismissed the authenticity of these texts during his time: "Many people of my generation, however, unanimously reject and criticize [the above discoveries]. They consider them [the creation of] curiosity-hunters, who have intentionally and cunningly altered the standard style, and cut windows in the walls [of Confucius' house] to fake unintelligible books." Translation adapted from Thern, 15. From Xu's defense it could be gathered that Xu Shen asserts the authority of these books in the face of widespread controversy about them.

³⁹³ Duan Yucai was of the persuasion that Zhang Cang presented the texts of both the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition at the same time. He disagrees with Xu Shen's division of the two, with the former belonging to the wall texts, and the latter to Zhang's presentation. Duan also cites an anonymous comment that the characters *Chunqiu* among the list of wall texts might have been an interpolation, suggesting that Zhang Cang was the one who brought to light the first copy of the Classic in the 'archaic script.' Perhaps more so than Xu Shen, Duan is committed to the idea of the status of the Zuo Tradition as the inseparable exegetical tradition the *Annals* as early as Zhang Cang's time. Duan further elaborates the myth of Zhang Cang by hypothesizing that Zhang must have concealed the Zuo Tradition under the Qin prohibition of book possession, and did not present it until after the abrogation of this law in the third year of Emperor Xiao Hui (194–187 BCE). Duan firmly repudiates Wang Chong's reference to the discovery of the Zuo Tradition among the wall texts. *Shuowen jiezi* 15A.12–13.

³⁹⁴ As we recall from an earlier discussion, Wang Chong identifies the *Annals* among these "wall books" straightaway as the Zuo Tradition version of it, when he writes: "King Gong of Lu destroyed the lecture hall of Confucius to make his palace, and found the thirty chapters of *Annals*. These were the Zuo Tradition." LH 29.1161.

³⁹⁵ In the *Shiji* biography of Zhang Cang, he is noted for his work on calendars only, instead of the Zuo Tradition also. SJ 96.2675. In the *Hanshu* "Rulinzhuan," Ban Gu features him as one of the eminent Western Han officials who studied the Zuo Tradition. Refer to discussion in chapter three. Thanks perhaps to the rewriting of history by scholars such as Ban Gu, the profile of Zhang Cang has become bound with his study of the Zuo Tradition by Xu Shen's time.

Two generations after Xu Shen, He Xiu (129–182) is the next scholar known to have offered an opinion about the Zuo Tradition, and He Xiu betrays an awareness that the status of the Zuo Tradition was so much on the rise that it posed a threat to the survival of the Gongyang Tradition. According to He Xiu’s own account, this danger motivated him to write his commentary *Chunqiu Gongyang jiegū* 春秋公羊解詁. In his preface for this work, He Xiu interprets Jia Kui’s actions as attempts to supplant the Chairs of the Gongyang Tradition with those of the Zuo Tradition:

是以治古學貴文章者謂之俗儒。至使賈逵緣隙奮筆，以為公羊可奪，左氏可興。³⁹⁶

For this reason those who devote themselves to past learning and prize fine writing considered them [Gongyang Tradition commentators] vulgar classicists.³⁹⁷ Things have reached such a pass that they encouraged Jia Kui to take advantage of the chasm [in views] and exercise his brush,³⁹⁸ thinking that [the seat of the] Gongyang could be taken away and the Zuo Tradition established.

He Xiu’s characterization of Jia Kui’s intent does not tally with the attitude Jia exhibited in his memorial to Zhangdi in 79 CE, as Jia Kui had sought to minimize the divergences between the exegetical traditions. Apparently, in the second half of the Eastern Han, He Xiu perceives Zuo Tradition scholars as a serious enough threat for him to exaggerate the menace posed by Jia Kui, but He Xiu’s rhetoric quite possibly overstates the divide between Gongyang and Zuo Tradition scholars.

He Xiu’s defensive posture suggests the prominence the Zuo Tradition had gained came at the expense of the Gongyang, even though an official post for the Zuo Tradition was only briefly established. In He Xiu’s view, a relatively recent newcomer such as Jia Kui has exercised sufficient influence to jeopardize the place of the Gongyang Tradition. As He Xiu’s complaint shows, the Zuo Tradition commentators for the first time began to gain a strong following.

Conclusion

³⁹⁶ SSJZS: *Chunqiu Gongyang zhushu*, 12.

³⁹⁷ Xu Yan’s 徐彥 (785–805) Tang subcommentary accepts the Xu Shen’s definition of *guxue* 古學 to mean the study of the Zuo Tradition as opposed to that of the Gongyang Tradition. Xu Yan identifies those who “prize fine writing” as commentators on the Zuo Tradition such as Zheng Zhong and Jia Kui. He Xiu, *Chunqiu Gongyang zhushu*, 12. As Dull recapitulates, He Xiu “was alarmed that such Old Text scholars as Chia K’uei had suggested that the Tso commentary should replace the Kung-yang text and that in debates the New Text scholars were often unable to defend themselves.” Dull, 389.

³⁹⁸ Xu Yan says that Jia Kui wrote a commentary laying out forty-two points that illustrate the superiority of the Zuo Tradition’s interpretations over the Gongyang Tradition’s. The *Hou Hanshu* biography of Jia Kui quotes Jia as saying that he wrote a commentary of thirty-plus items. He Xiu, *Chunqiu Gongyang zhushu*, 12

In this period, the scholars Jia Kui, Wang Chong, and Xu Shen reinterpreted the history and uses of the Zuo Tradition. At the time Ban Gu worked on his *Hanshu*,³⁹⁹ setting out his story about the authorship and transmission of the Zuo Tradition, other scholars were using the Zuo to advance their own projects. Jia Kui drew omenological support from the text of the Zuo Tradition to support the emperor's prerogatives. In a similar vein, Wang Chong treated the Zuo Tradition as a physical sign of political and cultural florescence, tracing the authority of the Zuo Tradition to its correspondence with other Classics and masterworks, not to mention its popularity among prominent scholarly families. Xu Shen, for his part, exalted the Zuo Tradition as an exemplary source for the study of ancient etymologies. Overall, these scholars' statements attest the multiplicity of ways that authority came to be vested in the Zuo Tradition, apart from discussions concerning its exegetical relation to Confucius' teachings. These scholars evince relative disinterest in matters of interpretation that speak to the hermeneutic of the *Annals*. But these issues did not go away, as Du Yu would return to them with greater attention and more complex theoretical frameworks, as the next two chapters will show.

³⁹⁹ Ban Gu began to work on the *Hanshu* begun by his father sometime after 57 CE. The greater part of his work was circulating in the early 80s. That would mean that his colleague in the imperial library, Jia Kui, might have had a greater chance of seeing Ban's manuscript. Wang Chong and Xu Shen would have had less access to the manuscript, but there is still no evidence to show that they had seen Ban Gu's writings. For the dating of Ban Gu's writings, see De Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 6–7.

Chapter 5

Du Yu's Reinvention of the Hermeneutic of the *Annals* (Western Jin)

Introduction

Du Yu's 杜預 (222–284 CE) commentarial work, the *Collected Explanations of the Classic and Tradition of the Annals* (*Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie* 春秋經傳集解), compiled in 283 CE, is the single most influential commentary for study of the Zuo Tradition. Part of the reason may well be that this work is the only survival from a host of other commentaries compiled in the Eastern Han to early Tang period (1st c.–7th c. CE).⁴⁰⁰ Lacking the complete texts of other commentaries, it is difficult to make fair comparisons between Du Yu's writings and these works, regarding such issues as the degree to which Du is innovative.

Nevertheless, one may argue that, compared to his predecessors, Du Yu made the greatest contribution to reinforcing the status of the Zuo Tradition as an “exegetical tradition” of the *Annals*. In his “Preface” to the *Jijie*, he positions the Zuo Tradition as unquestionably the most authoritative among the main exegetical traditions, including the Gongyang, Guliang, and Zuo Traditions. While doing so, he also modifies the Han conceptions of the *Annals*, saying that Confucius' work contains only a limited number of embedded judgments, consisting as it does, of inherited material from old scribal records. While modern scholars have typically considered this breakthrough as a form of “progress,” because he recognizes the “historical” or “factual” nature of the annals,⁴⁰¹ no one yet has examined Du Yu's reconceptualization of the Classic in light of his attempts to make the Zuo Tradition superior to the other main exegetical traditions. In refocusing ideas about the *Annals*, he establishes the claim that the Zuo Tradition alone succeeds in pinpointing the precise location and meaning of moral lessons in the *Annals*. This chapter shows Du Yu's notions about the *Annals* to be central to his conceptualization of the Zuo Tradition.

Background

⁴⁰⁰ In his “Preface to the collation notes for the commentaries and subcommentaries of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition” (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhushu jiaokanji xu* 春秋左傳注疏校勘記序), Ruan Yuan (1764–1849) writes that it is hard to get any coherent picture of earlier commentaries, because the evidence is scanty and fragmentary: “Scholarship on the Zuo Tradition arose with the various schools of interpretations such as those of Jia Kui, Fu Qian, Dong Yu, Zheng Zhong, and Ying Rong. Du Yu, following upon them, cut up and correlated the Classic and Tradition, and [on the basis of the commentators' work] compiled his *Collected Explanations*. Now the complete works of these various schools of interpretations cannot be viewed, and the versions occasionally seen in [other] transmitted texts often differ and deviate from Du's version. In earlier times, the Wu kingdom had a version written by Huang Xiang [a calligrapher], the [Liu] Song dynasty had one edited by Zang Rongzhu (415–488), and the Liang dynasty had one edited by Cen Zhijing (519–579). All of these are unobtainable today. It is my opinion, then, that the verifiable variances between the base texts are also few indeed” 左氏傳之學興於賈逵、服虔、董遇、鄭眾、穎容諸家，杜預因之分經比傳，為之集解。今諸家全書不可見，而流傳聞見者往往與杜本乖異：古有吳皇象所書本；宋臧榮緒、梁岑之敬所校本，今皆不可得，蓋傳文異同可考者亦僅矣。SSJZS 3.

⁴⁰¹ For example, see Shen Yucheng, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan xue*, 140.

In the late Eastern Han and the Three Kingdoms period (2nd to 3rd c. CE), intellectual trends and historical events laid the groundwork for Du Yu's heavy emphasis on Western Zhou institutions in his reconceptualization of the *Annals*. In particular, the discovery of the *Bamboo Annals* in the Western Jin (265–317 CE) stimulated new thinking about the *Annals*, possibly driving Du Yu to return to pre-Qin conceptions of the state annals. While these possible influences on Du Yu do not 'explain' his work, they provide some context for us to appreciate both his rhetoric and underlying conceptions.

From early Eastern Han to Eastern Jin (1st c. to 5th c. CE), the official status of the Zuo Tradition remained as uncertain as ever. To recap previous chapters: in 29 CE, Guangwudi briefly appointed Academicians for the study of the Zuo Tradition, but allowed the Chairs to fall vacant shortly thereafter. Then, in 84 CE, Zhangdi appointed Jia Kui's "students and disciples" to study the Zuo Tradition, but not as official Academicians.⁴⁰² Thereafter, the standard histories make no explicit statement about any other attempt to establish one or more Academicians' posts for the Zuo Tradition, though the posts for the Gongyang Tradition remained in place.

During the second century CE, the emperors seem not especially interested in classical learning.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, the Great Proscription (167–184) pushed some scholars from the court ranks to private tutelage under the patronage of elite landholding families. Thus, the lack of discussion about the Zuo Tradition at court could be attributed to a general disengagement of the courts in classical learning, rather than any animus toward the Zuo Tradition.

Shortly after Du Yu's death, the *Sanguo zhi* (compiled by Chen Shou 陳壽 before 297) reports that, one of the famed scholars of the Jingzhou Academy, Yin Mo 尹默 (d. 240) of Shu 蜀, was well versed in Zuo Tradition commentaries by Liu Xin, Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (d. 83), Jia Hui 賈徽 (?–?), Jia Kui, Chen Yuan, and Fu Qian 服虔 (d. ca. 195).⁴⁰⁴ This reference suggests that a great many commentaries on the Zuo Tradition were circulating, at least among the scholars who fled to the Jing Province.⁴⁰⁵ Since Du Yu governed the area not too long after the

⁴⁰² See HHS 36.1239.

⁴⁰³ CHC 317–6.

⁴⁰⁴ The biography of Yin Mo in the *San Guozhi* 三國志 says: "Yin Mo, courtesy name Siqian, was from Zitongfu. [The scholars at] Yi District mostly prized *jinwen* and did not prize *zhangju* commentaries. Yin Mo knew they were not comprehensive and traveled to Jingzhou. He received instruction in 'old learning' from Sima Decao, Song Zhongzi, and so on. They were all versed in the classics and histories. Moreover, they specialized in the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*. From the 'organized norms' [i.e. commentaries] of Liu Xin, to the commentaries and explanations of Zheng Zhong, father and son Jia Kui [and Jia Hui], Chen Yuan, and Fu Qian, Yin Mo could recite and transmit all of them without having to refer to the texts again. When the former ruler [Liu Bei] pacified Yizhou and governed it, he appointed Yin Mo as an official to encourage learning. When he established the crown prince, he appointed Yin Mo as the Supervisor (in the Imperial Secretariat) to teach Zuo Tradition to the prince" 尹默字思潛，梓潼涪人。益部多貴今文而不崇章句，默知其不博，乃遠游荊州，從司馬德操、宋仲子等受古學。皆通諸經史，又專精於左氏春秋，自劉歆條例，鄭眾、賈逵父子、陳元、（方）服虔注說，咸略誦述，不復按本。先主定益州，領牧，以為勸學從事，及立太子，以默為僕（射），以左氏傳授後主。SGZ 42.1026. Title from De Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 1239.

⁴⁰⁵ About the formation of the Jingzhou Academy, see Michael Farmer, *Talent of Shu*, 76. Many of these scholars were followers of Yang Xiong. As Michael Nylan notes, Yang Xiong's "reading of the classics, as interpreted by Song Zhong 宋衷 (d. 219), eventually served as the core teaching of the Jingzhou academy." Nylan, "Legacies of the Chengdu Plain," 315.

Jingzhou Academy (ca. 190–265) was disbanded,⁴⁰⁶ one wonders if his appointment as a general in Jingzhou in 278 CE brought him into contact with this Academy, with its Zuo Tradition commentarial traditions.⁴⁰⁷ This historical event raises questions about the extent to which the legacy of the Jingzhou Academy influenced Du Yu after its formal dissolution. At a minimum, Du Yu’s emphasis on system and structure is not an anomaly in his times, as scholars in Jingzhou were famous for devising complex systems of interpretation.⁴⁰⁸

The *Bamboo Annals* and Du Yu’s innovations

This section explores the possibility that Du’s innovations were also tied to his knowledge of the *Bamboo Annals* after 281 CE. Modern Zuo Tradition scholars have generally ignored one essay authored by Du Yu, the “Postface” (*Houxu* 後序) to Du Yu’s *Chunqiu jingzhuàn jijie*.⁴⁰⁹ Whereas in the “Preface” and its annotations, Du Yu asserts time and again that the *Annals* was largely composed of Western Zhou materials, his “Postface” points to other possible origins for his convictions. While none of his predecessors had parsed the *Annals* into separate sections, Du Yu thinks of the Classic as Confucius’ compilation of pre-existing scribal records, on which Confucius imposed occasional small-scale edits. Du Yu cast the Zuo Tradition as the best key for understanding where Confucius altered the words of the Lu annals. Du Yu’s “Postface” offers some tantalizing suggestions about inspiration for Du Yu’s views.

Du Yu’s “Postface” narrates the circumstances around the compilation of his *Jingzhuàn jijie* and *Chunqiu shili*. Most critically, this “Postface” describes the contents of the *Bamboo Annals*, discovered among the unearthed texts in the Ji County tombs in 281 CE, texts which date to 299 BCE.⁴¹⁰ Below, Du Yu describes the cache of broken bamboo slips with ancient script on them:

始訖會汲郡汲縣有發其界內舊冢者，大得古書，皆簡編科斗文字，發冢者不以為意，往往散亂，科斗書久廢，推尋不能盡通。始者藏在祕府，余晚得見之所記。⁴¹¹

When I had just completed [my commentaries, the *Shili* and *Jijie*], it happened that there were excavations of old tombs within the boundaries of Ji County in the

⁴⁰⁶ According to Wang Baoxuan, the Jingzhou Academy disbanded after Cao Cao took over. Wang, *Jingwen jingxue*, 175. Nylan, “Legacies of the Chengdu Plain,” 315.

⁴⁰⁷ The biography of Du Yu in the *Jinshu* says: “When [Yang] Hu died, Du Yu was appointed the Great General of Southern Zhen, in charge of the myriad military affairs of Jingzhou, and was given speedy carriages and horses of the second rank. When Du Yu arrived at Zhen, he repaired armors and weapons, displaying military might. Then he selected vanguard troops, infiltrated the territory of Zhang Zheng at Xiling of Wu, roundly defeated him, and was enfeoffed three-hundred and sixty-five households for his merit” 及祜卒，拜鎮南大將軍、都督荊州諸軍事，給追鋒車、第二駟馬。預既至鎮，繕甲兵，耀威武，乃簡精銳，襲吳西陵督張政，大破之，以功增封三百六十五戶。 *Jinshu* 34.1028.

⁴⁰⁸ Du Yu continued the Jingzhou tradition, since one of its defining aspects is the impetus to interpret meaning in relation to other aspects of the system. Wagner, *Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, 47.

⁴⁰⁹ At the minimum, Shen Yucheng made no mention of it in *Chunqiu Zuo-zhuan xue*.

⁴¹⁰ For the textual history of the *Bamboo Annals*, see ECT 39-47.

⁴¹¹ SSIJS 2735.

Ji Commandery. Many old documents were obtained, all of them were [written] on rolls of bamboo slips in tadpole script. The people who opened the tombs did not make much of the finds. They [The documents] were in many instances thrown into disarray. Documents in tad-pole script had long been abandoned. [Even after] seeking out the meaning, one could not gain a complete understanding of it. In the beginning, the documents were stored in the palace library. Later I had the opportunity to see what they recorded.

Du Yu's encounter with the *Bamboo Annals*, which ends with a chronicle of the Jin and later Wei states,⁴¹² probably made him feel that the *Annals* was a historical chronicle from Lu that barely differed in format or contents from the chronicles kept in the other states before Qin unification. As Du Yu muses in his "Postface":

其著書文意，大似春秋經，推此足見古者國史策書之常也。

The format and style of the [*Bamboo Annals*] compilation greatly resembles those of the *Annals* classic. From this we can infer the ancient principles of record-keeping by state scribes.

Of course, this similarity was not a revelation for Du, for long ago Mozi and Mencius had spoken of the *Chunqiu* as state chronicles, while Sima Qian (in *Shiji* 14) and Ban Gu (in "Yiwen zhi") specifically state that Confucius based his *Annals* upon the "scribal records" of Lu (see chapters one and three). But Du Yu's preface is the first account to advance specific claims about the exact proportion of the material Confucius left intact versus what he altered so as to convey his moral judgments. It took the Ji Commandery texts to reveal the form and contents of the pre-Qin chronicles again, reminding people of things they thought they already knew. Du Yu's personal encounter with these excavated materials could well have stirred his imagination about the material aspects of the *Annals* in bamboo scrolls.⁴¹³ The physical form of the *Bamboo Annals* could have made a strong impression on him, as they differed from the silk manuscripts of the Classics that were circulating in his time. With his knowledge of the new finds, Du Yu could not have ignored the possible parallels between the *Bamboo Annals* and the 'original' *Annals*.

⁴¹² The "Postface" continues to state Du Yu's understanding of the *Bamboo Annals* as the scribal records of first the Jin state in the Spring and Autumn period, then the Wei state after the division of the Jin in the Warring States period: "[The *Bamboo Annals*] record in particular [the affairs of] the Jin state, beginning with the reign of Shangshu, then the Marquis of Wen, the Marquis of Zhao, all the way up to Earl of Zhuang of Quwo. The eleventh month of the eleventh year of Earl Zhuang's reign corresponds to the first month of the first year of [the reign] of Duke Yin of Lu [722 BCE]. The *Jinian* uses the Xia calendar with the *Jianyin* month as the first month of the year, and proceeds annalistically by sequence. [After] the state of Jin perished, the *Jinian* records the affairs of the Wei state through the twentieth year [299 BCE] of King Ai of Wei [318–296]. It is most likely the historical records of the state of Wei" 唯特記晉國起自殤叔，次文侯，昭侯，以至曲沃莊伯。莊伯之十一年，十一月，魯隱公之元年，正月也，皆用夏正建寅之月為歲首，編年相次。晉國滅，獨記魏事下至魏哀王之二十年，蓋魏國之史記也。SSJZS p. 2735.

⁴¹³ Perhaps the *Bamboo Annals* unearthed there is the first document, surfaced since the pre-Han period, that closely parallels the *Annals* in format and contents.

According to Du Yu's own account in his "Postface," he did not see the *Bamboo Annals* until after completing the *Jijie* and *Shili*.⁴¹⁴ His "Preface" does not mention a word about the new findings. Nevertheless, he could not have been immune to the excitement generated by this archeological discovery. The question for Du Yu was, what was Confucius' precise role in compiling the *Annals*, if his work so closely resembled other state chronicles? How does the *Annals* convey Confucius' ethical instructions?

For Du, it was probably not difficult to reconcile the *Annals* as state chronicle and as oracle of Confucius, since the simultaneous ethical and judicial use of annals had deep roots in legal and political thought. But faced with the close analogies between the Classic and the *Bamboo Annals*, Du Yu may have felt compelled to seek ways to explain the compilation of the *Annals*, and hence the Zuo Tradition. Du Yu's solution was to claim that Confucius created his Classic largely by leaving the wording of the Lu state chronicle untouched, altering it in limited instances only, to suggest his own judgments. In his "Postface," Du Yu groups cases where the wording of the same entries in the *Bamboo Annals* and the *Annals* differs only slightly,⁴¹⁵ attributing any changes to Confucius' editing: "Confucius edited the *Annals* with moral standards [in mind] and systematically altered the wordings" 仲尼脩春秋以義而制異文也。⁴¹⁶ Regarding the Zuo Tradition, Du Yu portrays Zuo Qiuming as Confucius' disciple who had the unique privilege of knowing where the line should be drawn in adaptations. With Du's ingenious solution, the *Annals* could remain a historical text that was embedded with Confucius' thought.

Twin conceptions of authorship: the institutional and the personal

In Du Yu's conception, even though scribal records make up the bulk of the *Annals*, Confucius imparted those materials their proper shape and meaning. Du Yu figures the Sage as a master who assessed the relevance, applicability, and authenticity of Zhou protocols before incorporating some of them into his Classic's narrative. Du Yu's preface also imagines the personal motivations of Confucius. In all these ways, Du Yu conceives of the Classic as representing an amalgam of Confucius' bureaucratic, ethical, and personal choices. Below is the full translation of Du Yu's "Preface to the *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan*" 春秋左氏傳序:⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ The "Postface" begins with this personal account: "In the third month of the first year of the Taikang reign (283 CE), the rebels at Wu had just been pacified. I returned to Xiangyang from Jiangling, took off my armor, laid my weapons aside, then gave expression to my old intention, and compiled the *Chunqiu shili* and *Jingzhuan jijie*" 大康元年三月，吳寇始平，余自江陵還襄陽，解甲休兵乃申舊意，脩成春秋釋例及經傳集解。SSJZS 2735.

⁴¹⁵ The "Postface" gives this as an example: "The *Bamboo Annals* also writes that 'King Xiang of Zhou met with the vassal lords at Heyang.' That is none other than what the *Annals* records as 'the King of Heaven hunted at Heyang' [28th year of Duke Xi]. [The Zuo Tradition explains that:] 'Because it was the subject [i.e. the ruler of Jin] who summoned his lord [i.e. the Zhou Son of Heaven], this example could not be used for instruction.' Examples of this kind abound" 又稱「周襄王會諸侯于河陽」即春秋所書「天王狩于河陽。」「以臣召君，不可以訓也。」諸若此輩甚多。SSJZS p. 2735.

⁴¹⁶ SSJZS 2735.

⁴¹⁷ *Shisanjing zhushu: Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi*, Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1.1– 36. Kong Yingda *et al.* say they adopted this title of the Du Yu's "Preface" for their edition of the *Zhengyi*. According to them, this appears in the "old edition" 古本 of the Jin and Liu-Song dynasties. The other titles cited to have appeared in other editions include "Chunqiu xu" 春秋序," "Zuoshi zhuan xu" 左氏傳序, "Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie xu" 春秋經傳集

春秋者，魯史記之名也。記事者，以事繫日，以日繫月，以月繫時，以時繫年，所以紀遠近，別同異也。故史之所記，必表年以首事；年有四時，故錯舉以為所記之名也。⁴¹⁸

“Annals” is the designation given the scribal records of the Lu state.⁴¹⁹ Those who recorded events [i.e. the scribes] connected the events to the day, the day to the month, the month to the season, and the season to the year [of their occurrence].⁴²⁰ This was the method by which events distant and near [in time] were organized,⁴²¹ and their similarities and differences compared. Therefore that which the scribes recorded must mark the year to begin [the record of] events.⁴²² There are four seasons to a year. Therefore the scribes selected two of them to form the title of what they recorded.⁴²³

In the opening, Du Yu emphasizes the annalistic nature of the Lu scribal records, as a way of reminding readers that Confucius utilized these records in compiling his *Annals*. This emphasis prepares readers for Du’s subsequent arguments about the continuous nature of Confucius’ work and the older material he drew upon.

周禮有史官，掌邦國四方之事，達四方之志。諸侯亦各有國史，大事書之於策，小事簡牘而已。孟子曰：「楚謂之檮杌，晉謂之乘，而魯謂之春秋，其實一也。」韓宣子適魯，見易象與魯春秋，曰：「周禮盡在魯矣。吾乃今知周公之德，與周之所以王也。」韓子所見，蓋周之舊典禮經也。

解序. ZY 1.1. The significance of this editorial choice lies in the suggestion that it was important to include characters for *Annals*, Zuo Tradition and *zhuan* (exegetical tradition) in the selected title, instead of only some of these elements.

⁴¹⁸ This translation breaks up the sections of the preface roughly according to the *Zhengyi*’s summary of the main ideas in each: “This preface can be generally divided into eleven sections” 此序大略凡有十一段. ZY 1.1–2.

⁴¹⁹ The ZY glosses *shi* 史 as the office or official of the scribe. It also reviews the history of the term *Chunqiu*, pointing out that it appeared in sources before Confucius’ time and did not necessarily refer to scribal records of the state of Lu. It explains that in this particular instance, Du Yu specified that they were from Lu to refer only to those records that Confucius had edited to institute his “method of praise and blame.” ZY 1.3.

⁴²⁰ According to the ZY, to “connect” (*xi* 繫) the units of time means to lay down their sequence in the scribal records. Because this was the standard template used by scribes to enter data into the Lu chronicle, so any missing element could be construed a deviation from the template. However, the ZY also points that such omissions or deviations were not necessarily indicative of expressions of praise and blame, as held by Gongyang or Guliang exegetes, but could simply be the result of inconsistent practices. This is a justification of the fact that the Zuo Tradition on the whole did not “explicate such month and day scribal inconsistencies as norms” 不以日月為例. ZY 1.3–5.

⁴²¹ The ZY explains that dating conventions are the means by which to chronologically mark events as having occurred closer or farther in time relative to each other and from the reader. The commentary notes that “the similarities and differences” refer to, for example, events that occurred on different days of the same month. Ibid.

⁴²² The ZY glosses *biao* 表 as “make manifest” (*xian* 顯). ZY 1.5–6.

⁴²³ The ZY attributes this interpretation to Zheng Xuan, who as different from other scholars such Jia Kui, Fu Qian, and He Xiu, note that the title *Chunqiu* is a contraction of the four seasons. ZY 1.6–7.

The *Rites of Zhou* include [the job descriptions of] the official scribes. They managed the events of the four corners of domains and states, and they gave expression to the aspirations [of the people] of the four corners.⁴²⁴ The vassal lords each had their own state scribes. Great events were recorded on connected bamboo bundles,⁴²⁵ minor events on individual slips and wooden tablets only. Mencius said, “The Chu state designated it as ‘Daowu’; the Jin state, as ‘Sheng,’ the Lu state, as ‘Chunqiu.’ But their substance was the same.”⁴²⁶ Han Xuanzi went to the state of Lu and viewed the *Changes*, the “Hexagrams,” and the “Chunqiu” of Lu. He remarked, “All of the rituals of Zhou are in Lu. Only now do I understand the power of the Duke of Zhou and the reasons why the Zhou kingdom ruled as king.”⁴²⁷ What Hanzi saw were presumably the traditional protocols and ritual constants of Western Zhou.⁴²⁸

In this section above, Du Yu cites from the *Rites of Zhou*, *Mencius*, and the Zuo Tradition to emphasize his main point that the state of Lu is the most representative of Western Zhou scribal cultures, even if every feudal state had its own state annals. This point is key to his larger argument that Confucius’ *Annals* exemplified Western Zhou ideals and models.

周德既衰，官失其守，上之人不能使春秋昭明，赴告策書，諸所記注，多違舊章。仲尼因魯史策書成文，考其真偽，而志其典禮，上以遵周公之遺制，下以明將來之法。其教之所存，文之所害，則刊而正之，以示勸誡。其餘皆即用舊史，史有文質，辭有詳略，不必改也。故傳曰：「其善志。」又曰：「非聖人孰能修之。」蓋周公之志，仲尼從而明之。

As soon as the power of Zhou waned, [Zhou] officials lost their positions, and the authorities above could not make the annals manifest.⁴²⁹ Many of their reports

⁴²⁴ The ZY points out that these lines are from the “Offices of the Spring” 春官 of the *Zhouli*, also known as *Zhouguan*. ZY 1.6–7.

⁴²⁵ The ZY defines the “great events” as reports of temple sacrifices and news from other feudal states, while “minor events” are those that did not involve calamities as well as records of speeches. It further clarifies that the “great events” were recorded in connected bamboo strips (*ce* 策), and the “small events” were recorded in loose and separate bamboo strips (*jian* 簡) or wooden tablets (*du* 牘). These distinctions are important in so far as Du Yu attempt to distinguish the source materials of Confucius’ *Annals* and those of the Zuo Tradition. This is Du’s way of implying that Confucius edited formal records of major state events inscribed on connected strips whereas Zuo Qiuming drew from informal records inscribed on loose strips. ZY 1.9–10.

⁴²⁶ The ZY explains that the quotation from *Mencius* 3B.9 is Du Yu’s way of emphasizing the pre-existence of state records called the annals before Confucius compiled his own version of it. ZY 1.11.

⁴²⁷ This is a direct quotation from the second year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Tradition: “Han Xuanzi came on a diplomatic visit to Lu. . . he perused . . . the Lu annals” 韓宣子來聘魯...見...魯春秋. Yang Bojun p. 1226.

⁴²⁸ The ZY reads Du Yu’s use of “presumably” (*gai* 蓋) as an indication that even though the Zuo Tradition quotation does not explicitly say so, Du extrapolates that the “the rituals of Zhou” Han Xuanzi praised were formal state protocols. ZY 1.11–12.

⁴²⁹ The last line is an adapted quotation from the 31st year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Tradition: “The judgments of the *Annals* are subtle yet manifest, undulating yet distinct. If the authorities above could make the it manifest, good people would be encouraged and wanton people would be fearful—this was the reason why the gentlemen

and documents, and what they had variously recorded and commented upon, departed from the old principles.⁴³⁰ Confucius relied upon the chronicles and documents of the Lu scribes to complete his writings. He assessed their authenticity and inauthenticity, and recorded institutions and rites.⁴³¹ Looking backward, he did so in respectful deference to the remaining institutions inherited from the Duke of Zhou. Anticipating the future, he did so to clarify the standards for future use. As for the places where the teachings existed, [but] were obscured by the language, Confucius edited and corrected them in order to express his encouragement and warnings.⁴³² The rest [of the *Annals*] was all directly taken over from the old records. The scribes may have been refined or rustic, their language detailed or sketchy. Still he felt no need to emend.⁴³³ Therefore the Zuo Tradition says, “He was good at recording.”⁴³⁴ It also says, “Other than a Sage, who possibly could have compiled it?”⁴³⁵ It is my opinion that Confucius adhered to and publicized the aspirations of the Duke of Zhou.⁴³⁶

This section above narrates a period of decline in Eastern Zhou leading to the confusion of scribal roles, a situation Confucius set out to rectify. According to this narrative, Confucius was successful in preserving the scribal legacy inherited from early Western Zhou. As with the passage earlier, Du Yu equates the health of scribal institutions with how they maintained Western Zhou ideals.

左丘明受經於仲尼，以為經者不刊之書也。故傳或先經以始事，或後經以終義，或依經以辨理，或錯經以合異，隨義而發。其例之所重，舊史遺文，略不盡舉，非聖人所修之要故也。身為國史，躬覽載籍，必廣記而備言之。

valued it” 春秋之稱微而顯，婉而辨。上之人能使昭明，善人勸焉，淫人懼焉，是以君子貴之。 Yang Bojun, 1513.

⁴³⁰ The ZY explains that this section portrays the situation of decline that led to decay of scribal practices in the state of Zhou, despite their previous maintenance of exemplary scribal standards. ZY 1.12.

⁴³¹ One of the commentators of the “Five Scholars” (*Wuchen* 五臣) *Wenxuan* edition of this preface, Li Zhouhan 李周翰 glosses *zhi* 志 as “to record” (*jiye* 記也). *Wenxuan* 44.35.

⁴³² According to the ZY, this part addresses the areas in the Lu chronicle that prompted Confucius to edit its language. These are places where the events recorded contained moral lessons but the language of the scribe did not convey them, whereupon Confucius edited the language in such a way as to reveal them. ZY 1.13.

⁴³³ The ZY says that Du Yu meant to explain why Confucius did not tamper with the rest of the Lu annals: the sage understood that the scribes of the past had different styles, resulting in inconsistencies in the language they used to enter data. These were not inconsistencies that called for his editing to express his moral commentary. ZY 1.13–14.

⁴³⁴ This is a quotation from the 31st year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Tradition, spoken by a “Gentleman.” Yang Bojun, 1513. The *Zhengyi* states that the subject of this line is the old Lu chronicle. ZY 1.14.

⁴³⁵ This is a quotation from the 14th year of Duke Cheng in the Zuo Tradition. There, the text does not specify that the “Sage” refers to Confucius, and could possibly be “sages.” Yang Bojun, 870. But here in the context of Du Yu’s preface, it is quite clear that Du uses *shengren* to refer to Confucius as the compiler of the *Annals*.

⁴³⁶ The ZY points that tone particle *gai* 蓋 (presumably) both expresses Du Yu’s certitude and ties back to his earlier conclusion that Han Xuanzi had perused were “presumably the Zuo Traditional protocols and ritual norms of the Zhou.” ZY 1.14.

Zuo Qiuming received the Classic from Confucius and considered the Classic a text that could not be emended. Therefore at times the Zuo Tradition precedes the Classic to begin the account of an event,⁴³⁷ and other times it continues after the Classic to completely explain the significance of an event.⁴³⁸ Sometimes the Zuo Tradition accords with the Classic to delineate its principles,⁴³⁹ while other times it is interweaved with the Classic to reconcile differences.⁴⁴⁰ Following upon the significance [of the Classic], [the Zuo Tradition] sets forth interpretations about it. Where there is a doubling of norms [in the *Annals*],⁴⁴¹ this reflects the old records and inherited writings. Zuo Qiuming passed over such places without explicating them,⁴⁴² since these were not the essential ideas the Sage had redacted. As a state scribe, Master Zuo personally perused the records and books. He added to the records and comprehensively discussed them [the events] without fail.

This passage above introduces Zuo Qiuming, declaring that Zuo received instruction in the *Annals* directly from Confucius. Du moreover shows how the Zuo Tradition's interpretations revolve around the Classic, never diverging from its main messages. Finally, Du ascribes an official role to Zuo Qiuming as a state scribe with access to a vast range of texts.

其文緩，其旨遠，將令學者原始要終，尋其枝葉，究其所窮，優而柔之，使自求之；饜而飫之，使自趨之。若江海之浸，膏澤之潤，渙然冰釋，怡然理順，然後為得也。

His [Zuo Qiuming's] writings are extensive and their meanings are far-reaching. They tend to impel students to trace back to the beginnings and intuit the conclusion, to follow the branches and leaves, and to arrive at their end points.⁴⁴³ The Zuo Tradition soothes and relaxes them [students], making them seek for it

⁴³⁷ According to the ZY, this occurs when the Zuo Tradition starts narrating the events in a year before they were first mentioned in the *Annals*. ZY 1.14–15.

⁴³⁸ According to the ZY, this occurs when the Zuo Tradition narrates the development of events in a year much later than when they first appeared in the text of the *Annals*. Ibid.

⁴³⁹ As the ZY explains it, this occurs when the Zuo Tradition expands upon the implications of an event on the record in the *Annals*. Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ An example of this, says the ZY, is when the Zuo Tradition and the *Annals* use different terminologies but refer to the same thing. Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ According to the ZY, these are instances in which the *Annals* records the same event twice, in identical language, but Confucius did not excise the duplication because he wished to be faithful to the original records. ZY 1.15.

⁴⁴² That is, as the ZY explains, the Zuo Tradition does not repeat its explication of a duplicate entry that contains Confucius' moral lesson. Ibid.

⁴⁴³ According to the ZY, both the "conclusion" and the "end points" refer to the roots of events. The lines are from the lower wing of the "Xici" describing the *Changes*: "Its meanings are far-reaching, its phrases patterned, and its language is sinuous yet hits the mark" 其旨遠，其辭文，其言曲而中。Wang Bi, *Zhouyi zhengyi*, 8.693. "With regard to the composition of the *Changes*, it traces the beginnings and arrives at conclusions. It takes these pathways as its substance" 易之為書也，原始要終，以為質也。Ibid., 8.703.

on their own.⁴⁴⁴ It richly satiates them,⁴⁴⁵ making them hasten toward it. It resembles immersion in the rivers and seas,⁴⁴⁶ the lubrication of ointment and dewy moisture,⁴⁴⁷ and the melting of ice.⁴⁴⁸ Joyously the principles are smoothed out. Then and only then are they considered properly placed.⁴⁴⁹

This passage above focuses on the text of the Zuo Tradition, describing the experience of reading it. Du introduces the lyrical dimensions of the reading experience, which are all the more enticing and pleasurable when the Zuo Tradition is read against the *Annals*. Presumably, this sublime experience is one that the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions do not offer.

其發凡以言例，皆經國之常制，周公之垂法，史書之舊章，仲尼從而脩之，以成一經之通體。其微顯闡幽，裁成義類者，皆據舊例而發義，指行事以正褒貶。諸稱書、不書、先書、故書、不言、不稱、書曰之類，皆所以起新舊，發大義，謂之變例。然亦有史所不書，即以為義者，此蓋春秋新意，故傳不言凡，曲而暢之也。其經無義例，因行事而言，則傳直言其歸趣而已，非例也。

As for the Zuo Tradition's usage of [the term] “generally” (*fan*) to articulate a norm, all such places exemplify the normative institutions of state governance, the transmitted models of the Duke of Zhou, and the traditional conventions of scribal recording, which Confucius followed in his compilation, employing them to make the overall structure for the Classic.⁴⁵⁰ [Confucius] obscured the evident and illumined the subtle, editing them to form categories of significance. These are all places where he accords with the old norms to set forth their significance, and points to the actions and events in order to set our standards of praise and

⁴⁴⁴ The ZY notes that the lines “It soothes and relaxes them, impelling them to seek for it” come from the *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記, chapter 8.1, “Zizhang wen ruguan xue” 子張問入官學 (Zizhang asks about the way of entry into officialdom). ZY 1.16.

⁴⁴⁵ The editors of the ZY profess their ignorance about where this line could have come from. Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ The ZY suggests that the analogies to rivers and seas convey the broad-ranging records and comprehensive discussions of the Zuo Tradition surrounding the Classic. Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ The *Liji*'s “Yuzao” 玉藻 chapter says that: “When one's father is deceased and he can no longer read his books, the moisture of his hands is preserved there [on his writings]. When one's mother is deceased and she can no longer drink from her curved drinking vessel, the breath from her mouth's moisture is preserved on there.” 父沒而不能讀父之書，手澤存焉爾。母沒而杯圈不能飲焉，口澤之氣存焉爾。Zheng, *Liji zhushu*, SSSJZS, vol. 11, 1418.

⁴⁴⁸ This is an allusion to a line from chapter 15 of the *Dao Dejing*: “It disperses as ice does on the verge of melting” 涣兮若冰之將釋。Laozi *jiaoshi*, 15.50.

⁴⁴⁹ The ZY paraphrases *weide* 為得 as “obtaining their rightful places” 為得其所。ZY 1.16.

⁴⁵⁰ These instances refer to the explanations in the Zuo Tradition that begin with the character *fan* 凡. By Du Yu's count, there are fifty such explanations. The ZY makes clear that they point out places in the *Annals* that describe Zhou institutions and customs, and are therefore considered “old norms.” According to the ZY, there were classicists who rejected the idea that there was a distinction between “old” and “new” norms, depending on the presence or absence of *fan* 凡 invoked in the Zuo Tradition. ZY 1.16–18.

blame.⁴⁵¹ Where the Zuo Tradition uses the phrases “it is written,” “it is not written,” “it is first recorded,” “therefore it is recorded,” “it is not verbalized,” “it is not designated as,” “the text says,” and the like, these are the means by which the Zuo Tradition distinguishes the new from the old in order to set forth the great significance [of Confucius’ teachings]. These are called transformed norms.⁴⁵² In this case, there are also things which the scribes did not record but which Confucius considered of significance. Such perhaps are [also] new conceptions in the *Annals*.⁴⁵³ For this reason, the Zuo Tradition does not use “generally” (*fan*), but indirectly gives a full account instead. Where the Classic has no norms of significance, and merely follows the deeds and events in speaking about them, the Zuo Tradition would convey the gist of it only, as these places do not consist of norms.⁴⁵⁴

Above is the key passage presenting Du’s idea that the *Annals* contains systematic “norms of significance,” or passages loaded with ritual, political, and ethical meaning. He further subdivides these norms into “old” and “transformed” norms. In this scheme, the “old norms” represent those Confucius inherited from Western Zhou, while the “transformed norms” represent those expressing his own judgments. As Du makes clear, however, the Classic does not consist exclusively of “norms,” since it also preserves much material taken from the Lu state annals. Most importantly, as Du claims, only the Zuo Tradition can point out and differentiate among these three types of materials that comprise the *Annals*.

故發傳之體有三，而為例之情有五。一曰微而顯，文見於此而義起在彼，稱族尊君命，舍族尊夫人，梁亡、城緣陵之類是也。二曰志而晦，約言示制，推以知例，參會不地、與謀曰及之類是也。三曰婉而成章，曲從義訓，以示大順，諸所諱避，璧假許田之類是也。四曰盡而不汙，直書其事，具文見意，丹楹、刻桷、天王求車、齊侯獻捷之

⁴⁵¹ The subjects of these lines are supplied according to the interpretation of the ZY editors. The ZY argues that the lines “obscured the evident and illumined the subtle, editing them to form categories of significance” describe the actions of Confucius, whereas the lines “accords with the old norms to set forth their significance” refer to the functions of the Zuo Tradition. However, the ZY also cites the different interpretations of other commentators. For example, Liu Xuan 劉炫 (546?–613?) attributes the actions in the first set of lines to the Zuo Tradition, while He Daoyang 賀道養 (?–?, of the Liu-Song dynasty, 420–479) and Shen Wenhe 沈文何 (?–?) attribute the actions in the second set of lines to the *Annals*. ZY 1.19–20.

⁴⁵² According to the ZY, Du Yu means to highlight the distinction between “old norms” that Confucius adopted from Zhou traditions and the “new norms” that he created by changing the wording of the Lu chronicle. Du Yu claims that the terminologies above are the technical ways the Zuo Tradition uses to indicate where these “new norms” are in the text of the *Annals*. ZY 1.20.

⁴⁵³ The ZY cites Du Yu’s “Postface” of his *Chunqiu shili*, in which he explains that even though there the Lu chronicle itself might have omitted certain information, Confucius still manages to express his judgment. Normally, if something is absent from the chronicle, then Confucius would have had nothing to edit either. Accordingly, the Zuo Tradition is also capable of pointing out Confucius’ judgments, his “new conceptions,” even in the absence of material in the original chronicle. Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ The ZY says that the majority of the *Annals* consists of utterances that convey no moral judgment and merely chronicle state affairs. In such cases, the Zuo Tradition would not expound upon the praise and blame of Confucius and would simply give an account of the point of the events. Ibid.

類是也。五曰懲惡而勸善，求名而亡，欲蓋而章，書齊豹盜、三叛人名之類是也。推此五體以尋經、傳，觸類而長之，附于二百四十二年行事，王道之正，人倫之紀備矣。

Therefore, there are the three forms the Zuo Tradition sets forth,⁴⁵⁵ and five [types of] circumstances governing the making of norms. The first type is called “subtle yet manifest”: the language appears in one place but the meaning lies elsewhere. Examples of this category include: “the proclamation of the clan name honors the ruler’s command”;⁴⁵⁶ “the omission of the clan name honors the ruler’s lady”;⁴⁵⁷ “Liang was extinguished”;⁴⁵⁸ and “Built ramparts at Yuanling.”⁴⁵⁹ The second type is called “plainly recorded yet obscure”: the language is compressed to demonstrate the standard practices [of the Zhou kingdoms], so that one could extrapolate and understand the norms. Examples of this category include: “the omission of place names for triple-state diplomatic summits”;⁴⁶⁰ and “joint schemes were referred to with ‘and.’”⁴⁶¹ The third type is called “undulates

⁴⁵⁵ As the ZY recapitulates, the three forms are the explications of the “old norms,” the “transformed norms and new conceptions,” and the “gist of records not involving norms.” ZY 1.21.

⁴⁵⁶ This citation refers to the *Annals* entry in the 14th year of Duke Cheng: “In the autumn, Shusun Qiaoru went to Qi to escort the lady” 秋，叔孫僑如如齊逆女。Yang Bojun, 868. “Shusun” is the clan name of minister Qiaoru carrying out his mission of bringing back the duke’s wife, under “the ruler’s command.”

⁴⁵⁷ This refers to another entry in the same year as above: “In the ninth month, Qiaoru led the lady of the Jiang clan and arrived from Qi” 九月，僑如以夫人婦姜氏至自齊。The Zuo Tradition says: “The omission of the clan name honors the ruler’s lady” 舍族，尊夫人也。Yang Bojun, 870. The clan name “Shusun” does not appear in the *Annals* entry, only the personal name “Qiaoru.”

⁴⁵⁸ This refers to an entry in the 19th year of Duke Xi. The *Annals* says, “The state of Liang was extinguished.” 梁亡。The Zuo Tradition says: “The state of Liang was extinguished. The agent was not recorded, because Liang brought this about themselves. In the beginning, the Earl of Liang was fond of construction. He frequently built ramparts but did not populate [the areas]. The people were exhausted and could not bear it any longer, so they said ‘Such-and-such an enemy will arrive soon.’ Then they dug a moat around the palace of their ruler, saying: ‘Qin is about to attack us.’ The people panicked and dispersed. Qin consequently took over Liang” 梁亡，不書其主，自取之也。初，梁伯好土功，亟城而弗處。民罷而弗堪，則曰「某寇將至」。乃溝公宮，曰：「秦將襲我。」民懼而潰，秦遂取梁。Yang Bojun p. 384–5.

⁴⁵⁹ This alludes to an entry from the 14th year of Duke Xi. The *Annals* entry says: “The vassal lords built Yuanling” 諸侯城緣陵。The Zuo Tradition says: “The vassal lords built Yuanling and relocated [the people of] Qi there. The agents [the names of the various states] were not recorded, because something was amiss” 諸侯城緣陵而遷杞焉，不書其人，有關也。Du Yu’s commentary interprets *que* 闕 as faulty behavior. Yang Bojun, 347.

⁴⁶⁰ This is a citation from the second year of Duke Huan. The *Annals* says: “The Duke and the Rong tribe formed an alliance at Tang. . . . In winter, the Duke returned from Tang” 公及戎盟于唐。.... 冬，公至自唐。The Zuo Tradition says: “If it was a only a mutual meeting [between two states], then the place [of the meeting] was recorded for both the duke’s trip there and back—this is an act of deference. If there were three or more parties, then the place was recorded for the duke’s trip going there, but the term ‘meeting’ was used for the return” 特相會，往來稱地，讓事也。自參以上，則往稱地，來稱會，成事也。Yang Bojun, 91.

⁴⁶¹ This refers to an entry in the seventh year of Duke Xuan. The *Annals* says: “In summer, the duke met with the Marquis of Qi to go on a punitive campaign against Lai” 夏，公會齊侯伐萊。The Zuo Tradition says: “This was not jointly planned. Whenever armies were deployed, if [the military action] was jointly planned, then ‘and’ was used; if it was not jointly planned, then ‘met’ was used” 不與謀也。凡師出，與謀曰「及」，不與謀曰「會」。Yang Bojun, 691.

while establishing models”: it explains by indirectly following the significance to demonstrate great smoothness. They are the various taboos. An example of this category is “using jade to lease the hunting grounds of Xu.”⁴⁶² The fourth type is called “exhaustive yet not crooked”: it directly documents the affair and uses full expressions to reveal the [critical] intent. Examples of this category include: “[Duke Zhuang of Lu] lacquered his pillars”;⁴⁶³ “carved his roof beams”;⁴⁶⁴ “The Son of Heaven procured carriages”;⁴⁶⁵ and “The Duke of Qi presented prisoners-of-war.”⁴⁶⁶ The fifth type is called “castigating wrongdoing and encouraging good”: those seeking a reputation lost it, and those wishing to be covered were exposed. Examples of this category include the recording of Qi Bao as “robber”⁴⁶⁷ and the naming of the three traitors.⁴⁶⁸ [If one can] extrapolate from

⁴⁶² This is a citation from the first year of Duke Huan. The *Annals* says: “In the third month, the Duke [of Lu] met with the Earl of Zheng at Chui. The Earl of Zheng used a jade disc to lease the fields of Xu” 三月，公會鄭伯于垂，鄭伯以璧假許田。The *Zuo Tradition* says: “In the first year, spring, Duke [Huan] of Lu ascended to position. He maintained good diplomatic relations with Zheng. The leader of Zheng requested the reinstatement of the sacrifices to the Duke of Zhou and in the end traded the fields of Beng [for the fields of Xu]. Duke [Huan] permitted it. In the third month, the Earl of Zheng used a jade disc to lease the fields of Xu on account of [the reinstatement of sacrifices to the] the Duke of Zhou and Beng” 元年春，公即位，修好于鄭。鄭人請復祀周公，卒易祊田。公許之。三月，鄭伯以璧假許田，為周公、祊故也。Yang Bojun, 82.

⁴⁶³ In the 23rd year of Duke Zhuang, the *Annals* says: “In autumn, [the duke] painted red the pillars of the temple of Duke Huan” 秋，丹桓宮楹。The *Zuo Tradition* says: “In autumn, [the duke] painted red the pillars of the temple of Duke Huan” 秋，丹桓宮之楹。Yang Bojun, 227.

⁴⁶⁴ In the 24th year of Duke Zhuang, the *Annals* says: “In spring, the third month of the royal calendar, [the duke] carved the rafters at the temple of Duke Huan” 春王三月，刻桓宮桷。The *Zuo Tradition* says: “In spring, [the duke] carved the rafters—both [this and the painting of pillars] do not accord with ritual. Yusun remonstrated, saying: ‘I have heard: “Frugality is a virtue best upheld; excessiveness is the greatest of evils.” Our past ruler upheld his virtue, but you lead all to the greatest evils. I’m afraid this is impermissible’ ” 春，刻其桷，皆非禮也。御孫諫曰：「臣聞之：『儉，德之共也；侈，惡之大也。』先君有共德，而君納諸大惡，無乃不可乎」。Yang Bojun, 229.

⁴⁶⁵ In the 15th year of Duke Huan, the *Annals* says: “In spring, second month, the Son of Heaven sent Jiafu to come seek for carriages” 春二月，天王使家父來求車。The *Zuo Tradition* says: “This did not accord with ritual. The vassal lords should not give carriages and robes as tribute and the Son of Heaven should not privately seek material goods” 春，天王使家父來求車，非禮也。諸侯不貢車服，天子不私求財。Yang Bojun, 142–3.

⁴⁶⁶ In the 31st year of Duke Zhuang, the *Annals* says: “In the sixth month, the Marquis of Qi came to present the Rong prisoners-of-war” 六月，齊侯來獻戎捷。The *Zuo Tradition* says: “In the sixth month, the Marquis of Qi came to present the Rong prisoners-of-war—this did not accord with ritual. Whenever the vassal lords have the merit of [conquering] the barbarian tribes of the four corners, then they should present them to the king, and the king would use them as a warning to the barbarians. But this should not be the case for the central states. Vassal lords should not mutually exchange prisoners-of-war” 六月，齊侯來獻戎捷，非禮也。凡諸侯有四夷之功，則獻于王，王以警于夷；中國則否。諸侯不相遺俘。Yang Bojun, 249. According to Du Yu’s conception, in the above four citations illustrating the “fourth situation,” Confucius did not edit the language of the Lu chronicle to show his disapproval, rather, either he kept the record as it was or conveyed it directly in his words.

⁴⁶⁷ In the 20th year of Duke Zhao, the *Annals* says: “In the autumn, robbers killed the Zhi, the brother of the Marquis of Wei” 秋，盜殺衛侯之兄縶。The *Zuo Tradition* says: “Qin Zhang heard that Zong Lu died and was about to go mourn for his death. Confucius said, ‘The robbery of Qi Bao and the rebellion of Meng Zhi—why would you mourn over that? The gentleman does not feed on violation, does not benefit from rebellions, and does not become prostrate before evil for the sake of benefit. He does not treat others with evil, does not conceal nonrighteousness, and does not commit acts of impropriety’ ” 琴張聞宗魯死，將往弔之。仲尼曰：「齊豹之

these five forms when following along the *Annals* and Zuo Tradition,⁴⁶⁹ connect the categories and extend them, and attach them to the deeds and events of two hundred and forty-two years, [then] the correctness of the kingly way and the principles of human relations would be complete.

Above, Du Yu refines his ordering of different types of “norms of significance.” On this occasion, he categorizes five types of “norms.” While he fails to specify how these five types relate with his division into “old” and “transformed” norms, there must be considerable overlap. The examples cited all exemplify either Western Zhou political and ritual traditions or judgments ascribed to Confucius.

或曰：春秋以錯文見義，若如所論，則經當有事同文異而無其義也。先儒所傳，皆不其然。答曰：春秋雖以一字為褒貶，然皆須數句以成言，非如八卦之，可錯綜為六十四也，固當依傳以為斷。古今言左氏春秋者多矣，今其遺文可見者十數家，大體轉相祖述，進不成為錯綜經文以盡其變，退不守丘明之傳；於丘明之傳，有所不通，皆沒而不說，而更膚引公羊穀梁，適足自亂。

Someone said, “The *Annals* uses interweaved phrases to manifest its significance. If [on the other hand] it is as you claim, then in the Classic the same affair could be expressed differently and yet have no significance, contrary to what former scholars have taught us.”⁴⁷⁰ I answer: Even though the *Annals* may praise or blame with one word, it nevertheless takes multiple phrases to form its meanings. It is not the case that the text resembles the eight trigrams that could be variously combined to form sixty-four hexagrams. [Instead,] one ought to adhere to the Zuo

盜，而孟縶之賊，女何弔焉？君子不食姦，不受亂，不為利疚於回，不以回待人，不蓋不義，不犯非禮」。 Yang Bojun 1413–4.

⁴⁶⁸ In the 21st year of Duke Xiang, the *Annals* says: “Shuqi of Zhu fled here with [the territories] Qi and Lüqiu” 郝庶其以漆、閭丘來奔. The Zuo Tradition says: “Shuqi was not a minister [appointed by the Son of Heaven]. He came with territory. Even though his rank was low, his personal name was recorded, because [the state of Lu] attached great importance to territories” 庶其非卿也，以地來，雖賤，必書，重地也. Yang Bojun, 1058. In the fifth year of Duke Zhao, the *Annals* reads: “In the summer, Yimou of Ju fled here with [the territories] of Yilou, Fang, and Zi” 夏，莒牟夷以牟婁及防、茲來奔. The Zuo Tradition reads: “Yimou was not a minister [appointed by the Son of Heaven], but his personal name was recorded, because [the state of Lu] attached great importance to territories” 牟夷非卿而書，尊地也. Yang Bojun, 1270. In the 31st year of Duke Zhao, the *Annals* says: “In winter, Heigong fled here with [the territory of] Lan” 冬，黑肱以濫來奔. The Zuo Tradition says: “Even though he was of low rank, his personal name was recorded, because [the state of Lu] attached great importance to territories” 賤而書名，重地故也. Yang Bojun, 1512.

⁴⁶⁹ The ZY says that the use of *ti* 體 in “five forms” (*wuti* 五體) is used interchangeably with *qing* 情 in “five [types of] circumstances governing the making of norms” (*wei li zhi qing you wu* 為例之情有五). ZY 1.23.

⁴⁷⁰ The ZY points out that Du Yu set up an interlocutor in order to challenge his contemporaries’ idea that the variations in the language of the *Annals* must necessarily indicate the presence of Confucius’ moral judgments. ZY 1.25.

Tradition in order to make determinations.⁴⁷¹ Now as in the past, many have commented on the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*. The writings they have left behind that can still be read today are associated with ten or so experts,⁴⁷² but they generally regurgitate each other's explanations. When they advance [interpretations], they fail to compare the phrases of the Classic to exhaustive explore their variety. And when they retreat, they fail to guard the Zuo Tradition of [Zuo] Qiuming. Where they failed to understand the Zuo Tradition of Qiuming, they obscured it without further explanation, or they even cite the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions superficially. All this was enough to make a mess of things.⁴⁷³

預今所以為異，專脩丘明之傳以釋經，經之條貫，必出於傳。傳之義例，總歸諸凡，推變例，以正褒貶。簡二傳而去異端，蓋丘明之志也。其有疑錯，則備論而闕之，以俟後賢。然劉子駿創通大義，賈景伯父子、許惠卿，皆先儒之美者也。未有穎子嚴者，雖淺近亦復名家，故特舉劉賈許穎之違，以見同異。

The reason I, Du Yu, am different from them, is that I exclusively study the Zuo Tradition of Qiuming to explicate the classic. The systematic principles of the Classic always emerge in the Zuo Tradition. [As expressed] in the Zuo Tradition, the norms of significance are unified under [the term] “generally” (*fan*), while transformed norms are extrapolated, so as to rectify praise and blame. To pick from the two traditions [Gongyang and Guliang] and remove improper principles—these in my opinion are the aspirations of [Zuo] Qiuming.⁴⁷⁴ Wherever there are places of doubt or error [in both the Classic and Zuo Tradition], then I would comprehensively discuss them and leave the gaps there, and await [the elucidations of] future scholars. Yet Liu Zijun [Xin] was the first to understand the “great significance.” The Jias, father [Jia Hui, *zi* Jingbo] and son [Jia Kui], and Xu Huiqing [Xu Shu淑, fl. 28] were all among the outstanding classicists of the past. Of more recent times we have Ying Ziyang [Ying Rong容, d. ca. 200]. Though his scholarship is shallow and superficial, he is also considered a

⁴⁷¹ As the ZY explains, Du Yu wishes to emphasize that one needs to look at the Zuo Tradition before knowing where the moral significance lies (*yi ze daizhuan erhou xiao* 義則待傳而後曉). One cannot tell by studying the text of the *Annals* itself. Ibid.

⁴⁷² By the early Tang, the editors of the ZY profess they did not know which schools or scholars Du Yu was referring to. Ibid.

⁴⁷³ The ZY acknowledges that because the commentaries by other scholars perished, the editors could not illustrate Du Yu's statements. ZY 1.26.

⁴⁷⁴ The *Zhengyi* explains: “If the Zuo Tradition fails to explicate something, but the two traditions have their own explanations, and there are opinions of right and wrong that could either be ignored or taken, in that case Du Yu would pick from [among the explanations of] the two traditions, select the explanation that fits with the [underlying] significance [of the *Annals*], while getting rid of improper principles” 若左氏不解，二傳有說，有是有非，可去可取，如是則簡選二傳，取其合義，而去其異端. ZY 1.26–7.

famous expert. Thereupon I only raise examples of the divergences between Liu, Jia, Xu, and Ying, so as to illustrate their similarities and differences.⁴⁷⁵

Here above, Du Yu rejects the practice of reading every word in the *Annals* as an instance of Confucius' praise or blame; unlike the Gongyang and Guliang traditions, the Zuo Tradition does not offer interpretations word-for-word, Du says. Therefore, Du posits that Zuo Qiuming intended his interpretations to be maintained without the those of the two traditions conmingled with his. This is Du Yu's defense of the Zuo Tradition's style of exegesis.

分經之年與傳之年相附，比其義類，各隨而解之，名曰經傳集解。又別集諸例，及地名、譜第、歷數，相與為部，凡四十部，十五卷，皆顯其異同，從而釋之，名曰釋例，將令學者觀其所聚異同之說，釋例詳之也。

I cut up the years of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition, correlated them with each other, aligned their categories of significance, explicated each of them in turn, and entitled my work the *Collected Explanations of the Classic and Tradition*.⁴⁷⁶ Additionally, I separately compiled [a list of] all the norms, as well as the geographical names, genealogical tables, and calendrical systems, organizing them into sections.⁴⁷⁷ There are forty sections in fifteen scrolls. All of these manifest the differences and similarities [between items], explaining each in turn. The [second] work is entitled the *Explanations of Norms*. I hope that scholars will peruse the explanations of those differences and similarities collected therein, which are detailed in the *Explanations of Norms*.

Du Yu explains the way he correlated the contents of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition by year, and organized meanings by types. He also mentions the titles of two commentarial works, one an interlinear commentary, the *Jijie*, the other a topical commentary, the *Shili*. As he proclaims earlier, Du's commentaries will not apply interpretations from the Gongyang and Guliang traditions to the Zuo Tradition.

或曰：春秋之作，左傳及穀梁無明文，說者以為仲尼自衛反魯，修春秋，立素王，丘明為素臣。言公羊者亦云黜周而王魯，危行言遜，以避當時之害，故微其文，隱其義。公羊經止獲麟，而左氏經終孔丘卒，敢問所安？

⁴⁷⁵ The ZY editors notice that Du Yu does not mention Fu Qian, a major Zuo Tradition commentator of the Eastern Han. They explain this omission as representing Du's opinion that Fu was greatly inferior to the other commentators. ZY 1.27.

⁴⁷⁶ The ZY notes that even though Du Yu called his commentarial work the *Collected Explanations (jijie)*, it only provides his comments to the combined Classic and Zuo Tradition, unlike He Yan's *Lunyu jijie*, which collects the commentaries of various scholars. Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ The *Tudi ming* 土地名 (Geographical Names), *Shizu pu* 世族譜 (Genealogical Tables), and *Jingzhuang changli shi* 經傳長歷史 (Calendrical Systems of the Classic and Tradition) are three works comprising 10 of the 15 *juan* of the Siku edition of the *Explanations of Norms (Chunqiu Shili)*.

Someone said, “With regard to the composition of the *Annals*, the Zuo and Guliang traditions lack any clear account of it.⁴⁷⁸ Theories say that when Confucius returned from Wey to Lu, he compiled the *Annals*, anointed himself the uncrowned king, and made [Zuo] Qiuming his unofficial minister.⁴⁷⁹ Those speaking for the Gongyang Tradition also claim that Confucius replaced the Zhou with Lu the kingly state, that he properly conducted himself and spoke humbly to avoid [bringing] harm [to himself] at the time.⁴⁸⁰ And so he made his language subtle and veiled his meaning. The Gongyang version of the Classic concludes with the capture of the unicorn,⁴⁸¹ whereas the Zuo version of the Classic ends with Confucius’ death.⁴⁸² May I ask which is right?”

答曰：異乎余所聞。仲尼曰：「文王既沒，文不在茲乎？」此制作之本意也。歎曰：「鳳鳥不至，河不出圖，吾已矣夫！」蓋傷時王之政也。麟鳳五靈，王者之嘉瑞也，今麟出非其時，虛其應而失其歸，此聖人所以為感也。絕筆于獲麟之一句者，所感而起，固所以為終也。

I answer: All of this diverges from what I have heard. Confucius said, “Since King Wen has died, is culture not lodged in me here?”⁴⁸³ This is the original intention behind his writing of the *Annals*.⁴⁸⁴ Sighing, he [Confucius] said, “The *feng* bird does not arrive and the Yellow River yields no chart. It is all over with me!”⁴⁸⁵ To my way of thinking, he was lamenting the state of the king’s governance at the time. The unicorn, the phoenix, and [the rest of the] five divine animals are all auspicious omens for the king.⁴⁸⁶ When the unicorn appeared at the wrong time,⁴⁸⁷ it called forth no response and lost its proper place. This is why

⁴⁷⁸ According to the ZY, the version of the Gongyang Tradition commented on by He Xiu also lacks any account about the authorship of the Classic. ZY 1.29.

⁴⁷⁹ The ZY says that this was the commonly-held theory among scholars of the Han and Wei dynasties. The editors cite Dong Zhongshu, Jia Kui, Zheng Xuan, Lu Qin 盧欽 to show that they all subscribe to the idea that Confucius meant to establish himself as the uncrowned king. However, the editors could not find an antecedent to Du Yu’s idea that Zuo Qiuming was the unofficial minister. Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ The ZY points out that Du Yu was referring to He Xiu and his followers as the ones who hold these ideas. “He properly conducted himself and spoke humbly” is a citation of *Analects* 14.3. ZY 29–30.

⁴⁸¹ The text of the Gongyang Tradition ends with the 14th year of Duke Ai.

⁴⁸² The text of the *Annals* attached to the Zuo Tradition ends with the 16th year of Duke Ai, the year of Confucius’ death.

⁴⁸³ See *Analects* 9.5. Waley, 139.

⁴⁸⁴ As the ZY editors point out, this is Du Yu’s response to the interlocutor’s query that the Zuo Tradition has no account about the genesis of the *Annals*.

⁴⁸⁵ See *Analects* 9.8. Waley, 140.

⁴⁸⁶ The ZY tells us that the apocrypha was replete with accounts about these five types of birds and beasts as omens. Du Yu is citing the apocrypha here as well. ZY 1.31.

⁴⁸⁷ As the ZY explains, Du Yu considers the unicorn’s appearance untimely because there was no true king presiding over the world at the time. This reading conflicts with the Gongyang idea that the unicorn appeared because of the presence of such a king in the person of Confucius. Ibid.

the Sage was moved.⁴⁸⁸ As for ceasing to write after the last line about the capture of the unicorn, this [capture] was what had moved him to write. Therefore it was also where he ended [his text].⁴⁸⁹

The sections above focus upon the timing and circumstances behind Confucius' compilation of the *Annals*. While the Gongyang position is that the *Annals* expresses Confucius' intention to rule as the King of Lu in the text, supplanting Zhou rule, Du disagrees, citing evidence of Confucius' deference to Zhou culture. He adds that when the unicorn made its untimely appearance, Confucius was so profoundly moved by the inauspiciousness of this event that he began writing his text. In other words, he wrote, motivated by sympathy for fallen times, instead of by his political ambitions.

曰：然春秋何始於魯隱公？答曰：周平王，東周之始王也；隱公，讓國之賢君也。考乎其時則相接，言乎其位則列國，本乎其始則周公之祚胤也。若平王能祈天永命，紹開中興，隱公能弘宣祖業，光啟王室，則西周之美可尋，文武之跡不墜。是故因其歷數，附其行事，采周之舊，以會成王義，垂法將來。所書之王，即平王也；所用之歷，即周正也；所稱之公，即魯隱也。安在其黜周而王魯乎？子曰：「如有用我者，吾其為東周乎！」此其義也。

[The interlocutor] said, “In that case, why does the *Annals* begin with [the reign of] Duke Yin of Lu?” I answer: King Ping of Zhou was the first king of Eastern Zhou. Duke Yin was a worthy ruler who ceded his kingdom [to the rightful heir, his brother Duke Huan]. If one looks at the timing, [one would see that] their [reign] periods overlapped with one another.⁴⁹⁰ In terms of the position [of Lu], it was one of the vassal states. Traced back to his [genealogical] beginnings, Duke Yin was the favored heir of the Duke of Zhou. Had King Ping been able to implore heaven to grant him an everlasting mandate and initiate a dynastic restoration,⁴⁹¹ and had Duke Yin been able to broadly proclaim the legacy of his ancestors and expand his dynastic house,⁴⁹² then the excellence of the Western Zhou could have revived and the traces of King Wen and King Wu would never

⁴⁸⁸ As the ZY elaborates, Confucius identified with the fate of the unicorn, who was also out of joint with the world. Deeply moved by their parallel fates, he was prompted to write the *Annals*. Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ This is Du Yu's response to the interlocutor's question about the year in which Confucius ended his Classic. Du Yu expresses that Confucius did not end his work after recording the full year of events but rather after entering the line about the unicorn's capture in the text. Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ The ZY explains: “In the forty-ninth year of King Ping, Duke Yin ascended to throne. In the third year of Duke Yin, King Ping died—this is their ‘overlapping’” 平王四十九年而隱公即位，隱公三年而平王崩，是其相接也。ZY 1.32.

⁴⁹¹ Du Yu uses the language of the “Shao Announcement” of the *Documents*: “The king may implore heaven to grant him everlasting mandate” 王能祈天永命。ZY 1.33.

⁴⁹² Here Du Yu used the vocabulary from the Zuo Tradition, the 10th year of Duke Xiang: “extend my influence” 光啟寡君。Ibid.

have disappeared.⁴⁹³ For that reason, Confucius followed the [Zhou] calendrical system, attached actions and events to them, and gathered the traditions of the Zhou, in order to establish the significance of the [Zhou] kings and bequeath these models to future generations. The “King” recorded [in the *Annals*] was none other than King Ping [of Zhou]. The calendar employed was none other than Zhou standards. The “Duke” referred to was none other than Yin of Lu. Why would anyone suppose that Confucius intended to oust the Zhou and make Lu the kingly state instead?⁴⁹⁴ The Master said, “If anyone were to employ me, would I not make the Zhou in the east?”⁴⁹⁵ This was his intention.

With these examples above, Du Yu reemphasizes Confucius’ devotion to the maintenance of Zhou traditions and culture. In this way, Du emphatically rejects the notion that Confucius harbored any intentions of replacing the Zhou dynastic house with rule by Lu, his home kingdom.

若夫制作之文，所以彰往考來，情見乎辭，言高則旨遠，辭約則義微，此理之常，非隱之也。聖人包周身之防，既作之後，方復隱諱以避患，非所聞也。子路使門人為臣，孔子以為欺天，而云仲尼素王，丘明素臣，又非通論也。先儒以為制作三年，文成致麟，既已妖妄，又引經以至仲尼卒，亦又近誣。據公羊經止獲麟，而左氏「小邾射」不在三叛之數，故余以為感麟而作，作起獲麟，則文止於所起，為得其實，至於反袂拭面，稱「吾道窮」，亦無取焉。

As for the text he compiled, it is the means by which Confucius manifested the past and investigated the future.⁴⁹⁶ The truths are apparent in the words: if the language is lofty, its import is far-reaching,⁴⁹⁷ and if the wording is compressed, its significance is subtle. Such is the constancy of principles. It is not the case that Confucius concealed them.⁴⁹⁸ Sages [usually] protect themselves completely.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹³ This is a citation of *Analecets* 10.22: “Zigong said, ‘The way of Wen and Wu have not fallen to the ground. It is with the people’ ” 子貢曰：「文武之道，未墜於地，在人。」. Waley, 228.

⁴⁹⁴ This is Du Yu’s response to the interlocutor’s question about the Gongyang scholars’ view that Confucius meant to “oust the Zhou and make Lu the kingly state.”

⁴⁹⁵ This is a citation of *Analecets* 17.5: “If anyone were to use me, I believe I could make a ‘Chou’ in the east.” Waley, 210.

⁴⁹⁶ The line “manifested the past and discerned the future” 彰往考來 is from the lower wing of the “Xici” in the *Changes*: “The *Changes* manifests the past and divines the future” 夫易彰往而察來. ZY 1.34.

⁴⁹⁷ The ZY explains that language that is “lofty” (*gaojian* 高簡) and “compressed” (*jueshao* 約少) contrasts with “writings that are wordy and prolix” (*zhangju fanduo* 章句煩多). Likewise, meaning that is “far-reaching” (*yuan* 遠) and “subtle” (*wei* 微) is the opposite of “trivial and close-at-hand” (*suojin* 瑣近) and “easily manifested” (*yixian* 易顯). Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ According to its usage in the context of this preface, the term *qing* 情 connotes the aspirations, intentions, sentiments, even the fundamental nature and personality of Confucius. At this juncture, the preface seems to speak to early Chinese theories about language and poetry, in that the words directly express the basic constitution of their author. In that sense, Du Yu is positing that the *Annals* is something more than a collection of Confucius’ critical

That Confucius would wait until after he had composed [the *Annals*], and only then try to conceal and taboo [his judgments] in order to avoid calamity—this is unheard of. [When] Zilu tried to make Confucius’ disciples out to be his “ministers,” Confucius considered that deceiving heaven. Thus to claim that Confucius was the uncrowned king and [Zuo] Qiuming was his unofficial minister would be all the more unsound a theory. Past classicists thought that it took Confucius three years to produce the *Annals*, and that the completion of the work prompted the arrival of the unicorn. This theory is outlandish and preposterous enough. Yet the classicists further extended the Classic to the year of Confucius’ death. This is even more absurd.⁵⁰⁰ Based on the facts that the Gongyang version of the Classic concludes with the capture of the unicorn, and that the Zuo Tradition does not count She of Xiaozhu⁵⁰¹ as among the “three rebels,”⁵⁰² I think that Confucius was moved by the unicorn to compose the *Annals*. His composition began with the capture of the unicorn, so his text ends where it begins. Only this accords with the truth. As for Confucius “raising his sleeve to brush [tears off] his face” and saying, “My way has come to an end,” one should definitely not accept this saying.⁵⁰³

judgments as it also represents the entire personhood of Confucius. The ZY paraphrases the term as *qingqu* 情趣 as personal aspirations and predilections. Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ The ZY cites several examples of sage figures who met with persecution but escaped unscathed, presumably because they had taken their precautions before committing to action. Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Du Yu holds that Confucius’ disciples were the ones who extended the text of the *Annals* beyond the first entry about the capture of the unicorn in the fourteenth year of Duke Ai, that is, from there to the sixteenth year, which records the death of Confucius. The ZY says that this view runs contrary to the one held by other commentators, who adopt the narrative that Confucius began writing three years before the capture of the unicorn and continued to write after this event, up until his death. Unlike his predecessors, Fu Qian conceives of Confucius’ authorship as ending with the line about the unicorn’s capture. The ZY observes that Du Yu follows this conception of Fu Qian. Ibid 1.35.

⁵⁰¹ Xiaozhu is the name of a state.

⁵⁰² In the 14th year of the *Annals*, the entry immediately after the capture of the unicorn says: “She of Xiaozhu fled here [to Lu] with [the offer of the territory of] Gouyi” 小邾射以句繹來奔. Yang Bojun, 1680. The format of this entry is identical to that of the entries implicating three other such traitors from different states who fled to Lu with similar propositions. However, the Zuo Tradition fails to explicate that the *Annals* meant to condemn She by recording this incident with these words, while the other traitors were condemned with the same words. Du uses this fact to illustrate that the entries after the unicorn’s capture were not authored by Confucius because they no longer encoded his moral judgments, but were simply entries imported from the Lu chronicle. (ZY 1.36) The 31st year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Tradition says: “Because he betrayed his state with territory, even though he was of humble status, the text must record the territory and give the personal name of the person. Shuqi of Zhu, Mouyi of Ju, and Heigong of Zhu brought territories with them as they fled their home states. They sought survival only and did not seek a reputation for themselves. Though they were of humble status, their personal names were recorded. . . . The personal names of the three rebels: they were recorded to punish the unrighteous and to criticize wrong-doing and impropriety” 以地叛，雖賤，必書地，以名其人。 . . . 邾庶其、莒牟夷、邾黑肱以土地出，求食而已，不求其名。賤而必書。 . . . 三叛人名，以懲不義，數惡無禮. Yang Bojun, 1512–3.

⁵⁰³ The Gongyang Tradition’s interpretation of the capture of the unicorn is as follows: “Confucius heard about the capture of the unicorn. He raised his sleeve to brush [tears off] his face, and with tears moistening his robe, he said, ‘My way has come to an end’ ” 孔子聞獲麟，反袂拭面，涕沾袍曰：吾道窮矣. According to the ZY, Du Yu does not accept the idea of a Confucius who, as a sage, would be self-pitying to that extent. The ZY also explains that Du Yu means to clarify here that even though he accepts the Gongyang notion of the Classic ending with the entry about the unicorn’s capture, he does not accept the Gongyang interpretation of the entry itself. This is, as the

In this last passage of the “Preface,” Du Yu refutes the claim that Confucius deliberately concealed his messages in the text, out of fear of retaliation. Du’s denial goes against the accounts in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* stating that Confucius hid his criticisms. Furthermore, Du rejects the idea that Confucius wrote out of self-preoccupation rather than concern for the general state of affairs. With these counterclaims, Du Yu sets himself apart from earlier traditions of thought concerning the *Annals*.

Differences from Han conceptions of the *Annals*

Perhaps due to Du Yu’s acquaintance with the *Bamboo Annals*, his conception of the *Annals* as state chronicle recalls *Mencius* 4B.21 (more than *Mencius* 3B.9), and are distinguished from the conceptions in Han sources. Harking back to the conception of annals as one of the state chronicles with different names in *Mencius* 4B.21,⁵⁰⁴ Du Yu opens his preface with the following sentence: “‘*Annals*’ is the designation given the scribal records of the Lu state.” In the Han, this seemingly prosaic statement was anything but taken for granted. When Liu Xin and Jia Kui speak of the *Annals*, they do not equate it with the Lu state chronicles, but a text with larger cosmic implications. For example, Liu Xin says:⁵⁰⁵

夫曆春秋者，天時也，列人事而〔因〕以天時。傳曰：「民受天地之中以生，所謂命也。是故有禮誼動作，威儀之則以定命也，能者養以之福，不能者敗以取禍。」故列十二公二百四十二年之事，以陰陽之中制其禮。故春為陽中，萬物以生；秋為陰中，萬物以成。

What provides a chronology for the *Annals* is the heavenly seasons. It arrays human affairs and follows upon the heavenly seasons. The Zuo Tradition says: “The common folk receive the middle position between heaven and earth at birth. This we deem to be ordained. Therefore the acts of ritual propriety, and the principles governing charisma and deportment are used to fix the ordained. Those who are able are sustained and go toward blessings. Those who are unable are defeated and encounter disaster.”⁵⁰⁶ Therefore listed below are the events of the twelve ducal reigns spanning two-hundred and forty-two years. They take the middle of yin and yang to establish the rites. Therefore spring is the middle of

ZY says, an example of Du Yu “picking from the two traditions and removing unorthodox sayings” (*jian erzhuān er qu yiduan* 簡二傳而去異端) as stated earlier in the preface. ZY 1.36.

⁵⁰⁴ As we recall from in chapter one, *Mencius* 4B.21 says: “The *Sheng* of Jin, the *Daowu* of Chu, the *Annals* of Lu are the same kind of work” 孟子曰：楚謂之檮杌，晉謂之乘，而魯謂之春秋，其實一也。 Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, 574.

⁵⁰⁵ This passage appears in the “Pitch pipes and Calendar” (*Lüli zhi* 律曆志) chapter of the *Hanshu*, in which Ban Gu summarizes Liu Xin’s theory from the now lost *Santong* calendar (*Santong li* 三統曆) and *Genealogies* (*pu* 譜). The *Hanshu*’s commentator Yan Shigu 顏師古 says: “Below is Ban’s rendition of Liu Xin’s interpretations” 皆班氏所述劉歆之說也。 HS 21A. 979. This passage was not previously quoted until this chapter to facilitate a comparison between Du Yu’s understanding of the specific denotation of the title “*Annals*” and his predecessors’, such as Liu Xin’s, Jia Kui’s, and Zheng Xuan’s, as will be demonstrated shortly.

⁵⁰⁶ This is a quotation from the 13th year of Duke Cheng in the Zuo Tradition. Yang Bojun, 860–1.

Yang, and the ten-thousand things are brought into existence. Autumn is the middle of Yin, and the ten-thousand things are brought to completion.

The key concept in Liu Xin's passage is the underlying temporal progression as events unfold ("What provides a chronology for the *Annals* is the heavenly seasons. It arrays human affairs and follows upon the heavenly seasons"). Liu Xin also traces the cosmological significance of the text to yin-yang processes in nature ("take the middle of yin and yang..."). Liu conceives of "Spring and Autumn" as a distillation of cosmic transitions underlying the interactions between heavenly endowments and human fortunes, pleasant or unpleasant. In this way, Liu imbues the term with larger cosmological implications than Du Yu did.

Jia Kui essentially follows in the same vein of thought as Liu Xin in viewing the *Annals* as pointing to one's position in the flux of the seasonal and human affairs. Attributed to Jia Kui, the following citation is not from his memorial but from the *Zuozhuan Zhengyi*:⁵⁰⁷

賈逵云：取法陰陽之中，春為陽中，萬物以生；秋為陰中，萬物以成。欲使人君動作不失中也。

Jia Kui says: [The *Annals*] takes its model from within Yin and Yang. Spring is the mid-point of spring, and the ten-thousand things are brought into existence. Autumn is the mid-point of Yin, and the ten-thousand things are brought to completion. [Confucius] wished the rulers of men to not lose balance in their activities and deeds.

This quotation is identical to the passage attributed to Liu Xin above, except that Jia added a line about the text functioning as guidelines for rulership ("Confucius] wished the rulers of men to not lose balance in their activities and deeds"). Zheng Xuan builds upon Jia Kui's formulation, so that the definitions of Liu Xin, Jia Kui, and Zheng Xuan of the *Annals* overlap with each other. Zheng Xuan writes the following in his "Discussion on the Six Classics" 六藝論:

春秋者，國史所記人君動作之事。左史所記為《春秋》，右史所記為尚書。⁵⁰⁸

The *Annals* were records of the state scribes about the activities and deeds of rulers of men. What the Left Scribe recorded became the *Annals*; what the Right Scribe recorded became the *Documents*.

⁵⁰⁷ Interspersing this chapter will be frequent citation of the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, even though a more thorough discussion of its contribution to our understanding of Du Yu is beyond the scope of this thesis. Especially since the *Zhengyi* contains the best preserved annotations for an otherwise impenetrable "Preface" in some places, I have relied upon the *Zhengyi* commentary to obtain insight into Du Yu's antecedent sources, his points of departure from his predecessors, the rhetorical structure of the preface, and the implied specific examples that underlie his generalizations and assertions. Successful or not, I have exercised care in trying to distinguish Du Yu's implied references from the places where the *Zhengyi* editors read more into the text than might be warranted.

⁵⁰⁸ This is a citation of Zheng Xuan's "Discussions on the Six Classics" (*Liuyi lun* 六藝論) in the subcommentary to *Chunqiu Gongyang jingzhuan jiegou*. He Xiu and Xu Yan, SSJZS, 16.

Zheng Xuan's definition of the *Annals* is closer to Du Yu's while still retaining echoes of Jia Kui's. Whereas Liu Xin's definition features the rituals, seasons, and the fluctuations of yin-yang, and Jia Kui's definition adds a ruler-centered function to that formulation, Zheng Xuan's formulation makes no reference to yin-yang alterations. Du Yu expands upon Zheng Xuan's notion of the *Annals* as an institution of state scribes.

In contrast to Liu Xin's and Jia Kui's statements about the *Annals*, Du Yu's statement no longer focuses on the cosmological significance of the text. Clearly, the term *Annals* encompassed a range of meanings in the late Western Han to Eastern Han: it is a method of calendrical notation (Liu Xin), seasonal record (Liu Xin and Jia Kui), and political record (Jia Kui and Zheng Xuan). Du Yu, on the other hand, equates it specifically with the "scribal records of the state of Lu." He then emphasizes the physically tangible aspects of the records, highlighting their archival origins: "Great events were recorded on connected bamboo bundles, minor events on individual slips and wooden tablets only." Du Yu's comment in the 26th year of Duke Zhuang in the Zuo Tradition suggests that he had this strict separation in mind also:

此年經傳各自言其事者，或策書雖存而簡牘散落，不究其本末，故傳不復申解是言。⁵⁰⁹

In this year, the Classic and Zuo Tradition each discusses their own events. In some cases the records on stringed bamboo slips have been preserved, but the slips and wooden tablets have been lost. As [Zuo Qiuming] had no way to examine the development of events, therefore the Zuo Tradition fails to explicate the statements [in the Classic].

This correlation of stringed bamboo slips with important events recorded in the Classic versus separated bamboo slips and wooden tablets with those recorded in the Zuo Tradition reifies the hierarchical distinctions between the two in an especially potent, visual way. Du Yu may have thought to highlight the material features of the scribal records, because as his "Postface" says, he saw the *Bamboo Annals* "on rolls of bamboo slips and in the tadpole script." In light of the possible physical resemblance of the *Annals* to the scribal records of other states, he invests much in the distinction between "connected bamboo bundles" and "individual slips and wooden tablets" in order to differentiate Confucius' *Annals* from the records of ordinary official scribes in Lu and elsewhere.

Du Yu also refocuses attention on the genre of state chronicles to which the scribal records of Lu once belonged. He next resurrects a line from *Mencius* 4B.21 that none of his predecessors—Liu Xin, Ban Gu, and the Eastern Han scholars—had thought to cite in their discussions of the nature of the *Annals*: "Mencius said: 'The *Sheng* of Jin, the *Daowu* of Chu, the *Annals* of Lu are the same kind of work.'" With this allusion, Du Yu reminds his readers that the Lu annals were no different from the sort kept in other state archives. It is quite unusual that Du Yu would equate scribal records with the only annals scholars at the time could read—namely the Classic *Annals*—since very few scholars of the Zuo Tradition cite this passage from

⁵⁰⁹ Du Yu, *Jijie*, 3.194.

Mencius 4B.21. Even Jia Kui, whom the *Zhengyi* quotes, equates the scribal records with Zhou rituals, and not necessarily with the Lu chronicle:

賈逵云：周禮盡在魯矣，史法最備，故史記與周禮同名。⁵¹⁰

Jia Kui says, “All of the rites of Zhou were found in Lu. [Certainly] their scribal methods were the most comprehensive. Therefore their scribal records and Zhou rituals share the same name.”

In this instance, Jia Kui curiously identifies the scribal records as the Zhou rituals and not as state annals, citing the line “All of the rites of Zhou were found in Lu” from Han Xuanzi’s speech in the Zuo Tradition.⁵¹¹ Whereas in the original Han Xuanzi quote, the “rites of Zhou” clearly refer to a body of customs, protocols, and standard practices, it is far from clear whether Jia Kui takes *Zhouli* as the title of the text in circulation or the rituals not in a book.

A potential problem arises when Du Yu feels the need to define the term the *Annals* as a specific reference denoting the Lu chronicles as revised by Confucius, rather than as a general reference denoting either the scribal records of the different pre-unification kingdoms or the Lu chronicles mentioned in *Mencius* 4B.21. So Du Yu now explains why, out of all the kingdoms, only Lu had handed down a complete chronicle, and only Lu had had its chronicle revised by a famous master. Why did the kingdom of Jin, for example, not preserve its chronicles in a revised form worthy of consideration, since the Ji County excavations revealed that Jin once had the *Bamboo Annals*? Now that the Jin chronicles had resurfaced, part of Du Yu’s task was to single out the superior status of Lu’s chronicle by showing its special connection with the Zhou State.

Reorientation toward Western Zhou models

The Western Zhou state had, since late Western Han at least, represented the ideals of cultural order and propriety. But it was Du Yu who applies these ideals to his conception of the *Annals* specifically. Since the late Western Han, the popularity of the Duke of Zhou’s cult status also contributed to Du Yu’s conception about the *Annals* and, concurrently, the Zuo Tradition.⁵¹² In his “Preface” and commentary, Du Yu consistently commends the Duke of Zhou, Zhou institutions, and Confucius as the historian of Zhou, rather than casting Confucius as a Sage of divine origins. Du Yu reinforces the notion that the *Annals* primarily represents the historical legacy of the Western Zhou dynasty, best exemplified by the Duke of Zhou (ca. 1100 BCE), and that Confucius minimally edited the work, intervening only at select moments to convey his

⁵¹⁰ Even though *Zhengyi* attributes this quote to Jia Kui, we do not know in what context this occurs, as it is neither in Jia Kui’s memorial nor is it among the fragments of commentaries preserved in the Ma Guohan compilation. ZY 1.11.

⁵¹¹ The second year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Tradition reads: “Spring, the Marquis of Jin sent Han Xuanzi to come pay a diplomatic visit, and also to report on the governance of Lu. His arrival accords with ritual. He perused the documents with the Grand Scribe. Having seen the *Changes*, “Images,” and the Lu annals, he said, ‘All of the rituals of Zhou are in Lu. Only now do I understand the power of the Duke of Zhou and the reasons for which the Zhou state ruled as king’ ” 春，晉侯使韓宣子來聘，且告為政，而來見，禮也。觀書於大史氏，見易、象與魯春秋，曰：「周禮盡在魯矣，吾乃今知周公之德與周之所以王也」。Yang Bojun, 1226.

⁵¹² See Nyland, “The Many Dukes of Zhou,” 2010.

moral judgments. The fall of Confucius from superhuman status,⁵¹³ seen in Du Yu's work, may have shaped Du's conception about the compiler of the *Annals*. At the same time that the Duke of Zhou's status rose, Confucius' stature fell from its divine heights, at least in some circles. In Du Yu's conception, Confucius is a human moral authority who largely respects and defers to Zhou precedents. Given these changes, it should not surprise us that the Duke of Zhou looms just as largely as Confucius in Du's "Preface."

Du Yu cites lines from the Zuo Tradition to justify his treatment of the *Annals* as the institutional history of Western Zhou ritual and administrative paradigms; specifically, Du alludes to the Zuo Tradition episode concerning Han Xuanzi, a Jin emissary sent to pay a diplomatic visit to Lu in the second year of Duke Zhao of Lu. As recounted in the Zuo Tradition, Han Xuanzi had the opportunity to consult the Lu archives, which Du Yu believed contain valuable documents concerning Western Zhou institutions:

Han Xuanzi went to the state of Lu and viewed the *Changes*, the "Hexagrams," and the annals of Lu. He remarked, "All of the rituals of Zhou are in Lu. Only now do I understand the power of the Duke of Zhou and the reasons why the Zhou state ruled as king." What Hanzi saw were presumably the Zuo Tradition's protocols and the ritual norms of Western Zhou.

Du Yu incorporates this Han Xuanzi episode from the Zuo Tradition to highlight the charismatic influence ("the power") of the Duke of Zhou.⁵¹⁴ Like many Han texts, the *Shiji* 14 mentions the Western Zhou as a cultural ideal, and the *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi" identifies the state of Lu as the Duke of Zhou's fief. But Du Yu infers that the documents Han Xuanzi perused were somehow the very basis for Lu's supposed moral and cultural supremacy, giving Lu the most complete set of organizational principles and guiding paradigms for upholding a polity. As the commentators of Du's "Preface" point out, the word *gai* 蓋 (presumably) marks the demarcation between the Zuo Tradition quotation and Du Yu's own voice. The lines that follow this marker indicate Du Yu's conclusion about the broader significance of the Lu archive as an encapsulation of a well-preserved institutional system.⁵¹⁵ The terms "traditional protocols and ritual norms" raise the discussion of authority to an institutional level, well beyond the issue of completeness or incompleteness of archival materials. As Du Yu asserts, the political authority of the Duke of Zhou and the Zhou rulers was founded upon their possession of a full system of political, ritual, and cultural guidelines.

Du Yu's invocation of the term "ritual constants" (*lijing* 禮經) also has a specific application when considered within its original context in the Zuo Tradition. This term appears in the seventh year of Duke Yin:

⁵¹³ Scholars have amply discussed the gradual, as it seems, replacement of the Sages' ancestry from the sky-gods with the Sages' human ancestry. See for example, Wang Baoxuan, *Jinguwen jingxue*, 427–28.

⁵¹⁴ This is Du Yu's first introduction of the figure of the Duke of Zhou in his preface through the citation of lines from the Zuo Tradition. Du Yu invokes the "Duke of Zhou" five times in his preface, using this figure to punctuate his essay to emphasize the nature of the *Annals* as an institutional history of the model of governance associated with the duke.

⁵¹⁵ The *Zhengyi* says: "What Hanzi saw and delighted in were none other than the Zuo Traditional protocols and ritual norms of Western Zhou. Because as there was no exact text for citation, Du Yu uses 'presumably' as an expression of doubt" 韓子所見而說之，即是周之舊典，以無正文，故言蓋為疑辭也。SSJZS 14

Annals:

七年春，滕侯卒。

In the seventh year, spring, the Marquis of Teng died.

Zuo Tradition:

七年春，滕侯卒。不書名，未同盟也。凡諸侯同盟，於是稱名，故薨則赴以名，告終、稱嗣也，以繼好息民，謂之禮經。⁵¹⁶

In the seventh year, spring, the Marquis of Teng died. His name was not recorded because the states of Teng and Lu were not formal allies. In all cases where the vassal lords form an alliance, their names were recorded. Therefore when such lords die, their names were recorded. The reportage of deaths and the designation of heirs perpetuated good relations and pacified the people. We call these practices “ritual constants.”

In this immediate frame of reference, the term “ritual constants” refers only to the protocols for diplomatic reports. Using the Marquis of Teng as an example from the Classic, the Zuo Tradition explains that the principle of only naming allies in the record itself indicates something about the official diplomatic relations pertaining the states. These scribal rules, which the Zuo Tradition calls “ritual constants,” helped to maintain interstate relations and general political stability (“perpetuated good relations and pacified the people”). Notably, Du Yu appropriates this specific phrase “ritual constants” to provide a bridge to the next few sections of his preface. In the lines below, Du Yu equates the political and moral decline of Zhou power with the crumbling of Zhou institutions, particularly those associated with the “ritual constants” embedded in the scribal practices:

As soon as the power of Zhou waned, officials lost their positions, and the authorities above could not make the annals manifest. Many of their reports and documents, and what they had variously recorded and commented upon, departed from old principles.

This narrative about the decay of the Zhou institutions seems to contradict Han Xuanzi’s observation that the complete set of Zhou rituals were preserved in the Lu, which is notable, since Han’s visit precisely occurred during this period of decline. As the commentators point out, the line about the abandonment of posts (“officials lost their positions”) specifically refers to those of the Zhou scribes.⁵¹⁷ In a sense, Du Yu implies that the state of Lu was the last bastion of Zhou culture, even as the Zhou state was disintegrating. The line “the authorities above could not make the annals manifest” negates a statement in the Zuo Tradition.⁵¹⁸ In the original

⁵¹⁶ Yang Bojun, 53–4.

⁵¹⁷ ZY 1.12.

⁵¹⁸ This is the line from the 31st year of Duke Zhao 31 in the Zuo Tradition: “If the authorities above could make the annals manifest, good people would be encouraged and wanton people would be fearful. This was the reason why the gentlemen valued it” 上之人能使昭明，善人勸焉，淫人懼焉，是以君子貴之。 Yang Bojun, 1513.

context, the “annals” refer to the methods by which judgments are conveyed indirectly. Du Yu redeploys the term “annals” to refer more broadly to the scribal practices and institutions of men in positions of power. Du Yu appropriates the same phrase to describe the errors in reportage and notation rather than in judgment (“Many of their reports and documents, and what they had variously recorded and commented upon, departed from old principles”). Thus for Du Yu, the *Annals* is less exclusively a book of moral judgments and more as a set of scribal practices linked to the Western Zhou.

Du Yu envisions the broad reach and central dominance of the Zhou kingdom over all other kingdoms: “The *Rites of Zhou* include [the job descriptions of] the official scribes. They managed the events of the four corners of domains and states, and they gave expression to the aspirations [of the people] of the four corners.” In this instance, the *Zhouli* could refer to the title of the text, because as the commentators inform us,⁵¹⁹ the succeeding lines are lifted from the *Zhouli* text. The “Spring Office” 春官 chapter of the *Zhouli* says:

小史掌邦國之志。

The Minor Scribe manages the aspirations of the domains and states.

凡四方之事書，內史讀之。

Whenever the events of the four corners are recorded, the Inner Scribe recites them.

外史掌書外令… 掌四方之志… 掌達書名于四方。

The Outer Scribe manages the recording of outer commands.... [He] manages the aspirations of the four corners, ... [and] manages the recording of names from the four corners.

Comparing Du Yu’s lines with these quotations, we can readily see that he cobbles together separate *Zhouli* lines about the stations of different scribal officers—the “minor scribe,” the “inner scribe,” and the “outer scribe.” Basing himself on the *Zhouli*, Du Yu strings together these references to further his notion of the ideal official scribe rooted in a Western Zhou past.

In such a way, Du Yu builds on earlier claims, such as those found in *Shiji* 14 and Ban Gu’s “*Yiwen zhi*,” to advance the position that the scribes of Lu, more than those of any other state, carried on the legacy of the ideal Western Zhou scribes. As we recall, the *Shiji* says Confucius longed to restore Western Zhou culture (“looked west to the ruling house of the Zhou”) as he began his compilation of archival materials (“arrayed the scribal records and old traditions”). Yet upon closer examination, the *Shiji* passage did not specify from which archive Confucius drew his sources. Similarly, in the “*Yiwen zhi*,” Ban Gu emphasizes Confucius’ emotional ties to the Zhou house: “Once the Zhou house declined, records were incomplete and documents had lacunae in them. Confucius longed to preserve the legacy of past Sages.” But

⁵¹⁹SSJZS 10.

while Sima Qian and Ban Gu allude to Confucius' effort to restore the archival records and scribal practices, Du Yu, taking a step further, equates the authority of the Lu archival materials with that of the Zhou rituals, insofar as entire administrative systems cannot exist without those archives which date to the early Western Zhou period.

The Classic as summary of Western Zhou political ideals

To further establish the identity of the *Annals* as a Western Zhou legacy, Du Yu must supply explanations for why the text begins with a record of events in Eastern Zhou, if the Classic embodies Western Zhou political thought. None of Du Yu's predecessors explain the rationale behind the choice to begin the Classic with Duke Yin of Lu. Creating an interlocutor to pose this question, Du Yu answers that the reign of Duke Yin of Lu (722–712 BCE) overlapped with that of King Ping (771–720 BCE), the first Eastern Zhou king:

[The interlocutor] said, "In that case, why does the *Annals* begin with [the reign of] Duke Yin of Lu?" I answer: King Ping of Zhou was the first king of Eastern Zhou. Duke Yin was a worthy ruler who ceded his kingdom [to the rightful heir, his brother Duke Huan]. If one looks at the timing, [one would see that] their [reign] periods overlapped with one another. In terms of the position [of Lu], it was one of the vassal states. Traced back to his [genealogical] beginnings, Duke Yin was the favored heir of the Duke of Zhou.

In this section, Du Yu endows the beginning of the record with political and moral significance. Previous sources (*Mencius*, *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, etc.) never raised the issue of the starting date of the Classic. This question evidently occurs to Du Yu because he saw nothing dictating that the Lu annals should begin with Duke Yin, since the *Bamboo Annals* chronicles events in the ducal reigns of Jin well before the time of Duke Yin.⁵²⁰ Given this difference between the two texts, Du Yu might have realized that beginning the *Annals* with Duke Yin had to be an arbitrary or conscious choice. If the status of the *Annals* were to remain that of a Classic, nothing should be arbitrary or accidental.

Du Yu's preoccupation with beginnings is apparent in this section, as he attempts to correlate the different kinds of beginnings. He lays out a series of larger beginnings within which to situate the beginning of the *Annals*: "King Ping of Zhou was the first king of Eastern Zhou. . . . Traced back to his [genealogical] beginnings, the Duke Yin of Lu was the favored heir of the Duke of Zhou." Stating the ancestry of Duke Yin, Du Yu highlights the duke's relation to Duke of Zhou as his descendant in the lineage on the throne of Lu. Du Yu singles Duke Yin out as the "favored heir of the Duke of Zhou," even though Yin's predecessors were all successors of the Duke of Zhou as well. By burnishing the image of Duke Yin as a "worthy ruler" because he

⁵²⁰ From Du Yu's "Postface": "The *Jinian* chapters begin with [the records about] the Xia, Yin, and Zhou dynasties. They are all [concerned with] the kingly affairs, and there are no distinctions between the states, except that they record in particular [the affairs of] the Jin state, beginning with the reign of Shangshu (784–781 BCE), then the Marquis of Wen, the Marquis of Zhao, all the way up to Earl of Zhuang of Quwo. The eleventh month of the eleventh year of Earl Zhuang's reign corresponds to the first month of the first year of [the reign] of Duke Yin of Lu (722 BCE)" 其紀年篇起自夏、殷、周，皆三代王事，無諸國別也，唯特記晉國起自殤叔，次文侯，昭侯，以至曲沃莊伯。莊伯之十一年，十一月，魯隱公之元年正月也。SSJZS p. 2735.

abdicated to his brother (“ceded his kingdom”), Du Yu gives Yin a moral and political identity that would elevate him above other offspring. By contrast, the Gongyang Tradition regards Duke Yin as a ruler whose actions “reveal intimations of usurpation.”⁵²¹ By asserting the duke’s hereditary and moral advantages over his predecessors, Du places him on a pedestal to show that the textual beginning of the *Annals* is not arbitrary but justified on moral grounds.

Du Yu also links Duke Yin with his contemporary, King Ping of Zhou, so that the first year of Duke Yin could also signal a new political beginning for the Zhou dynasty. Du Yu portrays the political mission of King Ping, ideally undertaken by Duke Yin, who would join forces to revive the glories of the Western Zhou:

Had King Ping been able to implore heaven to grant him an everlasting mandate and initiate dynastic restoration, and had Duke Yin been able to broadly proclaim the legacy of his ancestors and expand his dynastic house, then the excellence of the Western Zhou could have been resumed and the traces of King Wen and King Wu would have never disappeared. For that reason, Confucius followed the [Zhou] calendrical system, attached actions and events to them, and gathered the traditions of the Zhou, in order to establish the significance of the king and bequeath these models to future generations.

Compared with the other sources about the *Annals*, this passage issues a bold counterfactual statement that the Western Zhou could have been revived. All other texts, including the *Mencius*, the *Shiji*, and Liu Xin’s “Letter to the Academicians,” portray the 8th century BCE as an age of decline, rather than of hopeful beginnings:

Mencius 3B.9 says,

When the world declined and the way fell into obscurity, heretical sayings and violent deeds arose. There were in fact ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and sons who murdered their fathers. Trembling, Confucius made the *Annals*.

The *Shiji* “Table of the Twelve Feudal Lords” says,

Whenever the Grand Historian read the chronologies and genealogies of the Spring and Autumn [period], and came to [the accounts of the] King Li of Zhou, he always invariably put aside the book and sighed. . . . As the way of Zhou suffered damage, the poets . . . composed the “Guanju.”

Liu Xin’s “Letter to the Academicians” says,

Once the Zhou house fell into decline, the rites and music were set askew—such is the difficulty of maintaining the way in its completeness. For this reason, Confucius was anxious that the way was no longer practiced. So he traveled to states one by one to take up employment [in the government]. From Wei he

⁵²¹ See Moss Roberts, “Double Judgments” in Wakeman, “*Nothing Concealed*,” 25.

returned to Lu, only then was music rectified and the *Ya* and *Song* odes put in their proper places. He compiled the *Changes*, put in order the *Documents*, and made the *Annals*. . . .

Du Yu works against the tradition of doom and gloom, choosing instead to depict the endowments, capabilities, and the mandate of these two historical figures (King Ping had the “everlasting mandate” to “initiate dynastic restoration” and Duke Yin could “expand his dynastic house”). By transforming Duke Yin into a symbol of possibility as a moral and political exemplar, Du Yu establishes the authority of the opening reign of the *Annals*.

The commentators offers an interesting interpretation of Du Yu’s unconventional decision to turn King Ping and Duke Yin into the figures on whom all hopes of dynastic revival rested. As the *Zhengyi* commentators perceive it, this hypothetical scenario of restoration serves as a foil to the abject failure of the two rulers; the rulers did not fail for lack of heavenly and ancestral endowments, but rather for lack of institutions and systems:

平王隱公居得致之地，有得致之資，而竟不能然，只為無法故也。仲尼愍其如是，為之作法，其意言若能用我道，豈致此乎。是故因其年月之麻數，附其時人之行事，采周公之舊典，以會合成一王之大義。雖前事已往，不可復追，冀得垂法將來，使後人放習，以是之故作此春秋。⁵²²

King Ping and Duke Yin lived in locales from which one could bring it [i.e. sagely rule] about, possessed the resources for bringing it about, but in the end were unable to do so. This was simply because they did not have the method. Confucius felt aggrieved about the situation, and created models for rulers. His intentions were, if they had employed my way, how could they have come to this [failure]? Therefore he relied upon the calendrical chronology of the years and months, correlated the deeds and events of the people of those times, gathered the traditional protocols of the Duke of Zhou, in order to draw up one set of standards for all kings. Though the events of the past have transpired, and could not be altered, Confucius hoped to leave behind models for the future, so that future generations would imitate and practice his ways. For these reasons, he compiled the *Annals*.

According to the *Zhengyi*’s explication, King Ping and Duke Lu squandered their wealth of potential and failed to restore the ways of their illustrious ancestors because of one reason: they both lacked “method” (*fa*). This emphasis on method is consistent with the importance Du Yu attached to system, for rather than attributing Yin’s and Ping’s failure to immorality or great character flaws, Du Yu suggests that their failure lies in something more technical in nature: their lack of knowledge of systematic methodology. Thereupon, Du Yu reconceives the figure of Confucius as an author whose motivation for compiling the Classic was to transmit the missing set of methods.

⁵²² ZY 1.32.

Reestablishment of scribal foundations

In his “Preface,” Du Yu demonstrates that the very structure of the *Annals* itself exemplifies the system of methods inherited from the Zhou institutions of scribal recording. Because of his emphasis on institutional practices, he works to reduce the moral content in some places in the *Annals*, particularly where the Gongyang and Guliang exegetes read moral meaning into calendrical information. At the same time, he also elevates the position of scribes to the heights of reverence. In this way, Du Yu increases the institutional significance of scribal conventions that, in his view, formed the foundations of the Classic.

Establishing the moral neutrality of chronological data

In the opening of his “Preface,” Du establishes the structural use, not the ethical implications, of the temporal units in the Lu annals. He describes the scribal records of the Lu as composed of calendrical units established in a fixed order:

Those who recorded events [i.e. the scribes] connected the events to the day, the day to the month, the month to the season, and the season to the year [of their occurrence]. This was the method by which events distant and near [in time] were organized, and their similarities and differences were compared.

The content of this passage may appear painfully obvious: the Lu annals are organized around a calendrical format with strict attention to chronological order. Let me suggest something less obvious: reversing the order in which the units appear in the *Annals*, Du Yu begins with the event in question, fitting it within the larger temporal frame, the month, which in turn is attached to the season, and then the year. It is as if Du would mimic the scribe inserting a record of discrete events into the blanks on a preset form, as the character *xi* 繫 literally means “to tie” one thing (bamboo slip) to another. The *Zhengyi* commentators more narrowly define it as connecting a smaller and more specific unit to a larger and more general one:

繫者以下綴上，以末連本之辭。⁵²³

To “tie” is to link the bottom to the top, and is the expression for connecting the tip to the root.

Du Yu reproduces the fastidious method with which the ideal scribe compiled the chronicle, highlighting the scribes’ conscientious effort to date events precisely when many events had been left undated, or were dated by different calendars, with their relation to each other initially obscured. This line can be construed as Du Yu’s implicit statement about another aspect, however: the many instances in which the scribes failed to follow the correct procedure for entering chronological data.

⁵²³ ZY 1.3.

Gaps occur frequently in the record, breaking the regularity of the expected order. The *Zhengyi* commentators supply examples from the *Annals* to illustrate these irregularities in the chronological notation of events:

若隱三年，春王，二月，己巳，日有食之。二年，秋，八月，庚辰，公及戎盟于唐之類，是事之所繫，年時月日，四者皆具文也。史之所記，皆應具文，而春秋之經文多不具，或時而不月，月而不日，亦有日不繫月，月而無時者。⁵²⁴

For instance, in the third year of Duke Yin, [the *Annals* records]: “Third year, spring of the royal calendar, the second month, *yisi* day, the sun eclipsed.” “Second year, autumn, eighth month, *gengchen* day, the Duke and the Rong tribe forged an alliance at Tang.” These [dates] are what are tied to the events. To have all four—the year, season, month, and day—is to have a complete record. What the scribes recorded should have had all four of them complete, yet those in the *Annals* Classic are often left incomplete. In some cases the season was recorded without the month, or the month was recorded without the day, or the day was recorded but not tied to any month, or the month was recorded without the season.

Du Yu’s implied critique of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions rejects their assignment of praise and blame based on missing elements in the dating format.⁵²⁵ When Du Yu lays out the expected norms in the ‘data entry’ practices of the ideal scribe, he in effect reiterates his larger point that the format of the Classic was prescribed by a scribal tradition that Confucius took over. In contrast to the way Gongyang and Guliang exegetes routinely assigned judgments to the irregular notations, the Zuo Tradition gives moral meanings to only two examples:⁵²⁶

Annals: 冬，十有二月，公子益師卒。⁵²⁷

[In the first year of Duke Yin,] winter, the twelfth month, Prince Yishi died.

Zuo Tradition: 公不與小斂，故不書日。⁵²⁸

⁵²⁴ ZY 1.3–4.

⁵²⁵ For the comparative study of the *Riyue li* 日月例 (norms for [omitted] days and months) in the Gongyang, Guliang, and Zuo traditions, see the monograph devoted entirely to this “norm”: Dai Junren 戴君仁, *Chunqiu bianli* 春秋辨例, 1978.

⁵²⁶ The *Zhengyi* says: “Therefore among the myriad affairs in the *Annals*, none of them has to do with days and months made into norms. Of the norms of significance based on days and months, only ‘the death of the high minister’ and ‘the eclipse’ can be regarded as such” 故春秋諸事，皆不以日月為例，其以日月為義例者，唯卿卒、日食二事而已。SSJZS 6.

⁵²⁷ Yang Bojun, 9

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

Duke Yin did not attend the minor dressing of the body. Therefore the [Annals] text does not record the day.

Annals: 冬，十月，朔，日有食之。⁵²⁹

[In the seventeenth year of Duke Huan,] winter, tenth month, on the first day of the month, the sun eclipsed.

Zuo Tradition: 不書日，官失之也。 . . . 日官居卿以底日，禮也。⁵³⁰

The [Annals] text does not record the day because the scribe omitted it. . . . The officer of the calendar occupied the rank of high minister and fixed the calendar. This accords with ritual propriety.

According to Du Yu, other than these two examples, all other omissions of the day for an event in the *Annals* elicit no comment in the Zuo Tradition; by contrast, the Gongyang Tradition ascribes judgment to 38 instances and the Guliang Tradition to 31 instances of such omissions.⁵³¹ Du Yu argues that absolute conformity to the formula was hard to achieve due to historical decay, according to his *Chunqiu Shili*. Du excoriates previous Zuo Tradition commentators for reading more judgments into the missing dating elements than was called for:

邱明之傳，月無徵文，日之為例者，二事而已，其餘詳略皆無義例也。而諸儒溺於公羊穀梁之說，橫為左氏造日月褒貶之例。經傳久遠，本有異義者尚難通，況以他書驅合左氏，引二條之例，以施諸日無例之月，妄以生義，此所以乖誤而謬戾也。⁵³²

In [Zuo] Qiuming's Tradition, the omitted months never invite commentary. The omitted days that comprise a "norm" are two instances only. The rest of the cases are all a matter of differences in the level of detail and cursoriness and do not embody any norms of significance. Yet the various classicists, stuck in the explanations of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, have arbitrarily applied "norms of praise and blame for omitted days and months" to [their interpretation of] the Zuo Tradition. The Classic and the Zuo Tradition belong to a remote past. The inconsistencies in these texts are difficult enough to understand, how much more so when these classicists rashly force [the explanations of] other books onto the Zuo Tradition, extrapolating the norms from these two instances to explain events whose months but not days were recorded, arbitrarily dealing out judgments. That is the reason why I consider those classicists wrong-headed and ridiculously obstinate.

⁵²⁹ Ibid, 148.

⁵³⁰ Ibid, 149.

⁵³¹ See Dai Junren, *Chunqiu bianli*, 315–22.

⁵³² Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (ed), *Chunqiu shili* 春秋釋例, 1.27.

This is a strong statement. Even though Du Yu acknowledges that some deviations from the normal pattern occur, he consciously positions himself against the other two exegetical traditions, with regard to the interpretation of dating inconsistencies. In Du Yu's conception, most of the omissions left in the Classic reflect original gaps in the Lu scribal records, rather than Confucius' deliberate suppression of data as a way of conveying his judgments.

In his next statement, Du Yu asserts that the title of the Lu chronicle is nothing more than a concise abbreviation of the four seasons. Even though this assertion may sound equally unremarkable, it conveys his emphasis on the historical, instead of cosmological, nature of the Lu chronicle: "There are four seasons to a year. Therefore the scribes selected two of them to form the title of what they recorded." In this instance, Du is responding to Liu Xin's and Jia Kui's explanation of the title,⁵³³ for as we recall, Liu and Jia treated spring as the "middle of Yang" and autumn as the "middle of Yin," implying a balance. He Daoyang 賀道養 (?-?) of the Liu-Song dynasty (420–479) follows Liu and Jia in explaining the title as related to yin-yang processes as well,⁵³⁴ for he says:

春貴陽之始，秋取陰之初。⁵³⁵

Spring is used to honor the initiation of Yang. Autumn is used to draw from the beginning of Yin.

Departing from these scholars, Du Yu follows in the footsteps of Zheng Xuan's tradition of treating "Spring and Autumn" as a synecdoche for the four seasons of a year.⁵³⁶ Aside from the days and seasons, Du Yu also insists upon the primacy of the months as the main organizational principle essential to the integrity and function of the Lu chronicle,⁵³⁷ emphasizing the ritual importance of writing in the first month of each season, irrespective of whether events were recorded for that month. For example, in the sixth year of Duke Yin, when no events followed the season's beginning in the text of the *Annals*, Du Yu furnishes his explanation for this omission:

Annals: 秋，七月。

In the autumn, the seventh month.

⁵³³ Below, Liu Xin, Jia Kui, and Zheng Xuan are brought up again for comparison with Du Yu's view on specifically the calendrical meaning of the title *Annals*.

⁵³⁴ He Daoyang wrote a commentary for Du Yu's preface. But this commentary is all but lost except for the fragments cited in the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*.

⁵³⁵ ZY 1.7.

⁵³⁶ Zheng's comment to a line in the *Odes* demonstrates this: " 'Spring and Autumn' are the same as the four seasons. This highlights that [the term] 'Spring and Autumn' sufficiently encompasses the meaning of the four seasons" 春秋猶言四時也，是舉春秋足包四時之義. ZY 1.6.

⁵³⁷ The texts of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions do not contain any statements that attach special significance to the first month of each season the way Du Yu does. On the contrary, the Eastern Jin commentator of the Guliang Tradition, Fan Ning 范甯 (339 – 401), takes over Du Yu's interpretation and applies it to his comments to the same entries in the *Annals*.

Du Yu's comment: 雖無事，而書首月，具四時以成歲，他皆放此。

Even though there was no [record of any] event, the first month [of the season] was noted. The four seasons together bring the year to completion. All other such instances are explainable in this way.

Du Yu links seasonal notation to scribal consistency and the integrity of the record:

史之記事，一月無事，不空舉月；一時無事，必空舉時者。蓋以四時不具，不成為歲，故時雖無事，必虛錄首月，其或不錄，皆是史之闕文。⁵³⁸

As for the scribe's recording of events, when a month had no recordable event, the scribes would not note the month alone, but when a whole season had no recordable event, they would always note the season alone. Probably if the four seasons were not fully provided for, the year could not be brought to completion. Therefore, when a season had no recordable event, the scribe had to record the first month [of that season] as an empty place holder. The cases where this was omitted represent lacunae in the text of the scribe.

According to the commentators' interpretation of Du Yu's thinking, the formal marking of the first month of the season gives the chronicle its structure. For Du Yu, because the chronicle is systematic, omissions reflect an integral part of the original chronicle.

Exalting the status of official scribes

Du Yu's conception of official scribes posits their exalted status in ancient days as opposed to the lower status they occupied in his own age. In the Eastern Han, Wang Chong (27–97 CE) laments that ignorant people of his day valued scribes with their technical skills more than classical scholars with their breadth of knowledge. In the “Zhengshuo” 正說 chapter of *Lunheng*, Wang Chong presents the following estimation of scribal officers:

史官記事，若今時縣官之書矣。⁵³⁹

The record of events by official scribes are like the writings by the imperial envoys sent to the county today.

He denigrates students who “rushed to study the scribal writings” (*qu xue shishu* 趨(趨)學史書”) because that distracted them from classical learning, with its past lessons.⁵⁴⁰ Wang Chong portrays classical scholars and career-minded administrators (experts in the law) as literate men

⁵³⁸ ZY 1.7.

⁵³⁹ LH 2:538.

⁵⁴⁰ See LH 34.538.

with diametrically opposed forms of training. Given the low estimation of some scribes in the views of some, Du Yu works to restore the image of the scribe. Preparing his argument about the role of Confucius as an editor of scribal records and that of Zuo Qiuming as a state scribe, Du attempts to posit the higher status of scribes during the Western Zhou.

As previously discussed, Du cites the *Zhouli* to portray the ideal of Western Zhou scribal office (*shiguan* 史官) at the king's court. Du Yu also depicts the scribes at the next level down, who worked for vassal lords: "The vassal lords each had their own state scribes." In Du Yu's usage, the terms "scribal office" and "state scribe" belonged to different levels of the Western Zhou hierarchy. As the former oversaw the universal affairs and aspirations of the king's people and thus were not assigned lowly tasks, whereas the latter were in charge of inscribing the material surface of bamboo bundles (*ce* 策) and individual slips and wooden tablets (*jiandu* 簡牘). Within the internal frame of reference of Du's "Preface," this bifurcated conception of scribes mirrors Du Yu's division of roles between Confucius the compiler of materials on "connected bamboo slips" and Zuo Qiuming the compiler of materials on "slips and tablets." Du Yu works to clarify the official role of Zuo Qiuming as the official compiler of records assembled by other state scribes. Further on in the preface, Du Yu depicts Zuo's official responsibilities as follows: "As the state scribe, Master Zuo personally perused the records and books, and inclusively recorded and comprehensively discussed them without fail." This description suggests Zuo Qiuming's importance as the state scribe of Lu, in contrast to the "Yiwen zhi," which only portrays Zuo Qiuming as Confucius' companion in the Lu archive.⁵⁴¹ Du Yu's construction of the ideal scribe in antiquity builds upon conceptions articulated in the *Hanshu*. As readers will recall, in the "Yiwen zhi," Ban Gu states that the chief duty of ancient scribal office was to make a written record of the rulers' speech and actions: "The Left Scribe recorded speech and the Right Scribe recorded events," those records tending to restrain rulers, making them "cautious in their speech and conduct," who would then in turn serve as exemplars for their subjects ("make manifest their paradigms and models"). Du Yu works to inspire this same sort of reverence accorded to exemplary scribes as he rebuilds their noble image.

The past two main sections have addressed Du Yu's revival of older notions about the scribal basis for the *Annals*, whose history purportedly preceded the time of Confucius. Du Yu's "Preface" takes up a conception found in *Mencius* 4B.21, basing the the book in the scribal records of Lu, in contrast to his predecessors, Liu Xin, Jia Kui, and Ban Gu. Even though previous scholars raised the Lu annals as a prime example of the Zhou ritual and historical legacy, Du Yu further elaborates the Lu-Zhou connection, making the Classic into a paragon of Western Zhou institutions, perhaps to support the authority of the Classic in the face of overwhelming evidence that it differs little from the *Bamboo Annals* in form and content. By making the case that the Lu annals alone reflected high Zhou culture, he implies that the *Bamboo Annals*, based primarily on the Wei annals, was inferior.

Redefining Confucius as human author

⁵⁴¹ See HS 30.1715: "Therefore [Confucius], together with Zuo Qiuming, perused the scribal records" 故與左丘明觀其史記.

Du Yu's "Preface" brings into prominence Confucius' role as a figure who aspired to protect the Western Zhou institutions from further decay; to fulfill this role, as Du argues, Confucius had to make relatively few changes to his source materials. With the future of the exemplary Western Zhou culture resting solely upon his shoulders, Confucius took it upon himself to test the veracity of the Lu records ("their authenticity and inauthenticity"). That did not mean that Confucius felt he had no right to change the flaws in Zhou legacy he inherited. Du Yu shows him engaged in editorial activities, seeking to clear the Lu records of obscurities: "As for the places where the teachings existed, [but] were obscured by the language, Confucius edited and corrected them in order to express his encouragement and warnings." In Du Yu's overlapping of the Lu chronicle with Zhou culture, the referent of *zhi* 之 in the phrase "edited and corrected them" 刊而正之 is vague, because it could easily refer to Zhou institutions as to the language of the Lu records. As the *Zhengyi* commentators propose, Du's lines mean that Confucius revised the language of the Lu chronicle only where he deemed that the lessons originally embodied in the text were not sufficiently clear. As an editor, Confucius only tweaked the language of the chronicle only to the extent that the moral lessons ("his encouragement and warnings") would not be lost on the reader. Far from being a heavy-handed editor of the old Lu chronicle, he only pointed out the precise points calling for his intervention.

Having presented Confucius' editorial changes as minimal interventions, Du Yu addresses the rest of the Lu chronicle that Confucius had presumably left untouched. These unedited parts of the chronicle are incorporated into the Confucius' new work, constituting the basic substrate of material in the *Annals*: "The rest [of the *Annals*] was all directly taken over from the old records (舊史). The scribes (史) may have been refined and rustic." Used twice here, the second usage of the character *shi* 史 could refer both to the text of the Lu records and the official scribe as a person. They are closely identified with each other, for the quality of the text reflects the personality of the scribe. The *Zhengyi* commentators interpret *shi* 史 to mean multiple generations of scribes, each with their own personal inclinations ("refined" or "rustic") and writing tendencies ("detailed or sketchy").⁵⁴² Because the Lu chronicles were compiled by many hands, Confucius' inherited the pre-existing areas of detail or spottiness.

Continuing in this vein, Du Yu presents Confucius' conservation of previous materials a mark of fine craftsmanship. Confucius was an excellent compiler precisely because of his faithfulness to the Lu chronicle: "Therefore the Zuo Tradition says, 'He was good at recording.' It also says, 'Other than a Sage, who possibly could have compiled it (修之)?" The object-pronoun *zhi* 之 could refer to the Classic rather than the Lu chronicle. Because the subject of the sentence is "Sage," we gather that "it" stands for the Classic. In the original Zuo Tradition passage, the "Sage" does not refer necessarily to Confucius, yet Du Yu appropriates the citation to celebrate the "sageliness" of Confucius when he used old materials in his work. In Du Yu's redefinition, a "Sage" is someone skilled at the work of preservation; Confucius would fit the bill. In the next lines, Du Yu develops his idea of the *Annals* as the embodiment of the Duke of Zhou, another Sage. Taken together, these lines say that Confucius preserved the old materials not out of antiquarian interest but for the higher purpose of promulgating the political and ethical ideals exemplified by the Duke of Zhou: "It is my opinion that Confucius adhered to and manifested

⁵⁴² SSJZS 17.

the aspirations of the Duke of Zhou.” As in one previous instance,⁵⁴³ the particle *gai* 蓋 marks the voice of Du Yu. As is characteristic of Du Yu’s “Preface,” he plays on the double meaning of characters, in this case *zhi* 志, used first as a verb (“He was good at recording” 其善志), next as a noun (“the aspirations of the Duke of Zhou” 周公之志). The proximity of the two uses suggests that the art of recording and the duke’s intentions overlap. That is, as Confucius recorded old materials, he also was inscribing the duke’s intentions, deferring to them (“Confucius adhered to and illuminated them”). Du Yu supplies this conclusion to reiterate his main theme that Confucius’ *Annals* distills Western Zhou institutions and the political thought of the Duke of Zhou.

The personal lyric of Confucius

Through a hypothetical debate with antagonists, Du Yu delves into the psychic aspects of Confucius’ project, exploring his political ambitions and personal mission. Based on this idea that Confucius followed the Duke of Zhou, Du Yu emphatically rejects the notion that Confucius arrogated powers to himself, without paying due deference to a past authority. Du Yu even more vigorously dispels the idea—favored by classicists of the Gongyang Tradition—that Confucius intended to establish himself as the “uncrowned king” of Lu:

Someone said, “With regard to the composition of the *Annals*, the Zuo and Guliang Traditions lack any clear account of it. Theories say that when Confucius returned from Wey to Lu, he compiled the *Annals*, anointed himself the uncrowned king, and made [Zuo] Qiuming his unofficial minister. Those speaking for the Gongyang Tradition also claim that Confucius replaced the Zhou with Lu the kingly state . . .”

The Gongyang scholars whom Du Yu dismissed as the “theorizers” must include Dong Zhongshu (c. 179–c. 104 BCE), He Xiu (129–182), and Lu Qin 盧欽 (?–278 CE), all of whom connected Confucius’ compilation of the *Annals* with his legacy as the “uncrowned king,”⁵⁴⁴ which was a notion influential in the Han.⁵⁴⁵ In particular, Du Yu singles out “expounders of the

⁵⁴³ This is the instance in which Du Yu’s “Preface” says: “What Hanzi saw were presumably the Zuo Traditional protocols and ritual norms of Western Zhou” 韓宣子適魯，見易象與魯春秋，曰：「周禮盡在魯矣。吾乃今知周公之德，與周之所以王也。」韓子所見，蓋周之舊典禮經也。

⁵⁴⁴ The *Zhengyi* gives the following citations: “The ‘*Duice*’ chapter of Dong Zhongshu’s [*Chunqiu fanlu*] says: ‘Confucius made the *Annals*. He first rectified kingship and tied the ten thousand affairs to it.’ This is the expression of the unseptrred king” 董仲舒〈對策〉云：孔子作春秋，先正王而繫以萬事，是素王之文焉。“Lu Qin’s ‘Preface to the Gongyang’ says: ‘Confucius adhered to the scribal records of Lu and compiled the *Annals*. He instituted the way of the uncrowned king’” 盧欽〈公羊序〉云：孔子自因魯史記而脩春秋，制素王之道。“He Xiu’s comment to the first year of Duke Yin [in the Gongyang] says: ‘Only when a king assumes his position does he change the calendar and establish his reign. The new king who receives his mandate from Lu is lodged in the *Annals*’” 何休隱元年注云：唯王者然後改元立號，春秋託新王受命於魯. SSZSJ 37.

⁵⁴⁵ See the chapter “Kongzi, the Uncrowned King” in Nylan, *Lives of Confucius*, 67–100.

Gongyang Tradition,” e.g. He Xiu, for upholding this notion.⁵⁴⁶ We may expect Du Yu to criticize the Gongyang position on this issue, in his bid to reconfigure Confucius as someone who would never dream of replacing the Western Zhou polity with his own rule. However, renowned Zuo Tradition scholars who preceded Du Yu—among them Jia Kui and Zheng Xuan—subscribed to the idea that Confucius planned to use his history to institute his own laws for the future.⁵⁴⁷ While these mid- to late Eastern Han scholars adopted this tradition of thought regarding Confucius’ political designs, Du Yu vehemently rejects it, in order to advance his own conception of Confucius as a faithful follower of the Duke of Zhou. By the Eastern Han, the image of the Duke of Zhou had by and large been purified of the charge that he was a usurper,⁵⁴⁸ thus making it easier for Du Yu to position him as the ultimate authority, for whom Confucius served as spokesman.⁵⁴⁹

Du Yu also reacts to conceptions about the Zuo Qiuming, refuting the parallel idea that Zuo Qiuming was Confucius’ unofficial minister:

[When] Zilu tried to make Confucius’ disciples out to be his “ministers,” Confucius considered that deceiving heaven. Thus to claim that Confucius was the uncrowned king and [Zuo] Qiuming was his unofficial minister would be all the more unsound a theory.

To the best knowledge of the *Zhengyi* editors, we cannot say who first made Zuo Qiuming out to be Confucius’ “unofficial minister.”⁵⁵⁰ But Du Yu’s citation of the *Analecets* passage represents his attempt to dispel any possible notion that Confucius could have harbored designs to crown himself king and make Zuo Qiuming his minister, for this notion is antithetical to Du’s conception of the *Annals* as a tribute to Western Zhou culture.

Du Yu marshals evidence to show that Confucius never intended to wrest authority from the Zhou rulers. Du points to Confucius’ usage of the Zhou royal title and Zhou calendar in his *Annals*:

⁵⁴⁶ The *Zhengyi* commentators say: “He Xiu’s comment to the 16th year of Duke Xuan [in the Gongyang] says: ‘Confucius used the *Annals* to become the new king. He ousted Qi and downgraded the new Zhou, and the old Song ousted Zhou to become the descendants of the king.’ This is the theory of ousting the Zhou and making Lu the kingly state” 宣十六年注云：孔子以春秋當新王上，黜杞下新周，而故宋黜周為王者之後。是黜周王魯之說也。Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ As cited also in the *Zhengyi*: “Jia Kui’s ‘Preface to the *Annals*’ says: ‘Confucius surveyed the scribal records, rectified the explanations of right and wrong, and established the rules of the uncrowned king’” 賈逵〈春秋序〉云：孔子覽史記，就是非之說，立素王之法。Zheng Xuan’s “Discussions of the Six Classics” says: “Since Confucius captured the unicorn of the western hunt, he titled himself as the ‘uncrowned king,’ instituted and clarified the principles of rulers receiving the mandate in later generations” 鄭玄《六藝論》云：孔子既西狩獲麟，自號素王，為後世受命之君制明王之法。Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ See Nylan, “Many Dukes of Zhou,” 101.

⁵⁴⁹ As Nylan notes, as early as in the *Analecets* 7.5, the Duke of Zhou is represented as the “inspiration of Confucius.” Ibid., 94. Confucius is reported to have said, “How utterly have things gone to the bad with me! It is long now since I dreamed that I saw the Duke of Chou.” Waley, 123.

⁵⁵⁰ The *Zhengyi* says: “It is unknown whose theory it was that proposed that [Zuo] Qiuming was the ‘unofficial minister’” 其言丘明為素臣未知誰所說也。SSJZS 37.

The “King” recorded [in the *Annals*] was none other than King Ping [of Zhou]. The calendar employed was none other than Zhou standards. The “Duke” referred to was none other than Yin of Lu. Why would anyone suppose that Confucius intended to oust the Zhou and make Lu the kingly state instead? The Master said, “If anyone were to employ me, would I not make the Zhou in the east?” This was his intention.

Du Yu is well aware that Confucius could have chosen another vassal state’s calendar for his chronology in the *Annals*; after all, the *Bamboo Annals* used the so-called Xia calendar to recount events. Nonetheless, as Du stresses, Confucius continued to adopt the Zhou calendar, showing his deference to the Zhou court.⁵⁵¹ Just as Confucius continued to refer to the Zhou rulers by their royal title (i.e. “King Ping”) and the Lu rulers by their ducal titles (i.e. the “Duke”). Du Yu highlights these choices to demonstrate Confucius’ desire to perpetuate Lu’s ritual subordination to the Zhou overlords.

The last question lodged by Du Yu’s interlocutor concerns the year Confucius chose to conclude his *Annals*, an issue relating to Du’s conception of the Classic’s authorship. The Gongyang and Zuo Traditions have the Classic end on different years, set two years apart. The Gongyang version ends with the 14th year of Duke Ai (the year of the capture of the unicorn), while the Zuo version ends with the 16th year (the year of Confucius’ death), as Du Yu’s interlocutor notes:

The Gongyang version of the Classic concludes with the capture of the unicorn, whereas the Zuo version of the Classic ends with Confucius’ death. May I ask which is right?”

The question prompts Du Yu to give a satisfactory answer. The precise year in which Confucius began his composition and the year he ended are two sides of the same coin for Du Yu. To address the circumstances around the start and conclusion of Confucius’ project, Du first states a position that he subsequently overturns: “Theories say that when Confucius returned from Wey to Lu, he compiled the *Annals*. . .” This position reflects a tradition that dates the composition of the *Annals* to the eleventh year of Duke Ai, or three years before the capture of the unicorn. The *Zhengyi* attributes this tradition to a Gongyang scholar of the Western Jin, Kong Shuyuan 孔舒元,⁵⁵² considered one of the theorizers whom Du Yu would refute. In the *Analects*, Confucius says that when he returned to Lu from Wey, he arranged the music and rites,⁵⁵³ but the *Analects* makes no reference to Confucius’ compilation of his *Annals*. Thereupon, Du Yu gives the following reply to the interlocutor’s question about whether the Gongyang or the Zuo version of the Classic is the authentic one:

⁵⁵¹ Likewise, since the *Bamboo Annals* uses “King” 王 to refer to the Wei rulers of the Warring States, Du Yu may have considered that Duke Yin could have been addressed as “King” too, had Confucius truly wanted to elevate Lu into a “kingly state.”

⁵⁵² See SJJZS p. 36.

⁵⁵³ *Analects* 9.15

I answer: All of this diverges from what I have heard. Confucius said, “Since King Wen has died, is culture not lodged in me here?” This is the original intention behind his writing of the *Annals*. Sighing, he [Confucius] said, “The *feng* bird does not arrive and the Yellow River yields no chart. It is all over with me!” To my way of thinking, he was lamenting the state of the king’s governance at the time. The unicorn, the phoenix, and [the rest of the] five divine animals are all auspicious omens for the king. When the unicorn appeared at the wrong time, it called forth no response and lost its proper place. This is why the Sage was moved. As for ceasing to write after the last line about the capture of the unicorn, this [capture] was what had moved him to write. Therefore it was also where he ended [his text].

Du Yu considered the unicorn’s emergence untimely (“appeared at the wrong time”) because there was no true king presiding over the world at the time. Du borrows quotations from the *Analecks* to illustrate Confucius’ despair over the bleakness of his fate in a world without a Sage-ruler (“King Wen has died”; “it is all over with me”). This reading directly conflicts with the Gongyang idea that the unicorn appeared to herald Confucius, the uncrowned king.⁵⁵⁴ In Du Yu’s reading, however, Confucius identifies with the fate of the unicorn, which was also out of joint with the world (“lost its proper place”). Deeply moved by their parallel fates, Confucius was prompted to write the *Annals*. Du Yu depicts the deep pathos of the Sage, characterizing him not only as an archivist and a moralistic judge, but also as an individual deeply responsive to events. By making him a lyric figure as well, Du Yu adds a personal dimension to his official and moral personae.⁵⁵⁵

Du Yu is committed to the idea of authorship as a process in the author’s personal experience with a meaningful beginning and end. In an exceptional move, Du accepts the Gongyang terminus for the Classic in the fourteenth year of Duke Ai, rather than the Zuo Tradition’s sixteenth year. For Du Yu, were the text to continue for two more years, the Classic would fail to make for a compelling tale of authorship:

Past classicists thought that it took Confucius three years to produce the *Annals*, and that the completion of the work prompted the arrival of the unicorn. This theory is outlandish and preposterous enough. Yet the classicists further extended the Classic to the year of Confucius’ death. This is even more absurd.

Du Yu finds fault with past classicists’ notions that Confucius’ completion of his work had cosmic resonance through the mythical unicorn. Rejecting the Zuo Traditions upheld by these unidentified scholars, Du Yu subscribes to the same tradition as the *Shiji*, which says that the year of the unicorn’s capture coincided with Confucius’ decision to write.⁵⁵⁶ Going further than Sima Qian, however, Du conceives of the unicorn’s arrival as the direct impetus behind Confucius’ project. In a sense, Du Yu refuses to accept authorship as a superhuman act capable of effecting cosmic changes. His reasoning is that Confucius chose to conclude his Classic with

⁵⁵⁴ ZY 1.31.

⁵⁵⁵ In this instance, Du Yu appears to reflect the development of the personal lyric and private authorship in the Han or earlier.

⁵⁵⁶ See SJ 47.1942–3.

the line recording the event that serves to commemorate the human genesis of his project. Besides, Du Yu raises a practical consideration: as author of the text, Confucius could never have recorded his own death in the sixteenth year of Duke Ai. Du Yu blames the classicists for attaching more text to the Zuo Tradition version of the Classic than Confucius meant to do (“the classicists further extended the Classic to the year of Confucius’ death”). Despite Du Yu’s vigorous opposition to the sixteenth year of Duke Ai as the valid terminus for the Classic, this date was still made authoritative in early Tang.⁵⁵⁷

Du Yu’s stance on the ‘correct’ version of the Classic nonetheless shows that he was not invariably a booster of the Zuo Tradition version. Du asserts that the entries after the unicorn’s capture cannot possibly convey any of Confucius’ judgments:

Based on the facts that the Gongyang version of the Classic concludes with the capture of the unicorn, and that the Zuo Tradition does not count She of Xiaozhu as among the “three rebels,” I think that Confucius was moved by the unicorn to compose the *Annals*. His composition began with the capture of the unicorn, so his text ends where it begins. Only this accords with the truth.

The line “the Zuo Tradition does not count She of Xiaozhu as among the ‘three rebels’ ” is a compressed allusion to the entry that immediately follows the entry on the capture of the unicorn. This entry from the *Annals* reads:

小邾射以句繹來奔。⁵⁵⁸

She of Xiaozhu took Gouyi with him and fled here [the state of Lu].

Even though this entry is also dated to the 14th year of Duke Ai, Du Yu thinks it does not belong to the text compiled by Confucius. Thus, for Du Yu, the line pronounces no judgment against She of Xiaozhu, unlike prior records of expatriates presenting bribes to Lu. In Duke Zhao, 31st year, the Zuo Tradition explains the scribal principles for expressing this reprehensible act:

Annals:

冬，黑肱以濫來奔。⁵⁵⁹

Winter, Hegong took Lan with him and fled here.

Zuo Tradition:

以地叛，雖賤，必書地，以名其人，終為不義，弗可滅已。... 邾庶其、莒牟夷、邾黑肱以土地出，求食而已，不求其名。賤而必書。... 三叛人名，以懲不義，數惡無禮...⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ The Tang version still ended with the sixteenth year. SSJZS 42.

⁵⁵⁸ Yang Bojun, 1680.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 1510.

Because he betrayed his state by giving away territory [to the kingdom of Lu], even though he was of humble status, the text must record the territory and give the personal name of the person. Whoever commits acts of unrighteousness at the end shall not have their personal names obliterated. . . . Shuqi of Zhu, Mouyi of Ju, and Heigong of Zhu brought territories with them when they fled their home states. They sought survival only and did not seek a good name for themselves. Though of humble status, their personal names are recorded. . . . The personal names of the three rebels are used to punish the unrighteous and to criticize wrongdoing and impropriety.

The Zuo Tradition explains that because the Zhou Son of Heaven did not ordain ministers from small states, their status was considered so low (*jian* 賤) that their names would normally not be individually entered into the record. That their personal names did appear in the Classic means that Confucius supposedly broke convention on purpose, so that he might make examples out of them for their unprincipled behavior (“punish the unrighteous and to criticize wrong-doing and impropriety”). Thus, in Du Yu’s “Preface,” the phrase “three rebels” refers to the figures enumerated in the Zuo Tradition passage above. In Du Yu’s estimation, because She of Xiaozhu does not figure among these three names, he was not judged by Confucius, even though the entry for him appears in exactly the same format as for the other three traitors.⁵⁶¹ Du Yu adduces this example to show that Confucius could not have written any of the entries after the entry on the unicorn’s capture.

In the final line of his “Preface,” Du Yu states the point where his agreement with the Gongyang Tradition ends: he refuses to adopt the Gongyang interpretation of the significance of the unicorn’s capture for Confucius.⁵⁶² Quoting from the Gongyang Tradition, he concludes that this interpretation is untenable: “As for Confucius ‘raising his sleeve to brush [tears off] his face’ and saying, ‘My way has come to an end,’ one should definitely not accept this interpretation.” Du Yu objects to this scenario of Confucius’ despair, believing the capture of the unicorn to be Confucius’ inspiration for authoring the Classic. For Du Yu, Confucius’ way could not have “come to its end” at the same time he was inspired to write. The Gongyang reading is too defeatist in Du Yu’s view. The Gongyang depiction of a Confucius overcome by emotion conflicts with Du Yu’s idea of Confucius as the emotionally sensitive but undefeated creator and preserver of a cultural, political, and ethical legacy. Whereas the Gongyang Tradition fits well enough with Du Yu’s notion of authorship, the Gongyang interpretation runs counter to Du Yu’s conception of the *Annals* as a work imbued with personal optimism.

Conclusion

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 1512–3.

⁵⁶¹ The *Zhengyi* explains this further. See SSJZS p. 42.

⁵⁶² The *Zhengyi* commentators say: “Since Du already accepts the Gongyang version of the Classic, which stops at the capture of the unicorn, and the Gongyang continues with this text after the capture of the unicorn, Du is afraid that others would accept it. Therefore he specifies that ‘this interpretation is not worth taking’ ” 杜既取公羊經止獲麟，而公羊獲麟之下即有此傳，嫌其并亦取之，故云亦無取焉。 Ibid.

As shown in his “Preface,” Du Yu is fundamentally committed to the conception of the *Annals* as a corpus reflecting the Western Zhou bureaucratic, cultural, and political legacy, in addition to Confucius’ ethical vision and personal experiences. He departs from his predecessors when emphasizing the human, rather than the divine, perspective of Confucius’ work. The preponderance of the Classic, he posits, consists of borrowed materials from the Lu archives. According to the rationale Du provides, the state of Lu was the last defender of Western Zhou institutions and political ideals.

As for textual features that bear the personal imprint of Confucius, as Du explains, they include the Sage’s editorial choices to begin his work with a period representing his political hopes, and also to end it on a year reflecting his personal inspiration. Du redefines Confucius as a human author who was a restrained editor and an emotional human being with no aspirations to become a ruler himself. In these ways, Du Yu reconfigures Han notions about the *Annals* as a cosmological and moral text. As explored in the next chapter, Du’s adaptations position the Zuo Tradition as a complex apparatus for interpreting the different facets of the Classic.

Chapter 6

Du Yu's Creation of a Hermeneutical System (Western Jin)

Breakthroughs

Du Yu puts forth a unique vision of the Zuo Tradition that excludes consideration of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions as viable systems of interpretations for the *Annals*. His vision of the Classic and Zuo Tradition as a single paradigm precludes any other exegetical tradition from having an authoritative place. Part of Du Yu's innovation thus lies in his structural conception of the interdependency between this pair of texts, while the other part of Du Yu's innovation lies in his attention to the emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic dimensions of the text's interpretation. Thus aside from structural concerns, Du Yu allows expression and appreciation to enter into not only the processes of authorship but also of explication.

Of all the Zuo Tradition scholars studied thus far, only Chen Yuan and Wang Chong had acknowledged the affective aspects of the readers' encounter with the Zuo Tradition. But Du Yu goes beyond these Han scholars, characterizing the reading the Zuo Tradition as a sublime experience that satisfies and refreshes the soul. Du Yu's systematic sophistication and lyrical depth accommodates both complex rules and free exploration, marking him as a real innovator (at least judging from extant works). These innovations eventually propelled the Zuo Tradition to attain an unprecedented level of official authority in the Tang court, even if Du Yu's legacy quickly came under critical scrutiny in the Song dynasty (960–1279) and later periods.

Du Yu's policy of exclusion

Given Du Yu's commitment to the Zuo Tradition as the only tool capable of recovering Confucius' messages from the Spring and Autumn, he naturally uses strong arguments to exclude the other exegetical traditions. In his "Preface," Du highlights his preference for the Zuo Tradition's interpretations, which suggests that this exclusivity was unusual. The *Jinshu* biography of Liu Zhao 劉兆 (?-?), a Western Jin contemporary of Du Yu, reveals the common practice of incorporating the Zuo, Gongyang, and Guliang Traditions into one compilation; Liu Zhao set out to "harmonize" the differences among the three exegetical traditions even as he "composed an explication of the Zuo Tradition" (*wei Chunqiu Zuoshi jie* 為春秋左氏解). Liu entitled the work the *Complete Synthesis* (*Quanzong* 全綜), with the primary section of Zuo Tradition commentaries written in black ink to distinguish this stratum from the strata of Gongyang and Guliang commentaries written in red ink.⁵⁶³ Other sources such as the *Sanguo zhi*

⁵⁶³ The biography of Liu Zhao says: he "considered the the *Annals* to be one Classic while the three Traditions each take a different path, and the discussions of right and wrong among the myriad classicists chaotic. So he thought about the differences of the three traditions, and synthesized and explained them. He compiled explanations for the *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition, and entitled the work the *Complete Synthesis*. He incorporated the commentaries on the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions into the Classic and the [Zuo] Tradition, using red ink to differentiate between them" 以春秋一經而三家殊塗，諸儒是非之議紛然，互為讐敵，乃思三家之異，

and the *Suishu* bibliographic treatise likewise indicate that other Zuo Tradition scholars of the Han-Wei periods used black and red inks to distinguish the Zuo version from the Gongyang and Guliang versions.⁵⁶⁴ By contrast, Du Yu exclusively features the Zuo Tradition in his *Jijie*, without adding in the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions.

Du Yu makes it a point to exclude the other two traditions, in other words. He criticizes earlier scholars for their insufficient commitment to the Zuo Tradition: “They generally regurgitate each other’s explanations. When they advance [interpretations], they fail to compare the phrases of the Classic to exhaustively explore their variety. And when they retreat, they fail to guard the Zuo Tradition of [Zuo] Qiuming.” Declaring sole allegiance to the Zuo Tradition, Du suggests that any citation of the Gongyang or Guliang interpretations is a sign of superficiality and befuddlement: “They even superficially cite the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. All this was enough to make a mess of things.”⁵⁶⁵ He also claims that only the Zuo Tradition can bring out the underlying structure of the Classic: “The systematic principles of the Classic always emerge in the Zuo Tradition.”

As a counter-weight to previous Zuo Tradition commentaries, Du Yu’s *Chunqiu jingzhuān jijie* stands out from that of He Yan’s (193-249) *Lunyu jijie* 論語集解. The common use of the term *Collected Explanations* (*Jijie* 集解) belies a key difference between the two compilations: Whereas Du Yu positions himself against previous commentators, He Yan gives due credit to the best readings of earlier commentators by naming them.⁵⁶⁶ Unlike He Yan, Du Yu positions himself as a purist. Nor does Du Yu invoke past authorities when insisting upon the authority of his new work. In that respect, he is even bolder than He Xiu, who expresses deference to Master Huwu’s commentary.⁵⁶⁷ Be that as it may, Du Yu nevertheless finds it

合而通之。…為《春秋左氏解》，名曰《全綜》，公羊、穀梁解詁皆納經傳中，朱書以別之。 *Jinshu* 91.2350.

⁵⁶⁴ The biography of Dong Yu 董遇 (d. ca. 230) states: He “was skilled in the Zuo Tradition. Moreover, he composed the *Zhūmò biēyì*” 善左氏傳，更為作《朱墨別異》. *Sanguo zhi* 13.420. According to the bibliography in the *Suishu*: Jia Kui wrote the *Chunqiu Zuoshi jingzhuān zhūmò lì* 《春秋左氏經傳朱墨例》. *Suishu* 32.928. Although these references from the standard histories are not terribly clear about the precise appearance and format of these *zhūmò* 朱墨 works, Wang Baoxuan explains the mechanics of the use of the black and red inks roughly in this way: Black ink is used to copy out the text of the Classic, the Zuo Tradition, and commentaries (*zhu* 注) for them. Then red ink is used to copy out the text of the Classic, the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, and commentaries for them. Wang, *Jingūwen jingxue*, 186.

⁵⁶⁵ This distaste for the mixture of interpretative traditions shown here is echoed later in Fan Ning’s 范甯 (Eastern Jin) “Preface” to the *Chunqiu Guliang zhuān* 春秋穀梁傳. Fan also strives to advocate on behalf of the Guliang Tradition by ‘purifying’ it: “Although those who explicate the Guliang Tradition are close to ten schools, they are all superficial scholarship and do not follow the model of their teachers. Their language, logic, and textual evidence have nothing to recommend them. Moreover they draw upon the Zuo Tradition and Gongyang Tradition to explain this tradition [the Guliang]. With their contradictory language and conflicting meanings, this does harm” 釋《穀梁傳》者雖近十家，皆庸淺末學，不經師匠。辭理典據既無可觀，又引《左氏》、《公羊》以解此傳，文義違反，斯害也已。 *Shisanjing zhushu: Chunqiu Guliang zhuān zhushu*, 9.

⁵⁶⁶ Qing scholars, such as Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697–1748), Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 (1746–1809), and Ding Yan 丁晏 (1794–1875), to name a few, criticize Du Yu precisely for his refusal to cite the scholars whose interpretations he adopted. See Luo Junfeng 羅軍鳳, “Qian Jia Hanxue shiyezhong de Du zhu” 乾嘉漢學視野中的杜注, 254–7.

⁵⁶⁷ From He Xiu’s “Preface” to his *Chunqiu Gongyang jiegū* 春秋公羊解詁: “Scholars in the past loosely followed the organized norms [i.e. commentaries] of Master Huwu, obtaining much of his correct interpretations.

necessary to address other commentators of the Zuo Tradition his readers may have admired, so he gives his opinions regarding Liu Xin (46 BCE–23 CE), Jia Kui (30–101), Xu Shu 許淑 (fl. 29), and Ying Rong 穎容 (d. ca. late 190’s).⁵⁶⁸ Like the standard historians Ban Gu and Fan Ye, Du Yu grants special distinction to Liu Xin, crediting Liu with illuminating the “great principles” (*dayi* 大義), the meanings of moral significance that emerge from the reading of the Zuo Tradition against the *Annals*. To Du Yu, Liu Xin is the undisputed founder of Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition, and all others were Liu Xin’s successors (“outstanding classicists of the past”), whereas Ying Rong provided only “shallow and superficial” scholarship. Du’s language betrays a strong determination to supplant other commentarial traditions with his own works, comprised of his “Preface,” the *Chunqiu Jingzhuan jijie*, and the *Chunqiu Shili*.

To bind the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition together more tightly, Du Yu correlates their contents year by year. The editors of *Zhengyi* assert that Du Yu was the first scholar to have interweaved the two works into one edition, visually and structurally treating them as one inseparable unit.⁵⁶⁹ But Du was hardly the first scholar to have brought a Classic and an exegetical tradition together. Based on the fact that Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) compiled together what were (before his time) the separate “wings” of the *Zhouyi* with the Hexagrams and Line Texts, Du Yu might have been following a popular practice known decades before his compilation of the *Chunqiu Jingzhuan jijie*.⁵⁷⁰ In his preface, Du Yu states the following about his commentary:

I cut up the years of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition, correlated them with each other, aligned their categories of significance, explicated each of them in turn, and entitled my work the *Collected Explanations of the Classic and Tradition*.

Later scholars have assumed that he took two separately circulating editions of the *Annals* and the Zuo Tradition,⁵⁷¹ splicing them together by year, such that the events occurring in the same year from both works are conjoined.⁵⁷² Regardless of whether Du Yu introduced a technical

Therefore I include them and make them adhere to the standard” 往者略依胡毋生條例，多得其正。故遂隱括使就繩墨焉。SSJZS: *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan zhushu*, 14.

⁵⁶⁸ The reader of Du Yu may be compared to the implied reader of Wang Bi’s commentary. According to Wagner, he is “not a student or acolyte but a highly educated person familiar with the text, which he knows by heart. . . . It is a critical and potentially hostile reader who approaches Wang’s Commentary with a previous construction and reading routine in mind.” Wagner, *Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, 299. Xu Shu appears in HHS 36.1228. He sided with Han Xin in the debate with Fan Sheng. In Ying Rong’s biography, he is mentioned to have been an expert in the Zuo Tradition only and no other tradition. He was recruited to be a governor (*taishou* 太守) by Liu Biao, but refused the appointment. HHS 79B.2584.

⁵⁶⁹ See SSJZS 33.

⁵⁷⁰ Wagner grants that we have “no manuscript evidence of the exact way in which text and commentary were interlaced.” Therefore it is difficult to arrive at firm conclusions about the visual format of Du Yu’s *Jijie*. Wagner, 258.

⁵⁷¹ For example, the *Siku* 四庫 preface to the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 says: “Lu Deming’s *Jingdian shiwen* says: ‘In the past, the Classic of Confucius and the Zuo Tradition of Qiuming circulated separately. Du combined them to explicate them.’ In that case the Zuo Tradition had its [own version of the] Classic” 陸德明《經典釋文》曰：舊夫子之經與丘明之傳各異，杜氏合而釋之。則左傳又自有經。SSJZS 2.

⁵⁷² The post-Tang Stone Classics of Du Yu’s version of the Zuo Tradition with commentary exist only in fragments. Ruan Yuan’s preface says: “The people of Tang treated as authoritative the commentary of Du Yu, [so]

innovation in format, his intent is clear from this passage. He desires to blend the Classic and Zuo Tradition into one seamless commentarial tradition of his own.⁵⁷³

Zuo Qiuming as student-disciple

Having devoted the first third of his “Preface” to a discussion of Western Zhou institutions and Confucius, Du Yu turns to the figure behind the Zuo Tradition, Zuo Qiuming. In the late Western Han, Liu Xin names Zuo Qiuming as the author of the Zuo Tradition, but he fails to specify the nature of the relationship of Zuo Qiuming to Confucius.⁵⁷⁴ In early Eastern Han, Chen Yuan, a supporter of the Zuo Tradition, says that Zuo Qiuming is the most faithful representative of Confucius. Then Ban Gu says that Zuo Qiuming personally encountered Confucius and shared his ethical horizon. In the “Yiwen zhi” of the *Hanshu*, Ban Gu adds and comments on the collaborative relationship between the Master and Zuo as they compiled historical records together, placing Zuo in the best possible position to substantiate the intended meanings of Confucius. Jia Kui likewise conceives of Zuo Qiuming as the most trustworthy proponent of Confucius’ vision.

Building on these previous narratives, Du Yu claims Zuo Qiuming was the recipient of the written Classic from Confucius. For the first time, the relationship between the master and Zuo Qiuming is based on the transfer of a text: “Zuo Qiuming received the Classic from Confucius and considered the Classic a text that could not be emended.” As figured here, Zuo Qiuming was the privileged student-disciple,⁵⁷⁵ and faithful guardian of the infallible truths conveyed through the Classic “that could not be emended.” If the previous versions of Zuo Qiuming highlighted his concern over divergent interpretations circulating, Du Yu’s version treats the Classic as a perfect text.

in the [Later] Shu [934–965], the Classic, Zuo Tradition, and Du’s commentary were carved as part of the Stone Classics. But the Shu Stones are completely gone, and only a few hundred characters survive in extant rubbings. In the Later Tang dynasty [923–936], the scholar-minister Tian Min and others were ordered by imperial command to edit the Nine Classics, and to carve the originals at the Directorate of Education. They also carved the Classic, Zuo Tradition, and Commentary together, yet most of it no longer remains today” 唐人專宗杜注，惟蜀石經兼刻經、傳、杜注文，而蜀石盡亡，世間搨本僅存數百字。後唐詔儒臣田敏等校九經，鏤本於國子監，此亦經、傳、注兼刻者，而今多不存。SSJZS 3.

⁵⁷³ Kong Yingda’s “Preface to *Chunqiu Zhengyi*” 春秋正義序 says: “Du Yuankai [Yu] of the Jin period wrote the *Zuoshi jijie*. His commentary takes the Zuo Tradition of Qiuming and utilizes it to explicate Confucius’ Classic. This is what is meant by the son responding to the mother, and mixing glue into the lacquer. Even if someone had wished them to come apart, could he have made it so? Today, if we are to evaluate the merits and demerits of these past classicists, Du Yu stands unsurpassed. Consequently [his commentary on the Zuo Tradition] had been transmitted from the Jin and Song dynasties down to this day” 晉世杜元凱又為左氏集解，專取丘明之傳，以釋孔氏之經，所謂子應乎母，以膠投漆，雖欲勿合，其可離乎！今校先儒優劣，杜為甲矣，故晉宋傳授，以至于今。SSJZS 9.

⁵⁷⁴ Liu Xin’s “Letter to the Academicians” says: “The *Annals* of the Zuo Tradition, compiled by [Zuo] Qiuming.” HS 36.1969.

⁵⁷⁵ The *Zhengyi* also says that Zuo “received the Classic from Zhongni,” not necessarily in the sense of personally receiving the text handed by Confucius, but in the more general sense of gaining possession of the text in some way: “[Zuo] Qiuming created the Zuo Tradition for the Classic. Therefore it was said that he ‘received the Classic from Zhongni.’ It is not necessarily the case that he personally received instruction from Confucius, nor that Confucius commanded him to create the Zuo Tradition” 丘明為經作傳，故言受經於仲尼，未必面親授受，使之作傳也。SSJZS 18.

Schematization of the interdependent Classic and Zuo Tradition

Du Yu's penchant for schemes and structure probably reflects a scholastic trend that was gaining momentum around the time of the fall of the Eastern Han. Wang Bi's commentarial traditions are a good case in point, for Wang sees the *Daodejing* as a sophisticated system that, in the words of Rudolf Wagner, "imploded to a finite and small number of closely related issues which all hinge on one single relationship."⁵⁷⁶ Du's categorization of issues exhibits a similar drive to circumscribe meaning, rather than to stifle interpretations, generating meaning within some broad parameters. His structural organization of meaning is part and parcel of his conception of the *Annals* as a microcosm of Western Zhou institutions, and the Zuo Tradition as the exponent *par excellence* of that system.

The four methods of structural support

In conceptualizing the Zuo Tradition, Du Yu takes care to underline the impossibility that an exegetical tradition might impair the integrity of the Classic. Because of the perfection of the Classic, the Zuo Tradition can only support it. According to Du Yu, the Zuo Tradition provides this support in the following schematic way:

Therefore at times the Zuo Tradition precedes the Classic to begin the account of an event, and other times it continues after the Classic to conclude the significance of an event. Sometimes it accords with the Classic to delineate its principles, while other times it is interweaved with the Classic to reconcile differences. Following upon the significance [of the Classic], [the Zuo Tradition] sets forth interpretations about it.

While this passage clearly conveys the general point that the Zuo Tradition never contravenes the sense of the *Annals*, the specific application of each the four clauses is more ambiguous. The *Zhengyi* commentators furnish concrete examples to show that these four ways contribute the whole of the Zuo Tradition's procedure.⁵⁷⁷ While Du Yu may not be suggesting anything as rigid as this, he does illustrate the ways in which the Zuo Tradition elucidates the implicit meanings of the Classic ("Following upon the significance [of the Classic], [the Zuo Tradition] sets forth interpretations about it"). By implication, despite the voluminous text of the Zuo Tradition, it has no surplus material that fails to interpret Confucius' messages. By delving into the Zuo Tradition's methodology, Du Yu goes beyond his predecessors' rhetorical assertions about its function, disproving the charge that the Zuo Tradition contains accounts that are independent of the *Annals*.

Du Yu does raise one limited exception to his schema, however: he acknowledges that there are places in the *Annals* that the Zuo Tradition fails to interpret. There are entries in the

⁵⁷⁶ Wagner, 300.

⁵⁷⁷ The *Zhengyi* says: "Although the text of the Zuo Tradition is extensive, it does not go beyond these four formats. Therefore Du Yu wrote these four lines to clarify it" 傳文雖多，不出四體，故以此四句明之也。SSJZS, 19.

Annals for which the Zuo Tradition offers no corresponding interpretations: “Where there is a doubling of norms [in the *Annals*], it reflects the old records and inherited writings. Zuo Qiuming passed over such places without explicating them, since these were not the essential ideas the Sage redacted.” On the surface of it, it is not at all clear what “doubling of norms” means. Short of other surviving subcommentaries on Du Yu’s “Preface” except those in the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, we can only consider his intended reference. According to the *Zhengyi* commentators, “This section explains the meaning of where the Classic exists with no interpretation from the Zuo Tradition” 此說有經無傳之意。⁵⁷⁸ There can be two identical entries in the *Annals* where Zuo Qiuming only troubles himself to interpret one of them, leaving the other devoid of explanation. For instance, in the first year of Duke Huan, one *Annals* entry reads: “In the autumn, there was a great flood.” 秋，大水。⁵⁷⁹ The Zuo Tradition explains: “Generally, when water washes over the plains, that is called a ‘great flood’ ” 凡平原出水為大水。⁵⁸⁰ In the seventh year of Duke Zhuang, another entry reads again: “In the autumn, there was a great flood.”⁵⁸¹ But this time the Zuo Tradition omits any corresponding explanation. As the *Zhengyi* argues, Zuo Qiuming knew that the duplicate entry does not contain any special significance that merits explanation.⁵⁸² This argument presupposes that the text of the Classic is not equally morally significant everywhere.

A second corollary to Du’s argument holds that the Zuo Tradition is the only exegetical tradition capable of drawing the line between the places where Confucius signifies the exemplary Western Zhou norms and where he signifies his personal moral judgments. Under this system of signification, whenever the Zuo Tradition uses the word *fan* 凡, it pinpoints the precise spot where the Classic preserved archival records to denote exemplary norms. They are, as Du Yu phrases them, “not the essential ideas the Sage redacted,” that is, not lessons the Sage wished to impart. This is Du Yu’s way of assuring that Zuo Qiuming was not remiss explicating the Classic, but only that the duplicate entry does not serve an edifying function.

Tri-partite structure of the Classic

Only after Du Yu eliminated any lingering notion of the Zuo Tradition’s independence does he introduce the linguistic apparatus the Zuo Tradition employs to signal different layers of material in the *Annals*. In the next section of the “Preface,” Du Yu lays out three strata of the Classic: the institutional norms of Western Zhou, the implied judgments of Confucius, and the archival records that carry no particular ethical significance. Treating the Zuo Tradition as a template of meaning, he worked backward to infer the tri-partite structure of the Classic from three different signifiers within the Zuo Tradition.

The “Preface” explains that the Zuo Tradition uses the signifier *fan* 凡 to indicate the first stratum of material in the Classic. This is the stratum consisting of the expressions that convey the state protocols and institutional norms established by the Duke of Zhou himself:

⁵⁷⁸ ZY 1.15.

⁵⁷⁹ Yang Bojun, 82.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Yang Bojun, 171.

⁵⁸² SSJZS 19.

As for the Zuo Tradition's usage of [the term] “generally” (*fan*) to articulate a norm, all such places exemplify the normative institutions of state governance, the transmitted models of the Duke of Zhou, and the traditional conventions of scribal recording, which Confucius followed in his compilation, employing them to make the overall structure for the Classic.

In this passage, Du Yu equates “general norms” (*fanli* 凡例) with the Western Zhou state institutions, the legacy of the Duke of Zhou, and scribal protocols. Du makes them synonymous entities that are mutually reflective and reinforcing. In one bold stroke, he collapses these things together to characterize the basic foundation of the *Annals* (“the overall structure for the Classic”).⁵⁸³ The series proceeds from the general to the particular, such that the governing bodies (“normative institutions of state governance”) suggest the broadest significance, next come the enduring traditions (“transmitted models”), and lastly, the particular manifestation of these traditions in historical documentation (“traditional conventions of scribal recording”). While Du Yu groups these subjects under the designation *fan* 凡, he also narrows their purpose and function. Together these items constitute the exemplary institutions Confucius adopted with little modification. Thus, according to Du Yu's schema, the Zuo Tradition employs the linguistic marker *fan* 凡 to designate the institutional norms as the primary category of meaning in the Classic.

The next section of the “Preface” introduces the stratum of the *Annals* that bears a much stronger imprint of Confucius' editing, Confucius' personal ideas about the moral justice, which are still discernible in the Classic:

[Confucius] obscured the evident and illumined the subtle, editing them to form categories of significance. These are all places where he accords with the old norms to express their significance, and points to the actions and events in order to set our standards of praise and blame.

This passage causes considerable dissension among the Six Dynasties commentators, as the *Zhengyi* tells us.⁵⁸⁴ The *Zuozhuan Zhengyi* posits a different reading of the phrase *weixian chanyou* 微顯闡幽, such that both “obscure” 微 and “illumine” 闡 are the verbs and “the evident” 顯 and “the subtle” 幽 are their respective objects. With this latter interpretation, Confucius was the agent who used subtle language such as euphemisms to veil blinding truths and used bold language in the form of pronouncements to uncover otherwise obscure facts.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ The *Zhengyi* corroborates Du Yu's innovation on this point thus: “There have been many past classicists who interpreted the *Annals*. They all said that [Zuo] Qiuming created the Zuo Traditions with his ideas and explained the Classic of Zhongni, and that there are no distinctions between the old and new in the norms, whether or not *fan* is invoked or not” 先儒之說春秋者多矣，皆云丘明以意作傳，說仲尼之經，凡與不凡無新舊之例。SSJZS 21.

⁵⁸⁴ The phrase *weixian chanyou* 微顯闡幽 is a citation from the second section of the *Xici* 繫辭 of the *Changes*. The editors of *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義 interpret the compounds *wei xian* 微顯 and *chan you* 闡幽 to both mean the eventual illumination of something initially dark, such that “the obscure” (*wei* 微) becomes a noun object while “evident” (*xian* 顯) becomes the resultant quality, and “illumined” (*chan* 闡) becomes the verb while “subtle” (*you* 幽) becomes the original quality. Wang Bi, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, 638.

⁵⁸⁵ This is the interpretation suggested by the *Zhengyi*. See SSJZS 23.

Although the referent *qi* 其 in *qi weixian chanyou* 其微顯闡幽 is ambiguous, possibly pointing to Zuo Qiuming/Zuo Tradition (as Liu Xuan 劉炫, the commentator takes it),⁵⁸⁶ the *Zhengyi* commentators adjudicate the referent to be Confucius. Then Zuo Qiuming becomes the subject of the subsequent phrases “accords with the old norms to express their significance, and points to the actions and events in order to set our standards of praise and blame.”⁵⁸⁷ Possibly, Confucius is the agent of these actions, since throughout the “Preface” and his commentary, Du Yu conceives of him as the primary moral agent who infuses inherited material with his own ideas of right and wrong. Perhaps Du Yu leaves the agent deliberately ambiguous so that the roles of Confucius and Zuo Qiuming merge, insofar as they share the same overall ethical objectives.

The next lines specify the linguistic markers within the Zuo Tradition that indicate the parts of the *Annals* that carry the strong ethical messages Confucius wished to convey. In the following clauses, the subject is indisputably the Zuo Tradition:

Where the Zuo Tradition uses the phrases “it is written,” “it is not written,” “it is first recorded,” “therefore it is recorded,” “it is not verbalized,” “it is not designated as,” “the text says,” and the like, these are the means by which the Zuo Tradition distinguishes the new from the old in order to set forth the great significance [of Confucius’ teachings]. These are called transformed norms.

In Du Yu’s schematic picture, this second stratum of the *Annals* consists of the new norms Confucius created by rewording the original entries in the Lu chronicle. The Zuo Tradition has the wherewithal (“the methods”) to help readers distinguish among these different strata in the Classic (“differentiate the new from the old”).⁵⁸⁸ Du Yu suggests that, be they the “old” norms established by the Duke of Zhou or the “new” norms instituted by Confucius, both are still rule-based norms. Du Yu applies the term “transformed norms” to this category of “new” principles, calling them (*weizhi* 謂之) as if by custom. But it is likely Du himself creates this nomenclature, since the separation of the Classic into “old” versus “new” strata began with Du.⁵⁸⁹ The “Preface” proceeds to refine this second level of meaning attributed to Confucius, by Du Yu’s discussion of the personal designs of Confucius not reflected in his editing:

⁵⁸⁶ See Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ The *Zhengyi* says: “The preface here mainly discusses the creation of the Zuo Tradition, yet He [Daoyang], Shen [Wenhe], and the various classicists all regarded this to be discussing the Classic. This is not recognizing the flow of the argument and erroneously missing Du Yu’s point” 此序主論作傳，而賀沈諸儒皆以為經解之，是不識文勢而謬失杜旨。Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ In the Southern Song, Zhu Xi (1130–1200 CE) expresses disbelief in this conception of the *Annals*: “By the time of Confucius, the way of the august ones, emperors, kings, and hegemony had died out. Therefore Confucius made the *Annals*. He based it on the truth of other events and copied them there, to make people see that the events of those days were like this. How could one know whether he used old scribal records or not? Now people willfully say that this character belongs to the language of Confucius, and that one does not. But how is one to verify?” 到孔子時，皇、帝、王、伯之道埽地，故孔子作春秋，據他事實寫在那裏，教人見得當時事是如此，安知用舊史與不用舊史？今硬說那箇字是孔子文，那箇字是舊史文，如何驗得。 *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, 83.2145.

⁵⁸⁹ The *Zhengyi* says: “Before the time of Du Yu, no one was aware of the difference between the new and old [‘norms’]. Now that he designates them the ‘transformed norms,’ this is Du clarifying it himself in order to make others understand” 自杜以前不知有新舊之異，今言謂之變例，是杜自明之以曉人也。SSJZS 24.

In this case (然), there are also things which the scribes did not record but which Confucius considered of significance. Such perhaps are [also] new conceptions in the *Annals*. For this reason, the Zuo Tradition does not use “generally” (*fan*), but indirectly gives a full account instead.

Du uses the word “in this case” to signal that within the category of “new norms,” there is a subcategory of entries that represents the possibility that Confucius found nothing to edit despite his desire to convey his particular judgment on the matter. (This at least is the *Zhengyi* commentators’ interpretation, which I find logically consistent with Du Yu’s schema).⁵⁹⁰ Faced with a gap in the scribal record, how was Confucius to express himself if his role was limited to that of an editor, as posited by Du Yu? Solving this awkwardness in his conception, Du proposes that in such instances, Confucius’ judgments would still be apparent even if he did not edit anything and simply inherited the lacunae, for no other reason than that the Zuo Tradition would make the appropriate explanations.

Since Confucius did not technically make any edits in this layer, the Zuo Tradition does not use explicit markers (such as *fan* 凡 or *bushu* 不書) to point out where they are. Instead, says Du Yu, the Zuo Tradition switches to the use of flexible language to bring out the Sage’s messages on a case-by-case basis (as it “indirectly gives a full account instead”).⁵⁹¹ In Du’s conception, the Zuo Tradition is perfectly capable of discerning and representing Confucius’ voice, which would otherwise be lost in the language of archival material he adopted.

Du Yu introduces the third layer of material in the Classic with the same introductory particle as the ones used to introduce the other two levels. He uses the character *qi* 其 again, in keeping with his stylistic choice in *qi fa fan yi yanli* 其發凡以言例 and *qi weixian chanyou* 其微顯闡幽: “Where the Classic has no norms of significance, and merely follows the deeds and events in speaking about them, the Zuo Tradition would convey the gist of it only, as these places do not consist of norms.” Du allows for a category of meaning in the Classic that lies outside of the system of signification he has been explicating thus far, admitting that the meaning of every utterance cannot be automatically deduced or derived from the Zuo Tradition’s system of signification. In fact, the Zuo Tradition proffers no ready explanation for large portions of the Classic; it would merely give a limited reading of the events (“would convey the gist of it”). In

⁵⁹⁰ The *Zhengyi* says: “Where the old records did not document anything, there was nothing for [Confucius] to edit. Therefore here [Du Yu] distinguishes it. If there is also where the scribes did not record anything, but it accords with the conceptions of Confucius, then Confucius would take it as [points of great] significance” 其舊史不書則無可刊正，故此又辯之亦有史所不書，正合仲尼意者，仲尼即以爲義。SSJZS 24. This is a paraphrase of Du Yu’s explanation in the “Final Chapter” (*Zhongpian* 終篇) of his *Chunqiu shili*, for there he says: “Even though this is what the old text did not record, the event accords with the conceptions of Confucius, and he adopts and uses it. These are none other than the new conceptions of Confucius” 雖是舊文不書，而事合仲尼之意，仲尼因而用之，即是仲尼新意。Du Yu, *Chunqiu Shili*, 15.661.

⁵⁹¹ Although it is tempting to read Du Yu’s language as describing the extended language of narration in the Zuo Tradition with no prescribed meaning, the *Zhengyi* reminds us that the preface is still discoursing on the realm of Confucius’ ethical import, even if it is not the kind that is automatically visible through linguistic markers: “Not to use ‘*fan*’ nor provide a commentary on every event—this is ‘sinuously giving free passage’ ” 不言凡而每事發傳，是其曲暢。SSJZS 25.

admitting the presence of non-normative material in the Classic, Du Yu considers the text a partly neutral text in terms of morality.

In emphasizing this neutral character of the *Annals* in some places, Du Yu's conception also conveniently locates a function for the large swaths of text in the Zuo Tradition that convey no normative moral significance. Du Yu removes the expectation that the Zuo Tradition should work uniformly as a decoding machine. Du could not hope to construct the Zuo Tradition's -to-one correspondence with the Classic. Thereupon, he re-conceptualizes the Classic as consisting of both paradigmatic and non-paradigmatic material, such that the text can retain a sacred function, even if it outwardly resembles state archival records such as the *Bamboo Annals* (see discussion in Chapter Five).

Five categories of "norms"

In an uncharacteristic move, Du Yu provides a bridge leading to the next section of the "Preface" concerning the creation of the "norms" spoken of earlier. This transitional sentence neatly sums up the forgoing and succeeding sections: "Thereupon, those [above] are the three forms (三體) the Zuo Tradition sets forth, and these [below] are five [types of] circumstances (五情) governing the making of norms." According to the schema laid out by Du Yu previously, the "three forms" are the vehicles through which the Zuo Tradition indicates the strata composing the *Annals*: the "general norms" (*fanli* 凡例) the "transformed norms" (*bianli* 變例) and "places [that] do not consist of norms" (*feili* 非例). Without the guidance of the Zuo Tradition, those who study the Classic would be bereft of the linguistic markers (*fan* 凡, *bushu* 不書, etc.) for discerning which parts of the Classic express the Western Zhou legacy, or Confucius' judgments, or which simply document events. Having identified the "three forms," Du then distinguishes the types of concrete historical circumstances out of which these "norms" arose. In keeping with the schematic nature of his "Preface," Du Yu limits these types of circumstances to a finite number ("five [types of] circumstances"). Subsequently, Du Yu sets out to raise specific examples of historical events that exemplify each of the five categories of composition and interpretation. In Du Yu's paradigm, the following is the first circumstance that composes the cultural and ethical "norms" Confucius laid down in his Classic:

The first type is called "subtle yet manifest": the language appears here but the meaning lies elsewhere. Examples of this category include: "the proclamation of the clan name honors the ruler's command."

These examples illustrate the first kind of situation in which the use of language in the *Annals* is elusive and understated ("subtle") but the implications indicated are unambiguous and evident ("manifest"). The list of allusions compresses three historical examples recorded in the Classic and explained in the Zuo Tradition. Seamlessly woven into Du Yu's exposition, these sentences are direct quotations from the Zuo Tradition. Because of limited space, I explain the workings of one of the allusions, as cited in Du's "Preface." The text of the Zuo Tradition reads: "The proclamation of the clan name honors the ruler's command. . . . The omission of the clan name

honors the ruler's lady.”⁵⁹² These are the explanations the Zuo Tradition gives to account for the discrepancy between two entries in the *Annals*, both during the 14th year of Duke Cheng:

秋，叔孫僑如如齊逆女。⁵⁹³

In the autumn, Shusun Qiaoru went to Qi to escort the lady.

九月，僑如以夫人婦姜氏至自齊。⁵⁹⁴

In the ninth month, Qiaoru led the lady of the Jiang clan and arrived from Qi.

The Zuo Tradition explains the presence of the phrase “Shushun” as an expression of respect for the ruler, and the removal of the clan designation as a form of deference toward the lady. In this way, the Zuo Tradition indicates the presence of a “norm” in the Classic. By contrast, neither the Gongyang Tradition nor the Guliang Tradition comments on the above cases. Precisely for this reason, Du Yu may have found it opportune to utilize this pair of entries to illustrate the way the Zuo Tradition surpasses its competitors in linguistic analysis.

It is interesting that the speaker in the Zuo Tradition indulges in a moment of reflection about the aesthetic and functional qualities of the *Annals*. After pointing out the larger implications behind this case of linguistic discrepancies in the Classic, the passage runs:

故君子曰：「春秋之稱，微而顯，志而晦，婉而成章，盡而不汙，懲惡而勸善，非聖人，誰能脩之？」⁵⁹⁵

Therefore the Gentleman says, “The designations of the *Annals* are subtle yet manifest, plainly recorded yet obscure, undulate while establishing models, exhaustive yet not crooked, castigate wrongdoing and encourage good. Other than a Sage, who possibly could have compiled it?”

Essentially, Du Yu lifts the language for his description of the “circumstances governing the making of norms” (*weili zhi qing* 為例之情) right out of the Zuo Tradition, converting its phraseology into the labels he applies to each of his five categories. He marks his categories thus: “The first is called ‘subtle yet manifest’ ” 一曰微而顯; “The second is called ‘plainly recorded yet obscure’ ” 二曰志而晦; “The third is called ‘undulating to establish models’ ” 三曰婉而成章; “The fourth is called ‘exhaustive yet not crooked’ ” 四曰盡而不汙; “The fifth is called ‘castigating wrongdoing and encouraging good’ ” 五曰懲惡而勸善. Whereas the Zuo Tradition passage above uses these phrases to characterize the general quality of the *Annals*, Du Yu uses them to describe the Classic’s system of signification. Drawing from the Zuo Tradition

⁵⁹² Yang Bojun, 870.

⁵⁹³ Yang Bojun, 868.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Yang Bojun, 870.

as his resource, Du Yu imports its language as structural points for both his rhetorical exposition and theoretical conceptualizations.

Du Yu's second type of circumstance is a variation of the first type, in that both describe the employment of subtle language to indicate a larger point of significance. The difference between them is stylistic, as the two qualities are reversed. If the previous category is "subtle yet manifest," this second category is dubbed "plainly recorded yet obscure," which refers to the efficient ("compressed") code words used in recording the conventions ("the standard practices") of inter-state diplomacy. As the examples are only representative of a greater system of conventions laid out in the Zuo Tradition, it is incumbent upon the reader to apply this one norm to many other historical situations ("one could extrapolate and understand the norms"). In short, Du Yu insists that one can infer the institutional protocols from the short-hand conventions used, because of the broad applicability of these norms.

By now the parallel structures in Du Yu's presentation of the "five circumstances" should be clear enough. Defining the next category of situations, he first gives the name of the designation, then its mode of expression, its intended function, followed by illustrative examples. The third category, "undulates while establishing models," applies to taboos: "it [the Classic] explains by indirectly following the significance to demonstrate great smoothness. They are the various taboos." Here the term "undulates" designates something virtually indistinct from the terms characterizing the first two categories, "subtle" and "compressed." All these terms point to the conception of the *Annals* as Confucius' encrypted thought; hence, this newest category of "norms" is little different from the former ones. But the difference in vocabulary—from "subtle" and "compressed" to "undulates" and "indirectly"—suggests a movement from a more to less restrictive flow of ideas and language. Thus, Du's staggered presentation of their qualities introduces an aesthetic dimension to the appreciation of these scribal or editorial choices.

But lest the reader becomes comfortable with the thought that all expressions in the *Annals* are elusive, Du Yu defines the category of direct criticism. For the fourth category, "exhaustive yet not crooked," he brings up examples of rulers' blatant violation of decorum and propriety that elicit Confucius' direct response:

It directly documents the affair and uses full expressions to reveal the [critical] intent. Examples of this category include: "[Duke Zhuang of Lu] lacquered his pillars"; "carved his roof beams"; "The Son of Heaven procured carriages"; and "The Duke of Qi presented prisoners-of-war."

As Du Yu explains, the designation "exhaustive" means complete documentation of an event while "not crooked" refers to the straightforward style of language used. The fourth mode thus involves no attempt to use encoding conventions or cryptic language. Instead, it "directly documents the affair," such that any intended criticism is readily apparent. Du's usage of the phrase "exhaustive yet not crooked" from the Zuo Tradition may contradict the overall conception of the *Annals* as Confucius' encrypted criticisms. But as Du says earlier, one of the three "forms the Zuo Tradition sets forth" (*fazhuan zhi ti* 發傳之體) distills the essential significance of deeds and events recorded in the Classic without providing any norms (*feili* 非例). Thus earlier, Du Yu states that parts of the Classic are a transparent record and do not require deciphering. For these portions of the Classic corresponding to the fourth situation, Du

conceives of the Zuo Tradition as a helpful record of events whose import should be sufficiently clear.

Du Yu's fifth or final category states the common function shared by the previous categories of situations. Even though he names it as the fifth category and duly furnished examples of it,⁵⁹⁶ the concluding category is not so much descriptive as it is a summing up of the didactic functions of all the previous "norms." As the designation "castigating wrongdoing and encouraging good" indicates, moral instruction constitutes the fundamental purpose of all generalizing "norms": "Those seeking a reputation lost it, and those wishing to have their crimes covered were exposed. Examples of this category include the recording of Qi Bao as 'robber' and of the names of the three traitors." This last category serves as the umbrella category of the forgoing four categories. The specific examples catalogued here concern the issue of posthumous reputations fixed in the record of the *Annals*. For instance, Qi Bao was a minister anointed by the Son of Heaven, thus by scribal convention deserved to have his full name recorded. Yet because of his aggression, he became no different from an anonymous criminal. The three traitors were not ordained ministers, and hence convention normally omits their personal names from the record, but because of their treacherous behavior, their names were recorded for all posterity to see. Thus the moral punishment ("castigation") and exhortations ("encouragement") resulted from applying the "norms" in recording and interpreting the Classic. Du Yu aligns the moral purposes of the Zuo Tradition completely with that of the Classic, insisting that they work in tandem to make or break reputations.

The Zuo Tradition serves as the key for recovering and explicating these "norms," therefore up to this point, Du Yu's "Preface" has been highly descriptive, but the operations of the "norms" he describes point toward one purpose. The Zuo Tradition supplies the finished apparatus (the three forms) for extracting the "norms" built into the Classic, while history supplies the raw circumstances for forming their basic building blocks ("the five types of circumstances"). The very structure of Du Yu's conceptual schema makes the reader dependent on the Zuo Tradition to obtain clarity about these interdependencies.

Moreover, Du Yu organizes the four methods by which the Zuo Tradition overlays the Classic in a grid-like fashion: preceding the Classic (*xianjin* 先經), succeeding the Classic (*houjing* 後經), following the Classic (*yijing* 依經), and interweaving with the Classic (*cuojing* 錯經). Du Yu's spatial imagery underscores the Zuo Tradition's adherence to the structure of the Classic, presenting the Zuo Tradition as an adaptable structure rather than an inflexible system.

Invitation for Readers' Inquiry and Experience

While Du Yu's "Preface" is mostly preoccupied with a schematic presentation of "norms" as the compositional and interpretive principles, the essay also features a poetic passage extraordinary for its lyricism. The passage describes the scholar's experience in reading the Zuo Tradition. Traditional scholars have treated this section as a description of the long stretches of

⁵⁹⁶ As other scholars such as Qian Zhongshu observes, "The first, second, third, and fourth categories of the five 'norms' are the substance of recording (*zaibi zhi ti* 載筆之體), while the fifth one demonstrates the function of recording (*zaibi zhi yong* 載筆之用)." Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, *Guanzhui bian*, 162.

text that correspond with none of the entries in the *Annals*. For this layer of the Zuo Tradition, Du Yu proposes new ways of thinking about it. Rather than trying even more strenuously to force one stratum of material into an interpretive framework, Du Yu suggests that the ‘non-interpretive’ material could become the pleasurable grounds for the scholar’s own pursuit of knowledge. In arguing that the text offers a personalized experience, Du not only strengthens his reading, but allows the scholar more authority to form their own conclusions. Du Yu highlights the quality of the Zuo Tradition as being conducive to further exploration and contemplation: “His [Zuo Qiuming’s] writings are extended and their meanings are far-reaching.” Then he provides possibilities for scholars of the Zuo Tradition to move around the text or move back and forth between it and the Classic to forge their own connections (“trace back to the beginnings and intuit the conclusion”) and travel down their own logical paths (“follow the branches and leaves, and to arrive at their end points”). The vague poetry of this passage opens scholars up to experiencing feelings not governed by explicit interpretive guidelines. Du Yu is far from proposing that the Zuo Tradition represents a complete universe for scholars to delve into, since that would undo his argument positioning the Zuo as the best exegetical tradition to the Classic. But this portrait of the Zuo Tradition admits a realm of private scholarship and reading as well, at one remove from the authoritative claims by masters and exegetes. Whereas the rest of Du Yu’s “Preface” strengthens the exegetical status of the Zuo Tradition in the old sense, this passage, so different in tone and diction, claims that good interpretation not only prescribes meaning and settles questions but also spurs further inquiry and play.

Next Du Yu elaborates on the experience that the Zuo Tradition avails its reader, as Du captures its enticing pleasures:

The Zuo Tradition soothes and relaxes them [students], making them seek for it on their own. It richly satiates them, making them hasten toward it. It resembles immersion in the rivers and seas, the lubrication of ointment and dewy moisture, and the melting of ice. Joyously the principles are smoothed out. Then and only then are they considered properly placed.

This passage not only emphasizes pleasure for pleasure’s sake (“The Zuo Tradition soothes and relaxes them”; “richly satiates them”), but more importantly, bases the source of pleasure in personal endeavor (“making them seek for it on their own”; “hasten toward it”).⁵⁹⁷ On the one hand, it does not describe a form passive enjoyment but an active pursuit during the process of reading and interpretation. It is the experience akin to ‘letting go,’ allowing oneself to be affected and transformed by the process (“immersion in the rivers and seas, the lubrication of ointment

⁵⁹⁷ The Song philosopher Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107) cites these lines from Du Yu’s preface, placing Du Yu in the league of Xunzi and Guanzi: “If there is anyone whose learning fails to attain the ultimate [state] but whose words do, one may follow his words and also enter into the way. Xunzi says, ‘Through the accumulation of effort, one may enter it.’ Du Yu says, ‘The Zuo Tradition soothes and relaxes them, making them seek for it on their own. It richly satiates them, making them hasten toward it.’ Guanzi says, ‘To contemplate it once more, and again to contemplate it. If one contemplates it but still fails to connect, the ghosts and spirits can connect it. It is not the case that it was due to the effort of the ghosts and spirits, but the ultimate of numinosity’ ” 有學不至而言至者，循其言亦可以入道。荀子曰：積力久則入。杜預曰：優而柔之，使自求之，厭而飫之，使自趨之。管子曰：思之思之，又重思之。思之而不通，鬼神將通之。非鬼神之力也，精神之極也。此三者，循其言皆可以入道。而荀子、管子、杜預初不能及此。Zhang Boxing 張伯行, “Er Cheng yulu” 二程語錄, 9a.

and dewy moisture, and the melting of ice”), until one arrives at a higher state of understanding (“Joyously the principles are smoothed out”). The union of scholarship and pleasure in classical scholarship is certainly not a new concept in Du Yu’s time.⁵⁹⁸ But part of Du Yu’s innovative contribution lies in his characterization of exegesis as entry into a realm of corporeal delights.

Conclusion

Implicitly, Du Yu’s preface argues that the cut-and-dry exegetical methods of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions are ill suited for the highest orders of interpretation. For him there must also be thorough immersion in the text in addition to understanding the system of interpretive “norms.” The divine state of understanding not only varies among individuals, but liberates them from total dependency on prescribed rules. As the “Preface” intimates, the schematic guidelines for interpretation, powerful and efficient as they may be, are not sufficient by themselves. As conceptualized by Du Yu, in all their complexity, the multiple strata of the *Annals*, the generative architecture of the Zuo Tradition, and the reader’s self-propelled explorations of meaning all contribute toward making the Classic, the Zuo Tradition, and their joint interpretation a dynamic process rather than a template for fixed lessons.

Epilogue: Reception of Du Yu’s work

In the Sui dynasty (581–618), scholars rejected Du Yu’s interpretive framework and specific interpretations, before the early Tang (7th c.) court made Du Yu’s *Jijie* the authoritative commentary on the Zuo Tradition. Other dissenters ranged from Liu Xuan 劉炫 (546–613), to Zhu Xi, and the Qing commentators of the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns (1736–1821), who resented the dominance of Du Yu’s commentary because of its detrimental effects on the preservation of other Han commentaries for the Zuo Tradition.

These later reactions to Du Yu’s work lend much insight into post-Du Yu developments. Later scholars might have overplayed the prominence of Du Yu’s commentary because it competed with the authority of Fu Qian’s commentary up through the Sui Dynasty. Based on historical records regarding Du Yu and his commentary, the so-called ‘triumph’ of Du Yu’s commentary in early Tang was not predicted in his lifetime nor throughout the Six Dynasties. According to the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (compiled in the Liu-Song dynasty, 420–479), Du Yu was known more for his martial achievements and personal charisma than for his scholarship.⁵⁹⁹ In the *Shishuo xinyu*, Zheng Xuan (127–200) and Fu Qian (125–95) figure as major Zuo Tradition commentators, whereas Du Yu is conspicuously absent from anecdotes about scholarly figures.

⁵⁹⁸ As Nylan discusses, “Many readers before Yang Xiong must have experienced the pleasures of reading as a comment in the *Huainanzi* suggests (*Huainanzi* 21.706 “Yaoliue” 要略). But to experience a pleasure is hardly the same as to write or theorize about it. It was Yang Xiong . . . who constructed the first serious, sustained, and systematic case for the keen pleasures to be had from reading the Classics.” Nylan, *Yang Xiong and Pleasures*, 2.

⁵⁹⁹ See the “Fangzheng” 方正 chapter of *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, entries 5.12 and 5.13.

In the standard histories for the Six Dynasties, the only passing reference to the Zuo Tradition appears in the biography of an Eastern Jin figure, Xun Song 荀崧. As the *Jinshu* 晉書 records, during the reign of Yuandi 元帝 (317–322) of the Eastern Jin, Xun Song argues against the emperor’s decision, in 317, to establish the Zuo Tradition and to dismantle the positions for the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions:

時方修學校，簡省博士，置周易王氏、尚書鄭氏、古文尚書孔氏、毛詩鄭氏、周官禮記鄭氏、春秋左傳杜氏服氏、論語孝經鄭氏博士各一人，凡九人，其儀禮、公羊、穀梁及鄭易皆省不置。崧以為不可。⁶⁰⁰

At the time [Yuandi] was repairing the academies, he reduced the number of Academicians’ posts. He established the Wang commentary for the *Changes*; the Zheng commentary for the *Documents*; the Kong Tradition of the *Ancient Script Documents*; the Zheng commentaries for the Mao Tradition of the *Odes*; the *Zhou Offices*; the *Record of the Rites*; the Du and Fu commentaries for the Zuo Tradition of the *Annals*; and the Zheng commentaries of the *Analects* and *Classic of Filial Piety*. He appointed one Academician for each of these traditions, for a total of nine scholars. The posts for the *Etiquette and Ceremonial*, the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, and the Zheng commentary of the *Changes* were all eliminated. Xun Song thought this was unacceptable.

As with Guangwudi of the Eastern Han, the founder of the new dynasty had to consider his court appointments. Yuandi’s reconfiguration of the Academicians’ posts reflected—or perhaps contributed to—the rising prestige of Du Yu’s and Fu Qian’s commentaries, which were on equal footing with each other. This *Jinshu* reference meanwhile reveals, possibly, the waning influence of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, even though Xun Song voiced his resistance to this change. At any rate, this passage reveals, at a minimum, a ‘fact’ about the official status of the Zuo Tradition: this emperor officially sponsored Du Yu’s commentary along with Fu Qian’s.

Only the later standard histories compiled in the early Tang, such as the *Jinshu* 晉書, *Nanshi* 南史,⁶⁰¹ and *Beishi* 北史,⁶⁰² fully recognize Du Yu for his scholarly achievements and influence.⁶⁰³ Du’s ideas distinguish him from prior Zuo Tradition scholars, but his body of thought did not dominate the discussions until the early Tang, when the court adopted the Zuo Tradition and Du Yu’s commentary as the authoritative interpretations chosen for the *Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義 (Correct Significance of the Five Classics), while excluding the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions from the required curriculum for exam-takers.

The standard histories compiled in the Tang tend to contrast the influence of Du Yu’s commentary during the Six Dynasties with that of Fu Qian’s commentary, with each of them

⁶⁰⁰ *Jinshu* 75.1976–7.

⁶⁰¹ This standard history was compiled by Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 618–76) and presented in 659.

⁶⁰² This was also compiled by Li Yanshou and presented in 659.

⁶⁰³ See *Jinshu* 34.1031–1032, compiled in 644 CE; *Nanshi* 71.1739, presented in 659; *Beishi* 81.2709, presented in 659.

having their own champions, supposedly.⁶⁰⁴ But in the early Tang, Kong Yinda (574–648) and the other editors clearly endorsed Du Yu’s commentary and sought to refute other commentaries not in substantial agreement with Du’s interpretations.⁶⁰⁵ Retroactively, the Tang compilers of standard histories narrate the ‘struggle’ for dominance between Du Yu’s and Fu Qian’s commentary among Six Dynasties scholars, ending with Emperor Taizong’s (627–650) recognition of the Zuo Tradition’s authority and Du Yu’s commentary. This imperial decision contributed to the dominance of the Zuo Tradition over the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions and Du Yu’s commentary over Fu Qian’s. Thus we can see that the standing of Du Yu’s commentarial tradition did not rival or surpass the others until long centuries after his death.

⁶⁰⁴ For example, the “Rulin zhuan” of the *Nanshi* 南史 records in the biography of Cui Linggen 崔靈恩 (? - ?) of the Liang Dynasty: “[Cui] Linggen first studied Fu [Qian’s] explanations of the Zuo Tradition, but because they were not circulated east of the river [i.e. south of the Yangzi River], he switched over to expounding Du Yu’s interpretations. In Cui’s [explanations] of the words and phrases [of the Zuo Tradition], he often supports Fu’s interpretations and criticizes Du’s. Subsequently he composed *Zuoshi tiaoyi* to clarify it [his explanations]. At the time his assistant Yu Sengdan was also well-versed in the scholarship of Du, and so he supported Du’s interpretations and criticized Fu’s as a response to [Cui] Linggen. From that point on, both Fu’s and Du’s interpretations were transmitted in that generation” 靈恩先習左傳服解，不為江東所行，乃改說杜義。每文句常申服以難杜，遂著左氏條義以明之。時助教虞僧誕又精杜學，因作申杜難服以答靈恩，世並傳焉。 *Nanshi* 71.1739. Likewise, the “Rulin zhuan” of the *Beishi* 北史 records that “East of the river, for the *Zhouyi*, Wang Fusi’s [Bi’s] commentaries were adopted; for the *Shangshu*, Kong Anguo’s; the Zuo Tradition, Du Yuankai’s [Yu’s]. Around the rivers *He* and *Luo*, for the Zuo Tradition it was Fu Zishen [Qian]’s; the *Shangshu* and *Zhouyi*, Zheng Kangcheng’s [Xuan’s]; the *Odes*, Master Mao’s, and the *Rites*, all followed Zheng Xuan’s” 江左，周易則王輔嗣，尚書則孔安國，左傳則杜元凱；河洛，左傳則服子慎，尚書、周易則鄭康成；詩並主於毛公，禮則同遵於鄭氏。 *Beishi* 81.2709.

⁶⁰⁵ For example, in his “Preface” to the *Zuozhuan zhenyi*, Kong Yingda says this of subcommentator Liu Xuan 劉炫 (546?–613?): “Studying Du’s interpretations yet attacking Du is like maggots growing out of trees yet returning to eat their wood. This goes against principle.⁶⁰⁵ Though he corrects Du’s mistakes, his interpretations are shallow and superficial. This is what is meant by catching the singing cicada in front of one’s eyes but not realizing that the sparrow is right behind” 習杜義而攻杜氏，猶蠹生於木而還食其木，非其理也。雖規杜過，義又淺近，所謂捕鳴蟬於前，不知黃雀在其後。 ZY 4.

Conclusion

In its early stages, this present study was meant to be an examination of Zuo Tradition commentaries in early medieval China, but it soon became apparent that the fragmentary nature of the sources rendered this task difficult, because of the stark contrast between the fullness of Du Yu's commentary and the extreme paucity of commentaries by other scholars. The conceptual foundations of Du Yu stand out much more clearly than those of his predecessors and peers, by virtue of the completeness of his writings. Du Yu's works allow one to perceive a strong conceptual unity across his expository essays and his commentaries (i.e. the *Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie*).⁶⁰⁶ Consequently, this project examined essays in their various forms—letters, biographies, memorials—to try to obtain a more coherent picture of the conceptual issues underlying the early scholars' views about the authority and status of the Zuo Tradition.

From this approach there emerged Ban Gu, a figure who loomed large in the earliest discussions about the Zuo Tradition, thanks to various chapters of the *Hanshu*. His biography of Liu Xin, the “Yiwenzhi,” and the “Rulin zhuan” display remarkable consistency with regard to one central issue: they all implicitly postulate that, compared to the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions, the Zuo Tradition can better capture the presence of Confucius. In contrast to the strong coherence of Du Yu's and Ban Gu's accounts about the authorship, transmission, and function of the Zuo Tradition, the memorials of Chen Yuan and Jia Kui offer partial views on the uses of the Zuo Tradition in their time. These early and mid-Eastern Han scholars certainly sought to establish the Zuo Tradition on equal footing with the other exegetical traditions enjoying imperial sponsorship. The politics of institutionalization demanded that these scholars appeal to their sovereigns, who would decide whether to officially establishing the Zuo Tradition or not. Hence, Chen Yuan appealed to Guangwudi's political ambitions and independent insight, while Jia Kui appealed to Zhangdi's sense of entitlement to the throne as a supreme authority with a divine mandate. Other mid-Eastern Han scholars such as Wang Chong and Xu Shen also wrote narratives about the Zuo Tradition that befit their own purposes. In their writings, the Zuo Tradition became a malleable object adapted to different occasions, with Wang Chong using it to discuss textual authenticity, and Xu Shen, as a primary source for ancient etymology.

Yet Du Yu was the first scholar to argue for the definitive authority of the Zuo Tradition superseding that of the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions. His notion of the Classic and Zuo Tradition required multiple temporal and hermeneutical layers, as he envisioned the Classic largely as a repository of Western Zhou culture, Confucius as an editor making limited changes, and the Zuo Tradition as the guide for distinguishing the various strata of the *Annals*. He built a schematic model of interpretation that lay emphasis on institutional history, traditions, and culture, and he reconfigured Confucius as a preservationist, as well as a moral critic. At the same time, he established the lyrical dimensions of the Zuo Tradition, inviting readers to embark on their own processes of inquiry and to open themselves up to a transformative experience.

For Further Study

⁶⁰⁶ The same could be said of Wang Bi's essays “*Laozi weizhi lilue*” 老子微旨例略 and “*Zhouyi lueli*” 周易略例, and his commentaries *Laozi zhu* 老子注 and *Zhouyi zhu* 周易注.

Due to the self-imposed limits of this study, a number of topics could not be incorporated into the present thesis. But at a future point in time, scholars (myself included) may find it rewarding to pursue the following lines of inquiry related to Zuo Tradition scholarship in pre-modern China. Particularly illuminating would be a comparative study of commentarial traditions of the Zuo Tradition within specific time frames. At present, other than historical surveys of classical scholarship in the Chinese language, there are few studies of the subcommentaries on the Zuo Tradition included in the *Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義 (Correct Significance of the Five Classics). Yet it would be interesting to study the parallel processes through which other traditions gained authority during the Six Dynasties.

Excavated texts also expand the possible areas of inquiry, as some excavated texts bear some resemblance to the received texts of the Zuo Tradition and the *Guoyu*, including the “Gucheng Jiafu” 姑成家父 and “Cao Mo zhi zhen” 曹沫之陣 collections from the Shanghai Museum, as well as the *Chunqiu shiyu* 春秋事語 from Mawangdui.⁶⁰⁷ These excavated texts offer alternative versions of historical episodes and personages presented in the Zuo Tradition and the *Guoyu*. Some scholars have begun to study the narrative differences among these different accounts.⁶⁰⁸ It remains unclear whether distinct commentarial traditions drew upon these excavated versions.⁶⁰⁹ More study is thus required to determine the extent to which the excavated and received texts contributed to commentarial traditions.

Although this thesis focuses on the reception history of the Zuo Tradition, more could be done in a comparison with the *Shiji*. As highlighted in chapter two, similar issues of precedents and authority relate to the status of the *Shiji*. As shown by the Fan-Chen debate, opposing parties used the *Shiji* for denouncing or advocating the Zuo Tradition. Such conflicting assessments of the *Shiji* hold implications for the dating and textual formation of the Zuo Tradition that have yet to be teased out.

Along the same lines, Liu Xin’s advocacy of the Zuo Tradition deserves further study in relation to his major works on the calendar, on genealogy, and on omenology. We may recall that the expression of Liu Xin’s attitude toward the Zuo Tradition is mostly confined to his “Letter to the Academicians,” and doubts remain over the extremely limited fragments on the Zuo Tradition that are attributed to him. At present, the “Treatise on Pitchpipes and Calendar” 律曆志 and “Treatise on the Five Phases” 五行志 of the *Hanshu* preserve the bulk of Liu Xin’s scholarship, including his *Passage of the Generations* (*Shijing* 世經).⁶¹⁰ There are many citations

⁶⁰⁷ See Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 (ed). *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, 1983.

⁶⁰⁸ See, for example: Li Longxian 李隆獻, “Xianqin chuanben/ jianben xushi juyu: yi ‘San Xi zhi wang’ wei li” 先秦傳本 / 簡本敘事舉隅——以「三郤之亡」為例, 31–77. See also Gao Youren 高佑仁, *Shanghai Bowuguan Zhanguo Chu zhushu (4) Cao Mo zhi zhen yanjiu (Part 1 and 2)* 《上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書(四)·曹沫之陣》研究(上、下), 2008.

⁶⁰⁹ The scope of these excavated versions is limited to a small set of episodes, and the amount of text is underwhelming compared to the received version of the Zuo Tradition. Supposing that commentaries were written for the excavated versions, questions of textual identity remain.

⁶¹⁰ The “Wuxing zhi” presents omen interpretations attributed to Dong Zhongshu, Liu Xiang, and Liu Xin, representing the Gongyang, Guliang, and Zuo Tradition readings of astronomical signs, mostly eclipses, recorded in the *Annals*. Translation of *Shijing* by Loewe in *Chang’an 26 BCE*, forthcoming.

of the Zuo Tradition throughout these two chapters, raising questions about the omenological basis of possibly the first commentary on the Zuo Tradition. It may prove worthwhile to explore Liu Xin's calendrical, omenological, and genealogical work in light of his interest in the Zuo Tradition. The incorporation of Liu's writings into the *Hanshu* opens up issues of textual formation as well, as later redactions of the Zuo Tradition might have made their way into these chapters of the *Hanshu*.

Beginning with Jia Kui, fragments of commentaries have been preserved, presenting a piecemeal picture of Zuo Tradition commentarial traditions in the period leading up to Du Yu. Qing scholars Li Yide 李貽德 and Liu Wenqi 劉文淇 collated and annotated Han commentaries on the Zuo Tradition, yet there is a dearth of systematic studies on the philosophical, ideological, and scholastic substance of these commentaries. Given the disparateness of Han commentarial fragments, it may not be feasible to conduct such a full study, but perhaps a more modest attempt would identify and compare themes shared by different exegetes.

In the Eastern Han, two other scholars deserve as far as future studies of Zuo Tradition commentaries on the Zuo Tradition are concerned: Zheng Xuan (127–200) and Fu Qian (125–95). In Zheng's three rebuttals to He Xiu (*Zhen Zuoshi gaohuang* 箴左氏膏肓, *Shi Guliang feiji* 釋穀梁廢疾, and *Fa Gongyang moshou* 發公羊墨守), his rebuttal to Xu Shen (*Bo Wujing yiyi* 駁五經異義), as well as the records of Zheng Xuan's lectures to his students in the "Chunqiu zhi" 春秋志 section of the *Liuyi lun* 六藝論, a fair number of his comments place the Zuo Tradition in dialogue with other classics. These surviving fragments from Zheng Xuan's works are especially valuable for their comparative outlook across a range of Classics and exegetical traditions. Even though Zheng is more renowned for his commentaries on the *Odes* and the "Three Rites" corpus, a study of his comments on the Zuo Tradition would yield insights into his contribution to the authority of the Zuo Tradition at a time before Du Yu.

As for Fu Qian, it is unclear why Du Yu never mentioned him in his "Preface," if Fu's commentary rivaled Du's in their own time. Of all commentaries composed for the Zuo Tradition during the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms periods, Fu Qian's commentaries have the most sizable quantity preserved, far outstripping those by the likes of Wang Su 王肅 (195–256) and Ji Kang 稽康 (223–62). As reviewed in chapter six, Du Yu's and Fu Qian's commentarial traditions were thought to both compete with and complement each other throughout the Six Dynasties. What accounts for the long-running popularity of Fu Qian's tradition when he fails to figure in Du Yu's discussion of his predecessors? A separate study of Fu's commentarial tradition is in order, even if his extant commentary is incomplete and a conceptual essay similar to Du Yu's "Preface" is absent.

A substantial portion of the present study examines the role of Du Yu in establishing the authority of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition, but much of his work is still unexamined. While this thesis makes multiple references to Du's *Chunqiu Shili*, the complexity of the forty-two categories of norms laid out therein makes it a challenge to work with; in essence, the *Shili* fleshes out the skeletal structure of the interpretive apparatus Du provided in his "Preface." Also understudied are Du's other commentarial works, the *Place Names* (*Tudi ming* 土地名), *Genealogical Charts* (*Shizu pu* 世族譜), and the *Long Calendar of the Classic and Tradition* (*Jingzhuan changli* 經傳長曆), all of which are partially reconstructed in the *Siku quanshu*. Except for the *Tudi ming*, which correlates the geographical place names in the Zuo Tradition with those of the Western Jin, the other two works follow in the tradition of Liu Xin,

who as noted earlier, also composed calendrical and genealogical works. More in-depth studies of the conceptual underpinnings of these works are called for.⁶¹¹

While Du Yu's "Preface" and *Jijie* are landmarks of Zuo Tradition scholarship in the pre-Tang period, the greater intellectual milieu from which they emerged deserves greater study. For example, it would be fruitful to compare Du Yu's commentary with those of Wei Zhao 韋昭 on the *Guoyü*, Wang Bi on the *Daodejing* and *Changes*, He Yan on the *Lunyu*, He Xiu on the Gongyang Tradition, Zheng Xuan on multiple classics, and slightly later, Fan Ning on the Guliang Tradition. Their commentarial strategies are no doubt as diverse as the Classics they commented upon. But the common tendency, in Wang Bi and Du Yu, to construct the Classics and their exegetical traditions as self-contained systems of internal referencing, marks a sharp departure from Zheng Xuan's wide-ranging citations across multiple Classics. Studies on He Xiu's and Fan Ning's commentaries might shed more light on the question of why the Gongyang and Guliang Traditions did not obtain imperial endorsement in the early Tang, in contrast to the Zuo Tradition. While any synchronic study of commentarial traditions across Classics is in all likelihood overly ambitious, any small step in this direction would help to illuminate our understanding.

Outside of commentaries collected in the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, we know little, since the authority of the *Zuozhuan zhengyi* meant that commentaries not preserved in it tended to fall out of circulation. Even though Yan Kejun 嚴可均 (1762–1843) and Ma Guohan 馬國翰 (1794–1857) salvaged the available fragments from the Six Dynasties, there is still no synoptic study devoted to the Zuo Tradition commentaries excluded from the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*. For the time being, scholars tracing out the contours of Zuo Tradition scholarship in the Six Dynasties have to work through reverse detection, since these alternative interpretations are apprehensible mainly through the *Zhengyi* editors' criticisms of them.⁶¹² Thus, more research on the formation of the *Zuozhuan Zhengyi* will clarify our understanding of the role of Du Yu's commentarial tradition in canonizing the Zuo Tradition in the early Tang; indeed, it may well turn out to be difficult to assess the role of Du Yu's work without first considering the circumstances behind the compilation of the *Wujing Zhengyi* corpus. Looking into the intellectual history of the *Zhengyi* may well be a necessary prelude to a more in-depth study of Du Yu's *Jijie*.

In the Tang period, Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661–721) is a counterpoint to the imperial project of the *Wujing zhengyi*; Liu's oppositional politics against the official historians are well known, thanks in part to William Hung's series of studies on this topic.⁶¹³ Liu Zhiji's essays discussed the Zuo Tradition as it relates to issues of historiography and historical narratives at the same moment it was made *the* authoritative exegetical tradition of the *Annals* for the first time. It would be fascinating to explore the multiplicity of conceptions about the Zuo Tradition, as manifested in the tension between the court's standards for *Zuozhuan zhengyi* as exegesis and Liu Zhiji's different concerns about historiography.

⁶¹¹ So far, one article treats the *Changli* while other titles by Du Yu await analysis: Gao Jiye 郟積意, "Du Yu *Changli*" 杜預《長曆》, 69–108.

⁶¹² This is what Liu Wenqi has done in his annotations of early medieval commentaries for his compilation *Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan jiu zhushu zheng* 春秋左氏傳舊注疏證.

⁶¹³ Hung, William, "A Bibliographical Controversy," 74–134; "A T'ang Historiographer's Letter of Resignation," 5–52; "The T'ang Bureau of Historiography Before 708," 93–107.

The concomitant ‘triumphs’ of Du Yu’s commentary and the Zuo Tradition in the early Tang did not prevent the tide from turning in the mid-Tang, when the scholar Zhao Kuang 趙匡 (fl. 766–79) sought to dissociate the Zuo Tradition from the *Annals*.⁶¹⁴ The Song disavowal of exegetical traditions (in favor of direct understanding and internalization of the Classics) also meant that Du Yu’s conceptions of the Zuo Tradition and the *Annals* came under fire. Zhu Xi rejected the notion that judgments are lodged in Confucius’ word choice (*yizi baobian* 一字褒貶), thus dismissing Du’s elaborate system of norms. This historical development undermined the entire basis of the exegetical authority of the Zuo Tradition in early medieval China.⁶¹⁵

The Qing dynasty is an interesting period for Zuo Tradition scholarship, as compared with the Yuan and Ming periods, because the positions staked out by Qing scholars changed many times. In the first place, mid-Qing scholars critiqued Du Yu’s commentary and the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, dedicating themselves instead to the collection and annotation of the fragments of early medieval commentaries on the Zuo Tradition.⁶¹⁶ Subsequently, Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776–1829), then Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), famously repudiated the idea of the Zuo Tradition as early exegesis. This repudiation provoked a reaction that ironically seems to have reconsolidated the status of work as an exegetical tradition of the *Annals*.⁶¹⁷ For instance, the late Qing “doubting antiquity” movement spurred Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936) and Liu Shipai 劉師培 (1884–1919) to conduct a thorough study of the “norms” governing the relation between the Zuo Tradition and the Classic. While I do not subscribe to historical determinacy in such cycles of scholarship, things appear to have come full circle, when early and medieval scholars built up the status of the Zuo Tradition as an exegetical tradition, only to have it abandoned for about a millennium, to be salvaged by late-Qing scholars, and reinforced by bursts of activity on the eve of the twenty century.

⁶¹⁴ As William Hung and Wong Young-tsu have pointed out, Zhao and Ye Mengde 葉夢德 (1077–1148) cast considerable doubt on the assumption that the Zuo Qiuming mentioned in the *Analects* could be identified as the author of the Zuo Tradition and a contemporary of Confucius. See Hung, *Combined Indices*, p. xlvi – xlvi and Wong, “In Defense of History,” 229.

⁶¹⁵ The notable exception to this trend is Su Che’s 蘇轍 *Chunqiu jijie* 春秋集解, which still treats the Zuo Tradition as explication of the *Annals*.

⁶¹⁶ A particularly hard-line position was taken by Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 in his blanket rejection of Du Yu’s and embrace of Han interpretations in his *Chunqiu Zuozhuan gu* 春秋左傳詁.

⁶¹⁷ Kang Youwei’s view that the Zuo Tradition is Liu Xin’s forgery builds off of the work of Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776–1829). In *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng* 左氏春秋考證, Liu adduces evidence that Liu Xin was the author of exegetical comments explicating the *Annals*’ principles within the Zuo Tradition. Therefore it is not an authentic exegetical tradition. Kang’s controversial work *Xinxue weijingkao* 新學偽經考 stirred up the scholarly world. In the explosive fall-out between Kang Youwei and other intellectuals, countless scholars wrote to overturn his claims that the Zuo Tradition is a forgery.

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