The "Chinese" Rhetorical Curriculum and

A Transcultural History of Political Thought, ca. 1250–1650

By

Shoufu Yin

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in

History

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Nicolas Tackett, Chair
Professor Wen-hsin Yeh
Professor Geoffrey Koziol
Professor Robert Ashmore

Spring 2021

Abstract

The "Chinese" Rhetorical Curriculum and a Transcultural History of Political Thought, ca. 1250–1650

by

Shoufu Yin

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Nicolas Tackett, Chair

This dissertation provides a new narrative of the history of early modern political thought by examining a rhetorical curriculum that flourished in East Eurasia. This rhetorical curriculum trained individuals to write official documents in literary Sinitic, a lingua franca of the regions. Using documents in Chinese, Mongolian, Manchu, and Persian, among other languages, I trace how the curriculum took its shape under Mongol-ruled China, flourished in post-Mongol East Eurasia, until it was finally restructured under the Manchu Empire. Employing a large number of previously untapped sources that have survived in different parts of the world, I contend that this education gave rise to new and compelling political theories. It enabled individuals thus trained to conceptualize their rights vis-à-vis the throne, re-problematize the proper shape of the government, and conceive alternative possibilities in history. Despite its importance in the early modern world, the curriculum of writing documents in literary Sinitic has sunk into complete oblivion since the late eighteenth century. Against this background, my dissertation is ultimately an archaeology of a discipline as well as an excavation of the ideas, imaginations, voices, and aspirations that once constituted this curriculum.

To Prof. Tackett
And All My Teachers

Table of Contents

List of Figures iv

List of Tables iv

Acknowledgements v

Introduction - 1 -

Part One: Formation - 15 -

1. The Challenge of Bureaucratic Eloquence: ca. 900–1300 - 15 -

The Tang Legacies and the Northern Song Reforms - 16 -

The Southern Trajectory, ca. 1130–1270 - 20 -

The Northern Trajectory, ca. 1190–1300 - 25 -

2. The Mongol Re-making of the "Chinese" Rhetorical Curriculum - 31 -

Bičigeči: From the Inner-Asian Traditions to the Early Mongol Empire - 32 -

At the Khan's Palace: The 1313 Decree of Reestablishing the Imperial Examination - 39 -

Closing Remarks - 46 -

3. Contending Possibilities, Rescuing Possibilities: The Development of Rhetorical Learning under Mongol Rule - 50 -

Introduction: The Fourteenth-Century Transformation - 50 -

Chen Li (1252–1334): Examination Response as Political Manifesto - 53 -

Yang Weizhen (1296–1370): Framing Rhetoric, Re-engaging History - 62 -

Closing Remarks: From Rhetoric to Political Thought - 71 -

Part Two: Transformation - 73 -

4. The Diffusion of Rhetorical Learning: Examination, Environment, and Everyday Thought- 73 -

Introduction - 73 -

The Re-making of the Rhetorical Curriculum - 75 -

The Making of an Examination Question - 84 -

The Making of an Exemplary Response - 91 -

Appendix: Liu Yu on River and Government, 1579 - 99 -

5. Memorial and Statecraft: Networks of Ideas in Post-Mongol China and the Early Modern Globe - 103 -

Introduction - 103 -
On the Examination (I): Memorials through Data Visualization (ca. 1400–1700) - 105 -
On the Examination (II): Interpreting the Statecraft Turn - 111 -
Beyond the Examination (I): From Memorial Writing to Statecraft Learning - 120 -
Beyond the Examination (II): Lost and Regained in Translation - 124 -

6. Counterfactual Imagination in Seventeenth-Century China and Korea: A Translocal History of East Eurasia - 130 -
Introduction - 130 -
Xu Yunlu (1565–ca.1640): Excavating Possibilities from the Past - 134 -
Cho Ch'anhan (1572–1631): Reclaiming Possibilities for the Future - 144 -
Closing Remarks - 152 -

Conclusion - 155 -
Recapitulating the Narrative in Time and Space - 156 -
Implications for the Study of Political Thought - 159 -

Reference Matter - 161 -

List of Figures

Figure 1 A Question of Bureaucratic Writing in the Civil Service Examination of Sơn Nam Province, Vietnam, 1802 - 14 -

Figure 2 Real Questions from the Southern Song Examination of Eloquence collected by Wang Yingling - 30 -

Figure 3 *Bičigeči* as Glossed in Mongolian/Chinese Translation Manual of Huayi yiyu (1389) - 49 -

Figure 4 Rhetoricians of the Mongol and Post-Mongol East Asia (ca. 1300–1400) - 51 -

Figure 5 Chen Li's Examination Response, Sanchang wenxuan, Seikado Museum - 57 -

Figure 6 Preparing for Examination Questions - 61 -

Figure 7 Ming "Academy Coursework" in Relation to Different Examinations - 82 -

Figure 8 Frequency of Reported Yellow River Floods over the Course of the Sixteenth Century - 86 -

Figure 9 Knowledge Graph of the Memorial Part of Provincial and Metropolitan Examinations, the case of the Ming (1368–1644) - 108 -

Figure 10 Thematic Distribution of the Memorial Writing Part of the Provincial and Metropolitan Examinations, 1450–1700 - 109 -

Figure 11 Genealogy of Hanyang Cho, as it appears in the nineteenth-century *Man'ga bo* 萬家譜 - 143 -

Figure 12 The Examination Registries (1601) Featuring Cho Ch'anhan - 143 -

List of Tables

Table 1 Genres of Official Documents and Required Styles in Song Examination of Eloquence (1094–1274) - 20 -

Table 2 Designs of the Civil Service Examination in 1274, 1301, and 1313 - 40 -

Table 3 Civil Service Examinations in Ming China and Chosŏn Korea: A Simplified Comparison - 79 -

Table 4 Imitative Writings of Official Documents in Hyŏnju jip 玄洲集 - 145 -

Acknowledgements

Despite growing interest in the study of footnotes, marginalia, and paratexts, it seems that the history of scholarly acknowledgement has remained relatively understudied.[1] A question that I have long sought to understand is this: Out of what kind of historical processes do we end up stating our personal debts, feelings, and stories *only* at the beginning (and/or the end) of an academic work, as if these words are separable from the rest of the work? Why haven't we been allowed—and indeed encouraged—to footnote our personal memories together with thankful words between lines, just as we do with scholarly citations nowadays? Shouldn't it be the case that at least a part of each page should be reserved for the author(s) to thank persons of importance and note the experiences that matter? In my case, every word written in this dissertation is saturated with my gratitude to the instruction, guidance, and support of my advisor, my teachers, my friends, and my family.

At Berkeley, I have had the extraordinary fortune to work under Nicolas Tackett. I cannot thank him enough for all his guide, support, and encouragement. Had I a second life after this one, it would be my wish to apply to be his student again. During the past years, Yeh Wen-hsin has taught me much about what it means to be a historian and intellectual. Geoffrey Koziol instantiates all the scholarly virtues that I aspire to embody and will continue to emulate throughout my career. Robert Ashmore coached me in the art of crossing different terrains in our field of study and in the mountains of North California. The opportunities to study under and write essays with Michael Nylan have transformed me in many different ways. I am grateful to the meticulous guidance of Mary Elizabeth Berry, Maria Mavroudi, and Sophie Volpp during my doctoral studies. I feel so fortunate to have joined the seminars of Maureen Miller, Thomas Laqueur, Robert Sharf, and Rowan Dorin. I thank He Jianye, our uncrowned professor, for her mentorship, and Deborah Rudolph, Mabel Lee, Todd Kuebler, Ken Mahru, and Erin Leigh Inama for their help. I dedicate this dissertation to my advisor, Professor Tackett, and all my other teachers, who have contributed to my development as a schoar.

I have learned a lot from my friends at Berkeley and other institutions, including Ilya Bobkov, David Bratt, Simon Brown, Cai Keru, Cao Tianjiang, Chen Jianqing, Nicholas Constantino, Sean Cronan, Miles Culpepper, Benjamin Daniels, John Daukas, Maelia DuBois, Christopher Elford, Fan Zijing, Feng Xiangjun, Caleb Ford, Kaitlin Forgash, Sourav Ghosh, Grace Goudiss, Mahel Hamroun, Paulina Hartono, John Handel, Hirata Koji, Mason Hinsdale, Hsu Hu, Huang Tingshuo, Clare Ibarra, J.T. Jamieson, Craig Johnson, Matthew Kimani, Pawel Koscielny, Lang Chao, Christopher Lawson, Jonathan Lear, Peiting Li, James Lin, Liu Kan, Liu Tong, Sihang Luo, Coleman Mahler, Wiliam McClung, Peter Michelli, Brendan Morley, Anthony Morreale, Uyen Nguyen, Maria Barreiros Almeida Reis, Lois Rosson, Flora Shao, James Stone-Lunde, Christene Stratman, Allyson Tang, Lucia Tang, Hannibal Taubes, Tung Yung-chang, Peter Vale, Linh Vu, Emily Wang, Wang Haixiao, Jesse Watson, Matt Wild, Brandon Williams, Deborah Wood, Claire Wrigley, Serena Wu, Elisheva Wyle, Xin Zhaokun, Mustafa Yildiz, Camila YaDeau, Gloria Yu, Christopher Zimmer, Christin Zurbach, Zheng Yifan, Linda Zhang, Zhang Yichi, Zhang Yike, Zhang Yueran, and Zhang Zhengyuan.

I thank Eloise Wright and Trenton Wilson for their marvelous senpai-ship. I thank Ching Kit Wu for all his support, both academic and personal, and for all the timeliest help during the most difficult moments of mine. I thank Joseph Passman for being such an exemplary friend and mentor, and for his insightful suggestions on almost every line I write.

[1] A growing body of scholarship, however, uses acknowledgement data to study scholarly networks of different kinds.

For the dissertation project, I also thank Yu Wei, Beverly Bossler, Zhou Yiqun, Dominic Sachsenmaier, He Yuming, Wang Mengxiao, Eileen Chow, Prasenjit Duara, Peter Bol, Bian He, Wen Xin, Paize Keulemans, Hasegawa Masato, Chen Hsi-yuan, Lin Peiying, Johchi Takashi, Iguro Shinobu, Nicholas Williams, Iwamoto Marie, Wang Sixiang, Chong Soonil, Kim Seonmin, Hou Xudong, Javier Cha, Qiu Luming, and Hou Meizhen, for their invaluable suggestions at different stages of my research.

I thank Iiyama Tomoyasu for his kind guidance and generous support throughout this year. I thank Park Hyun Soon for patiently walked me through the historiography and the Kyujanggak Institute. I thank the UBC committee—Timothy Brook, Leo Shin, Jessica Hanser, Bruce Rusk, and Yan Niping—and many other colleagues for the inspiring discussions.

I thank Michelle Lee, Ryan Zohar, and other staff at SSRC for their support. I thank Qiu Qi for her help at the Library of Congress. I thank Chunhua and Hong Ye of the Palace Museum for their guidance on the Manchu documents. I thank Narisawa Asako for hosting me at the Seikado Bunko Museum. I thank Keum Heekyung for all her help throughout my stay at the Kyujanggak Institute. I thank Chen Xianxing, Chen Shunzhong, and Xu Jinhua at the Shanghai Library for their help over the past years. I thank the amazing staff at the Fu Ssu-Nien Library. I thank all the physicians, nurses, and workers that helped me during the pandemic crises. I do *not* thank Project Muse, HathiTrust, Duxiu, nor CNKI: they are too difficult to use, and too capitalistic in design. I am indebted to Library Genesis and various Wechat groups (à la An Bo), as they enabled access to a wealth of digitized materials.

I thank Edward Shaughnessy, Daniel Morgan, Zhou Yuan, Qiu Luming, Chen Shangjun, and Yu Wei for their courses and guidance when I started to learn history. I thank Hilde De Weerdt, Michael Höckelmann, Peter Heather, Lucy Kostyanovsky, and Max Edling for their guide and support during and after my M.Res studies.

I miss the wonderful classes on research languages, given by David Martinez, Charles Manson, Lobsang Samten, Kim Jieun, Christopher Waldo, Lynn Gallogly, Bian He, Yuriko Miyamoto, Brian Baumann, and Fatemehsadat Mirsharifi. I thank Charles Manson and Lobsang Samten for allowing me to take their Tibetan classes despite all the institutional barriers. I thank Bian He—as well as Martin Backstrom, Dylan Davis, and Yeh Wen-hsin—for making the summer Manchu program possible! I thank Alexander Bevilacqua for his help during our Persian studies. I thank Mori Eisuke for bringing me into the Kansai Mongolian Reading Group. I thank Joanna Wilson-Scott for correcting many of my English sentences. I thank Baptiste Massart for proofreading my earlier writing in French, and Liu Xiaodan for her help with regard to academic writing in Japanese. UCBerkeley's Japanese language program, I have to mention, requires serious reform and improvement.

I thank my earlier teachers who have taught me many things in different fields: Ci Jiwei, Stephen Matthews, Fung Kam Wing, Pierre Magne, Steffen Schmidt, Robert Pippin, Agnes Callard, David Finkelstein, James Conant, and Mark Payne. I thank my old friends at Fudan, HKU, and UChicago. I thank Li Qiong for her guidance during my high school studies. I thank Wang Chaomei and Wang Ren for their support since I was eighteen.

I thank Lu Chuxu for hearing all my threads, reading all my drafts, tolerating all my idiosyncrasies, and offering all kinds of support.

I thank my mother, who supports my research in every possible way, though she never understands why I spend so much time working on rot documents.

When I was six, I heard a story: Once one obtains a Doctor of Philosophy, one gains the supreme power of entering the realm of the dead, and may have the chance to rescue a person one loves. If only this were true, I would bring my grandfather back.

Introduction

This dissertation provides a new narrative of the development of ideas and imagination about individual, bureaucracy, and politics from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Decentering the Western European experience and the canonical thinkers (be they Machiavelli [1469–1572]or Wang Shouren 王守仁 [1472–1529]), I focus on an educational component that once flourished in East Eurasia across political and linguistic boundaries. In particular, I look at a "rhetorical" curriculum, to use my term, that prepared individuals for writing official documents in literary Sinitic, an important language of administration and diplomacy in East Eurasia.[2] As its defining feature, this curriculum required its students to produce official documents on behalf of someone else, either a notable figure in history, or a contemporary minister of importance—and sometimes even the king or emperor of another regime (see Figure 1). They were not only to imitate their style of writing but also to imagine what they could or could have said and done in a specific given situation. As the following chapters will show, this particular form of education, which developed in multiple polities as a consequence of Eurasian inter-state interactions, eventually trained millions of individuals, requiring them to ruminate over the complicated relationships between style and argumentation, history and politics, and ultimately, what individuals can say, do, and aspire to be within a large bureaucratic system. During this process, a particular political theory flourished, according to which the bureaucratic realm, instead of a mere space that chokes agency, can also be an area for creative thinking for ordinary individuals.

More specifically, my argument revolves around three interrelated components. First, though elements of this form of rhetorical training had a long history in East Eurasia,[3] it was Mongol decision-makers, in consultation with "secretaries" of the Inner Asian tradition (Mongolian: *bičigeči* ᠪᠢᠴᠢᠭᠡᠴᠢ), that made document-writing a compulsory part of the civil service examination in 1313 (Chapters One and Two). After the fall of the Mongol empire, the very same rhetorical curriculum was adopted, *mutatis mutandis*, by a variety of post-Mongol regimes, including Ming (1368–1644) China and Chosŏn (1392–1897) Korea, and was thus used to train millions of individuals in China and tens of thousands in neighboring regimes (Chapters Four and Six). In this sense, I show that the connection between East Asia and Inner Asia (the totality

[2] Literary Sinitic is usually called "literary Chinese" or "classical Chinese." The disadvantage is that these terms seem to imply that it is a language belonging to a certain nation-sate. As a variety of scholars have shown, this written language was not only influential beyond "China," but also developed in different regions of East Eurasia through transcultural and translingual practices. See Victor H. Mair, "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.3 (1994): 707–751; Peter Francis Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese texts in East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Bunkyo Kin, *Literary Sinitic and East Asia: A Cultural Sphere of Vernacular Reading* (Leiden: Brill, 2021). For other important documentary languages in East Eurasia during the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, see Gyorgy Kara, *Books of the Mongolian Nomads* (Bloomington: Sinor Research Institute of Inner Asian Studies, 2005); Mårten Söderblom Saarela, *The Early Modern Travels of Manchu: A Script and Its Study in East Asia and Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020); Zhuang Sheng, *Teikoku o tsukutta gengo seisaku : Daichin Gurun shoki no gengo seikatsu to bunka* 帝国を創った言語政策：ダイチン・グルン初期の言語生活と文化 (Kyo̅to: Kyo̅to daigaku, 2016).

[3] For discussions of the use of documents in early China, see for instance Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Enno Giele's *Imperial Decision-making and Communication in Early China: a study of Cai Yong's Duduan* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006); Jesse Watson, "Paperwork Before Paper: Law and Materiality in China's Early Empires," (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2019.

of which I call East Eurasia)[4] is much deeper than previously assumed, to the extent that to really appreciate the formation and transformation of a curriculum using the Sinitic language, it is nevertheless imperative to delve into the heart of Mongol culture, and its long-term impact upon a wide swathe of the continent.

Second, this rhetorical curriculum, once formalized, had empowered a great variety of individuals in different locales—the Lower Yangzi Delta (Chapters Three and Six), the mountainous hinterland of northwest China (Chapter Four), and the capital region of Chosŏn Korea (Chapter Six), for instance. Through their rhetorical exercises embedded in their own ecological, social, and political contexts, they transformed this curriculum into a medium where they could articulate their political claims and philosophies. Thus, they conceptualized their right to participate in politics, problematized the proper form of the government, and conceived counterfactual scenarios to question how history and politics might have unfolded differently. In this regard, I expand the cultural and intellectual histories of the aforementioned locales by going beyond well-known philosophical movements and literary forms, such as "Neo-Confucianism"[5] and "vernacular" genres.[6]

Third, by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after this curriculum had produced a distinct political and rhetorical culture in East Eurasia, European missionaries came to be interested in it. Their observations, originally published in Latin or Spanish, were soon translated into other European languages. During this process, more Europeans started to reimagine this "Chinese" curriculum in contexts familiar to them, contexts ranging from the decline of the Spanish empire to the flourishing market of pamphlets in France (Chapter Five). Tracing the metamorphosis of the curriculum in the understanding and imagination of European readers, I explore how different individuals—be they European or Chinese, global travelers or local readers—approached the shared problem of how to express oneself in a hierarchical, institutional domain.

Thus, I trace the history of the curriculum at three different scales, namely that of *Eurasian* politics that shaped it, that of *local* individuals who experienced it, and that of *global* connections through which more persons ruminated over it. This means that this dissertation is *not* a typical case of Inner Asian/Eurasian history, nor a local or global history *per se*. Synthesizing these approaches,[7] I seek to deconstruct not only the Euro-centric narrative but also other narratives that prioritize a particular "national" tradition—be it "Chinese," "Mongolian," or

---

[4] The framework of "East Eurasia" has been much explored in Japanese scholarship, to break the boundaries of East, Inner, and Southeast Asia. See for instance Hirose Norio 廣瀬憲雄, *Kodai Nihon to tōbu Yūrashia no kokusai kankei* 古代日本と東部ユーラシアの国際関係 (Tōkyō: Bensei Shuppan, 2018). For the merits of including "Inner Asian and East Asian rulers and polities" into a broader framework, see notably, Timothy Brook et al., *Sacred Mandate: Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), x.

[5] For the term "Neo-Confucianism," cf. Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Stephen C. Angle and Justin Tiwald, *Neo-Confucianism: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Polity, 2017).

[6] The term vernacular is problematic in itself. For discussions, see Shang Wei, "Writing and Speech: Rethinking the Issue of Vernaculars in Early Modern China," in *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000-1919* (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2014), 254–301.

[7] For methodological discussions on how to read individual experiences "not through only any one of the lenses of local history, regional history, and global history but through the three combined," See Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Entanglements of a Man Who Never Traveled: A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian and His Conflicted Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), esp. 1–17.

"Korean."[8] (I use these terms in quotation marks to underscore the fact that they were subject to different imaginations during different periods.) Put differently, my purpose is not so much to use non-Western thinkers famous in their own worlds for creative theorizing.[9] Instead, I engage individuals who have been marginalized in their respective traditions, contextualizing their thinking experiences and excavating their insights.[10]

Common to each chapter, accordingly, is a consistent commitment to read all individuals—those participating in, debating over, and making observations about the rhetorical curriculum—as theorists and philosophers in their own rights. This distinguishes my approach from the classical model that Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge School have laid out. According to the Skinnerian method, in order to truly appreciate the contributions of "the chief" thinkers, one must reconstruct "the intellectual context in which the major texts are conceived."[11] Thus, researchers have to go through works of the "lesser writers" in order to understand the well-explored concepts to which great thinkers reacted.[12] In this dissertation, I do not read the ordinary students, bureaucrats, or missionaries as the mere means to foreground the originality of the "big-name" thinkers, but as ends in themselves. In fact, in no way do I intend to assert that the individuals that I study were influential. As we shall see, the ordinary students in Suzhou or in Hansŏng (modern-day Seoul) whom I examine all failed to gain political influence or intellectual fame in their own world (Chapter Six). Moreover, it does not appear that the missionary writings about the Sinitic curriculum exerted any serious impact upon big-name philosophers in Europe (Chapter Five).[13] However, I propose that once we seriously delve into the lifeworld of these individuals, their voices—often expressed through writings of a seemingly mundane, repetitive, and ordinary nature—themselves constitute a blue ocean of ideas that were otherwise invisible to us.

These ideas are valuable not only because they point to vibrant social and cultural phenomena of the past, but also because, as I contend, they speak to present debates in the fields of political and social theory. Certainly, none of the individuals I study have produced systematically articulated philosophies—at least not through their rhetorical exercises. Thus, I shall not offer any grand narrative for the creation of master concepts of an ideology. Nevertheless, the chapters below do present a story of development, which one might summarize as follows: Throughout their engagement with the rhetorical curriculum, these individuals

---

[8] For a critique of linear history from the perspective of the nation-state, see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 3–50; cf. Loubna El Amine, "Beyond East and West: Reorienting Political Theory through the Prism of Modernity," *Perspectives on Politics* 14.1 (2016): 102–120; Naomi Standen, "Taking China out of Premodern Global History: Bodies, Threads and Fabrics," Coughlin Lecture on East Asia, University of Virginia, November 19, 2020.

[9] A variety of important and provocative studies have already taken this approach. I am indebted to Leigh Jenco, *Changing Referents: Learning Across Space and Time in China and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Miranda Brown, "Returning the Gaze: An Experiment in Reviving Gu Yanwu (1613–1682)," *Fragments* 1 (2011), 41.

[10] For a provocative approach to recovering intellectual contributions of non-elite actors as a part of the historical process, see Rhiannon Stephens and Axel Fleisch, "Theories and Methods of African Conceptual History," in *Doing Conceptual History in Africa* (New York, Berghahn, 2016), esp. 2–5. It pays to acknowledge that the individuals that I study were still elites in that they were all educated, yet they were not especially famous or powerful.

[11] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Volume 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xi.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Quite some recent studies seem to have employed the strategy of playing up the missionaries' influence. See, for instance, Sun Banghua 孫邦華, "Ming Qing shiqi zaihua xiren shiye zhong de kejuzhidu tezheng yu zuoyong" 明清時期在華西人視野中的科舉制度與作用, *Fujian luntan* 9 (2006): 74–79.

problematized the ways in which they spoke, acted, and existed within the bureaucratic system, and explored alternative possibilities, excavated lost possibilities, and vindicated denied possibilities of speaking, doing, and being within a hierarchical world mediated by official documents.[14] During this process, as mentioned above, they themselves substantially reconceptualized the realm of the bureaucracy, which became not so much a soulless machine defined by pre-given rules, but as the everyday home where creative thoughts could flourish (see Chapter Five). Thus, this dissertation offers a hermeneutic circle in the following sense: The deeper we delve into the everyday experience of ordinary individuals in regions and periods of study, the further we may sharpen our own methodological toolkit and elaborate on our theoretical framework, thanks to which we may better reconstruct the historical reality that these individuals experienced and so better appreciate their insights.

Despite its importance in the early modern world, the rhetorical curriculum in question has long been overlooked in modern and contemporary historiography (see discussions below). This dissertation is the first monograph-length study exploring this topic, and I have engaged in extensive archival work in Tokyo, Kyoto, Taipei, Shanghai, Beijing, and Seoul. I have used documents in Sinitic, Mongolian, Manchu, and Persian to trace the Eurasian politics that shaped the curriculum. I have also employed a large number of previously untapped exercises, manuals, and textbooks generated from the rhetorical training to reconstruct the educational experiences of individuals. Whenever possible, I have visited the archeological sites of the schools where the rhetorical curriculum was once taught, and I have read each book that has come to us, treating each as a unique object that forms a part of the social and material culture of the times. Last but not least, I have collected descriptions of this curriculum in Latin and a variety of European languages to understand how different European readers imagined it.

In sum, this dissertation is a *cultural* history of political thought in the sense that it seeks to excavate intellectual creativity out of the everyday experiences of ordinary individuals. It is also a *trans*cultural history because it seeks to contextualize intellectual breakthroughs against the backdrop of different translocal, transregional, and translingual connections.

So far, I have briefly characterized the subject matter, the argument, the significance, the sources, and the methodology of this dissertation. In the rest of the introduction, I shall clarify a number of terms that will recur in my writing, and explain the temporal framework of this dissertation. In doing so, I further situate my arguments in the context of the recent development of a variety of research fields to which I am indebted and seek to contribute.

Key Terms and Periodization

As a working definition, I use the term bureaucracy (or the bureaucratic sphere) in a very inclusive sense, covering different kinds of institutional systems that heavily relied on the use of written documents that should be crafted according to particular formulas.[15] These documents of different genres (re-)created voices in written forms on behalf of different players, ranging from the emperor who promulgated decrees to the commoners who filed petitions or pleads.[16]

---

[14] Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?," in *Dits et Ecrits*, tome IV (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 562–578.
[15] For a very helpful clarification of the terms "government" and "court," see Zi (Chelsea) Wang, "Dilemmas of Empire: Movement, Communication, and Information Management in Ming China, 1368-1644" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017), 4.
[16] For the aural dimension of the bureaucratic genres, see for instance, Robert Ashmore, "The Mastering Voice: Text and Aurality in the Ninth-century Mediascape," in *Memory in Medieval China: Text, Ritual, and Community*, eds.

Bureaucratic rhetoric, accordingly, is the etic term I introduce to designate the art or craft of advancing one's voices through these written genres. It is not intended as a translation of any word in literary Sinitic, though the idea of rhetoric overlaps with a series of emic terms that will appear throughout the dissertation: *ci* 辭 (eloquence), *hongci* 宏辭 (grand eloquence), *xiuci* 修辭 (refined eloquence or expression).[17]

While this dissertation is an archaeology of a discipline devoted to bureaucratic rhetoric, an entry point to the vast lore of excavation is a particular kind of exercise, known as 擬 (*ni* in Chinese pinyin, *ui* in Korean, *nghĩ* in Vietnamese Hán Nôm), or imitative drafting in my translation, which bears at least two layers of meanings. On the one hand, it refers to a literary mode of writing, by which one *imitates* the style of a particular figure—locus classicus cases include Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53BC–18CE) imitative composition of classics, and Xie Lingyun's 謝靈運 (385–433) imitative composition of poems.[18] On the other hand, it is also jargon within the bureaucracy; any official document—be it a decree, edict, memorial or other genre used within the government—without final signature is referred to by this term. When I speak of "rhetorical curriculum," I refer to the totality of training and experience through which one learned to produce imitative drafting of official documents and used such writings to advance one's own goals. Emic terms for this rhetorical curriculum varied over time, as will become clearer in later chapters. Here it suffices to note that the rhetorical curriculum in question overlapped with or formed a part of a broader examination curriculum, when the requirement to produce imitative writing of official documents first appeared in the examinations.

The civil service examination in China and its neighboring polities was a complicated system explored in more detail in the following chapters. To avoid ambiguities, I differentiate two kinds of examinations from the outset. By the *general* examination, I mean the "thorny gate" that one was supposed to pass in order to be qualified for appointment as a ranked official—the only avenue into officialdom unless one enjoyed special privileges or had other qualifications. This examination can be differentiated into multiple levels. For instance, in China from 1314 to 1905, an individual who had earned the status of "licentiate" (*shengyuan* 生員) could compete for the opportunity to take the provincial examinations. The graduate from the provincial examination would be awarded the *juren* 舉人 degree, sufficient to receive low-tier official employment. A *juren* graduate could also proceed to take the metropolitan and palace examinations, and those who

---

Wendy Swartz and Robert F. Campany (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 243–266. For a close analysis of the process by which "speech changed into writing," see Jesse Watson, "Paperwork Before Paper," esp. 18–49.

[17] For the chancing concept of "*xiuci* 修辭" and its translingual connection with "rhetoric," see Chen Wangdao 陳望道, *Xiuci xue fafan* 修辭學發凡 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1982); Huo Sitong 霍四通, *Zhongguo xiandai xiuci xue de jianli* 中國現代修辭學的建立 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2012). For an example of recent scholarship that rethinks "stylistic" studies (*wenzhang xue* 文章學), see Chang Fangzhou 常方舟, *Shiluo de wenzhang xue chuantong* 失落的文章學傳統 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2020).

[18] Zhao Lianggong 趙良恭, a fourteenth-century scholar in Jinhua, took Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53BC–18CE) as a pioneer of imitative writing. See Wang Wei 王禕, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* 王忠文公集 (printed, 1522), Shanghai Library, *juan* 13. For Yang Xiong and early Chinese rhetoric, see Michael Nylan, "Yang Xiong's Final Fayan Chapter: Rhetoric to What End and for Whom?," in *Facing the Monarch: Modes of Advice in the Early Chinese Court*, ed. Garret P. S. Olberding (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 237–272. For Xie Lingyun, see Rebecca Doran, "Perspective and Appreciation in Xie Lingyun's 'Imitations of the Crown Prince of Wei's Gatherings in Ye'," *Early Medieval China* 17 (2011): 51–76. For the conception of literary imitation, see Wang Yao 王瑤, *Zhonggu wenxue shilun* 中古文學史論 (Taibei: Chang'an chubanshe, 1982), 110 –134; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), esp. 261; Bian Dongbo 卞東波, *Haiwai jigu lu* 域外稽古錄 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2019), 314–341.

succeeded in these would earn the *jinshi* 進士 degree, by means of which they could receive more desirable appointments and embark on a career of a more promising nature.[19] Though the general examination was divided into different tiers, it is important to differentiate all of these tiers from the special examinations that aimed to select officials of particular talent. For current purposes, the most relevant one was the "examination of eloquence" (*hongci ke* 宏詞科), which, under the Song and the Jurchen Jin, was used to recruit ministers involved in the crafting of documents for the throne.[20]

In China (as opposed to neighboring polities), the imitative drafting of official documents appeared sporadically in the general examination from 681 to 788 and regularly between 1314 and 1757.[21] A similar assignment formed a part of the Korean and Vietnamese examination systems starting from the fourteenth century, and remained in use at least until the nineteenth century (see Figure 1).[22] Thus, a full history of imitative drafting should probably start with the earliest exploration of the genre (which flourished already under the Han), explore how the genre was transformed under the Tang, and end with the nineteenth century. At present, I have decided to focus on the four centuries from ca. 1250 to ca. 1650, a period of time when imitative drafting was particularly impactful on the lives of a broad segment of the educated population.

In contrast to many other scholars, I do not take key dates in the development of the examinations (1314 or 1757) or the dates of dynastic transitions (1279 or 1644) as the most critical thresholds to frame my research, because I take the imperial examinations and imperial politics as critical components of a complicated ecology of social and cultural transformations. To begin the story with the thirteenth century is in some sense to begin in the middle. Nevertheless, as the rising Mongol empire quashed the Jurchen Jin (1115–1234), subjugated the Koryŏ Korea (918–1392), and conquered the Southern Song, some prominent scholars of this period started to rethink the merit of rhetorical education and the future of literary Sinitic as a documentary language. In this sense, the thirteenth century as a starting point allows me to delve into how intellectuals of the times perceived earlier legacies and envisioned a new system for their own needs. Looking back to the thirteenth century, as we shall see, is useful to offer the contexts for making sense of the transformations under Mongol rule.

I end with the mid-seventeenth century for three reasons. First, I underscore that a rhetorical curriculum focused on imitative writing remained important in China after the Manchu conquest in 1644. In other words, there was no linear decline in this training over the course of the sixteenth and/or the seventeenth century, as some recent research suggests. And the Qing (1636–1911) curricular reform of 1757 that replaced the imitative drafting of official documents with regulated poems requires a separate study that systematically scrutinizes the eighteenth-century political and intellectual cultures. Second, the mid-seventeenth century offers

---

[19] Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 56–61.

[20] For an excellent study of the Song examination of eloquence and literature, see Guan Qin 管琴, *Cike yu Songdai wenxue* 詞科與宋代文學 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018).

[21] Wada Masahiro 和田正広, *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū* 明清官僚制の研究 (Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 2002), 36–39; Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 736; Li Shiyu 李世愉 and Hu Ping 胡平, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Qingdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 清代卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), 395.

[22] For an example from Korea, see *Kwagŏ kŭpkwa mun* 科擧及科文 (manuscript, nineteenth century), Kyujanggak Library (古 351.3-G994). Interestingly, Japan and Ryukyu never adopted this form of training, to my knowledge, at least in part because the curriculum was embedded in Eurasian politics on the continent. This means that Chinese and Japanese scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth century, who were most critical to the making of modern East Eurasian history, were by and large ignorant of this training, which had once flourished.

an ideal opportunity to compare the transformations of the curriculum in China and Korea, precisely because of the crises following from the rise of the Manchu empire. Last but not least, during the mid-seventeenth century, an increasing number of writings were published in Europe that introduced the rhetorical curriculum to European audience. In this sense, by proceeding from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, I tell the story of how a particular "Chinese" rhetorical curriculum became a part of the transcultural, if not global, history of political thought.

Previous Scholarship

This periodization in turn allows me to address the problematic of how the Mongols matter in East Eurasian and world history,[23] and advance specific arguments in three different research fields. The first is the history of civil service examination, which has been the subject of decades, if not centuries, of meticulous scrutiny. Thanks to a series of groundbreaking studies by Hilde De Weerdt, Benjamin Elman, and other scholars, the old impression that the examination system was a stagnant machine via which the state sought to control the minds of the educated population has been entirely destroyed. In Elman's terms, the examination was rather a vibrant "cultural arena within which diverse political and social interests contested with each other and were balanced."[24] It forms "a bounded cultural space," as De Weerdt puts it, "in which students, teachers, emperors, examiners, court and local officials, literati intellectuals, editors, and printer/publishers in effect" advanced their concerns.[25]

My intervention, simply put, is two-fold: scale and approach. In terms of scale, though a growing body of studies of local history has focused on the Song-Yuan-Ming (960–1644) transformation in Chinese history,[26] what has received insufficient attention is the continuity and discontinuity of institutions such as the civil service examination before and after Mongol rule. The deeper challenge against this backdrop, as Iiyama Tomoyasu 飯山知保 has pointed out, is how to situate institutional and social changes in "China" in the broader context of trans-dynastic connections, as well as of trans-Eurasian interactions.[27] Following Iiyama's lead, the present study makes another effort to bridge the scholarship on the pre-Mongol and post-Mongol periods, a task, as we shall see, that requires me to draw comparison between different regions of

---

[23] See John W. Dardess, "Did the Mongols Matter? Territory, Power, and the Intelligentsia in China from the Northern Song to the Early Ming," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003): 111–134; Bettine Birge, "How the Mongols Mattered: A Perspective from Law," in *How Mongolia Matters: War, Law, and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 87–104.

[24] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, xxiv.

[25] Hilde De Weerdt, *Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127–1279)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 16.

[26] Peter K. Bol, "Neo-Confucianism and Local Society, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century: A Case Study," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Richard von Glahn and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 241–283. Anne Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Sukhee Lee, *Negotiated Power: The State, Elites, and Local Governance in Twelfth- to Fourteenth- Century China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Wang Jinping, *In the Wake of the Mongols: The Making of a New Social Order in North China, 1200-1600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018); Xi He, *Lineage and Community in China, 1100–1500: Genealogical Innovation in Jiangxi* (London: Routledge, 2020).

[27] For further discussions, see Iiyama Tomoyasu 飯山知保, *Kin-Gen jidai no Kahoku shakai to kakyo seido : mō hitotsu no "shijinsō"* 金元時代の華北社会と科挙制度：もう一つの「士人層」 (Tōkyō: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2011), 1–27.

China and Korea. In terms of approach, while Elman has exhaustively explored the implications of the Skinnerian argument that the examination constitutes the context and precursor of later intellectual movements, I am committed to excavating the ideas of ordinary participants in the examination curriculum.

It is also worth mentioning that the imitative drafting of official documents as a part of the examination system—either the general or special ones—has long evaded scholarly attention, as Elman has pointed out.[28] The situation has started to change only in recent years. In 2010 and 2017, Yao Dali 姚大力 and Guo Peigui 郭培貴 respectively scrutinized the weight of this exercise in the Mongol Yuan (1271–1368) and the Ming examinations.[29] Even more importantly, beginning in the late 2010s, Hou Meizhen 侯美珍 has started to systematically scrutinize the contents of imitative drafting of official documents.[30] Thanks to her ground-breaking studies, a variety of particular details of this part of examination become clear for the first time. Simultaneously, Chen Baoliang 陳寶良 has noticed that imitative drafting constituted a significant part of the training of the Ming licentiates,[31] while Park Hyun Soon has published a variety of research recovering everyday educational experiences in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Korea, of which document-writing formed a key part.[32] In the chapters below, I shall specify how I build specific sub-arguments on top of their studies. Here I would like to stress that without their intellectual leadership as well as a large body of research that has been published in East Asian languages, the present study would probably have taken much more time and a very different shape—and may not have been possible at all.

The second research field I engage with concerns the long-term transformation of political and rhetorical culture in China and other parts of the Sinitic sphere. During most of the twentieth century, bureaucratic rhetoric in literary Sinitic was assumed to involve merely the ability to "articulate compositions" (*cizhang* 詞章) that aimed to flatter the rulers. Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854–1921), when introducing Adam Smith's political economy to the Chinese audience, noted that Smith was a master "who trained disciples in the study of eloquence" 以辭令之學授徒.[33] Thus, Yan drew a critical distinction between liberal humanist rhetoric and its Chinese counterpart. The development of the former epitomized the progress of civilization for Yan,[34]

---

[28] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 38-42.

[29] Yao Dali 姚大力, "Yuan xiangshi ruhe queding shanggong renxuan ji qi cidi," 元鄉貢如何確定上貢人選及其次第 *Qinghua shixue* 2 (2013): 119–175; Guo Peigui 郭培貴, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 明代卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), 170, 225–227.

[30] See Hou Meizhen 侯美珍, "Mingdai xianghuishi zhao gao biao gongwen kaoshi xilun," 明代鄉會試詔誥表公文考試析論 *Guowen xuebao* 62 (2017): 125–158; "Yuandai keju sanchang kaoshi pianzhong zhi shitan," 元代科舉三場考試偏重之探論 *Guowen xuebao* 6 (2018): 171–202. See also the master thesis under her supervision, Li Zhuyin 李竺穎, "Mingdai xiang hui shi erchang biaowen yanjiu" 明代鄉會試二場表文研究 (MPhil diss., Guoli chenggong daxue, 2018).

[31] Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, *Mingdai ruxue shengyuan yu difang shehui* 明代儒學生員與地方社會 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005); revised and republished as Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, *Mingdai xiucai de shenghuo shijie* 明代秀才的生活世界 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2020).

[32] Pak Hyŏnsun [Park Hyon Soon], "Munjibŭl t'onghae pon chosŏnshidaeŭi ilgiwa ilgissŭgi" 문집을 통해 본 조선시대의 일기와 일기쓰기, *Chosŏn shidae sa hakpo* 12 (2016): 73–118.

[33] Yan Fu 嚴復, *Yuan fu* 原富 (Shanghai: Nanyang gongxue, 1902), 444.

[34] Compare: Adam Smith: In the progress of refinement, when philosophy and rhetoric came into fashion … (Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 599. Yan's translation] 世愈文明，民尚名理、言語之學. (Yan Fu, *Yuan fu*, 444); [Back translation of Yan] The more civilized the world is, the more the people value the studies of names-and- principles, and that of speech-and-language.

but after finishing the "Chinese" curriculum, "[learners] end up with the qualities for being slaves." 學成而後盡成奴隸之才.[35] In other words, for Yan (and many subsequent scholars), rhetorical training in China was so dependent on formulaic expressions and on complex stylistic rules that any inkling of creativity in the individual writer was inevitably squashed.

In recent years, however, an increasing number of scholarly works have started to challenge this stereotypical vision of bureaucratic rhetoric in the Sinitic tradition. It is interesting to note, however, that most publications so far have focused on the centuries from the early Chinese empires (220BC–220CE) to thirteenth-century East Asia—notably, Tang-Song China (618–1279) and Heian Japan (794–1192).[36] A variety of fascinating studies have shown that the Sinitic rhetoric of these empires was as rich in political thought as its counterpart in the Roman, Carolingian, and Byzantine empires.[37] Nevertheless, the question of how bureaucratic rhetoric evolved starting from the thirteenth century has largely evaded scholarly attention.[38]

The imbalance of research attests to some deeper assumptions underlying the field of Chinese and East Asian history. For historians of the Tang (618–907) together with its predecessors and successors (the Six Dynasties [220–589], the Northern Song [960–1127], and Heian Japan [794–1192], for instance), the imperial institution itself instantiated phenomenal civilizational achievements. For this reason, official documents and bureaucratic rhetoric produced by this system deserve close attention as a means to access the cultural and intellectual backbone of the empire. Given that a finite number of documents survive from these early periods, and many of them are even literary pieces canonized by later tastes or artifacts of artistic

---

[35] Yan Fu 嚴復, *Yan Fu quanji* 嚴復全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 282. For further discussions on Yan Fu on style, see Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 93; Wu Jianlin 吳建林, "Fanyi yu mingshi: Yan Fu yu xiuci" 翻譯名與實 嚴復與修辭, *Bianyi luncong* 4.1 (2011): 39–72.

[36] Peter Bol's *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) plays a critical role in directing scholarly attention to the cultural forms and the formulaic genres through which empires and individuals expressed themselves. Under Bol's leadership, a younger generation of scholars have deepened his observations from different perspectives: including Lu Yang on the post-755 transformations (*Qingliu wenhua yu Tang diguo* 清流文化與唐帝國 [Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2016]); Kou Lu on pre-Tang rhetoric ("Courtly Exchange and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy in Early Medieval China," [PhD diss., Harvard University, 2018]); and Brian Steininger on these cultural forms in Heian Japan (*Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017]).

[37] Paul van Els and Elisa Sabattini, "Introduction: Political Rhetoric in Early China," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 34 (2012): 5–14; for the project of "Classicising Learning in Medieval Imperial Systems: Cross-cultural Approaches to Byzantine Paideia and Tang/Song Xue," see the project website, accessed on April 6, 2021, http://paixue.shca.ed.ac.uk.

[38] Notable exceptions can be further divided into three groups. The first focuses on the distinct phenomenon of re-standardizing bureaucratic language during the early Ming (focusing on the so-called *hongwu ti* 洪武體). See for instance Adam Wilder Schorr, "The Trap of Words: Political Power, Cultural Authority, and Language Debates in Ming Dynasty China" (PhD diss., University of California, 1984). The second is the field of diplomatic rhetoric or the language used through transcultural politics broadly considered, which has been flourishing in recent decades. Exemplary studies include Wang, Sixiang. "Co-constructing Empire in Early Chosŏn Korea: Knowledge Production and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1392–1592" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015). Third, especially during recent years, scholars of late imperial China have shown that the realm of bureaucracy is an area where knowledge of different kinds were not only utilized but also negotiated. Fascinating studies include Bian He, "Too Sick to Serve: The Politics of Illness in the Qing Civil Bureaucracy," *Late Imperial China* 33.2 (2012): 40–75; "Of Wounded Bodies and the Old Manchu Archive: Documenting Personnel Management in the Early Manchu State," *Saksaha* 16 (2019): 1–29.

values, researchers have further reasons to dissect them meticulously from the perspective of literary and intellectual history.[39]

For historians of China who focused on the periods from the Southern Song all the way to Qing, the default assumption is substantially different. A whole range of fascinating studies have shown that, during this period, elites without governmental appointments played increasingly active roles in taking care of their own locales, founding schools, patronizing monasteries, and promoting the common good.[40] Moreover, as commerce flourished, different forms of vernacular literature—lyrics, drama, and novels—developed, giving new voice to merchants and urban commoners. Bureaucracy, in the historiography of Ming-Qing China, often instantiated a potential threat to the development of civil society or the public sphere.[41] Bureaucratic documents, accordingly, have been used to autopsy how an imperial state maintained itself and extended its control over a vibrant society.[42] While a huge number of official documents have survived in print, manuscript, and archives, very few—if any, at all—have entered the literary historical narratives of late imperial China.[43]

In brief, the historiographical reality that historians of different periods ask different questions, pursue different agendas, not to mention rely on sources of radically different natures result in a difficulty in understanding long-term transformations. Given that the two broad periods of Tang-Song and Ming-Qing happened to be connected (or separated) by that of Mongol rule, the continuity and discontinuity across the Song-Yuan-Ming transformation are often further obscured by assertions that either castigate the Mongols as the destroyer of civilization or romanticize them in one way or another. This dissertation contributes a case study to Mongol transformations. Simply put, I propose that Sinitic bureaucratic rhetoric remained a vibrant culture both under and after Mongol rule, a development that was catalyzed in different ways by the cultural politics under Mongol rule.[44]

---

[39] See for instance Lin Xiaoguang 林曉光, "Zhongshi shuxie de guanwenshuti gongtong pingtai" 中世書寫的官文書體共同平臺, *Xin guoxue* 2 (2015): 47–79.

[40] See Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42:2 (1982): 365–442; Robert Hymes, "Sung Society and Social Change," in *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5:526–664; Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1993); Fei Si-yen, *Negotiating Urban Space: Urbanization and Late Ming Nanjing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010).

[41] See Alexander Woodside, "The Divorce Between the Political Center and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China," in *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900*, eds. Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), esp. 459–460.

[42] Notable examples include Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), esp. 219. For a review of the current stake of the scholarship on documentary administration of Ming and beyond, see Wang, "Dilemmas of Empire," esp. 1–13. For recent progress in manuscriptological studies of "Chinese" official documents, see Huang Zhengjian 黃正健 ed., *Zhongguo gu wenshuxue yanjiu chubian* 中國古文書學研究初編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019).

[43] *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) offers a telling example. In Volume 1, from the beginning to 1375, multiple chapters read official documents—decrees, edicts, and memorials—as key genres of "literature" however understood (see the chapters of Martin Kern, Xiaofei Tian, and Stephen Owen). In Volume 2, official documents are cited only as historical sources of imperial policies.

[44] It is worth mentioning here that Kōjirō Yoshikawa 吉川幸次郎 (1904–1980) has notably argued that regulated poetry continued to flourish in China and East Asia well after the supposed classical age of the Tang. It was never replaced, not even marginalized by lyrics and vernacular dramas and novels. My contention is analogous to his.

In terms of the third research field, though this dissertation is not explicitly comparative, my arguments are intended to contribute to several broad-ranging dialogues, including the study of comparative political theory. In her recent article, Loubna El Amine has cogently pointed out that "while critiquing the dominance of the Western tradition in the discipline of political theory, recent methodological discussions in Comparative Political Theory (CPT) fail to move beyond the East-West dichotomy."[45] In other words, though an increasing number of scholars have started to take non-Western theories seriously, they start with a clear vision of what "Western" ones are about, and then engage non-Western traditions to identify "alternatives." This approach, in the end, reinforces, instead of challenges the dominance of European experiences in the fields of intellectual history and political thought. The antidote, as El Amine sees it, is to shift the focus to the "globally-shared institutional condition," against which actors of different regions reacted. This very insightful observation, however, is constrained by her next assertation that such a condition came into existence only with the "emergence of the sovereign state in the modern period."[46]

In this dissertation, I argue that the formation of "globally-shared" conditions predates the rise of the modern sovereign state. Since long ago, individuals from different parts of the Eurasian world were using official documents. The theme of how one may or may not speak within a hierarchical system premised upon the use of formulaic documents thus provides a common denominator for comparative studies. From here, we may observe the development of documentary, rhetorical, and philosophical cultures across different regions. For this reason, the focus on the thirteenth to the seventeenth century has its particular merits. It is a period when different documentary cultures were increasingly in contact with each other: Pope Innocent IV (1195–1254) sent his letter in Latin to Güyük Khan (1206–1248) of the Mongol empire; the latter soon replied, in 1246, in Persian;[47] missionaries such as Domingo Fernández Navarrete (ca.1610–1689) would be writing petitions and issuing orders under different institutional frameworks of the Spanish monarchy, the Manchu empire, and the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo in Latin America where he was the bishop.[48] The focus on how different individuals explored the potentials of official documents, accordingly, may offer new insight into the global history of political thought.

One may note that the exercise of writing (or speaking) on behalf of someone else is by no means unique to the Sinitic tradition. In ancient Greek tradition, ethopoeia (ἠθοποιία) was the mode of exercises by which an orator spoke from the perspective of another person—either historical, mythological, or hypothetical.[49] The rhetorical curriculum, known as progymnasmata (προγυμνάσματα, or fore-exercises) was a part of the standard education in the whole Roman world.[50] In the Byzantine context, it remained important in subsequent centuries. The

---

[45] Loubna El Amine, "Beyond East and West," 102.
[46] Ibid.
[47] For the letter in Persian original, see Vatican Secret Archives, Vatican City, Inv. no. A. A., Arm. I-XVIII, accessed on April 12, 2021, http://www.asnad.org/en/document/249/.
[48] For a "memorial" from "fray Domingo Fernández Navarrete," see "Petición del dominico Domingo Fernández Navarrete de prórroga de limosna de vino y aceite," in Archivo General de Indias (Reference Code: ES.41091.AGI/25//FILIPINAS,82,N.62), digitized; accessed on April 12, 2021, http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/1930484. For the life of Navarrete, see J. S. Cummins, *A Question of Rites: Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China* (Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1993).
[49] See Christine Walde, "Ethopoeia," in Brill's New Pauly, Antiquity Volumes, accessed on 05 April 2021, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/ethopoeia-e12221700.
[50] George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

consequences of a particular rhetorical curriculum could also be far-reaching. As Dimiter Angelov has recently shown, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, official Byzantine political rhetoric offered an entry point for the development of political thought.[51] In Latin West, ethopoeia regained an importance through the twelfth- and thirteenth-century development of *ars poeticae* and *ars rhetoricae*.[52] Thanks to the series of studies of Quentin Skinner, it has become clear that rhetorical culture played a critical role in the making of political theories and the conduct of public life.[53] In addition, as Charles E. Butterworth has notably demonstrated, Ibn Rushd (often Latinized as Averroes, 1126–1198) and other thinkers of the Islamic tradition further developed Aristotle's rhetorical theory, of which ethopoeia was a part.[54] Meanwhile, Miya Noriko 宮紀子 has shown that the study of chancellery letters and its proper style further flourished in post-Ilkhanate Persia.[55] The transformation of the rhetorical and documentary cultures in the post-Mongol Persianate sphere has been the subject of several fascinating studies.[56] I simply hope that the present study can offer a case of reference for future scholars conducting comparative and theoretical research.

In sum, engaging the three aforementioned research fields, I show Mongol rule mattered in three different ways. First, it opened a new page in the history of civil service examination in East Eurasia. Second, this institutional *discontinuity* fostered a range of cultural and intellectual transformations, a full recognition of which underscores that bureaucratic rhetoric *continued* to flourish under and after Mongol rule. Third, the development of document and rhetorical culture under and after Mongol rule should be recognized as a part of the globally connected history of political thought.

Chapter Synopsis

This dissertation is composed of six chapters that proceed in chronological order. Together, they offer a narrative of formation (Chapters One to Three) and transformation (Chapters Four to Six).

Chapter One traces the transformation of rhetorical education in the "Chinese" tradition. I argue that following the fall of the aristocracy, the rise of local elites, and the Jurchen and then Mongol conquests of North China, the intellectual mainstream of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries increasingly downplayed training that aimed to improve eloquence in the genres of official communication. Consequently, a limited number of elites endeavored to improve the

---

[51] Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[52] See, for instance, Henrik Specht, "Ethopoeia or Impersonation: A Neglected Species of Medieval Characterization," *The Chaucer Review* 21.1 (1986): 1–15.

[53] Quentin Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in Rhetoric and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1.

[54] Charles E. Butterworth, "Rhetoric and Islamic Political Philosophy," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3.2 (1971): 187–198; Mark Schaub, "Rhetorical Studies in America: The Place of Averroës and the Medieval Arab Commentators," *Journal of Comparative Poetics* 16 (1996): 233–254; Feriel Bouhafa, "Natural Justice under the Scope of Rhetoric: The Written and the Unwritten laws in Ibn Rushd's Political and Legal Philosophy" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2016).

[55] Miya Noriko 宮紀子, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai* モンゴル時代の「知」の東西 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2018), esp. 500–502.

[56] James Robert Pickett, "The Persianate Sphere during the Age of Empires: Islamic Scholars and Networks of Exchange in Central Asia, 1747-1917" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2015); Nile Green, ed., *The Persianate World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

rhetorical competence of imperial officials. While their efforts resulted in limited success during their own times, the institutional and intellectual legacies they established would contribute to the flowering of rhetorical learning under Mongol rule and afterwards.

Chapter Two contends that the Mongol culture of employing *bičigeči* secretaries (cf. Chinese: *bi-she-chi* 必闍赤; Persian: *bītikchī* بیتکچی) who specialized in the writing of documents constituted a crucial yet so far neglected background in the re-making of the "Chinese" rhetorical curriculum. More specifically, when Mongol rulers re-installed the civil service examination in 1313, they were not merely approving a curriculum that their "Chinese" advisers had submitted, as previous scholars have assumed; instead, they made critical revisions to it. The new examination curriculum, which for the first time established rhetorical exercises as a regular and compulsory element, in turn set the scene for tectonic cultural and intellectual transformations.

Chapter Three focuses on the province of Jiangzhe (roughly, the Lower Yangzi Delta) under Mongol rule. Using recently discovered examination records and previously untapped literary collections, I trace how rhetoric—or "the studies of eloquence" (*yanyu zhixue* 言語之學), as contemporaries called it—evolved into a vigorous discipline. Comparing developments in Jiangzhe with another region of the Yuan empire, the Koryŏ Kingdom, I show how local elites of the fourteenth century transformed the rhetorical curriculum into a platform that they could exploit to defend their right to political participation and to philosophize alternative possibilities in history.

Chapter Four investigates the post-Mongol transformation of the rhetorical curriculum. I start by introducing the remaking of the rhetorical curriculum under the Ming (1368–1644) empire, tracing how imitative writing of official documents diffused itself into the everyday schedules of ordinary examination candidates. Then, delving into the quotidian work of ordinary examiners and educators, I examine the geographical circulation of knowledge, information, and ideas. In the end, I argue that the everyday trainings allowed ordinary individuals to formulate creative ideas about the proper shape of government throughout their mundane rhetorical exercises.

Chapter Five explores a new approach that combines digital humanities and global intellectual history. On the one hand, I trace the changing focus of the Chinese rhetorical training from 1400 to 1700. As I shall show, the transformation gives rise to a compelling theory that conceptualized official documents as the everyday "home" of statecraft and political thought. On the other hand, I examine how this evolving curriculum was introduced to Europe, and how knowledge of it was interpreted by different European readers. I contend that the theorization of rhetoric as the "home" of thought in post-Mongol China—as well as its metamorphoses in Latin, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and English contexts—constitutes one key component of an emerging global political theory.

Chapter Six pursues a connected and comparative history focusing on two individuals who lived during the early seventeenth century: Xu Yunlu 徐允祿 (1565–ca.1640), a senior student at the Suzhou Prefecture School (China); and Cho Ch'anhan 趙纘韓 (1572–1631), a scholar turned official in Chosŏn (1392–1897) Korea. Sharing the same curriculum while each in his own way experienced and witnessed the expansion of the Japanese and the Manchu polities, Xu and Cho pressed the question of how history could have happened differently. Thus, I explore a translocal history of political imagination in the Eurasian context. I argue that while rhetorical education gave rise to counterfactual imaginations in categorically different ways in China and Korea, both Xu's and Cho's insights have the potential of rewriting the history of the foundations of modern political thought.

Figure 1 A Question of Bureaucratic Writing in the Civil Service Examination of Sơn Nam Province, Vietnam, 1802

Note, in particular, the second question: "The Edict appointing Di Qing as the Commissioner of Pacification of Jing-Hu" 以狄青為荊湖宣撫使制 (second line from the right). This requires the student to write from the perspective of the Song dynasty in 1052, which appointed Di Qing to attack Nong Zhigao/ Nùng Trí Cao, whose regimes stretch between modern-day China and Vietnam. See *Lịch khoa tứ lục* 歷科四錄 (1802), R.1922, http://lib.nomfoundation.org/collection/1/volume/825/, accessed on January 1, 2020.



Part One: Formation

1. The Challenge of Bureaucratic Eloquence: ca. 900–1300

"For the craft of composing [official documents]," noted Wang Yingling 王應麟 (1223–1296) in his *Cixue zhinan* 辭學指南 (Compass of the Study for [the Examination of] Eloquence), one should have a fixed curriculum. Accordingly:

> 日須誦文字一篇或量力念半篇或二三百字；編文字一卷或半卷須分兩冊，一冊編題，一冊編語；卷帙太多，編六七板亦得；作文字半篇或一篇……[57]
>
> Every day, one must recite one [model] texts, or a half of it, or [at least] two to three hundred characters, depending on one's energy. One must compile a chapter of texts, or at least a half chapter. [Wang's addition note:] One should divide them into two books, one listing the topics, the other listing materials [for addressing these topics]; if one has accumulated too many volumes, it is also helpful to compile six to seven blocks. One must compose a piece of writing or a half.

In prescribing such specific procedures, Wang was well aware that many intellectuals of his times were opposed to these daily practices for mastering bureaucratic eloquence. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), the grand philosopher of morality and metaphysics, had once ridiculed them as "[mere] repetitions of exaggerated and flattering words" 諂諛夸大之辭.[58] Wang disagreed. For him, though the power of eloquence may serve evil ends in the hands of malicious individuals, the study of it had its merit. In his terms, it was here that learners "ruminate over the texts of the Six Classics" 涵泳六經之文.[59]

Wang's remarks express some important though often neglected aspects of the intellectual culture of his times. Above all, elites of imperial China did not master the genres of memorials or edicts automatically or without effort—even though some may have boasted that they could, as I have elsewhere discussed.[60] On top of their general education, they needed to learn how to write each bureaucratic genre (see Table 1), and practice it from time to time. Against this backdrop, a tension arose between the pursuit of (bureaucratic) eloquence, on the one hand, and the pursuit of virtue or wisdom, on the other. If the former belongs to the realm of rhetoric, and the latter to moral philosophy (both broadly considered), eventually the question emerged, as it did in many cultures across time and space: Which of the two should be the basis of education?[61]

Here, my purpose is not to address the tension between rhetoric and philosophy *per se*—not yet at least. Instead, I seek to historicize it in the context of a particular period in Chinese history, that is, the tenth to the thirteenth century, a period that bridged the shadow of the Tang (618–907) legacies and the eve of the Mongol conquest (1234/1279). Already, historians of past

---

[57] Wang Yingling 王應麟, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* 玉海 辭學指南 (printed, latest preface [hereafter l.p.] in 1351), Fu Ssu-Nien Library, *juan* 201.

[58] Wang Yingling, *Yu hai cixue zhinan*, *juan* 201.

[59] Wang Yingling, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* (printed, l.p. 1351), Fu Ssu-Nien Library, *juan* 201.

[60] For further discussions, see Yin Shoufu 殷守甫, "Yimeng shuxie yu shi shiji de shehui wenhua bianqian" 異夢書寫與十世紀中國的社會文化變遷, *Zaoqi zhongguoshi yanjiu* (2020), in print.

[61] After all, in castigating the expertise of eloquence in his own times, Plato set up the agenda of the love of wisdom; in reconciling rhetoric and philosophy, Cicero—just like Wang Yingling—defended the merit of the former against the critique by the latter. See Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), esp. 3–30.

decades have scrutinized the structural changes during this period, including the demographic shift, economic revolution, elite transformation, state restructuring, and the contested relations between literature/culture (*wen* 文) and the Way (*dao* 道).[62] What remains understudied, however, concerns not only the process through which the intellectual mainstream increasingly downplayed the pursuit of bureaucratic eloquence, but also how such changes affected the quotidian maintenance of the bureaucracy on the one hand, and the literati experience within the government on the other.

In what follows, I contend that beginning in the eleventh century, the rhetorical competences of officials in the bureaucracy declined to the extent that even the court and some elites of the Song (960–1276) and Jin (1115–1234) were compelled to explore strategies to improve it. Ultimately, as we shall see in later chapters, the Song/Jin institutional and intellectual legacies would contribute to, in different ways, the flowering of rhetorical learning under Mongol rule and afterward. Meanwhile, an appreciation of the sporadic efforts to defend bureaucratic rhetoric during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries will make the fourteenth-century flourishing of the study of eloquence, described in Chapter Three, appear all the more remarkable.

The Tang Legacies and the Northern Song Reforms

In 1094, the central government of the Song Empire ("Three Boards") submitted a proposal to the throne, the deep background of which warrants close attention:

> 三省言：「今進士純用經術。如詔·誥[63]、章表、箴·銘、賦·頌、赦敕、檄書、露布、誡諭，其文皆朝廷官守日用不可闕，且無以兼收文學博異之士。」遂改置宏詞科……[64]
>
> The Three Boards proposed [to Emperor Zhezong]: "Nowadays, the *jinshi* examination only tests an understanding of the classics. As for [genres like] imperial decrees and edicts,

[62] For an overview of the recent scholarly trajectory, see Nicolas Tackett, "A Tang-Song Turning Point," in Michael Szonyi ed., *A Companion to Chinese History* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 118-128. For elite localization, see, notably, Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, & the State in Sung China (960-1279)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998). For imperial examinations, see notably Araki Toshikazu 荒木敏一, *Sōdai kakyo seido kenkyū* 宋代科挙制度研究 (Kyōto: Tōyōshi Kenkyūkai, 1969); John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Hilde De Weerdt, *Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127–1279)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007); Zhu Shangshu 祝尚書, *Songdai keju yu wenxue* 宋代科舉與文學 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008); Zhang Xiqing 張希清, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Songdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 宋代卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015); WEN Xin, "The Road to Literary Culture: Revisiting the Jurchen Language Examination System," *T'oung Pao* 101.1-3 (2015): 130–167; Iiyama Tomoyasu 飯山知保, *Kin-Gen jidai no Kahoku shakai to kakyo seido : mō hitotsu no "shijinsō"* 金元時代の華北社会と科挙制度：もう一つの「士人層」 (Tōkyō: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2011). For the "Ancient Prose Movement," see Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), esp. 176–211; Zhu Gang 朱剛, *Guwen yundong yu shidafu wenxue* 唐宋古文運動與士大夫文學 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2013); Kojima Tsuyoshi 小島毅, *Sōgaku no keisei to tenkai* 宋学の形成と展開 (Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1999).

[63] I use "·" to indicate that it concerns two different but related genres.

[64] Toqto'a 脫脫 et al., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 156.3649.

> memorials and expressions, admonitions and commemorations, rhapsodies and eulogies, edicts of amnesty, declarations of war, announcements of triumph, and instructions and orders, they are all indispensable for the quotidian maintenance of the court. In addition, [an examination that only focuses on the classics] cannot recruit gentlemen of literary capacity and outstanding erudition." Thus, [the court] turned to establish the "examination of eloquence."

Above all, the proposal gives an overall, though simplified, picture of the imperial examinations of the times. The *general* examination (in this case, *jinshi* 進士), as I call it, is the "thorny gate" that one was supposed to pass in order to be qualified for appointment as a ranked official—unless they enjoyed special privileges or had other qualifications.[65] The examination had a long history that dates back to at least 587 CE, and was held regularly until 1905 CE, with the exception of an important hiatus under the Mongols, who only re-instituted this institution in 1314 (Chapter Two).[66] It is important, however, to differentiate it from the *special* examinations that aimed to select officials of particular talents. The "examination of eloquence" (*hongci ke* 宏詞科), one of the many such special examinations, aimed to recruit "gentlemen of literary capacity and outstanding erudition." The Northern Song established it in 1094, when the throne approved the cited proposal of the Three Boards, an event to which I shall return later.

For current purposes, it is important to note that this proposal had identified a series of genres central to "the quotidian maintenance of the court." Eloquence (*ci* 詞/辭), in this context, concerned effective expression of meanings through these genres. Simultaneously, the proposal of 1094 also pointed out that the general examination of the times had failed to prepare candidates with eloquence or the skills for crafting such documents.[67] To understand why this is the case, it pays to briefly review the deep history surrounding examination content before going back to the proposal of 1094.

The overall question behind was whether *ci* eloquence, or the craft of composing official documents, could and should be taught—rather than simply enjoyed or absorbed as part of the general education devoted to classical learning and literary studies. Throughout the history of imperial examinations in China, the requirement to compose edicts or memorials appeared only sporadically in the general examination from 681 to 788 and regularly between 1314 and 1757 (excluding 1757).[68] Notably, the Tang eliminated bureaucratic genres from the general examination curriculum in the 780s.[69] As Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 and many scholars have discussed, the Tang court decided so, because it valorized poetic ability as the key to selecting men of taste in contrast to the mere clerks who processed paperwork.[70]

---

[65] John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, esp. 18–46.
[66] See Chapter Two and Three.
[67] Interestingly, while civil service examinations today in China and in many other countries often require candidates to write official reports and documents, the Song counterpart did not even require candidates to be able to compose administrative writing. See, for instance, *Guojia gongwuyuan luyong kaoshi yingshi zhidao* 國家公務員錄用考試應試指導 (Beijing: Qiye guanli chubanshe, 1995).
[68] Wada Masahiro 和田正広, *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū* 明清官僚制の研究 (Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 2002), 36–39.
[69] Prominent intellectual continued practicing imitative drafting even after the 780s, a fact that is recently rediscovered. For the case of Bai Juyi 白居易, see Xie Siwei 謝思煒, "Ni zhi kao" 擬制考, *Wenxue yichan* 1 (2009): 42–50.
[70] See Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, *Tangdai keju yu wenxue* 唐代科舉與文學 (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1986), esp. 149–156.

The Tang empire, however, was never short of competent "rhetorician ministers" (*cichen* 詞臣), that is, of the officials who crafted documents for the imperial and provincial governments. The reason was, in brief, that the empire was itself built upon an aristocratic society. Up until the late ninth century, the officials dominating key posts of the bureaucracy were descendants of aristocratic families.[71] To legitimate a situation in which a finite number of families monopolized the key posts in charge of crafting official documents, these aristocratic families consciously set themselves apart from the rest of society in part by laying claim to a mastery of the written word, and of other cultural forms of the past. Accordingly, while their art of administrative writing carried the semi-mystical power of a medium that could culturally transforming the realm, the supreme talent for producing them was closely tied to family lineage and breeding.[72]

The general circumstances under which elites developed their bureaucratic eloquence underwent an important transformation beginning in the tenth century. With the destruction of the Tang aristocracy during the 880s and 890s,[73] new generations of rhetorician ministers, lacking family traditions and thus access to manuscript of family collections, had to devote substantial energy to collecting model texts and working on this craft.[74] What is more, gradually through the eleventh century, scholars-officials became increasingly skeptical of the high Tang assumption that official documents, composed in four- and six-character parallel prose (or four-six for short), carried the power in themselves to transform the realm.[75] In 1067, Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), a prominent scholar-official known for his erudition, famously declared to the throne that he "was not able to produce [documents in] four-six" 不能為四六.[76] This assertion was not a mere gesture of humility, but rather illustrates an emerging ethos among the literati officials of the mid and late eleventh century. Epitomized by Sima, they refused to be employed merely for their rhetorical skills and their ability to give literary flourish to imperial orders. Instead, they insisted that they, if employed, should make decisions "on the governance of the realm together with [the throne]."[77]

Rather than focusing on literary style, leading intellectuals of the eleventh century, including Sima Guang, proposed that the purpose of literary activity lay in the search for the moral, cosmological, and metaphysical Way (*dao* 道). As is well known to students of Chinese literature, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), among others, cultivated a style of writing that purportedly pre-dated the rise of four-six parallelism, calling for a whole-scale "ancient prose" (古文) movement.[78] Though "ancient prose" movement reshaped the literary landscape from

---

[71] Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), esp. 1–44.

[72] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours,"* 109; Chen Jo-shui 陳弱水, *Tangdai wenshi yu Zhongguo sixiang de zhuanxing* 唐代文士與中國思想的轉型 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2016); Lu Yang 陸揚, *Qingliu wenhua yu Tang diguo* 清流文化與唐帝國 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2016), esp. 2–15.

[73] Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*, esp. 1–44.

[74] See Yin Shoufu, "Yimeng shuxie yu shi shiji de shehui wenhua bianqian," in print.

[75] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours,"* 109; Lu Yang, *Qingliu wenhua yu Tang diguo*, esp. 2–15.

[76] Toqto'a et al., *Song shi*, 255.10762.

[77] For reconstruction of this political ideal, see Yu Ying-shih 余英時, *Song Ming lixue yu zhengzhi wenhua* 宋明理學與政治文化 (Taipei: Yunchen, 2004); for a critique of Yu, see Zhu Pingci 祝平次, "Ping Yu Yingshi xiansheng de *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie Songdai shidafu zhengzhi wenhua de yanjiu*" 評余英時先生的《朱熹的歷史世界：宋代士大夫政治文化的研究》, *Chengda zhongwen xuebao* 19 (2007): 249–298.

[78] Zhu Shangshu 祝尚書, *Bei Song guwen yundong fazhan shi* 北宋古文運動發展史 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1995), esp. 1–35; Ronand C. Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), esp.

many perspectives, a great variety of key official documents continued to use the four-six style throughout the Song and later (see Table 1, see also Chapter Six for four-six in post-Mongol Korea).[79] This resulted in a cultural environment where the intellectual mainstream, which increasingly valorized the "ancient" style, came to dissuade young and aspiring official from practicing the genres of routine bureaucratic communication, which throughout the entire Song required the use of four-six parallelism. Not surprisingly, as an observer of the twelfth century noted, literati who grew up in such an atmosphere were poorly prepared to draft functional documents, ranging from imperial decrees to routine letters.

Alongside the development of the ancient prose movement, an increasing number of political and intellectual elites were dismissive of the use of poetry on the general examinations as a means to select officials. Especially after the 1060s, they submitted memorials in increasingly moralizing language,[80] contending that the primary goal of the examination was to select the worthy men instead of eloquent belletrists.[81] From their perspective, an examination curriculum focusing on literary composition would encourage the literati population to prioritize the art of composing beautiful lines over the cultivation of virtues. Whenever advocates of the classics-only curriculum seized power at court, they pushed the court to conduct general examinations that left no space for the demonstration of poetic abilities.[82] As a result, some literati who passed such an examination of classics were only familiar with standard commentaries; in one case, a graduate was apparently even ignorant of the dynasty Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BC), a famous classical scholar, flourished.[83]

In a sense, 1094 is a year of importance because it is the first time that the court itself acknowledged that, as a result of the previous restructuring of examination contents, entering officials needed to be properly trained to compose the documents central to the maintenance of the imperial bureaucracy. In other words, in contrast to the Tang aristocrats who believed that eloquence could and should not be taught, the proposal of 1094 envisioned a particular program to train and select rhetorician ministers who were capable of crafting documents of bureaucratic and diplomatic communications. Against this backdrop, the Song court implemented a new special "examination of eloquence" (*hongci ke*) in 1094 to recruit talent in the composition of the genres central to "the quotidian maintenance of the court." As the examination was further formalized in 1110, candidates were asked to write two pieces based on situations of the past, and another two based on situations that the current regime faced (see Figure 2 for an example).[84] As Wang Yingling summarized the situation:

1–11. For a more nuanced narrative, see Anna Shields, "Defining the 'Finest': A Northern Song View of Tang Dynasty Literary Culture in the *Wen cui*," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 4:2 (2017): 306–335.

[79] See also Zhu Gang, *Guwen yundong yu shidafu wenxue*, 172.

[80] See Ari Daniel Levine, *Divided By A Common Language: Factional Conflict In Late Northern Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

[81] Araki Toshikazu, *Sōdai kakyo seido kenkyū*, 346–380; Zhu Shangshu, *Songdai keju yu wenxue*, esp. 43–65. Zhang Xiqing, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Songdai juan*, 41–51; Hilde De Weerdt, *Competition over Content*, esp. 1–24.

[82] See Ye Fen 葉棻 ed., *Sheng Song mingxian siliu congzhu* 聖宋名賢四六叢珠 (manuscript, Ming), Shanghai Library. As its preface re-emphasized, while it is appropriate to replace four-six with the ancient style in the writings of treatises, parallel prose is indispensable in daily use. This is so, because from the grand speeches of the monarchs to the minor communications in memorials, all these genres "require the use of four-six." For daily uses of four-six, see Tsui Lik Hang, "Writing Letters in Song China (960-1279): A Study of its Political, Social, and Cultural Uses" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2013).

[83] Zhu Bian 朱弁, *Quwei jiuwen* 曲洧舊聞, *juan* 3, in SKQS.

[84] The Song *hongci ke* 宏詞科, thus designed, differs substantially from its acknowledged predecessor, the Tang "examination of erudition and eloquence" (*boxue hongci* 博學宏詞). The Tang *boxue hongci* focused on the genres of

蓋質之古，以覘記覽之博；參之今，以觀翰墨之華。[85]
[The examination] evaluates the candidates on the past to observe the broadness of their memory and reading knowledge, and checks them on contemporary issues to behold the splendor of their writings."

To recapitulate, the Northern Song establishment of this examination was itself a reaction to the declining rhetorical capacity of the bureaucratic corps in general, a much over-looked phenomenon that followed from a well-studied tectonic shift in the social composition of the elite and its cultural re-orientation.

It is important to re-emphasize that the Song "examination of eloquence" was a special examination that targeted a small group of literati, and thus should not be conflated with the general *jinshi* examination. The Northern and the Southern Song examinations of eloquence only passed 176 individuals from 1094 to 1276,[86] a period during which over 30,000 individuals earned their *jinshi* degrees.[87] Given its highly competitive nature, the vast majority of literati would not even bother to try their luck at the examination of eloquence, whereas training for the *jinshi* examination was considered a necessary prerequisite to be a member of the educated class. Nevertheless, as we shall see below, this institution did contribute to the Southern Song and Jurchen Jin literary and political cultures in different ways. In the end, some assignments of the Song/Jin examination of eloquence would find their way into the Mongol Yuan general examination, a topic scrutinized in Chapters Two and Three.

Table 1 Genres of Official Documents and Required Styles in Song Examination of Eloquence (1094–1274)

Genres requiring the use of four-six parallelism	Memorial 章, Expression 表, Announcement of Triumph 露布, Declaration of War 檄書, Imperial Edict 制, Imperial Decree 詔 (added to the curriculum in 1110)
Genres that can be composed in either four-six parallelism or in other styles of the past and present	Eulogy 頌, Admonition 箴, Commemoration 銘, Instruction/Order 誡/諭, Preface 序, Record 記.

(Wang Yingling, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* (printed, l.p. 1351), Fu Ssu-Nien Library, *juan* 201.)

The Southern Trajectory, ca. 1130–1270

rhapsodies 賦, poems 詩, and discussions 議論—almost the same as the general (*jinshi*) examination. See Wu Zongguo 吳宗國, *Tangdai keju zhidu yanjiu* 唐代科舉制度研究 (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1992), 98; Jin Yingkun 金瀅坤, "Shilin xuanhua Tangdai boxue hongci ke yanjiu," 士林選華 唐代博學宏詞科研究 *Lishi yanjiu* 1 (2018): 52–67.

[85] Wang Yingling, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* (printed, l.p. 1351), Fu Ssu-Nien Library, *juan* 201.

[86] Cao Jiaxin 曹家欣, "Cong *Cixue zhinan* kan Songdai boxue hongci ke de kaoshi" 從詞學指南看宋代博學宏詞科的考試, *Xueshu tansuo* 9 (2014): 114–118.

[87] During the Southern Song, about 29,000 individuals were known to have earned their degrees from the general examinations. See Zhang Xiqing, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Songdai juan*, 62.

After the fall of its capital Kaifeng in 1127, the Song court re-established itself in the south after almost two decades of warfare and negotiations.[88] Reforms of the examination continued nevertheless.[89] The Southern Song court allowed candidates of the general examination to select between a track based on literary composition and one based on classical studies, so as to ensure that at least those specializing in the former would be competent in bureaucratic writing. What is more, in 1133, the regime further decreed that everyone could try his luck in the special examination of eloquence, even those without a *jinshi* degree.[90]

Against this backdrop, "studies for [the examination of] eloquence" (*cixue* 辭學) flourished during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries to a certain extent. At least some leading intellectuals of the time had enrolled themselves in the examination, and later emerged as masters who trained students for it—including notable examples like Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–1181) and Zhen Dexiu 真德秀 (1178–1235).[91] It is also worth mentioning that publishers, having recognized that mastery of four-six parallelism was crucial for crafting official documents and a variety of letters, started to sell manuals and models, targeting the elites' need to sharpen their skills in writing official documents. In other words, during the Southern Song, the general examination, the special one, the print market, and different educators cooperated to improve training in bureaucratic eloquence amid the educated population.

Nevertheless, these efforts were counterbalanced by broader social and intellectual transitions. Because the imperial bureaucracy could not accommodate the fast-growing educated population, more and more elites no longer considered government employment as an essential part of their literati identity.[92] With little chance to participate in the bureaucracy and formal administration of the realm, many educated elites turned their energy to their own local society, consolidating local dominance, promoting local welfare, and compiling local histories—a phenomenon that scholars of recent decades have termed "elite localism."[93] In the meantime, many local elites were increasingly concerned with self-cultivation, pursuing their own personal road to sagehood. Against this backdrop, the Learning of the Way or Daoxue 道學 movement gained more and more adherents.

Here I use Daoxue to refer to the particular teachings that Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) developed on top of his eleventh-century predecessors. Accordingly, Daoxue formed a part of the

---

[88] See Teraji Jun 寺地遵, *Nansō shoki seijishi kenkyū* 南宋初期政治史研究 (Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 1988).
[89] Hilde De Weerdt, *Competition over Content*, esp. 25–54.
[90] Cao Jiaxin, "Cong *Cixue zhinan* kan Songdai boxue hongci ke de kaoshi," 114–118.
[91] See Wang Yingling, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* (printed, l.p. 1351), Fu Ssu-Nien Library.
[92] Robert Hymes, "Sung Society and Social Change," in *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5 Part 2*, eds. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 526–644.
[93] See Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 365–442; Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*; Robert Hymes, "Sung Society and Social Change." There is also a formidable literature that qualifies, complicates, or simply strives to refute the thesis of elite localism during the middle-period China. See, for instance, Bao Weimin 包偉民, "Jingyingmen difanghua le me?" 精英們地方化了么 *Tang yanjiu* 11 (2005): 653–671. For a clarification of the term "local," see Chang Woei Ong, *Men of Letters within the Passes: Guanzhong Literati in Chinese History, 907–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008). For a comparison between scholarship in East Asia and in the United States, see Luo Yinan, "A Study of the Changes in the 'Tang-Song Transition Model'," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 35 (2005): 99–127. For further research directions to build upon current debates of elite localism, see, for instance, Chen Song, "The State, the Gentry, and Local Institutions: The Song Dynasty and Long-term Trends from the Tang to the Qing," *Journal of Chinese History* 1.1 (2017): 141–182.

broader intellectual phenomenon known in English scholarship as Neo-Confucianism.[94] In a nutshell, Daoxue invites (or rather requires) its adherents to investigate the Principle (*li* 理), or the ultimate normative patterns of society and the cosmos, in their quotidian lives.[95] Due to complicated faction politics, the court adopted a rather inimical attitude towards Daoxue in the 1190s.[96] Nevertheless, gradually though not linearly throughout the thirteenth century, Daoxue redefined the mainstream of political culture at the court and in society at large.

Many Southern Song sources point out that Daoxue advocates dissuaded youngsters from devoting themselves to bureaucratic eloquence, and especially the examination of eloquence. To cite one of many examples:

> 楊誠齋初欲習宏詞科，南軒曰：「此何足習，盍相與趨聖門德行科乎？」誠齋大悟，不復習，作《千慮策》，論詞科可罷曰：「孟獻子有友五人，孟子已忘其三。周室去班爵之籍，孟子已不能道其詳，孟子亦安能中今之詞科哉！」[97]
>
> In the beginning, Yang Chengzhai [i.e. Yang Wanli] planned to study for the examination of eloquence. Nanxuan [i.e. Zhang Shi] said, "How can this be worthwhile? Why not pursue the subject of virtue of the sagely learning together?" Chengzhai, thus enlightened, no longer practiced [for the examination of eloquence]. He composed the "Treatise of Thousand Considerations." There, he argued that the examination of eloquence should rather be abolished: "Lord Meng Xianzi had five friends, but Mencius/Mengzi had forgotten three of them. During the Zhou dynasty, the registry of noble ranks was lost, and even Mengzi could not recount the details. Could even Mengzi have passed the examination of eloquence!"

This anecdote takes Yang Wanli 楊萬里 as the protagonist, and the narrative features Yang's intellectual connection with Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133–1180), a close friend of Zhu Xi and a key figure of the Daoxue movement. One may recall that Zhu Xi attacked the studies to prepare for the examination of eloquence on the ground that it trained youngsters in piling up flattering words. Here, Yang takes a different perspective. He argues that related training forces candidates to memorize the fuzzy details of the institutional infrastructure. This is a waste of time, because even Mencius/Mengzi (372–289BCE) the sage could not do it. As we shall see in later chapters,

---

[94] Here, following Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, I use Daoxue as a proper name. See his "A New Direction in Confucian Scholarship: Approaches to Examining the Differences between Neo-Confucianism and Tao-hsüeh," *Philosophy East and West* 42.3 (1992): 456; "The Rise of the Tao-hsüeh Confucian Fellowship in Southern Sung," in *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5 Part 2*, eds. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 727–730.

[95] The scholarship on Daoxue is too voluminous to cite here exhaustively. For an overall characterization of its philosophical tenets, see also Wing-tsit Chan, *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology Compiled by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-Ch'ien* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), xii; Chen Lai 陳來, *Song Ming lixue* 宋明理學 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991); Stephen C. Angle and Justin Tiwald, *Neo-Confucianism: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Polity, 2017). For the development of Daoxue as a historical development, see Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, "The Rise of the Tao-hsüeh Confucian Fellowship in Southern Sung;" Akira Fukutani 福谷彬, *Nansō dōgaku no tenkai* 南宋道学の展開 (Kyōto : Kyōto daigaku gakujutsu shuppankai, 2019).

[96] Huang Kuanchong 黃寬重, *Zhengce duice: Songdai zhengzhi shi tansuo* 政策 對策 宋代政治史探索 (Taibei: Lianjing, 2012), 145.

[97] Luo Dajing 羅大經, *Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 48.

under and after Mongol rule, the exercises of bureaucratic rhetoric played a role in making sure that youngsters had a basic understanding of governmental system(s). The question, of course, concerns how much one should memorize in such preparation (see Chapter Four).

Here, it pays to emphasize that not all Daoxue followers were against the learning for the purpose of the examination of eloquence or the art of bureaucratic writing. Zhen Dexiu's career deserves some attention here. While Zhen Dexiu endorsed Zhu Xi's teachings and positioned himself as a Daoxue follower, he had passed the eloquence examination and, later, even trained youngsters for this examination.[98] In a sense, he epitomized the scholar-officials who aimed to combine the moral philosophies on the one hand, and the practical craft of bureaucratic eloquence on the other. In the long run, his legacy would set an important model for intellectuals of Ming China and Chosŏn Korea (1392–1897) to emulate. In his own times, Zhen enjoyed a comparatively successful official career, and in 1234 he was promoted to the position of Hanlin Academician in Charge of Drafting Edicts 翰林學士知制誥.[99] His success, while indebted to powerful decision-makers who were increasingly amicable to Daoxue, further consolidated the venues through which Daoxue followers could penetrate into key positions of the government.[100]

It is interesting to note that once appointed as the edict drafter, Zhen needed to face the serious challenge of bureaucratic eloquence. In an exchange with Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187–1269), a fellow Fujianese of a younger generation,[101] Zhen confessed that due to a heavy burden of "social engagements" (應酬), he had been neglecting the practice of bureaucratic writing; as a result, he would be embarrassed if the throne counted on him to produce documents on-site. Seeing no hope to improve his own bureaucratic eloquence, Zhen shared his lessons with the young promising Liu Kezhuang. "After leaving the issue [of writing official documents] from hand for a while, the skills fade away" 此事久不拈弄則荒疏, Zhen warned. To maintain one's bureaucratic eloquence, Zhen revealed a secret method he had come up with:

> 如街談巷語及士大夫所傳某人除某官之類，即題目也。暇日試擬為之，臨時或可采用。[102]
>
> Even rumors on the street and literati hearsay concerning someone being promoted to some position, these are all topics [for practice]. When you are free, try to draft these documents. In times of need, you may just use them.

Instead of warning youngsters to distance themselves from political "rumors," Zhen instructed Liu to drill himself with such ungrounded rumors. Indeed, Zhen lived in an information order in which news circulated quickly through elite networks, and Zhen made good use of the rumors.[103] What is more, Zhen's advice is particularly informative of the informal channels by which officials strived to maintain bureaucratic eloquence: they drilled themselves with rumor-informed

---

[98] *Song shi*, *juan* 437, 12957.

[99] See Zhen Dingyuan 眞鼎元, ed., *Xishan Zhen Wenzhong gong nianpu* 西山眞文忠公年譜 (printed, 1764), East Asian Library, UC Berkeley.

[100] Huang Kuanchong, *Zhengce duice: Songdai zhengzhi shi tansuo*, 149.

[101] For Liu Kezhuang in a broader historical context, see Nakasuna Akinori 中砂明徳, *Chūgoku kinsei no Fukkenjin : shitaifu to shuppanjin* 中国近世の福建人 : 士大夫と出版人 (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2012).

[102] Liu Kezhuang, "Ba ni zhi sandao," 跋擬制三道 QSW 326:61.

[103] For the circulation of personnel information, see Tung Yung-chang, "Confronting the Job Shortage: The Commercialization of Personnel Information in Song China," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 48 (2019): 57–98.

hypothetical situations. Such exercises vividly show that rhetorical exercises have the inherent power of forcing their practitioners to ruminate over possible deeds and actions, including imagined or even counterfactual situations—a potential that later rhetoricians would further explore, as we shall see in Chapter Three.

Overall, historians in the past have characterized the Southern Song as a period of the phenomenal spread of literacy and elite education, a trend facilitated by the development of block printing technology, the dissemination of schools, and commercialization in a variety of regions of the empire.[104] More and more powerful families that were dominant in their own locales invested substantial resources to educate their sons and daughters to read and write.[105] As a result, by the end of the regime, almost a million individuals were studying for the general examination, according to He Zhongli's 何忠禮 recently estimated.[106] For many of them, participation in the general examination confirmed their state of belongingness to the imagined community of literati or *shi* 士, while most of them were well aware that the likelihood of earning a *jinshi* degree was extremely low.

Education, in turn, transformed the elite stratum. Reading Zhu Xi's manuals for family rituals as well as models of clan lineages, the local elites sought to re-organize the basic units of daily life.[107] Paying close attention to printed gazettes and other state documents, some scholars of even comparatively remote regions were informed about current affairs of the court and started to form opinions about politics.[108] Against this background, this section highlights another aspect of education during the Southern Song, according to which a general reading culture does not automatically prepare one for eloquent and efficient bureaucratic writing. Indeed, compared to the Tang rhetorician ministers who were eager to hide their painstaking process of sharpening skills in bureaucratic writing, the Southern Song elites had left far more materials on this painstaking process. Most of these sources, barely tapped, point in some promising directions for further studies.

Here, it is helpful to add that "the study for [the examination of] eloquence" in late Southern Song (ca.1250), though certainly influential on the development of the Yuan "study of eloquence," was also qualitatively different from the latter. The Southern Song rhetorical education is centered around its own special examination and an actual official career. In contrast, up to the fourteenth century, the new "study of eloquence" was facilitated by the Yuan general examination, and soon rose as a discipline that was no longer tied to the examination curriculum and an actual bureaucratic career. These two *regimes* of rhetorical culture are of course mediated through the transmission of manuscripts and knowledge through local ties of

---

[104] Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, & the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, 16.

[105] For Song school education in general, see Chu Min-kin, *The Politics of Higher Education: The Imperial University in Northern Song China* (Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong Press, 2020), esp. 16–47. For everyday literary practices, see Tsui Lik Hang, "Bureaucratic Influence on Letters in Middle Period China: Observations from Manuscript Letters and Literati Discourse," in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, ed. Antje Richter (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 363–97. On women and literary activities during the Song, see Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp. 120–130. On women as participants of literati culture in the increasingly marketized society of the Southern Song, see Beverly Bossler, *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University East Asian Center, 2013), 163–207.

[106] He Zhongli 何忠禮, *Nan Song keju zhidu shi* 南宋科舉制度史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2009), 285.

[107] Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3–13.

[108] Hilde De Weerdt, *Information, Territory, and Elite Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), esp. 325–394.

discipleship and trans-local networks of printing and literati socialization.[109] Nevertheless, to appreciate the transition of these two *regimes* of these two rhetorical cultures, it is important to go beyond the local and trans-local mechanism in the south, and turn the gaze to the Eurasian Steppe.

The Northern Trajectory, ca. 1190–1300

During Zhen and Liu's times, the Southern Song coexisted with its powerful neighbors, the Jurchen Jin and then the emerging Mongol Empire. Chapter Two will examine how steppe regimes employed scribes or secretaries. Here I investigate the persistence and transformation of the Chinese-language rhetorical learning from the perspective of those who specialized in this art and served the "alien" regimes.

In 1115, the nomadic Jurchen coalition based in Manchuria declared themselves *amba-an ant ʃ u-un* ("the Great Golden Country") or the Jin in Chinese sources, and soon quashed the *huld ʒi kitai gur* (the Khitan Liao), pushing the Song to the south.[110] As Wen Xin has notably demonstrated, the Jurchen rulers were committed to developing a literary culture in the Jurchen language, and thus, classical Chinese became only one among a variety of other languages used for diplomatic and administrative purposes.[111] Against this backdrop, many Han Chinese elites under Jin rule actually adopted a vernacular form of the Chinese language when producing steles for certain uses, a phenomenon that Iguro Shinobu 井黒忍, Iiyama Tomoyasu 飯山知保, and Wang Jinping 王錦萍 have scrutinized from different perspectives.[112]

Following their Khitan predecessors, the Jurchen rulers entrusted a very limited number of scholars to compose documents in classical Chinese for the practical purpose of communicating with the Song and the Koryŏ courts. It was only beginning in the 1190s, "two full generations" after the Jurchen conquest of central China, that ethnic Han literati under the Jin started to initiate a "self-sustaining" "intellectual revival," in Bol's terms, seeking "common grounds" with their Jurchen rulers.[113] Zhao Bingwen 趙秉文 (1159–1232), the central figure of this movement, arose as a rhetorician minister of the Jurchen empire.[114]

---

[109] For instance, Wang Yingling's manual for studying the Song examination of eloquence would be rediscovered and reprinted in the 1340s, for new generations of students studying for the Yuan general examination. See Wang Yingling, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* (printed, l.p. 1351), Fu Ssu-Nien Library, *juan* 201.

[110] For Jurchen terms of the "Golden Country," see Jin Qicong 金啓孮, *Nvzhen wen cidian* 女真文詞典 (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1984), 80, 244. For a narrative informed by recent scholarship, see Furumatsu Takashi 古松崇志, "Kingoku (Joshin) no kōbō to Yūrasha no tōhō jōsei" 金国（女真）の興亡とユーラシア東方情勢, in *Kin Joshin no rekishi to Yūrashia Tōhō*, eds. Furumatsu Takashi et al. (Tōkyō: Bensei Shuppan, 2019), 14–31.

[111] See Julia Schneider, "The Jin Revisited: New Assessment of Jurchen Emperors," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 41 (2001): 343–404; Wen Xin, "The Road to Literary Culture," 130–167.

[112] Iguro Shinobu 井黒忍, "Shanxi Yicheng Qiaozemiao Jin Yuan shuili bei kao," 山西翼城喬澤廟金元水利碑考 *Shanxi daxue xuebao* 34.2 (2011): 92–97; Iiyama Tomoyasu, "Genealogical Steles in North China during the Jin and Yuan Dynasties," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 13.2 (2016): 151–196; Wang Jinping, *In the Wake of the Mongols: The Making of a New Social Order in North China, 1200-1600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

[113] Peter Bol, "Seeking Common Ground: Han Literati Under Jurchen Rule," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987): 461–538.

[114] Toqto'a 脫脫 et al., *Jin shi* 金史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 110.2426. See also Peter Bol, "Chao Ping-wen (1159-1232): Foundation for Literati Learning," in *China under Jurchen Rule*, eds. Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen H. West (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 115–144.

Among many of his practices of administrative writing, Zhao "drafted the imperial instruction in imitation of the new style that Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831) developed during the Changqing era [821–824 CE]" 擬元縝長慶新體戒諭.[115] Here, Zhao imagined that he was playing the role of Yuan Zhen in 821, who was in turn drafting a document for Emperor Muzong of the Tang 唐穆宗 (795–824). As the imperial edict drafter, Yuan was known for exploring a "new style" 新體. This style, as I have argued elsewhere, was designed to speak to recipients of edicts directly, instead of piling up tropes and allusions in highly coded ways.[116] However, as a key politician of the Changqing reign, Yuan was also known for mishandling the military qua political crisis of 822.[117] As a direct result, the Tang court lost much of what it had gained during the previous years, in terms of control over the Hebei provinces.

The way that Zhao began his imitative drafting illustrates his own intellectual agenda:

> 予新即大政，承元和師旅之後，軍國庶務有所未明……[118]
>
> We [the Emperor], recently, inherited the grand governance [that is, the throne]. Following the [use] of troops during [the previous reign of] Yuanhe [806–820], [our empire] has not illuminated the routine affairs of arms and governance yet.

Imitating Yuan Zhen on the one hand, and drafting an imperial document for the Changqing emperor on the other, Zhao started the document with the first-person pronoun of *yu* 予. Ever since the Qin unification, monarchs used *zhen* 朕 to refer to themselves. However, around the year of 820, both Yuan Zhen and Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) began to revive the pre-Qin style of document writing. A hallmark of their experiments was precisely the reinstallation of the archaic use of *yu*.[119] Zhao's writing merits our attention in part because it shows how literati under the Jurchen rule continued the project of the ancient prose movement, reforming the language of "Chinese" edicts.

What is more, Zhao was not only emulating the stylistic features of Yuan Zhen, but also pressing the question of what Yuan Zhen could have done better in retrospect in the year 821. Thus, Zhao's "Yuan Zhen" did precisely what the historical Yuan Zhen had failed to accomplish as a key minister of the times. The former emphasized that the military success gained through the preceding years of the Yuanhe era only marked a beginning of reform. Starting from here, the rest of Zhao's writing detailed what the Changqing emperor should have done to forestall the rebellion of 822. In all, if Liu Kezhuang's exercises exemplify the uses of imitative writings for engaging hypothetical situations that have not happened yet, Zhao's rhetorical experiments pioneered later efforts that turned imitative writing into a serious platform for rethinking history.

---

[115] QLJW 3:2204.

[116] His friend, the famous Bai Juyi 白居易(772–846), accoladed Yuan's exploration with the claim that "edicts turn to be elevated and ancient since the Changqing era" 制從長慶辭高古. Bai Juyi 白居易, *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao* 白居易集箋校 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), 1532.

[117] Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 166.4333. For a general background for the crisis of 822, see Charles A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid- and Late T'ang," in *Cambridge History of China, vol. 3: Sui and T'ang China, Part 1*, ed. Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 464–560. Li Biyan 李碧妍, *Weiji yu chonggou* 危機與重構 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015).

[118] QLJW 3:2204.

[119] See Takabashi Kōkichi 高橋幸吉, "Gen Kōmon to Kan mon bunjin," 元好問と韓門文人 *Keiō gijuku daigaku hiyoshi kiyō: Chūgoku kenkyū sōsho* 6 (2013): 49–77.

Due to the tenuous nature of surviving sources, we do not know whether Zhao Bingwen's rhetorical ventures were embedded in the examination of eloquence that the Jin established based on the Song model.[120] What is clear is that during Zhao's times, this special examination offered a channel for Han literati to advance their careers.[121] Nevertheless, even for the very few graduates of this special examination, their best chance in officialdom lay in positions responsible for producing writings in "Chinese" for the court. Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190–1257), who would emerge as the leading literatus after Zhao, was among the graduates of 1224.[122] But unfortunately, Yuan did not have the opportunity to enjoy a career of rhetorician qua secretary. As the entire Jurchen Jin regime began falling apart under the Mongol onslaught, Yuan Haowen was forced to flee for safety multiple times in this particularly violent period of time, and soon became known for his poems of lamentation and efforts to document the cultural achievements of the fallen Jin dynasty.[123]

During these tumultuous years, Yuan Haowen was fortunate enough to find an asylum under the patronage of Yan Shi 嚴實 (1182–1240) and his sons, the powerful warlords that the Mongols entrusted to rule the region of Dongping in modern-day Shandong.[124] Employed as an instructor at the Prefectural School of Dongping, Yuan Haowen was able to teach a younger generation of local literati. Thanks to Yuan, together with fellow refugees in Dongping, literati here continued practicing the rhetorical training culminated in imitative drafting of ancient documents, and they continued to do so even after examinations were abolished under the Mongol rule.[125] To cite an example, Wang Xu 王旭 (?–ca.1300), a native of Dongping, emerged as a mature author in the 1260s. His collection includes three imitative pieces of historical documents, including "Imitative draft of Liu Yu's (363–422) declaration of war against Huan Xuan (369–404)" 擬劉裕討桓玄檄.[126] The legacy of Jin rhetorical learning, as it survived amid the Dongping circle of scholars,[127] would make its impact a few decades later under Mongol rule, as we shall see in Chapter Two.

Returning to the violent transition between the Jurchen and the Mongol rule, Hao Jing's 郝經 (1223–1275) experience is telling from another perspective.[128] Though the Jin fell when

---

[120] For an attempt to understand the Jin institution of the examination of eloquence, see Wu Yuhuan 武玉環, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Liao Jin Yuan juan* 中國科舉制度通史 遼金元卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015).

[121] Toqto'a et al., *Jin shi*, 110.2428.

[122] Toqto'a et al., *Jin shi*, 126.2742; QLJW 2878.

[123] Stephen H. West, "Chilly Seas and East-Flowing Rivers: Yüan Hao-wen's Poems of Death and Disorder, 1233-35," in *China under Jurchen Rule*, eds. Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen H. West (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 281–304.

[124] Fan Xiangda 范祥達, "Yuan chu de Dongping xuefeng yu yingxiang" 元初的東平學風與影響, *Xingda lishi xuebao* 19 (2007): 45–80.

[125] He carefully preserved his imitative writings thanks to with which he passed the eloquence examination; examples include "Announcement of Triumph over Wang Shichong on behalf of Prince Qin [Li Shimin]" 秦王擒竇建德降王世充露布—a piece he drafted in the name of Emperor Taizong of the Tang. QLJW 3:2878.

[126] QYW 19:472.

[127] See Herbert Franke, "Wang Yun (1227-1304): A Transmitter of Chinese Values," in *Yuan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion Under the Mongols*, eds. Hok-lam Chan and Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 153–196.

[128] For an intellectual biography of Hao Jing, see Tillman's chapters in Christian Soffel and Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Cultural Authority and Political Culture in China: Exploring Issues with the Zhongyong and the Daotong during the Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012); Wang Mingsun 王明蓀, *Liao Jin Yuan shixue yu sixiang lungao* 遼金元史學與思想論稿 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2001), 141–169; Qiu Yihao 邱軼皓, *Mengu diguo shiye*

Hao was only eleven, his father instructed him to compose official documents in line with the curriculum of the eloquence examination, thereby requiring him to learn the rhetorical style of each period.[129] At the age of 32, he joined the entourage of Qubilai (1215–1294), the future khan of the Mongol Empire, and in 1260, he was dispatched to the Southern Song as an envoy.[130] Captured as a hostage, Hao spent his time in jail (re-)collecting his own compositions: "Out of both personal belongings and memory, he recovered multiple pieces of imitative writings of official documents that he had once composed in the past" 裒集追憶得故述擬者若干首.[131] That Hao memorized these pieces or brought them with him in person suggests that he was well aware that this diplomatic mission required mastery of different bureaucratic genres—a training that he had once received, but set aside due to his "exclusive commitment to ancient proses" 專為古文.[132] In other words, while his endorsement of the ideology of the ancient prose movement led him to abandon his early rhetorical training focusing on documents in four-six parallelism, actual diplomatic experiences forced him to pick up once more the skills of bureaucratic writing.

Upon reviewing his early practices of imitating historical decrees on behalf of the ancients, Hao, now confined to the jail, proposed a new historical narrative of written styles. With regard to imperial proclamations, as he noted, "the Western Han style was most elevated, because it carried on the legacies of the pre-Qin and the three eras [of sagely governance]" 謂西漢格高，辭約有先秦三代遺風.[133] However, the period from the Eastern Han to the Tang was not merely an era of literary decline or decadence—as Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) once portrayed in his glorification of Han Yu 韓愈. Hao Jing realized that official writings during this millennium had their own strengths as well:

> 然而點化詩書六經，雜用先秦二漢，暢如陸贄，質如吏部，富如文饒，情如封敖，雄如東坡，工如彥章，學經作句，亦足自為。……故自東漢終於李唐，為詔赦制冊檄書露布等述其事而擬其辭。[134]
>
> Nevertheless, for wonderfully incorporating [passages from] the *Odes*, the *Documents*, and [the other] classics, for widely deploying tropes of the pre-Qin and Han times, for fluency like that of Lu Zhi, austerity like that of Han Yu, richness like that of Li Deyu, passion like that of Feng Ao, brilliance like that of Dongpo [Su Shi 蘇軾], refinement like that of Yanzhang [Wang Zao 汪藻], it suffices for learners of classics and compositions to emulate these [masterpieces]. … Thus, [it is imperative to look to the period] from the Eastern Han to the Tang, in order to craft imperial proclamations, edicts of amnesty, decrees, edicts, declarations of war, announcements of triumph, etc; one illustrates what was going on [during a particular event from this historical period] and imitatively drafts the document.

---

xia de Yuanshi yu dongxi wenhua jiaoliu 蒙古帝國視野下的元史與東西文化交流 (Fudan: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2019), 438–444.

[129] Hao Jing 郝經, "Shu ni," 述擬 QYW 4:474.

[130] Song Lian 宋濂 et al., *Yuan shi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 157.3705.

[131] Hao Jing, "Shu ni," QYW 4:474.

[132] Hao Jing, "Shu ni," QYW 4:474.

[133] Hao Jing, "Shu ni," QYW 4:474.

[134] Hao Jing, "Shu ni," QYW 4:474.

It goes beyond the scope of this study to illuminate Hao as a literary critic of official writings. For current purposes, it is important simply to note that at this moment, Hao Jing was well aware that the Mongol Empire would dominate the known world to him in the near future. In addition, Hao knew that the Mongol rulers were not particularly interested in the "Chinese" language and its literary tradition; instead, they employed men specialized in different languages to issue orders, alongside scholars, craftsmen and artisans specialized in the arts of divination, medicine, weaponry and so on (Chapter Two).[135] In this context, Hao was concerned with the questions like what follows: Would official documents of the "Chinese" tradition be valuable under the Mongol world? If yes, in virtue of what were they valuable at all? His thoughts foreshadowed an important problematic that would occupy a great variety of elites of the fourteenth century, ranging from academicians around the Yuan ruler to the officials of post-Mongol regimes such as the Ming and the Chosŏn. In a nutshell, if they were to install a new rhetorical curriculum for the production of "Chinese" official writing, what style should this curriculum focus on?

To recapitulate, while edicts and memorials are among the best-known sources for historical and literary research, most scholars have approached them as a final product. This chapter broaches the much-understudied question of how officials or the educated population in general built and maintained their competence in crafting these documents—or bureaucratic eloquence in short. To put it in another way, during the past decades, scholars have scrutinized the phenomenal transformations between the Tang and the Song (960–1279)/the Jin (1115–1234) from a variety of perspectives, ranging from the demographic shift, the economic revolution, elite transformations, new state-building, to cultural/literary reforms. Despite in-depth studies of how leading intellectuals oriented themselves through the changing relationship between *wen* 文 (culture/literature) and dao 道 (the Way), what remains overlooked concerns how these movements affected the documentary practice within the imperial bureaucracy. Against this backdrop, the theme of bureaucratic eloquence offers a provocative heuristic device to rethink the areas where elite education, routine administration, literary innovation, and intellectual reform meet each other.

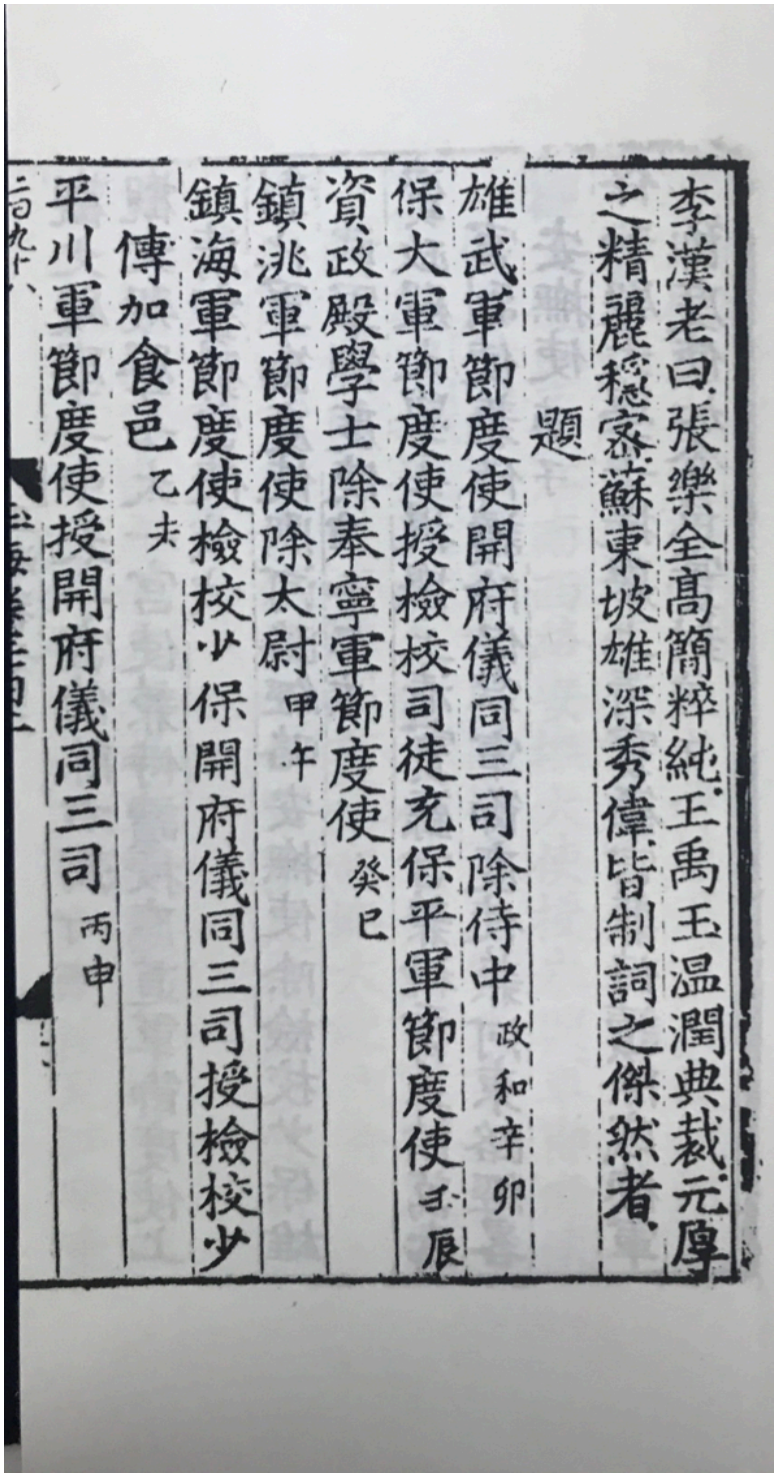
Attention to bureaucratic eloquence reveals some understudied aspects of post-Tang transitions. Here, we do not see the picture that the historian Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890–1969) famously romanticized—that is, that the "Chinese" political and intellectual culture "culminated during the Song dynasty."[136] Instead, both the Southern Song and the Jurchen Jin faced a similar challenge, but in different ways. With elites turning to their own locales, with a steppe conqueror ruling over a "Chinese" population, and with the success of the ancient prose movement and the development of Daoxue, much of the educated population had distanced themselves from proper training in bureaucratic rhetoric. Against this background, the courts and the elites of both the Song and the Jin took action. While various authors—Liu Kezhuang, Hao Jing, and Liu Xu—explored the potentials of imitative writing, the empires in both south and north institutionalized the examination of eloquence. However, it is worth mentioning that neither the Song nor the Jin, as far as the available sources are concerned, ever conceived the possibility of adding the assignment of bureaucratic writing in the general *jinshi* examination. It was the Mongols that would make this critical decision. The next chapter turns to the background of and process accounting for this Eurasian remaking of the "Chinese" examination curriculum.

---

[135] See, for instance, Miya Noriko 宮紀子, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai* モンゴル時代の「知」の東西 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2018), esp. 633–671.

[136] Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, "Deng Guangming Songshi zhiguan zhi kaozheng xu," 鄧廣銘宋史職官制考證序 in *Jinming guan conggao er bian* 金明館叢稿二編 (Beijing: Sanlian, 2015), 277.

Figure 2 Real Questions from the Southern Song Examination of Eloquence collected by Wang Yingling



(1) 題 ("Questions") indicates what follows is real questions that have appeared in the examination of eloquence.

(2) Wang carefully noted the years on which these questions were given: the first one dates to 1111 CE.

(3) The question of 1111 CE, for instance, reads: [Compose the edict] "endowing the title of Director of the Chancellery to [someone], who is currently the Military Commissioner of Xiongwu, one who enjoyed his own Governmental Hall as if the Three Dukes." This requires candidates to craft a hypothetical edict on behalf of the Song court.

(4) It pays to note that Yuan and Ming *jinshi* examination that only required candidates to compose edicts of appointment on behalf the Tang.

Source: Wang Yingling 王應麟, *Yu hai cixue zhinan* 玉海 辭學指南 (printed, l.p. 1351), National Library of China, reprinted through *Zhonghua zaizao shanben* 中華再造善本 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2005), *juan* 201.

2. The Mongol Re-making of the "Chinese" Rhetorical Curriculum

In 1313, Ayurbarwada (1285–1320) or the Buyantu Khan of the Dai Ön Yeke Mongγol Ulus [137]—known in Chinese as Emperor Renzong of the Yuan 元仁宗—decreed the re-establishment of the civil service examination. Thus, a century after the rise of the Mongol Empire and thirty-four years after its rule over the entire "Chinese" territory, the Mongol Yuan (1271–1368) eventually decided to follow the previous dynasties in China, by using the imperial examination as a way to recruit officials.[138]

In recent decades the Yuan imperial examination has become a flourishing field of interests, though it is only recently that scholars have begun to pay attention to one particularly distinctive element of it.[139] In a nutshell, the Yuan examination required the candidates of "Chinese" backgrounds (that is, *hanren* 漢人 and *nanren* 南人) to write an official document—either a decree, an appointment edict, or a memorial.[140] Of even greater importance, the Yuan curriculum marked the first time since the eighth century that the general examination tested candidates on their skills in writing documents of these genres—a fact that has largely if not entirely evaded the existing scholarship.[141] The question, accordingly, is why the Mongol Yuan court decided to incorporate bureaucratic writing as a compulsory part of the re-instituted examination?[142]

This chapter contends that the Mongol culture of employing secretaries who specialized in the writing of documents—or *bičigeči* in Mongolian (cf. Chinese: *bi-she-chi* 必闍赤; Persian: *bītikchī* بیتکچی)—constituted a key yet so far neglected background in the re-making of the examination curriculum in 1313.[143] In other words, the Mongol rulers were not merely approving the curriculum that their "Chinese" advisers had submitted, as previous scholars have assumed; instead, they made critical revisions to it, to the extent that one can say that the structure of the examination contents was itself a product of Eurasian cultural interactions. In addition, the Yuan examination bears particular importance in the cultural and intellectual history of East Asia, not only because of its well-known canonization of Zhu Xi's commentaries

---

[137] For the concept of "Dai Ön Yeke Mongγol Ulus," see Kim Ho-dong 金浩東, "Menggu diguo yu Da Yuan" 蒙古帝國與大元, *Qinghua shixue* 2 (2013): 3–32.

[138] See Elizabeth Endicott-West, "The Yuan Government and Society," in *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 6:587–615.

[139] See Hou Meizhen 侯美珍, "Mingdai xianghuishi zhao gao biao gongwen kaoshi xilun" 明代鄉會試詔誥表公文考試析論, *Guowen xuebao* 62 (2017): 125–158; "Yuandai keju sanchang kaoshi pianzhong zhi shitan" 元代科舉三場考試偏重之探論, *Guowen xuebao* 6 (2018): 171–202.

[140] Prior to 1342, however, one could avoid it by writing a rhapsody. For a standard interpretation of the division of population under the Mongol rule, see Elizabeth Endicott-West, "The Yüan Government and Society." For a revisionist account, see Funada Yoshiyuki 舩田善之, "The Image of the Semu People: Mongols, Chinese, Southerners, and Various Other Peoples under the Mongol Empire," *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 7 (2014): 199–221.

[141] For charts of examination contents across time, see Wada Masahiro 和田正広, *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū* 明清官僚制の研究 (Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 2002), 36–39; Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 41–43.

[142] It is important to differentiate the general examination that selects jinshi 進士, during the post-Tang period, from the special ones epitomized by the "examination of eloquence" (hongci ke 宏詞科) of the Song/Jin times. The latter, while recruiting a very small group of rhetorician ministers, did required candidates to write official documents. See Chapter One for further details.

[143] The spellings and reconstructions of this word in middle Mongolian varied (e.g. *bičeči* or *bičiγči*). Cf. Ferdinand Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 102.

to the Confucian classics, but also because it formalized a specific curriculum of writing official documents.[144] Such a "rhetorical curriculum," to use my terminology, would catalyze phenomenal transformations in literati learning and political thought in China, Korea, and beyond, as we shall see in later chapters.

What follows is divided into two parts. First, using Turkish, Mongolian, Chinese, Persian, and Latin sources, I trace the cultural tradition through which the Mongols employed *bičigeči* and conceptualized secretarial work. I argue that the Inner Asian cultures—that is, the interconnected traditions flourishing in Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet and Central Asia—were not confined to hunting customs, ritualistic practices, and religious beliefs;[145] instead, just like their "Chinese" counterparts, they too had a rich tradition in employing specialists of document production and in valuing rhetorical competences. Second, on top of recognizing the importance of Inner Asian influence, I also present a new narrative of the reintroduction of the civil service examination. Proceeding through a close reading of document(s) from a highly important collection recently discovered in the Seikado Museum in Tokyo—that is, *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* 新刊類編歷舉三場文選 (Newly Published Categorized Collection of Examination [Questions and Responses] of Three Parts, 1340)—I uncover the process through which the Mongol decision-makers insisted upon their point of view during the debate over the examination contents.[146] I end by highlighting the limits of the known sources and directions for further research.

***Bičigeči*: From the Inner-Asian Traditions to the Early Mongol Empire**

Building upon the classical and recent studies of Gyorgy Kara, Christopher Atwood, Miya Noriko 宮紀子, and other scholars,[147] this section argues that Inner Asian regimes—from the pre-Mongol confederations to the Mongol empire—not only borrowed cultural forms to build

---

[144] For the established narrative on the Yuan examination and the "Chinese" intellectual history, see Yao Dali 姚大力, *Meng Yuan zhidu yu zhengzhi wenhua* 蒙元制度與政治文化 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 270; Shen Wanli 申萬里, *Yuandai keju xintan* 元代科舉新探 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2019), 365–380.

[145] For the concept of "Inner Asia," see Denis Sinor, "Introduction: the concept of Inner Asia," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia Introduction*, ed. Denis Sinor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1–18. For exemplary explorations of the Inner Asian perspective in "Chinese" histories of different periods, see, notably, Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), esp. 3–9; Luo Xin 羅新, *Heizhan shang de Bei Wei huangdi* 黑氈上的北魏皇帝 (Beijing: Haitun chubanshe, 2014), esp. 75–95. For a learned but probably unfair critique of "Inner Asian-ness," see Zhong Han 鍾焓, *Chongshi neiya shi* 重釋內亞史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2017).

[146] David Morgan has convincingly shown that the same is true in Mongol-ruled Iran. See his, "The Mongols in Iran: A Reappraisal," *Iran* 42 (2004): 131–136.

[147] See, especially, Gyorgy Kara, *Books of the Mongolian Nomads* (Bloomington: Sinor Research Institute of Inner Asian Studies, 2005), passim. For a recent collection that incorporates different scholarly perspectives, see Morris Rossabi ed., *How Mongolia Matters: War, Law, and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2017) and in particular, Bettine Birge, "How the Mongols Mattered: A Perspective from Law" in this collection. Cf her, *Marriage and the Law in the Age of Khubilai Khan: Cases from the Yuan dianzhang* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017). For various studies of Christopher Atwood, see, for instance, his "Banner, Otog, Thousand: Appanage Communities as the Basic Unit of Traditional Mongolian Society," *Mongolian Studies* 34 (2015): 1–76. See also Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State In Central Asia* (London: Routledge, 2013); Miya Noriko 宮紀子, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai* モンゴル時代の「知」の東西 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2018), esp. 633–671. For a provocative study of the pre-Mongol period, see, for instance, Jonathan Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and itsTurko-Mongol Neighbors* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

document-based administration, but also enjoyed their own tradition of employing specific personnel in charge of files and other written documents. This tradition, in a nutshell, valued the production of written documents as a specific skill or craft, and placed such specialists close to the khan, alongside other craftsmen who supplied the khan with material goods such as clothing. Up to the thirteenth century, the Mongols further developed this tradition, endowing their writing specialists (*bičigeči*) with the specific tasks of producing and processing decrees, edicts, and memorials/petitions. It is this development, as we shall see later, that shaped the way in which the Mongols valued civil officials and perceived the potential merit of the civil service examination in the early fourteenth century.

As a methodological approach to understanding the evolving place of administrators at Inner Asian courts, I begin with a cultural history of the term that designates such secretarial posts—*bitigeči*, *bičigeči*, or other variations—across different Inner Asian languages. Synthesizing and contributing to the philological studies of the relevant documents, I follow the insight of the renowned Turkologist Vasily Bartold and take *bičigeči* as "a cultural term" (Russian: *kul'turnyye terminy*), the kind of term that offers critical access to the rich cultures of Inner Asia.[148] The proposed approach, as we shall see, has its particular advantage in revealing deep cultural connections when surviving sources are tenuous.

The Serbi people (*xianbei* 鮮卑), to whose language the word *bičigeči* can be traced, affords a starting point for this inquiry. Originally flourishing in Manchuria, they established a sequence of regimes in north China from the fourth to the seventh centuries, and once extended their dominance over much of the Eurasian Steppe. One of the most successful dynasties was the Northern Wei (386–534).[149] To consolidate its rule, the Northern Wei not only borrowed techniques and ideologies from the *huaxia* 華夏 ("Chinese"/Sinitic) traditions,[150] but also adapted old tribal infrastructure and applied it to the new socio-political reality.[151] According to the sixth-century dynastic history *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (History of the Southern Qi), the Northern Wei monarch was accompanied by a sequence of attendants with titles in the Serbi language, and the secretaries were listed as the third of a total of twelve positions:

> 內左右為直真 The inner attendants are *zhi-zhen* [cf. *ičqčin*][152];
> 外左右為烏矮真 The outer attendants are *wu-ai-zhen* [cf. *iiyčin*];
> 曹局文書吏為比德真 The scribes of the functional bureaus processing documents are *bi-de-zhen* [cf. *bičigečin*]

---

[148] Васи́лий Барто́льд, *Собрание сочинений* (Москва: Издательство Восточной литературы, 1963), 1:374; Vasily Barthold, *Turkestan: Down to the Mongol Invasion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 312/322.

[149] For the general background, see Charles Holcombe, "The Xianbei in Chinese History," *Early Medieval China* 19 (2013): 1–38; Scott Pearce, "Northern Wei," in *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. Albert E. Dien and Keith N. Knapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 2:155–183.

[150] See Hu Hong 胡鴻, *Neng Xia ze da yu jian mu Hua feng* 能夏則大與漸慕華 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2017), 14–18, 275–281; Andrew Chittick, *The Jiankang Empire in Chinese and World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), esp. 244–245.

[151] See Tian Yuqing 田餘慶, *Tuoba shitan* 拓跋史探 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2003); cf. Kubozoe Yoshifumi 窪添慶文, *Gi Shin Nanbokuchō kanryōsei kenkyū* 魏晋南北朝官僚制研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2003).

[152] Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉 has suggested these reconstructed forms. See Shiratori Kurakichi, "Sinologische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Türk-Völker. II. Über die Sprache der Hiungnu und der Tunghu-Stämme," *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences* 17.2 (1902): 1–33. For recent discussions, see Анна Владимировна Дыбо, *Лингвистические контакты ранних тюрков: лексический фонд пратюркский период* (Москва : Восточная литература, 2007), 186–189; Miya Noriko, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, 490.

檐[襜]衣人為樸大真 Those who manage [different kinds of] clothes are *pu-da-zhen* [cf. *boqtayčin*].[153]
…

The compilers of *Nan Qi shu* painstakingly recorded these posts in the Serbi language to show that the Northern Wei remained a dynasty with a "barbaric" nature. But today, these Serbi terms provide key clues to Altaic linguistics as well as Eurasian history. Peter Golden has suggested that the word of *bi-de-zhen*, which seemingly had as its etymological root the Chinese word *bi* 筆 (brush), subsequently gave rise to the later Turkish and Mongolian terms *bitikči* and *bičigeči*.[154] In general, the Northern Wei institutions, themselves developed through Sino-Steppe encounters, heavily influenced the later organization of the Sui/Tang empires on the one hand,[155] while simultaneously providing models for the Turkish confederations.[156]

It is thus no coincidence, as Denis Sinor has noted, that the term *bitigeči* (spelled in Middle Turkish)—the nomen agentis of the word *bitig*, meaning documents or writings—appeared in various Turkish sources.[157] *Qutadyu bilig* (Wisdom of Royal Glory), the late eleventh-century mirror for princes of Central Asia, deserves particular attention. In this book, the poet, politician, and philosopher Yūsuf Balasağuni (ca.1019–1077) details his advice for a Kara-Khanid prince, advancing his view of a balanced way of living and governing. As a part of his advice, the book prescribes that the ruler should find, among a variety of specialists:

Açğıçı bitigçi ya iş tutğuçı, ya tonçı etükçi âmil bolğuçı[158]
[With respect to officials of] the treasurer or the secretary, or the artisan such as shoemaker or the one who manages clothes.

Here, just as with the Northern Wei, the secretary (*bitigçi/bi-de-zhen*) followed the more important attendants but preceded those who managed clothes (*bolğuçı/pu-da-zhen*).[159] The cultural—and not just linguistic—connections between the Serbi and Turkish records lend further evidence to a

---

[153] Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 et al., *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 57.985. Some scholars read the character of 檐 as the verb of providing shelter for (see Miya Noriko, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, 492). It is no less plausible that the character is misspelled through the transmitted text and should be 襜, a kind of cloth for convenient purposes in early China; here, 襜 is thus borrowed to describe the informal dressings and the carriage curtains of the khan.

[154] See Peter Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 73. For scribal positions in early Stepp regimes, see also, Miya Noriko, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, 496–498.

[155] Chen Yinke 陈寅恪, *Sui Tang zhidu yuanyuan luelun gao* 隋唐制度淵源略論稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963).

[156] Sources explicitly confirming how the Northern Wei had actually influenced the Turkish confederation, however, are tenuous. For parallels between the Serbi of the fifth century and the Turks in the early seventh century, see, for instance, Andrew Eisenberg, "Warfare and Political Stability in Medieval North Asian Regimes," *T'oung Pao* 83.4/5 (1997): 300–328.

[157] Denis Sinor argues that the nomen agentis "is first found in *Qutadyu bilig* under the form *bitigči*." See his, "Bitik, Bitikči", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman et al. Consulted online on 27 February 2020 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1459.

[158] Yūsuf Khāṣṣ-hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig* (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1947), 163. I thank Christin Zurbach for parsing related passages with me.

[159] According to Gerard Clauson, *bolğuçı* is the nomen agentis derived from the root of *bo:ğ*, meaning "bundle." See *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-13th Century Turkish* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 311. Miya Noriko suggests that the root of *pu-da-zhen* is *bohtay/boɣudal* (meaning "包袱"). See *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, 514. Further linguistic research is needed to determine how *bolğuçı* and *pu-da-zhen* are related.

phenomenon that Luo Xin 羅新 has recently traced, that is, a continuous tradition of political, administrative, and ritual cultures flourished through the vast space of Inner Asia.[160] In the current context, what is especially significant is continuity in the particular organization of personnel around the khan. Accordingly, the management of written documents was the responsibility of the particular kind of *bi-de-zhen/bitigçi* who gained some senses of identity through their designated position.

In the following centuries, the Mongols would further develop the post—and related ideas—of *bi-de-zhen/bitigçi*.[161] To be more specific, during most of the twelfth century, the warring tribes of the Mongolian Plateau were known for their reliance upon envoys who memorized orders and transmitted them orally. The situation started to change during Činggis Khan's (1162–1227) unification of all tribes of the Mongolian Plateau. Upon the conquest of the Naimans, he employed a Uighur named Tatar Toŋa as his own secretary and seal-keeper.[162] As Činggis Khan conquered more and more lands and people, he recruited a few secretaries specializing in different languages. Thus, Činqai 鎮海 (?–1251?) and Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材 (1190–1244) rose as the khan's secretaries specialized in languages of the west and the east, respectively.[163] Gradually, the rising Mongol Empire started to institutionalize its scribal positions based on the legacies provided by previous hegemons of the Steppe.

It is worth noting that according to *Mongγol-un niγuca tobčiyan* (*Secret History of the Mongols*), Činggis Khan entrusted Šigi Qutuqu (fl. 13th century),[164] his adopted stepbrother, as the *jarγuči* (judge).[165] The judge "bears with the power of judgement," and kept the "blue-script register book" (Mongolian: *kökö debter*) that recorded all legal decisions.[166] This arrangement is suggestive of how the rising Mongol Empire differentiated the role of the secretary (*bičigeči*), which Činqai and Yelü Chucai assumed on the one hand, and that of a judge (*jarγuči*) on the other. Even though both worked closely with written documents and both were eventually accommodated in the *kešik* Imperial Guard (see discussions below), their job differed.[167] By default, the former wrote

---

[160] Luo Xin, *Heizhan shang de Bei Wei huangdi*, 75–95.

[161] Some scholars have argued that the Mongolians took the Turkish term of *bitigçi* via the Uighurs. See Vasily Barthold, *Turkestan: Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 312/322. Gerard Clauson made the same argument; see his, "The Turkish Elements in 14th Century Mongolian," *Central Asiatic Journal* 5:4 (1960): 301–316. But this view seems particularly misleading.

[162] Gyorgy Kara, *Books of the Mongolian Nomads*, 27. Igor de Rachewiltz, ed., *The Secret History of the Mongols, volume 3 (Supplement)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 115.

[163] Song Lian 宋濂 et al., *Yuan shi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 2.31. Miya Noriko, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, 498. See also Yamamoto Mituo 山本光朗, "Yaritu Sozai to chūshoshō ni tu'ite," 耶律楚材と中書省について *Hokkaido kyoiku daigaku kiyō* 66.2 (2016), 37. Cf. Jagchid Sechen 札奇斯欽, "Shuo Yuanshi zhong de bizhechi bing jianlun Yuan de zhongshuling" 說元史中的必闍赤並兼論元的中書令, *Bianzheng yanjiusuo nianbao* 2 (1971): 19–113.

[164] For Šigi Qutuqu, see Paul Ratchnevsky, "Sigi-Qutuqu, ein mongolische Gefolgsmann im 12.-13. Jahrhundert," *Central Asiatic Journal* 10.2 (1965): 87–120.

[165] Note that in this case, the position of *jarγuči* was reserved for a close associate of the khan. In many cases, men from families of status could assume either *bičigeči* or *jarγuči*. To cite one example, around 1210 if not earlier, Činggis Khan took a Tangut youngster as his hereditary bondservant, and gave him the Mongolian name Čaγan. A family grandson of his, Yi-li-sa-he 亦力撒合, continued his service under Činggis's son Čaγatai, under whom he reached the position of *jarγuči* (紮魯火赤). His younger brother Li-zhi-li-wei 立智理威, however, continued the bond service under Činggis Khan's grandson Činkim; "as his *bičigeči* he took the responsibility of documents" (為……必闍赤典文書). See Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 120.2958.

[166] For a transliteration, see Igor de Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of Mongols* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1972), 116, line 7829.

[167] Hsiao Chi'-ch'ing, *The Military Establishment of Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge: Clauson, 1978), 31–50.

down orders in different languages, while the latter made decisions over criminal cases and beyond.

This conceptual distinction between secretary and judge, as I shall show, was important to the development of *bičigeči* throughout the course of the thirteenth century.[168] To appreciate the role that secretaries played in relationship to other posts, it might be helpful to take Bulγai (?–1264) as an example. In 1251, Möngke Khan (1209–1259) made a series of personnel arrangements. *Yuan shi* 元史, the "official" history that the Ming (1368–1644) court produced after pushing the Mongols back to the Steppe, described it in the following way:

> 以忙哥撒兒為斷事官；以孛魯合掌宣發號令、朝覲貢獻及內外聞奏諸事。[169]
>
> [The Khan] appointed Monggeser as the Judge [*jaryuči*]; he entrusted Bulγai with the responsibilities such as issuing decrees and orders [*ǰarliγ*], receiving envoys and tributaries, and memorials submitted from the inner and outer realms.

While *Yuan shi* provides a seemingly clear description of Bulγai's responsibility as *bičigeči*, one should emphasize that some accounts of the thirteenth century complicate his role in different ways. William of Rubruck (1220–1293), the Franciscan friar, stayed with the Möngke Khan's court from 1253 to 1254, and worked under Bulγai. According to his *Itinerarium*, the khan appointed Bulγai as "the chancellor, the major secretary of the court" (Latin: cancellarius, hoc est major scriptor curie), and thus Bulγai was someone "who is the major secretary and who judges the guilty to death" (Latin: qui est major scriptor curie et judicat reos morte).[170] Though William of Rubruck's observation converges with the description of *Yuan shi* to the extent that the grand secretary ("major scriptor" in Latin) was in charge of written documents, the former claims that Bulγai the *bičigeči* had obtained the authority of presiding over legal cases, and thus overlapped with that of *jaryuči*.

Vis-à-vis the disparity between the Chinese *Yuan shi* and the first-hand observations of a Christian missionary, Sakamoto Tsutomu has offered an interesting interpretation.[171] According to him, as the *yeke bičigeči* (grand secretary), Bulγai arbitrated disputes involving individuals speaking different languages. Because envoys from different regions submitted their petitions to Bulγai, William of Rubruck identified him as the judge. Otherwise, it was Monggeser, the *jaryuči*, that presided.[172] Yokkaichi Yasuhiro, based on an exhaustive survey of relevant sources in different languages, has made a different argument. Comparing Bulγai with Činqai, he shows that during the thirteenth century, *bičigeči* often assisted *jaryuči* in the management of routine legal cases. Thus, though the latter held de jure authority over legal matters, the former often "acted

---

[168] See Sakamoto Tsutomu 坂本勉, "Mongoru teikoku ni okeru bitikci" モンゴル帝国における必闍赤=bitikci, *Shigaku* 42.4 (1970): 81–111; Yokkaichi Yasuhiro 四日市康博, "Jaryuči to bičigeči ni kansuru hitotsu kōsatsu" ジャルグチとビチクチに関する一考察, *Shi kan* 147 (2002): 33–52; Miya Noriko, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, esp. 489–508; Gakusho Nakajima 中島樂章, "Gendai no bunsho gyōsei ni'okeru pa-su-pa ji shiyō kitei nitsu'ite" 元代の文書行政におけるパスパ字使用規定について, *Tōhō gakuhō* 84 (2009): 91–138.

[169] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 3.44.

[170] Francisque Michel ed., *Relations des voyages de Guillaume de Rubruk, Bernard le Sage et S. Wulf* (Paris: Chez Bourgogne et Martinet, 1839), 124, 139.

[171] Sakamoto Tsutomu, "Mongoru teikoku ni okeru bitikci," esp. 93. See also Thomas T. Allsen, "Guard and Government in the Reign of The Grand Qan Möngke, 1251-59," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46.2 (1986), esp. 504.

[172] Sakamoto Tsutomu, "Mongoru teikoku ni okeru bitikci," 95–97.

on behalf of" the latter; as a result, their de facto functions may have appeared similar to outsiders such as William of Rubruck.[173] The arguments of Sakamoto and Yokkaichi, despite their different focuses, convincingly show that secretaries in the Mongol Empire were conceived first and foremost as specialists producing documents. While their de jure responsibility differed from those of judges, in reality secretaries also played particularly active roles in the legal decision-making process and beyond. After all, it was the secretaries that received petitions and presented them to the khan.

To get a full picture of the *bičigeči*'s role during the mid-thirteenth century, it is important to consult 'Aṭā-Malik Juvainī's (1226–1283) masterpiece, the Persian *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy* (The History of The World Conqueror), which also details Bulγai's responsibility as *bičigeči*:

> و بلغای آقا را که به قدمت خد مت حقوق ثابت داشت فرمان شد تا او سر و سرو ر کتاب باشد و وزیر اتشان، مثل حاجب حاجتِ هریک از ملتمسات او عرضه دارد و ساخته و امثله و مناشیر او نویسد و سواد کند، ...
> آنچ أمور دیوانی است از تعیین اموال و نقلید اشغال امیر بلغای با یک دو کس د یگر بدان خسوصند.[174]

> And Bulghai Aqa, who had acquired rights by reason of his past services, was commanded to be chief and leader of the secretaries and to be their vizier. Like a chamberlain he was to announce the petition of each applicant and to attend to it; and it was he who should produce in written form the decrees and mandates. … As for affairs of the divan, such as the assessment of taxes and the conferment of appointments, these are the concern of the Emir Bulγai in conjunction with one or two other persons.[175]

Like the Chinese *Yuan shi*, the Persian *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy* highlights the *bičigeči*'s role in issuing decrees and receiving memorials or petitions. While *Yuan shi* stresses the *bičigeči*'s responsibility in receiving tributaries from the imperial domain and further afar, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy* emphasizes his duty of managing the employment (Persian: *ašḡal* اشغال) of officials. In the Mongol Empire of the 1250s, the two aspects could be intimately related.[176] Upon a closer reading of the text, one might also notice that *Yuan shi* portrays Bulγai the *bičigeči* as a recipient of documents, but *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy* emphasizes his agency in managing the divan. Here again, Yokkaichi's insight is helpful in reminding us that, by presiding over the flow of official documents, Bulγai could play a more active roles than his post would allow in theory.

One may have noticed that the *bičigeči*'s responsibilities, as I have shown, echo with the assignments that the Yuan court required examination candidates to prepare. If a *bičigeči* crafted imperial decrees, issued edicts of appointment, and helped the khan manage memorials and petitions, then an examination candidate in 1314 also needed to be able to write decrees, appointment edicts, and memorials. This was not the result of coincidence, as we shall see below, but rather instantiates one way by which the Inner Asian traditions of governance influenced the

---

[173] Yokkaichi Yasuhiro, "Jarγuči to bičigeči ni kansuru hitotsu kōsatsu," esp. 36–37.

[174] *Taḥrīr-i nuvīn-i Tārīkh-i jahāngushāy-i 'Aṭā Malik Juwaynī* (Tihrān: Amīr Kabīr, 1983), 405. I thank Sourav Ghosh and Aparajita Das for their guidance on transliteration.

[175] See Juvani, *The History of the World Conqueror, vol. 2* trans. J. A. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 605; with minor modifications.

[176] See Thomas T. Allsen, "Guard and Government in the Reign of the Grand Qan Möngke, 1251-59," esp. 476. Wen Haiqing 溫海清, *Huajing zhongzhou: Jin Yuan zhi ji Huabei xingzheng jianzhi kao* 畫鏡中州 金元之際華北行政建置考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012); Qiu Yihao 邱軼皓, *Mengu diguo shiye xia de Yuanshi yu dongxi wenhua jiaoliu* 蒙古帝國視野下的元史與東西文化交流 (Fudan: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2019), 93–130. See Miya Noriko, *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai*, esp. 500–508.

imperial examination and rhetorical education in China. What is more, I have highlighted that the Mongols counted on the *jarγuči* to adjudicate legal cases, a responsibility conceptually different from that of the *bičigeči*'s role. For this reason, to anticipate the discussion below, the Yuan examination targeting potential *bičigeči* did not test candidates' knowledge of the legal codes.[177] It was only in 1370 that the founder(s) of the Ming dynasty, inspired by their experiences with local administration and local justice in south China, found it bizarre to leave legal writings aside. Thus, the Ming examination required candidates to write legal judgements after composing a bureaucratic document.[178] As will become clearer later, while the Mongol approaches to documentary administration shaped the Yuan examination curriculum, later empires carried on the Mongol legacies with modifications informed by their own understandings of governance.

To recapitulate, this section has shown that the *bičigeči* tradition, rich and rigorous in itself, spurred multiple Inner Asian regimes to develop their own system of written official communication in written forms. While it is beyond the scope of the present discussion to delve into further institutional complexities concerning *bičigeči* at different levels of the Mongol empire, it is helpful to pay attention to how the Mongol way of employing secretaries, given that it developed out of the Inner Asian tradition, both resembled and differed from its Chinese counterpart. While some scholars imagine the Chinese approach to documentary administration as sophisticated, and stereotype the Mongol one as primitive qua barbaric, others have romanticized the latter as pragmatic qua efficient, denouncing the former as merely flowery.[179] My discussion suggests a different picture. Accordingly, the Mongol court did not consist solely of a collection of specialists with different skills, employed for merely pragmatic purposes. Instead, it entailed a sophisticated design that kept distinct the duties of the secretaries from the duties of the judges. The conceptually delicate distinction between the Mongol secretaries and judges itself was blurred by the reality of documentary administration—in the same way that many delicacies of the Song institutional design were also compromised by pragmatic concerns.

This, however, is not to deny the phenomenal differences between the Inner Asian and the "Chinese" approaches with regard to the conceptualization and employment of those crafting official documents. As Chapter One has shown, at least since post-Han China, the Chinese emphasized the ideological distinction between literary learning (*wenxue* 文學) and the functional paperwork of the bureaucracy. While the literati scholars (*shi* 士) monopolized the realm of the former, which supposedly bears the power to transform the realm, the latter was belittled as the work of petty clerks and functionaries (*li* 吏).[180] Though the Tang aristocrats believed that official documents of the genres of edicts and memorials belonged to the realm of literary learning, the post-Tang elites were increasingly skeptical about their efficacy. Thus, in certain circumstances, Song scholar-officials downplayed the pursuit of eloquence in bureaucratic writing as the task of mere clerks. In contrast, a rigid dividing line between literary learning and functional bureaucratic paperwork never existed for the Serbi, nor for the Turkish and the Mongol elites,

---

[177] The Tibetans, long after Mongol rule, still differentiate the judges (sByar-go-c'i) and the secretary (sBi-c'a'i-c'i). See Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 87.

[178] For further discussions on legal judgments in the Ming examination, see Wada Masahiro, *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū*, 52–78; for early Ming legal education, see Sarah Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State in Ming China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), esp. 20–29.

[179] See Sugiyama, Masaaki 杉山正明, *Kubirai no chōsen : Mongoru ni yoru sekaishi no daitenkai* クビライの挑戦：モンゴルによる世界史の大転回 (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2010).

[180] See ZUO Ya, "'Ru' versus 'Li': The Divergence between the Generalist and the Specialist in the Northern Song (960−1127)," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 44 (2014): 83–137.

who valued the production of official documents as a craft of its own. When they conquered "Chinese" territories and employed "Chinese" rhetoricians, they started to find a middle ground with the "Chinese" elites. In this sense, the phenomenal differences between these two were accordingly are mediated by historically contingent processes through which the Inner Asian and "Chinese" sphere interacted with each other. Overall, it is probably more productive to think of the "Inner Asian" and the "Chinese" as two internally diverse, mutually enhancing, and externally distinguished yet overlapping cultural spheres, as a starting point that will guide the discussion below.

At the Khan's Palace: The 1313 Decree of Reestablishing the Imperial Examination

To appreciate how the Mongol way of conceptualizing the scribal positions contributed to the making of the "Chinese" examination curriculum since 1313, it pays to examine the actual processes through which the Mongol rulers and their advisers of different backgrounds negotiated the examination contents. As early as 1274, the scholar Yang Gongyi 楊恭懿 (1225–1294) proposed the civil service examination to the Qubilai Khan. According to Yang's spirit-path stele:

> 詔先少師文獻公、司徒竇文正公與公雜議，公上奏曰："……試以五經、四書、大小義、史論、時務策。夫既從事實學，則士風還敦，民俗趨厚，國家得識治之材也。"[181]
>
> [Qubilai] ordered that the Junior Preceptor Duke of Wenxian [Yao Shu 姚樞 (1200–1280)], and Grand Minister Duke Wenzheng [Dou Mo 竇默 (1196–1280)] discuss the matter [concerning the imperial examinations] with him [Yang Gongyi]. Yang submitted the memorial: "The examination should test candidates on [first,] the Five Classics, the Four Books, the grand and minor meanings [of canonical texts]; [second,] discussion of history, and [third,] treatise on current matters. If the candidates devote themselves to substantial learning, then the literati ethos will return to that of honesty, and the custom of the people will prioritize sincerity. The realm will have the needed talents."

Though a variety of Chinese sources report that Qubilai appreciated the plan, ultimately the court did not adopt it.[182] Thus, in 1301, Wang Yun 王惲 (1228–1304) re-proposed an examination curriculum with some minor modifications and further specifications (see Table 2).[183]

Not only were Yang and Wang prominent scholars in the north, but both were sons of scholar-officials who had served the Jurchen Jin (1115–1234) dynasty. Though both were fortunate enough to serve at the Mongol court, they had to compete for the khan's patronage with specialists of other kinds. In particular, a variety of men benefitted from their status as the

[181] Yao Sui 姚燧, "Ling Taishi yuan shi Yang gong shendaobei," 領太史院事楊公神道碑 QYW 9:626.
[182] Yao Sui, "Ling Taishi yuan shi Yang gong shendaobei," QYW 9:626.
[183] Wang Yun 王惲, "Gongju yi," 貢舉議 QYW 6:40.

bondservants (or *genjiao* 根腳 in Chinese) of Mongol nobles,[184] later rising to positions as secretaries specializing in writing official documents on behalf of their patrons. Lacking a scholarly background and training in literary training, they staffed key positions of the administration with civilians with expertise in writing official documents. As recent scholars have shown, both Yang and Wang proposed to re-install the civil service examination with the purpose of recruiting scholars on the one hand, and curbing the influence of those bondservants-turned-secretaries on the other.[185]

Against this background, neither Yang Gongyi (and his associates) nor Wang Yun had ever conceived that bureaucratic writing (italicized in Table 2), the skill that the non-scholar secretaries by no means lacked, should be a part of the examination. Instead, in seeing the re-establishment of the examination as an opportunity to re-orient literati learning, they both elaborated on a conception of "substantial learning" (*shixue* 實學) of classics and history, in contrast to what they saw as superficial studies such as verses and rhapsodies. For them, during such a time when the value and merit of scholarship was challenged by craftsmen who specialized in armor-making or the workmanlike writing of official documents, a true Confucian/scholar (*zhenru* 真儒) should stand out with the kind of real learning that guaranteed moral integrity and statecraft expertise. Nevertheless, compared with Yang's idea to install a curriculum devoted to classics and history alone, Wang offered one of a more eclectic nature. He emphasized that because many literati of his times devoted themselves to verses and rhapsodies, the re-established examination should include such literary compositions for the time being: "once the substantial learning of classics and history flourish, those [superficial learnings] will themselves decline."[186] 經史實學既盛彼自絀矣。

Table 2 Designs of the Civil Service Examination in 1274, 1301, and 1313

	YANG GONGYI 1274	**WANG YUN 1301**	**THE DECREE OF 1313**
FIRST PART	The Five Classics, the Four Books, the grand and minor meanings [of canonical texts].	Classics and their meanings.	Two questions on the Four Books; one question on one of the Five Classics.
SECOND PART	*Discussion of history*.	*Discussion of history* (questions should be confined to the Three Histories); Poems and rhapsodies (which should eventually be abolished).	One of the following genres: ancient rhapsody, **decree, edict [of appointment], memorial.**

[184] I thank Prof. Iiyama for reminding me that the corresponding word in Middle Mongolian remains to be confirmed, though many scholars have assumed it to be *huǰa'ur*.
[185] Yao Dali, *Meng Yuan zhidu yu zhengzhi wenhua*, esp. 270.
[186] Wang Yun, "Gongju yi," QYW 6:40.

THIRD PART	Treatise on current matters.	Treatise covering issues of classics and history—"candidates should judge from their own opinion to elucidate on current affairs."	One treatise on issues of classics, history, and current affairs.

As Table 2 shows, the examination that the Mongol Yuan court implemented in 1314 generally followed the format that earlier scholars had designed for Qubilai in 1274 and 1301. However, there is a major exception, since the ultimate examination featured the assignment of writing official documents (see bold face text in the right column of Table 2). A scrutiny of the 1313 decree of reestablishing the civil service examination helps us to further appreciate further how the court conference, presided over by the Mongol khan, reached this decision.

Because the khans of the Mongol Yuan empire barely spoke Chinese, they held court conferences and released pronouncements in Mongolian.[187] The Mongolian version of the 1313 decree, if ever written, has been long since lost. What we have is a rendition of the Mongolian document in Sino-Mongolian (or "hard translation" of Mongolian into Chinese), a distinctive style known for its incorporation of Mongolian terms and occasional adherence to Mongolian word order.[188] Multiple Sino-Mongolian versions of the same decree have survived in different compilations, and Chen Gaohua 陳高華 has shown that the most comprehensive version comes to us through the book *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* housed at the Seikado Museum (hereafter Seikado version for short).[189]

Meanwhile, when the early Ming court compiled *Yuan shi*, it re-translated the same edict into classical Chinese, as a part of the "Chapter on Selection" 選舉志 (hereafter, the *Yuan shi* version for short). While the Seikado version offers a best approximation of the ways by which the Mongol khan and nobles perceived the examination, the *Yuan shi* version, as we shall see, instantiated how later scholars of China eradicated the active roles that the Mongol decision-makers played in the re-making of the Chinese curriculum.

Seikado Version (emphases are mine.)[190]
皇慶二年十月二十三日，拜住怯薛第二日，嘉禧殿有時分，博兒赤答失蠻丞相、哈剌赤燕帖木兒知院等有來，章閭平章、八剌脫因右丞、阿里海牙左丞、許參政、薛參政、薛忽都牙裏參議……又奏：
Day 23, month 10 of the second year of the Huangqing era [1313], this was the second day when Baiju[192] of

Yuan shi Version[191]
至仁宗皇慶二年十月，中書省臣奏：

Up to the tenth month of the second year of the Huangqing era of

[187] Bettine Birge, *Marriage and the Law in the Age of Khubilai Khan*, 67.
[188] See Irinchin 亦鄰真, "Yuandai yingyi gongdu wenti" 元代硬譯公牘文體, *Yuanshi luncong* 1 (1982): 164–178.
[189] Chen Gaohua 陳高華, "Yuanchao keju wenshu kao" 元朝科舉文書考, *Jinan shixue* 1 (2002), 159.
[190] Liu Zhen 劉貞 ed., *Leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* 類編歷舉三場文選 (printed, 1340s), Seikado Museum and Library, preface.
[191] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 81.2018.
[192] For the romanization of non-Chinese names appearing in the Chinese sources, I follow *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 元人傳記資料索引 (hereafter YZZS, accessed digitally through Hanchi: http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/), unless otherwise noted.

the *kešik* Imperial Guard was on duty. At a certain time at the Palace of Jiaxi, Dasiman (of the rank of *ba'urči* in the *kešik* and the Grand Councilo), and El Temür (of the rank of *ulaγači* in the *kešik* and the Supervisor of the Military Council), have come together with other officials. Zhang-lü[193] Co-Director of the Secretariat, Bala Toyin the Right Assistant, Ari Qaya the Left Assistant, Xu [Shijing] Participant of Politics, Xue [Jujing], Participant of Politics, Xue-hu-du-ya-li Participant of Discussion … further memorialized:

Renzong's reign, the Secretariat memorialized:

學秀才的，經學、詞賦是兩等。
"… For the youngsters who study for examination, the curriculum can have two [possible] focuses, that is classical learning, and literary composition.

夫取士之法，
"With regard to the selection of literati,

經學的是說脩身、齊家、治國、平天下的勾當；詞賦的是吟詩、課賦、作文字的勾當。
Classical learning teaches the deeds of cultivating the self, harmonizing the family, governing the country, and pacifying the realm. Literary composition teaches the deeds of reciting poems, crafting rhapsodies, and making documents [*bicig*].

經學實修己治人之道，詞賦乃摛章繪句之學。
classical learning is indeed the way of cultivating oneself and managing others; literary composition, however, is the study of *manipulating passages and decorating sentences*.

自隋唐以來取人，專尚詞賦，人都習學的浮華了。
Ever since the Sui and the Tang, [the literati] exclusively devoted themselves to literary composition; as a result of such learnings, people have become superficial and frivolous.

自隋、唐以來，取人專尚詞賦，故士習浮華。
Ever since the Sui and the Tang, the selection of literati focused exclusively on the literary composition; thus, the literati custom has been superficial and frivolous.

為這上頭，翰林院、集賢院、禮部先擬德行明經為本，不用詞賦來。俺如今將律賦、省題詩、小義等都不用，止存留詔、誥、章表，專立德行明經科。……
With this regard, early on, the Hanlin Academy, the Jixian Academy, and the Ministry of Rites have tentatively [designed a curriculum] that takes the virtuous behavior and classical studies as foundation, abandoning literary composition in examination. Now we set aside rhymed rhapsodies, palace poems, and minor meanings; **we only keep [the composition] of decrees, edicts and memorials.** …

今臣等所擬將律賦、省題詩、小義、皆不用，專立德行明經科。
Now, we, your ministers, have tentatively [designed a curriculum] that sets aside rhymed rhapsodies, palace poems, and minor meanings; exclusively, we establish the examination of the virtuous behavior and classical studies.

[193] See discussions below for reasons for using this romanization.

這般取人呵，國家後頭得人才去。
As we select candidates in this way, our state will get talents in the future.

以此取士，庶可得人。
Once we select literati in this way, it is probable that we will have real talents.

The Seikado version is particularly important, because it reveals crucial details throughout the debates over the examination contents. Prior to the imperial audience on day 23 month 10, some Hanlin and Jixian Academicians had proposed an examination curriculum that exclusively focused on classical learning.[194] Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫 (1249–1318), a southerner (*nanren* 南人) whom Qubilai promoted decades ago, was the Hanlin Academician Recipient of Edicts 翰林學士承旨, and a very senior member of the Academy.[195] A keen advocate of Daoxue, Cheng advised the khan that it was time to eradicate verse and rhapsodies from the curriculum. According to his biography in *Yuan shi*, the khan ordered him to draft a decree to implement the examination as he had designed it with his associates, including Xu Shijing 許師敬 (fl. early 14th century), son of Xu Heng 許衡 (1209–1281) a leading Daoxue scholar in the north.[196]

What Cheng Jufu's *Yuan shi* biography does not reveal, however, is the fact that upon receiving the document that Cheng drafted, the khan held a palace conference and he summoned several high-ranking advisers, including two members of the *kešik* imperial body guard, a prestigious group of attendants who followed the khan closely in war and in peace. The first of them was Dasiman (fl. 1310s), a descendant of the Central Asian Qarluqs.[197] His great grandfather surrendered to Činggis Khan, and his father, a bondservant to Ögedei, earned the prestigious rank of *ba'urči* within the *kešik*. Dasiman, after inheriting this rank, served Ayurbarwada even before he ascended the throne.[198] The second, El Temür (fl. 1310s) was a descendant of the Central Asian Qipchaq, a close associate of Qayisang (1281–1311) the previous khan.[199] By 1313, Dasiman and El Temür were, respectively, the Director and the Associate Director of the Palace Commission 宣徽院.

The khan, with the invited *kešik* members, then discussed the issue with a number of officials of the Imperial Secretariat, an institution that also developed more from the Mongol way of employing *bičigeči* than from Jin/Song legacies.[200] This time, Cheng was not invited, and even though Xu Shijing did participate, this group of officials was headed by Zhang-lü (fl. 1310s) and included Bala Toyin (fl. 1310s) and Ari Qaya (fl. 1310s), among others. While the names of these

---

[194] For the Jixian Academy, see Sakurai Satomi 櫻井智美, "Gendai no shōken'in no setsu ritsu" 元代集賢院の設立, *Shirin* (2000): 115–143.
[195] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 172.4017.
[196] Ibid.
[197] See Huang Jin 黃溍, "Xuanhui shi taibao dingguozhongliang gong shendaobei" 宣徽使太保定國忠亮公神道碑; QYW 968:164.
[198] Ibid. His name of "Dasiman," as in the Mongol context, *da-shi-ma* 大石馬, specifically denotes those "specifically in charge of documents" 專掌簿籍 in the Mongol context. See Wang Guowei 王國維, "Changchun zhenren xiyou ji jiaozhu" 長春真人西遊記校註, in *Wang Guowei quanji* 王國維全集 volume 12 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), 218.
[199] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 138.3326.
[200] See, in particular, Jagchid Sechen, "Shuo Yuanshi zhong de bizhechi bing jianlun Yuan de zhongshuling."

three suggest Han Chinese, Mongol, and Uyghur origins, all of these ethnic groups flourished in the Mongol court culture.[201]

Zhang-lü's case deserves particular attention. This decree refers to Han Chinese officials with their family names and then their official positions—that is, Xu *canzheng* 許參政 and Xue *canzheng* 薛參政. Thus, though the individual in question was probably surnamed Zhang, with the given name Lü, the fact he was referred to as Zhang-lü *pingzhang* 章閭平章 indicates that the Mongol rulers were not addressing him in a way that takes Zhang as the surname. Zhang-lü was known to his Mongolian master(s) as "Janglu" in Mongolian.[202] Multiple Mongolian inscriptions of the fourteenth-century do show that the Mongols refer to their Han Chinese servants by combining the first and given names into one compound word. In the case of Zhang-lü, it is even likely that he rose as a hereditary bondservant of the khan (or *genjiao*). This is why the name of Zhang-lü 章閭 punctuates multiple documents whereas the name of other Han Chinese officials appeared in the form of surname plus official position.[203] What is more, *Yuan shi* provides three different renditions of Zhang-lü in Chinese characters—章閭,[204] 張閭,[205] and 張驢[206]—and the inconsistency further confirms that he flourished in the Mongolian-speaking environment where the representation of names in Chinese characters was of less importance.[207]

In the early 1310s, Zhang-lü enjoyed the khan's trust especially concerning the management of *hanren* and *nanren*. In 1311, he was dispatched to head the Provincial Secretariat of Jiangzhe,[208] and soon he would initiate and co-lead a program of fiscal reform, the failure of which would cause his downfall. Against this background, in 1313, Zhang-lü, together with the Secretariat officials under him, made a revised proposal, probably after discussion with the khan, which in turn became the consensus of this palace conference.

---

[201] Though in general we have comparatively limited information about the career of each of them, it is possible, at least in theory, that Bala Toyin rose as a *bičigeči* of the circuit level, and was experienced in Sino-Mongolian translations. To be more specific, YDZ notes a Bala Toyin who flourished in the 1280s as Translation Scribe in Charge of the Surveillance Commissary of Hedong and Shanxi Circuits 判河東山西道按察司譯史 (YDZ 6.484). YZZS, probably because of the absence of evidence, does not link this person to the Bala Toyin that rose as the Right Assistant of the Secretariat 中書右丞 in 1313 (See Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 24.556).

[202] For instance, in the bilingual inscription of 1362 in Memory of Prince Hindu, the Chinese version specifies the name of an official named Zhang Qi 張璟, but the Mongolian version referred to him as "Jangki." See Francis Woodman Cleaves, "The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1362 in Memory of Prince Hindu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12.1/2 (1949), 103n50.

[203] For another example, see YDZ 1.110. "Zhang-lü, Co-Director of the Secretariat" vs. "Zhang [Gui], Co-Director of the Secretariat" 章閭平章 張平章.

[204] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 93.2353, 182.2811, etc.

[205] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 21.468, 174.4066, etc.

[206] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 47.537, 205.4578, etc.

[207] While 章 and 張 are homophones in the Chinese phonological systems of the fourteenth century, some non-Chinese manuals of the times, however, differentiate the initial consonants of these two characters. The Yuan print of *Shilin guangji* 事林廣記, a popular encyclopedia or book in categories, provides a table of Chinese surnames as written in the 'Phags-pa script, the writing system that Qubilai Khan promulgated for official communication. Here, it assigns the voiced [ɖ] (that is, 𡨴, in 'Phags-pa script, derived from the voiced Tibetan letter of ཌ) to 張, and the voiceless [ʈ] 𡨴 to 章.


(Cited from: *Qunshu leiyao shilin guangji* 群書類要事林廣記 (printed, 1492), Yonezawa Library.)

[208] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 21.468.

This Secretariat proposal, as I shall call it, declared that both classical learning and literary composition have their values, and explicitly explained that literary composition as a deed (Chinese: *goudang* 勾當; Mongolian: *üüles*) is not only about composing verses and rhapsodies, but also about making *wenzi* 文字 (the Chinese translation of the Mongolian *bicig*, written documents) in Sino-Mongolian documents. In other words, though the palace conference showed some consent to the proposal from the Academies, it insisted that the examination should "keep [the composition] of decrees, edicts and memorials," which Cheng Jufu, among other Academicians, tried to delete from the curriculum.

This is precisely the episode that the *Yuan shi* version of the same document deleted. As Lam Yuan-chu 劉元珠 has shown, the *Yuan shi* narrative of the Yuan implementation of the imperial examination had its own agenda; it is a text that early Ming adherents of Daoxue crafted to demonstrate how their teachings had transformed the Mongols to the extent that these so-called barbarians revitalized the examination to promote its tenets.[209] Key to producing this narrative was Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381), a Daoxue scholar qua master rhetorician (Chapter Four). Song Lian and his colleagues had clearly discerned that the Mongol decision-makers once vetoed the proposal of their Daoxue predecessors, one aiming to exclude bureaucratic writings from the examination curriculum. They deliberately deleted this episode from the narrative that they produced. Ultimately, this early Ming court reduced *bičigeči* to *li* 吏—a scribe as a sub-official clerk—in the translation manual.[210] Thus, even though the Ming inherited the Mongol examination curriculum,[211] this new empire was ready to deny that the Mongols had once contributed to the re-making of this institution. As a result, an entire page of history gradually sank into oblivion.

It is worth mentioning that, while the Ming was struggling with the Mongol legacies, in Manchuria local chieftains were striving to consolidate their power under the twilight of the Mongol Empire. On the Tyr stele erected on the bank of the Lower Amur River in 1413, the Jurchen version has the noun phrase "[bitihe]ši gemu 'all secretaries' forming a pair with bei-se ('nobleman-pl') 'noblemen'," as Pavel Rykin transliterates.[212] This does not indicate that the Jurchens would include the *bitihe-ši* among the nobles, but rather highlights the close working relationship between the secretaries and the dignitaries they assisted. Up to the seventeenth century when the Jurchen tribes re-rose to power as the Manchu Empire, they would establish their own system of *bithesi* 筆帖式, that is, lower rank scribal officials, who would no longer enjoy the political influence that their Mongol predecessors had once enjoyed.[213]

---

[209] Lam Yuan-chu 劉元珠, "The Civil-Recruitment Chapter in the Yuan History," *Monumenta Serica* 56 (2008): 293–372.

[210] Antoine Mostaert, *Le matériel Mongol du Houa i i iu 華夷譯語 de Houng-ou (1389)* (Paris: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1977), 49; Marian Lewicki, *La Langue Mongole des Transcriptions Chinoises du XIVe siècle : le Houa-yi yi-yu de 1389* (Wrocław: Nakładem Wrocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego, 1949), 117. For "the Huayi yiyu glossary as a case study of Mongol legacies," see Johannes S. Lotze, "Translation of Empire: Mongol Legacy, Language Policy, and the Early Ming World Order, 1368-1453" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2016), 171.

[211] See David Robinson, *In the Shadow of the Mongol Empire: Ming China and Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), esp. 9–16.

[212] Pavel Rykin, "The Mongol Text of the Tyr Trilingual Inscription (1413): Some New Readings and Interpretations," *International Journal of Eurasian Linguistics* 1 (2019), 143. Or, "*bitxə ʃi*" as in Jin Qicong, *Nvzhen wen cidian*, 148.

[213] Interestingly, in the Ottoman Empire, *beylikçi*, a title arguably derived from the Turkish word of *bitikçi*, was still among "the higher realm of the bureau chiefs." See Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 84.

The differences between the Mongol *bičigeči* and the Manchu *bithesi* well illustrate the diverse and dynamic nature of the Inner Asian cultural sphere. The hidden legacies of the *bičigeči* within the Ming Empire, together with this regime's effort to deny these legacies, further reminds us that the boundary between the Inner Asian and "Chinese" spheres was porous. Very often, it was imperial politics that hardened the contrast.[214] As Lydia Liu observes, "civilizations do not clash. Empires do," and what she notes in the Qing/British case is also applicable to the Sino-Steppe politics.

Closing Remarks

To recapitulate, for decades historians of the Mongol Empire have endeavored to understand how the old customs of the Mongols penetrated into their administrative practices from Eastern Europe to the Korean Peninsula. Meanwhile, scholars of the civil service examination have long questioned how different intellectual schools competed over the design of examination contents. This chapter contributes to both fields by showing that the *bičigeči* model characterized how the khan and his key advisers (some of whom were themselves the khan's *bičigeči*) conceptualized personnel "talent" and envisioned the shape of the civil service examination.

In lieu of a conclusion, however, it pays to delineate the limits of the Mongol ruler's agency in shaping the examination curriculum. While the palace conference that the khan presided over decided that the new civil examination would test candidates' skills at bureaucratic writing, it is not likely that the Mongol khan could have conceived of the specific forms of questions in the examination. As will be clearer in the next chapter, candidates of the Yuan examinations chose one of the following to show their eloquence in official writing: a decree from the perspective of a Han-dynasty emperor, an appointment edict from the perspective of a Tang emperor, or a memorial from the perspective of a minister of Tang/Song times or the more recent past. It must have been scholars well versed in the Chinese literary and political tradition that made the ultimate decision to test on these specific genres, carefully selected out of the curriculum of the Song/Jin examination of eloquence (Chapter One).

After all, this design is of remarkable eclectic spirit: This curriculum followed the ancient prose movement in featuring the Han-dynasty decrees, acknowledged the value of parallel prose as exemplified in the Tang appointment edicts, and invited examination candidates to write from the perspectives of worthy ministers, epitomized by Zhu Xi and the Daoxue masters themselves. What is more, one may recall that Yang Gongyi in 1274 and Wang Yun in 1301 proposed that the examination should test candidates' skills in discussing histories, and writing official documents in historical situations; thus, the reestablished examination to some extent fulfilled their goal as well (see Chapter Three). In brief, the imitative writing of historical documents constitutes a meeting point that both the Mongol rulers and scholars of different intellectual orientations could agree upon.

Unfortunately, due to the paucity of surviving, it does not seem possible to identify who exactly proposed this form of rhetorical exercises. However, circumstantial evidence points to the potential importance of three groups of political actors, all worth mentioning here. First, even before the Mongol conquest of the Song, Hao Jing was already ruminating over the legacies of each previous dynasty, and Yuan Haowen, among others, brought the practices of imitative writing of historical documents to the Dongping Prefecture (see Chapter One). Wang Xu, as

---

[214] See Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 1.

discussed in Chapter One, illustrates how Dongping natives cherished rhetorical exercises during their search for potential secretarial employment.

Second, through cooperation with the intellectuals they patronized, some nobles of Mongol and *semu* 色目 ("colored eyes," often Central Asians) statuses emerged as competent scholars of the "Chinese" tradition. Zhao Shiyan 趙世延 (?–1336) was a descendant of the Önggüd tribe, a group often assigned *semu* status. While his grandfather was already a follower of Činggis Khan, Zhao rose quickly as an experienced military commander as well as an administrator.[215] In the meantime, given his extensive knowledge of "Chinese" learning, he was occasionally mistaken for a *hanren*. In late 1313, the critical period during which the court made final decisions about the examination, the khan summoned him back from the Province of Jiangzhe, and in 1315, entrusted him as an examiner of the first palace examination.[216] In terms of intellectual orientation, Zhao celebrated the local tradition of Qinzhou where his family settled, and thus credited Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880–956), a tenth-century rhetorician minister who originated from Qinzhou, as the key forbearer of this lineage.[217] Zhao's example is of particular importance because it shows how, through elites of different ethnic backgrounds, pre-Song approaches to rhetorical training permeated into the Yuan curriculum.

Third, it is worth noting that the Koryŏ had already submitted itself to the Mongol yoke in 1260, as a partially autonomous kingdom of the Mongol Empire.[218] The Koryŏ continued its civil service examination even during the Mongol rule, based on a curriculum modeled upon the Tang Empire.[219] In the meantime, it followed its Mongol overlord's way of employing *bičigeči* and institutionalized its own *p'il-to-chŏk* 必闍赤 positions.[220] While the Koryŏ crown princes grew up in the Yuan capital as *turγaγ* (hostage), they also married Yuan imperial princesses, and thus became a part of the extended ruling family. The King Ch'ungsŏn 忠宣王 (1275–1325) of Koryŏ—Wang Wŏn 王謜 in Sinograph and Ijirbuka in Mongolian—declined to go back to his kingdom even after ascending the throne. A devotee of both Mongolian and Chinese cultures, he stayed in the Yuan capital as a patron of a variety of Koryŏ and Chinese scholars.[221] How his circle influenced Yuan policies about the previous territory of the Central Kingdom may deserve further attention in future studies.

---

[215] Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫, "Luguo gong jiamiao bei," 魯國公家廟碑, in *Longyou jinshi lu* 隴右金石錄, ed. Zhang Wei, in *Shike shiliao xinbian* vol. 21 (Taibei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1977), 16113–16114.

[216] Hsiao, Chi'-ch'ing [Xiao Qiqing] 蕭啓慶, *Jiuzhou sihai fengya tong: Yuandai duozu shirenquan de xingcheng yu fazhan* 九州四海風雅同：元代多族士人圈的形成與發展 (Taibei: Lianjing, 2012), 145.

[217] See Yin Shoufu, "Yimeng shuxie yu shi shiji de shehui wenhua bianqian," 異夢書寫與十世紀中國的社會文化變遷 *Zaoqi Zhongguoshi yanjiu*, in print.

[218] Kim Tang-t'aek 金塘澤, *Wŏn kansŏp ha ŭi Koryŏ chŏngch'isa* 元干涉下의高麗政治史 (Sŏul: Ilchogak, 1998); Morihira Masahiko 森平雅彦, *Mongoru hakenka no korai* モンゴル覇権下の高麗 (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2013); David Robinson, *Empire's Twilight: Northeast Asia under the Mongols* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 15–60.

[219] Pak Yong-un 朴龍雲, *Koryŏ sidae ŭmsŏje wa kwagŏje yŏn'gu* 高麗時代蔭敍制와 科擧制研究 (Sŏul: Ilchisa, 1990).

[220] Pak Yong-un 朴龍雲, "Koryŏ hugi p'il-to-chŏk e taehan kŏmt'o" 高麗後期必闍赤에 대한 검토, in *Han'guk sahak nonch'ong: Yi Ki-baek sŏnsaeng kohŭi kinyŏm* 韓國史學論叢 李基白先生古稀紀念 (Sŏul: Ilchogak, 1994): 868–872; Wang Minxin 王民信, *Wang Minxin Gaoli shi yanjiu lunwenji* 王民信高麗史研究論文集 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2010), 306.

[221] Okada Hidehiro 岡田英弘, *Mongoru Teikoku kara Dai Shin Teikoku e* モンゴル帝国から大清帝国へ (Tōkyō: Fujiwara Shoten, 2010), 157.

In any case, while this chapter has contended that the Mongol culture had contributed to the shaping of the "Chinese" examination curriculum, one should not downplay the agency of elites of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds—the Dongping intellectuals, the *semu* scholars, the Korean elites, to name a few, many of whom remain understudied in scholarship. For current purposes, it suffices to note that once promulgated through the imperial examination, the reformed examination curriculum would soon catalyze the further development of rhetorical learning in different parts of the Mongol Empire, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Figure 3 *Bičigeči* as Glossed in Mongolian/Chinese Translation Manual of *Huayi yiyu* (1389)

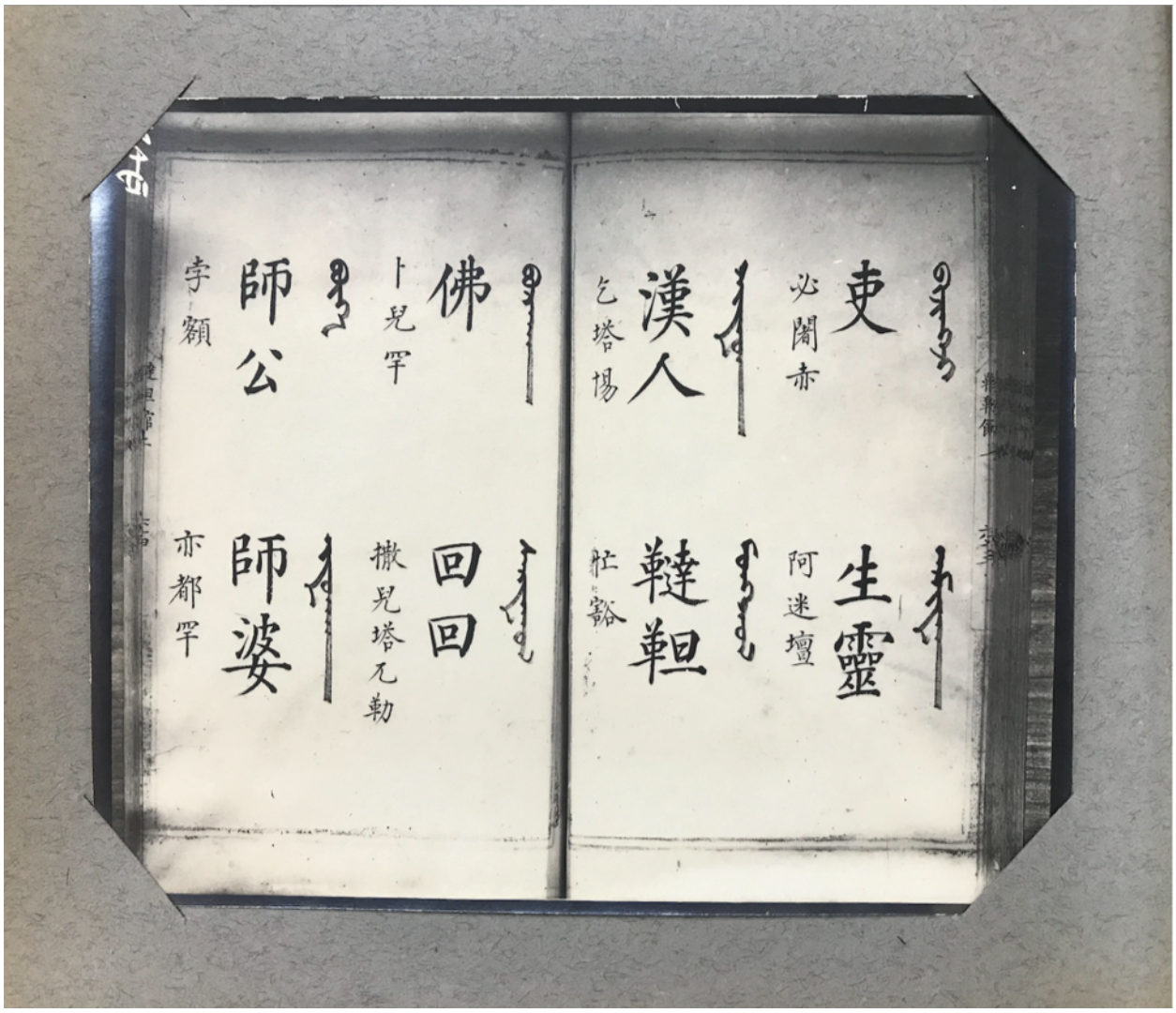
The word on the top right is:

ᠪᠢᠴᠢᠭᠡᠴᠢ (*biči'egeči*)

吏

必闍赤

Recited from: *Huayi yiyu Dada guan zazi* 華夷譯語 ·韃靼館雜字 (1389), Toyo bunko, accessed from the duplicated copy from the Kyoto Library.



3. Contending Possibilities, Rescuing Possibilities: The Development of Rhetorical Learning under Mongol Rule

Introduction: The Fourteenth-Century Transformation

By the mid-thirteenth century, not many youngsters shared the ambition of Wang Yingling's 王應麟 (1223–1296): to excel in the genres of official documents and to stand out as a master rhetorician at court. Even for the few who aspired to do so, they found themselves marginalized by the intellectual mainstream, which considered eloquence irrelevant with regard to the pursuit of wisdom. With the Mongol conquest of Song China (960–1279), it seemed that the rhetorical art of crafting "Chinese" official documents would further decline or even perish—after all, the Mongol khans barely spoke any Sinitic language, nor did they regard the decrees in high-register "Chinese" as a valuable cultural form in improving governance.[222]

By the mid- to late fourteenth century, however, the reverse had happened. The very rhetorical learning that culminated in the imitative writing (*ni* 擬) of official documents flourished to an unprecedented extent under the Mongol Yuan (1271–1368). Given the examination curriculum that the Mongol rulers designed with their advisers (Chapter Two), every candidate of "Chinese" background (that is, *hanren* 漢人 and *nanren* 南人) had to prepare themselves for writing edicts or memorials.[223] During the 1340s and 1350s, the "Compass" that Wang had once compiled for rhetorical learning (*Cixue zhinan* 辭學指南, see Chapter One) was rediscovered from the dust and printed in several editions to meet the rising needs of studying bureaucratic eloquence. As time went on, more and more intellectuals emerged as teachers or specialists of rhetoric—or, in their own terms, "the study of eloquence" (*yanyu zhi xue* 言語之學).[224] By the end of the fourteenth century, as we shall see, a variety of scholars explored rhetoric as a discipline that stood beyond the examination, and considered it as an important part of their overall intellectual growth.

To document this transformation, Figure 4—derived from my database "Rhetoricians and Rhetorical Exercise in East Asia, ca. 1200–1700"—offers a first approximation. It visualizes the geography of rhetorical learning, showing a clear regional pattern. Those individuals based around the Prefecture of Dongping flourished mainly during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Chapter One). Up to the middle of the fourteenth century, however, literati from the Jiangzhe Province (roughly, the Lower Yangzi Delta) and the special administrative region of the Koryŏ Kingdom eclipsed their Dongping predecessors in numbers.[225] It goes without saying that the flourishing of wood-block printing in the Jiangzhe area and the Korean Peninsula is responsible, at least in part, for featuring the centrality of Jiangzhe and Koryŏ in the

---

[222] See, for instance, Herbert Franke, "Wang Yun (1227-1304): A transmitter of Chinese values," in *Yuan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion Under the Mongols*, eds. Hok-lam Chan and Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 153–196. For an introduction to Yuan documents, see Bettine Birge, *Marriage and the Law in the Age of Khubilai Khan: Cases from the Yuan dianzhang* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017), 57–77.

[223] Robert Hymes, "Sung Society and Social Change," in *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5:526–664.

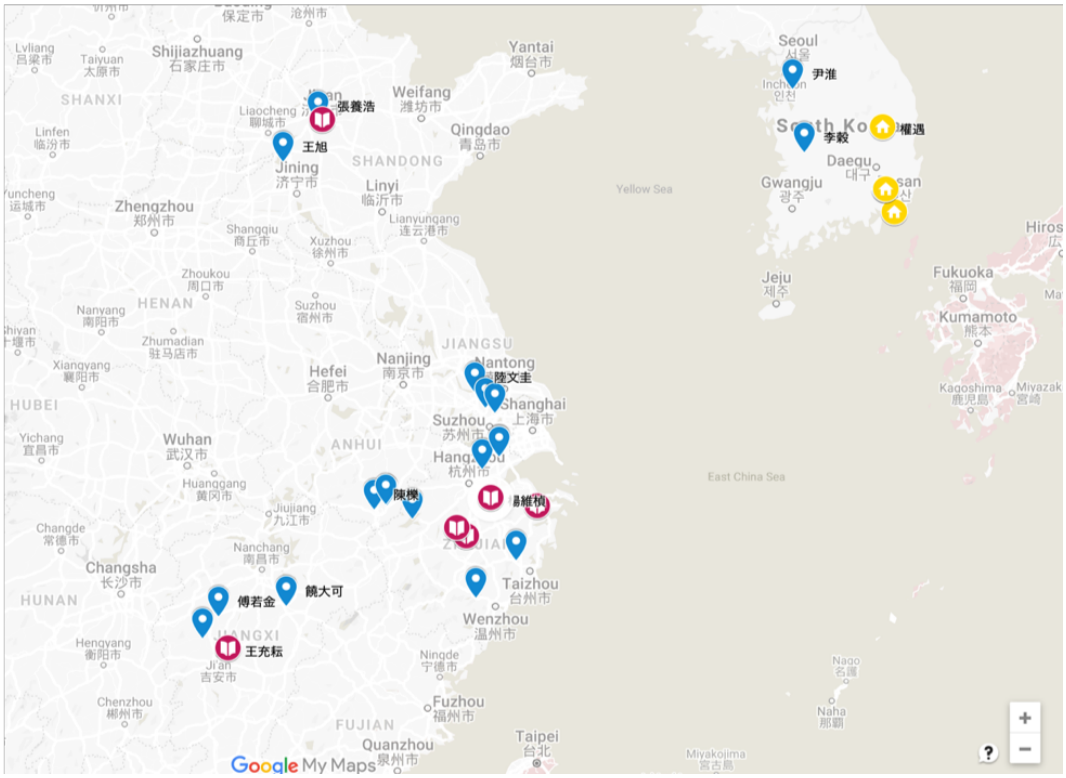
[224] Wang Wei 王禕, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* 王忠文公集 (printed, 1522), Shanghai Library, *juan* 13. See also QYW 55:731.

[225] For Koryŏ under the Mongol Empire, see David M. Robinson, *Empire's Twilight: Northeast Asia under the Mongols*, 15–60; Sixiang Wang, "Co-constructing Empire in Early Chosŏn Korea: Knowledge Production and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1392–1592" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015).

sources that have survived today.[226] Nevertheless, Figure 4 suggests that the local contexts were of pivotal importance, and can assist in further scrutiny of the intellectual changes that I describe.

Figure 4 Rhetoricians of the Mongol and Post-Mongol East Asia (ca. 1300–1400)

Each icon represents an elite whose imitative writing of historical official documents has survived or who was known for such writings. Yellow ones indicate the place of origin (*bongwan* 本貫). Red ones indicate authors who had compiled books of imitative writings or whose collections contain more than 15 such pieces.



What follows, integrated with comparative remarks concerning Koryŏ, focuses on the Yuan Province of Jiangzhe and proceeds through two case studies of Chen Li 陳櫟 (1252–1334) and Yang Weizhen 楊維楨 (1296–1370). Chen, who grew up under the Southern Song, belonged to the last generation that reached intellectual maturity before the Mongol conquest in 1276. Yang, in contrast, belonged to the first generation that pursued its studies after the Yuan reestablishment of the examinations. He would eventually witness the rise of the Ming (1368–

[226] Suyoung Son, *Writing for Print: Publishing and the Making of Textual Authority in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), 2; Young Kyun Oh, *Engraving Virtue: The Printing History of a Premodern Korean Moral Primer* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1–11.

1644), one of several post-Mongol regimes of the Eurasia.[227] Together, the experiences of Chen and Yang offer unique insight into the transition between pre- and post-Mongol times.[228]

I single out Chen and Yang among their contemporary devotees to rhetorical learning for a few additional reasons. Already, historians epitomized by Uematsu Tadashi 植松正 have devoted substantial effort to understanding how Yuan imperial rule penetrated local societies of the populous and prosperous Jiangzhe.[229] What is more, recent historiography in English and other languages has substantially furthered our understandings of how locally-established elites negotiated with the imperial officials on local matters.[230] Lacking from existing research is the question of how locals in Jiangzhe and elsewhere understood and imagined their roles in the Mongol world order.[231] It pays to ask, in addition, how their conceptualizations of political membership—or their conceptions of "citizenship," to use the term that Hilde De Weerdt suggests[232]—matter in the narrative of the world history of political thought.[233]

Chen's and Yang's experiences, which I reconstruct from previously untapped and understudied sources, illustrate how local episodes in Jiangzhe broached new dimensions for political theoretical inquiry. As we shall see below, Chen exemplifies a sharp thinker who explored the potentials of rhetorical exercises even when confined to the Yuan examination hall. His response, once decoded, elaborated on a key thread of Song political thought: The elites who flourished in the local sphere—that is, the sphere between family and state, as Chen Li argued—had a right to participate in imperial decision-making.[234] Yang Weizhen, in turn, belongs to a new generation of scholars who developed rhetoric as a vigorous discipline with a role to play

---

[227] Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2010), 28.
[228] Chen, during his last years, may have heard of Yang who rose as a provincial official in the vicinity of Chen's hometown. Meanwhile, it is likely that Yang had studied Chen's successful examination responses of 1314, when preparing for his own one in 1327.
[229] Uematsu Tadashi 植松正, *Gendai kōnan seiji shakaishi kenkyū* 元代江南政治社会史研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1997); Feifei Wang, "Negotiating between Mongol Institutions and 'Han Traditions': Buddhist Administration in Southeastern China under the Yuan," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 45 (2015): 339–369.
[230] See, for instance, Anne Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Sukhee Lee, *Negotiated Power: The State, Elites, and Local Governance in Twelfth- to Fourteenth- Century China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Xi He, *Lineage and Community in China, 1100–1500: Genealogical Innovation in Jiangxi* (London: Routledge, 2020).
[231] For literati imagination of the spatial order, however, see Yongtao Du, "Locality, Literati, and the Imagined Spatial Order: A Case of Huizhou, 1200-1550," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 42 (2012): 407–444; for particularly provocative discussions of how literati of Jiangzhe imagined "the Central Realm" (*zhongguo* 中國) under the Mongol rule, see Sakurai Satomi 櫻井智美, "Gendai kōnan shijin nittote no 'Chūgoku'" 元代江南士人にとっての中国, *Tōyō shi kenkyū* 78 (2019): 71–105.
[232] Hilde De Weerdt, "Considering Citizenship in Imperial Chinese History," *Citizenship Studies* 23 (2019), 256.
[233] John D. Langlois Jr., "Political Thought in Chin-hua under Mongol Rule," in *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. John D. Langlois Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 137–185; Peter Bol, "An Intellectual History of Literati Localism, 1100-1500," Lecture at University of California Berkeley, March 9, 2018. I thank Prof. Bol for introducing me to the book project that he is finalizing.
[234] It pays to differentiate from my argument from the effort to use the Habermasian concept of "public sphere" to study Chinese societies. My argument is that the conceptualization of a sphere between family and state was not unique to the European tradition. For provocative methodological discussions, see Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, "Introduction," in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, eds. Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 1–58; Frederic Wakeman Jr., "Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China," *Daedalus* 27.3 (1998), esp. 169. For the Song *shidafu* class, see Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), esp. 9–16; for Song student and their political activism, see Ming-kin Chu, *The Politics of Higher Education: The Imperial University in Northern Song China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2020), esp. 119–207.

beyond the examination. Within Yang's circle, rhetoric would emerge as a powerful platform capable of defending, excavating, and broaching the otherwise overlooked possibilities of speaking, acting, and being. In the end, I situate Chen and Yang against the broader historical context of Eurasia's intellectual transformation. I propose that their rhetorical explorations matter, because they provided provocative approaches—just like an analogous rhetorical culture flourishing in North Italy during the same time period—to rethink why certain political values are valuable at all in any period of time.

Chen Li (1252–1334): Examination Response as Political Manifesto

In 1252, Chen Li was born in a literati family in Xiuning County, Huizhou 徽州休寧.[235] By the age of fourteen, he had already emerged as a promising literatus in his own locale. By 1274, he was ready to take the Song imperial examination, but unfortunately, due to his sickness, Chen was not able to attend this round and had to wait for another three years. In 1276, news reached the 24-year-old that the Song capital Lin'an had fallen to the Mongols: "The examination itself has perished" 科舉廢矣.[236]

With the fall of the Song and the abolition of the civil service examination, Chen the young intellectual immersed himself in Daoxue (Neo-Confucian) learning. Like many other Daoxue followers (Chapter One), Chen ruminated over moral philosophy, promoted local welfare, and celebrated the cultural tradition of his locale. Thus passed several decades.[237] In 1313 when Chen was old and grey, news suddenly arrived at his village. The Mongol Yuan court had promulgated a decree to re-establish the imperial examination (Chapter Two), and local officials soon approached Chen, inviting if not requiring him to participate.[238]

In 1314, the 62-year-old Chen Li found himself in the examination hall again. The examination awaiting Chen followed a three-part design. For the first part, Chen had to answer two questions relating to the canonical text of *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects). One concerned the nature of "the way of loyalty and empathy" 忠恕之道, and the other asked him whether Confucius' education prioritized literary learning over virtuous deeds or otherwise.[239] Having answered these two questions, Chen needed to show off his knowledge of one of the Five Classics. All these assignments together made the first part.

For the second part, Chen would choose from one of the following composition questions—I number them from (1) to (4):

> (1) Rhapsody of the Grand Extreme 太極賦
> (2) [Imitative] Draft of the Han-dynasty Decree Which Ordered Prefectures and Kingdoms to Recommend the Filial and Integral in the first year of Emperor Wudi's Yuanguang Era [134 BC] 擬漢令郡國舉孝廉詔武帝元光元年

---

[235] See "Dingyu xiansheng xingzhuang" 定宇先生行狀, in Chen Li 陳櫟, *Dingyu ji* 定宇集, in SKQS. For a biographical study of Chen Li, see Jiang Minghe 姜名赫, "Yuan ru Chen li chushi jiqi xueshu sixiang yanjiu" 元儒陳櫟處世及其學術思想研究 (MA diss., Neimenggu daxue, 2019).
[236] "Dingyu xiansheng xingzhuang," in *Dingyu ji*, SKQS.
[237] For case studies of local elites, cf. Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-Chou, Chiang-Hsu in Northern and Southern* Sung; Anne Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1–20.
[238] "Dingyu xiansheng xingzhuang," in *Dingyu ji*, SKQS.
[239] Liu Zhen 劉貞 ed., *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* 類編歷舉三場文選 (printed, 1340s), Seikado Museum and Library, *xin ji*.

(3) [Imitative] Draft of the Tang Appointment Edict Appointing the Unemployed/Recluse Yang Cheng as the Grand Master of Remonstrance 擬唐處士陽城除諫議大夫誥

(4) [Imitative] Draft of the Expression of Congratulation on the Event that the Hall of Grand Completion of the Imperial Academy Produces Auspicious Mushroom in the year of Xinhai, the fourth year of Zhida [1311 CE] 擬國子監大成殿產瑞芝賀表至大四年歲次辛亥[240]

The third part questioned him on how the court could improve governance by promoting classical learning through imperial examinations and beyond.

Though we do not know who conceived the questions for the Jiangzhe provincial examination of 1314, it is evident that behind these assignments, there was a clear intellectual agenda. The concern of Daoxue permeates the questions in all three parts.[241] Simultaneously, whoever designed these questions was well aware that Jiangzhe was renowned for its density of literati, who had all previously valued examination participation as a constitutive part of their elite identity and the gate of entry into the imperial bureaucracy. Because no examination had been held since 1274, elites of this region, as elsewhere, were deprived of the most familiar way of becoming officials. Up to 1314, if these local elites were wondering what the empire, having re-installed the examination, would do with regard to them, the examination flipped the question around. It asked them: What, and how, could the local elites contribute to the empire?

To be more specific, questions of each part problematized the relationship of local worthies and the empire in slightly different ways: What are the major qualities of worthies (Part One)? How may these qualities contribute to the empire (Parts One and Three)? How should the empire employ worthies (Parts Two and Three)? Different assignments, it is worth mentioning, required the candidates to engage with these issues from different perspectives. For the first part, candidates wrote as scholars working on the classics. The next part invited them to speak from the perspective of the monarch or his ministers. For the last part, however, the same candidates composed the treatises that assumed the throne as the audience. In all, the three-part examination required the candidates to exercise their imaginative power, to take different roles, and to speak from different perspectives.

Chen Li, having chosen question (3) for the second part, thus had to speak as a Tang monarch. This question itself offers a good example of how the rhetorical exercise of imitative writing can embody pressing political concerns of the present. Before all, Chen should have imagined himself as a rhetorician minister of the Tang monarch, who had decided to appoint Yang Cheng 陽城 (736–805) as the Grand Master of Remonstrance. It was a closed-book examination. Thus, in order to produce a competent response in 1314, Chen needed to have mastered the Tang formulas of appointment edict, on the one hand, and to have gained some minimal knowledge of who Yang Cheng was and what characterized the duties of Grand Master of Remonstrance (cf. Figure 6), on the other.

What is more, this question of appointing Yang Cheng was not just about how to write a proper edict of the Tang period. At its heart lurked a deeper challenge posed by the examiners. A candidate would discover it once he recalled the following episode about Yang Cheng, which

---

[240] Liu Zhen ed., *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* (printed, 1340s), Seikado Museum and Library, *xin ji*. It pays to note that the questions of (2) and (4) give the specific year on which the event happened.

[241] For instance, even though the examination eventually offered the choice of the composition of a rhapsody, the theme is one of the key concepts in Daoxue metaphysics, the Grand Extreme from which all normative principles originates.

appears in the eleventh-century chronicle, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror for Aiding Governance), and in the widely circulated *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 資治通鑑綱目 (The String and Mesh for Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance)—an abridged version of the former:[242]

> 初，陽城自處士征為諫議大夫，拜官不辭。……及至…… 城方與二弟及客日夜痛飲，人莫能窺其際，皆以為虛得名耳。……前進士河南韓愈作《爭臣論》以譏之。[243]
>
> Earlier on, Yang Cheng was promoted from an unemployed one to Grand Master of Remonstrance. He accepted, instead of declining it. … Upon his arrival, … [Yang] Cheng indulged himself in drinking with his two younger brothers and guests all days and nights. No one was able to know what was going on; all thought he was a person of empty fame [that he did not deserve]. … Han Yu of Henan, who had passed the *jinshi* examination, composed the "Treatise on Officials of Admonishment" to ridicule him.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Mongol rulers were used to placing their bondservants to key administrative posts.[244] In general, they preferred men with proven competencies in war and in administration over those who had no experience in the government. Using the example of Yang Cheng, the examiners confronted the candidates with a key concern in Mongol politics: Why should the court employ locally prominent figures who had no previous experience in battle nor administration? Could they be men of empty fame? Though the question might seem daunting to neophytes to the Yuan examination or politics, the examiners intended that a learned candidate would easily discover the clue to crack the bigger problem. As *Zizhi tongjian* and related writings on the Tang history make clear, Yang Cheng eventually stood out with his integrity and demonstrated his competence in politics and administration.[245]

Having appreciated the question, one can then analyze Chen's response—translated in its entirety in what follows (cf. Figure 5):

古者諫無專官。上而為相，復於王以從諫。下而為工，亦執藝事以諫。官無高卑，人無貴賤，皆以諫納忠。漢以來，有諫大夫，始以諫為名，則專以言，為責任亦重矣。至我有唐有拾遺，有補闕，又有諫議大夫，其任固不尤	In antiquity, there was no specific official of remonstrance. As prominent as Grand Councilors, they turn to the king repeatedly until the king follows the admonishment. As base as craftsmen, they advise [the ruler] based on the arts of their specialty. Officials regardless of prominence or baseness, individuals regardless of being noble or ignoble, all display their loyalty via remonstrance. Since the Han Dynasty, there is the Grand Master of Remonstrance and it is from here and onward, an official post takes "Remonstrance" in the title; they specialized in speaking, and their responsibilities were heavy. By the time of our Tang Dynasty, there are the posts of Reminder and

[242] For further discussions of *Zizhi tongjian gangmu*, see Xu Zhaowen 徐昭文, another fourteenth-century literatus in Jiangzhe, and his *Zizhi tongjian gangmu kaozheng* 資治通鑑綱目考證 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2016).
[243] Sima Guang 司馬光, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 235.7688-9.
[244] See Iiyama Tomoyasu, "A Career Between Two cultures: Guo Yu, a Chinese Literatus in the Yuan Bureaucracy," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 44 (2014): 471–501.
[245] Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 235.7688-9.

重歟！在廷之臣，或以選直，或以序進，未有以處士起家居是官者。	Rectifier, as well as that of Grand Master of Remonstrance. Shouldn't their responsibilities be even heavier? Court officials are placed in these posts because of their integrity or in the order of promotion. There are no unemployed ones who start their career with this post.
處士陽城，潛德弗耀，化其鄉人，大臣以爾名聞。安有能善其鄉而不能正其君者？	Yang Cheng, the unemployed, you hide your virtues instead of showing them off; you transform men of your own district. Ministers recommend your name to me. How can there be individuals who can make their district good but cannot make their monarch upright?
是用擢為諫議大夫官，以諫且議為名，宜直諫讜議以奉其職。予違汝弼，汝其懋哉！毋蹈漢人所謂處士純盜虛聲，則予汝嘉。	Thus, [we] employ you as the Grand Master of Remonstrance. The post takes remonstration and discussion as its title. You should present upright discussions as remonstrance to fulfill your duty. If I disregard your counsel, you should devote yourself [to your responsibility of admonishing me]! The people of the Han[246] have the saying that the recluse is merely of empty reputation. If you do not follow them, then I will praise you.

Thanks to the *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* 新刊類編歷舉三場文選 recently discovered in the Seikado Museum (introduced in Chapter Two, hereafter *Sanchang wenxuan*, for short), we know how the anonymous examiners of 1314 read Chen's response.[247] They graded it with the following remarks (emphasis is mine):[248]

> 文理詳盡，非苟作者。誥平通。[249]
>
> This piece reasons in a detailed and comprehensive way. It is not composed without deliberation. The edict is plain and smooth.

The underlined phrase suggests that judged from the criterion of the 1314 examination, Chen's style is no more praiseworthy than being "plain and smooth." The examiners commentated on better ones in the following ways: "[The candidate] truly understood the essence of the edict [genre]" 深通誥體 or "[The candidate] indeed grasped the essence of the edict [genre]." 殊得誥體[250] Chen's response was not good in this sense.

---

[246] See discussions below.

[247] The book has not been publicized; therefore, what follows is based on my hand copies of the book in January 2020.

[248] Yuan examiners graded examination responses in a way similar to graduate admission today. Responses of all parts were considered together, and there were no articulated criteria of how much each part weighed. Ultimately, the examiners ranked all successful candidates one by one. See Yao Dali 姚大力, "Yuan xiangshi ruhe queding shanggong renxuan ji qi cidi," 元鄉貢如何確定上貢人選及其次第 *Qinghua shixue* 2 (2013): 119–175.

[249] Liu Zhen ed., *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* (printed, 1340s), Seikado Museum and Library, *xin ji*.

[250] In fact, for the Jiangzhe examination of 1314, most candidates were not well prepared for writing Han decrees or Tang edicts, despite the fact that they themselves chose this assignment. As a result, examiners had to correct some factual mistakes among the model texts they chose. To cite an example, a candidate who passed with the rank of 25th (the last) chose the question (2): [Imitative] Draft of the Han-dynasty Decree Which Ordered Prefectures and Kingdoms to Recommend the Filial and Integral (in the first year of Emperor Wudi's Yuanguang Reign [134 BC]).

Chen's response fails to show a concrete grasp of "the essence of the edict." Elsewhere, based on systematic analyses of Tang appointment edicts, I have argued that real Tang edicts require a three-part structure: It should start with some brief lines delineating what is the post for; and then it should elaborate in detail on why the appointee, given his (and sometimes her) qualities and experiences, fits the job description; and finally, it culminates with an imperial proclamation, such as "thus, we issue this appointment."[251] By default, the edict should use the parallel prose—a specific style that featured paired sentences in four and six characters, or four-six in short (Chapter One).

Chen Li did not use the parallel prose at all. As a follower of Daoxue, he had reason to stereotype the four-six as a flowery style incapable of conveying key principles. Deliberately, he used the ancient style that Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), one of the predecessors of the Daoxue movements, had advocated. One may note that in real history, the appointment of Yang Cheng happened before 795 CE, and by then, Han Yu—in his 20s—had not yet developed his characteristic ancient style. A complicated question here is whether the examination candidates had to use the style available to the historical Tang court or were expected to write in the style that the Tang ought to have used. The issue became a center of debate in post-Mongol rhetorical education, and as we shall see in Chapter Six. While the Ming elites argued for the former, their Chosŏn counterparts insisted upon the latter. Back in 1314 when the entire curriculum had just started to come into shape, examiners tolerated different approaches. Judged from other exemplary responses that *Sanchang wenxuan* publicized, a more serious limitation of Chen's "edict" is probably that it failed to follow the formulaic structure of the Tang appointment edict. Even though it had tried to follow the three-part structure, it had spent too few words on who Yang Cheng was. This raised the flag that the candidate might not know the related histories or was not capable of deploying eulogistic discourses.

Figure 5 Chen Li's Examination Response, *Sanchang wenxuan*, Seikado Museum

The examiner's comment comes to us through the Seikado *Sanchang wenxuan*, which is only accessible to readers on-site.

[Copyright under negotiation]

The examiners added the following comment: "[After the phrase of] 'each commandry and kingdom recommend one person,' there is no need to say 'submitting all of them to the government.'" 郡國舉孝廉各一人不必云悉上送

[251] Since the eighth century, it became common to incorporate hortative or imperative language at the end of an edict. See Yin Shoufu, "Negotiating with Female Commanders in Medieval China: War, Gender, and Imperial Rhetoric in Medieval China and Beyond," manuscript under review; Yin Shoufu, "Two Logics of Reciprocity: Appointment Edicts and Political Thought of Tang China," manuscript.

Fortunately for Chen, the examiners appreciated the depth of thought that he invested in his response. Chen, while missing "the essence of the edict," grasped the gist of the question—for this reason, the examiners highlighted the fact that his piece "reasons in a detailed and comprehensive way." From its very beginning, his response addressed the key question that the examiners posed: Given that imperial bureaucracy has its own rules of selection and promotion, why can a recluse without any credentials be employed as a high official all the sudden? Chen attacked this question in two steps. First, Chen started his edict by re-working the famous line that Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) articulated in the eleventh century: "in antiquity, there were no specific officials of remonstrance." 古者諫無官[252] In doing so, Chen pointed out that everyone has the responsibility of admonishing the monarch, and thus, what should be questioned was rather the institutional design of assigning the duties of admonishing to particular officials. If the scholars of the Song times had questioned whether the Han-Tang institutions adhered to the higher normative patterns of the universe (*li* 理), Chen carried out this task in another context: not only during the writing of official documents of most formulaic nature but also in the process of a real examination.

Having broached this meta-critique of the Han-Tang institutional legacies, Chen then advanced his second argument. Accordingly, someone capable of transforming his own locale is by nature capable of rectifying the throne. This contention is itself a highly condensed engagement with Daoxue philosophy. As is well known, *Da xue* 大學 (*Great Learning*), that is, the first of the canonical Four Books, delineated a continuum from self-cultivation to imperial governance:

> 心正而后身脩，身脩而后家齊，家齊而后國治，國治而后天下平。[253]
>
> When the mind is upright, the self is cultivated. When the self is cultivated, the family is harmonized. When the family is harmonized, the country is well-governed. When the country is well governed, there will be peace throughout all-under-heaven.

Between the harmonization of the family and the governance of the country, as Chen saw it, there is a gap. There is a sphere in between, which Chen identified as *xiang* 鄉, a district or a locale bridging family and state affairs. A local worthy, accordingly, is not only someone who merely "maintains his virtue himself," 獨善其身 as the canonical text of *Mengzi* puts it; instead, he is someone who can make the "district" a virtuous place 善其鄉, as Chen illustrated.

The way that Chen closed the edict further showcases Chen's ingenuity in orienting himself across the Han, the Tang, and his own times. As Chen wrote:

> 毋蹈漢人所謂處士純盜虛聲，則予汝嘉。[254]
>
> The people of the Han have the saying that the recluse is merely of empty reputation. If you do not follow them, then I will praise you.

---

[252] Sima Guang 司馬光, "Jianyuan timing ji" 諫院題名記, QSW.

[253] Zhu Xi 朱熹 ed., *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 4.

[254] Liu Zhen ed., *Xinkan leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* (printed, 1340s), Seikado Museum and Library, *xin ji*

The phrase is derived from a famous passage of the biographies of the two Eastern Han (25–220 CE) worthies, Huang Qiong 黃瓊 (86–164 CE) and Li Gu 李固 (93–167 CE). According to *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (History of the Late Han)

> 俗論皆言處士純盜虛聲。[255]
>
> According to the discussions circulated among common people, recluses are merely of fraudulent fame.

We should recall that Chen was writing from the perspective of a Tang monarch. A competent edict of the Tang times brought up precedents of the previous dynasties such as the Han Empire. In the context of 1314, the very term of *hanren* was saturated with the connotation of the Mongol way of differentiating populations. Thus, *hanren* literarily means people of Han ethnic background. The Mongol court was well aware that *hanren*, together with *nanren* (literally, the southerners) to which Chen belonged shared the same cultural tradition and the same examination curriculum applied to both.[256]

Using the multi-layered term of *hanren*, Chen addressed a stereotype that the Mongols and their close associates cast upon the Chinese literati. From the perspective of the Mongol rulers, the learnings of *hanren* and *nanren* Chinese could be "superficial and frivolous" 浮華, to use the term that punctuates the decree of 1313 (Chapter Two). In addressing such prejudices, Chen's "edict" projected an idealized emperor who performed his responsibility of employing worthies, praising and rewarding them for solid deeds. Chen's language here, it is worth mentioning, shifted to a unique register. Chen imagined himself as Han Yu, or someone who shared Han Yu's advocacy of ancient prose. Then, Chen imagined his "Han Yu" to be imitating the language of the *Classic of Documents*, a canonized collection of supposedly pre-Qin documents—as the historical Han Yu has once done. In this way, the edict itself fulfills a grand tour from the pre-Qin languages, the Han-dynasty worthies, the Tang literary reforms, all the way to the Mongol politics. Indeed, as the examiners had well noted, Chen's piece was by no means composed "without deliberation."[257]

At this point, it pays to emphasize that Chen was not exceptional in using rhetorical exercises to advance political claims. A further example will be helpful to highlight the intricate relations among examination responses and local political concerns. In 1333, Yi Gok 李穀 (1298–1351), a descendent of the aristocratic Hansan Yi clan of the Koryŏ Kingdom of Korea, was in the Yuan capital of Qan-balïq/Dadu (modern-day Beijing). There, he passed the imperial examination for *hanren* and *nanren*; afterwards, he was appointed as an editorial official of the Bureau of Historiography in the Imperial Academy 翰林國史院檢閱官, where he continued his studies. Throughout his preparations for the examination and his career, Yi had composed a

---

[255] Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 61.2032.

[256] Recent scholarship has well shown that the boundary between hanren and nanren was complicated, and in some cases, porous. Funada Yoshiyuki, "The Image of the Semu People: Mongols, Chinese, Southerners, and Various Other Peoples under the Mongol Empire," *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 7 (2014): 199–221.

[257] The circulation of texts merits attention. Chen's "edict" per se was selected as a model text of the year and later incorporated into the *Sanchang wenxuan* (1340s). Chen, too, was proud of his response, so that this very piece appeared in his authorial collection without a single character of revision. While the former belongs to the books targeting the market of examination preparation that included model texts from all provinces, the latter bespeaks deeper concerns of the local intellectual community.

great variety of imitations of historical official documents. Nevertheless, he was best known, through his collections and widely circulated anthologies, for what follows: "[Imitatively] Drafted Edict of the Han dynasty that Employs the Two Sons of Yang Zhen as Court Gentlemen." 擬漢楊震二子為郎詔[258]

Here, Yi prepared this imperial document for his imagined monarch, the Emperor Shundi of Han 漢順帝 (115–144) of 126 CE, proclaiming that to recompense Yang's merit, the throne deemed it appropriate to employ his two sons as court gentlemen and award his family a million coins. Interestingly, Yi had his reasons to care about the entitlement due to the offspring of prominent officials. His own descendants continued to be important scholar-officials through the tumultuous fourteenth century. About a century later, Yi's great-grandson Yi Kye-jŏn 李季甸(1404–1459) would rise as a renowned rhetorician of the Chosŏn Kingdom.[259] Yi Gok's example points to several other dimensions of rhetorical exercises and (imagined) political engagement. First, the trainings not only targeted the elites of the previous "Chinese" territories but welcomed intellectuals of literarily all ethnic groups. Second, anthologization, collection formation, and block-printing were important factor in preserving and distributing rhetorical exercises once composed for examination purposes and beyond. During this process, editors and publishers featured some particular texts that encapsulate the key information as they intended.

Despite these complexities, my discussion so far shows that writing official documents from the perspective of the ancients provided a powerful tool to discuss philosophical principles of political participation and engage the politics of the present. If the examination questions allowed local elites of Jiangzhe to negotiate their roles in the imperial order, the same exercises provided an opportunity for aristocrats of the Korean peninsula to rationalize hereditary service in the bureaucracy through the Koryŏ-Chosŏn transition.[260] In other words, such rhetorical exercises flourished, not only because they were required by the examination, but also because elites found these assignments productive.

To be able to produce such decrees or edicts, as I have emphasized above, one needed to have some understanding of the historical episodes. In Chen Li's and Yi Gok's cases, for instance, they needed to know who Yang Cheng or Yang Zhen were in order to come to a competent response. Thus, gradually through the fourteenth century, a variety of examination manuals appeared, preparing candidates with essentials of the Han and the Tang history for use in the imitative writing (see Figure 6). The printing and dissemination of such books, which deserves further scholarly attention, in turn cultivated further interests in historical events, speeches, and documents that would otherwise skip the scrutiny of literati learners of the times.[261] Soon, as we shall see below, the educated elite's pursuit of rhetoric was no longer limited to the context of examination preparation; it became an autonomous discipline through its interaction with the established fields of historical investigation and Daoxue philosophy.

---

[258] QYW 43:428.

[259] For the family, see Sin Ch'ŏn-sik 申千湜, *Chonyangjae Yi Kye-jŏn ŭi saengae wa haengnok* 存養齋李季甸의生涯와行錄 (Sŏul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 2001), esp. 11–49.

[260] John B. Duncan, *The Origins of the Choson Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 52–98.

[261] Key studies include Fu Jia 付佳, "Xinbian zhao gao biaozhang jiyao banben kao" 新編詔誥表章機要版本考, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 4 (2014): 55–57. Fu shows that the book *Xinbian zhao gao biaozhang jiyao* 新編詔誥表章機要 (Newly Compiled Essentials for [Composing] Decress, Edicts, and Memorials) is not a Jin print as previously believed; instead, the book was published during mid-Yuan targeting candidates of the re-established examination. This is further confirmed in Hou Meizhen 侯美珍, "Guo Mingru Xinbian zhao gao biaozhang jiyao tanxi" 郭明如《新編詔誥章表機要》探析, *Guowen xuebao* 67 (2020): 113–146

Figure 6 Preparing for Examination Questions

Liu Jin 劉瑾 ed., *Xinbian zhao gao zhangbiao shishi* 詔誥章表事實 (Basics for [Writing] Decrees, Edicts, and Memorials, printed, mid/late fourteenth-century) (printed, 1344), National Archive of Japan.

The book is intended to prepare Yuan examination candidates to recognize the historical figures and official posts so that they were able to write decrees, edicts, or memorials. The first entry from the right gives the basic facts about Yang Cheng.



Yang Weizhen (1296–1370): Framing Rhetoric, Re-engaging History

As soon as the rhetorical recreation of historical documents came to be an important part of literati learning, further intellectual development started to take place. In Jiangzhe, a number of scholars who had since their youth endorsed the "study of eloquence" (*yanyu zhi xue*) were increasingly interested in rethinking the historical events for which they crafted the documents. Going beyond the examination curriculum, they began to think about how their mastery of historical styles might reveal deep patterns behind or beyond historical changes. Drawing on a considerable reservoir of imaginative engagement with the history, Yang Weizhen, a much-understudied figure in the current narratives of Chinese cultural and intellectual histories, stands out in problematizing the possibilities of individual agency and historical justice. This section is by no means an intellectual biography of Yang, a task that must wait for future scholarship.[262] Here I study Yang as an explorer of rhetoric. I start with the materiality and sociality of rhetoric as practiced in mid-fourteenth-century Jiangzhe, and then I excavate Yang's terminologies that encapsulate his rhetorical and historical philosophies.

On the surface, imitative writing may appear as a text-centered activity. This interpretation, however, is misleading. An official document is first of all an object, and to write one is to explore how to articulate a voice within the material object of the document. The very document of the appointment edict (*gaoshen* 告身), for instance, is a *thing* that the court handed over to the appointee, the family of whom would then cherish it for generations. In 1278, Qubilai Khan, as a part of his campaign against the Song, ordered his troops "to trace and destroy the appointment edicts that the Song endowed to its previous officials." 追毀宋故官所受告身[263] As time went on, such policies only intensified the elites' interests in collecting these appointment documents qua objects. Up to the fourteenth century, a great variety of Tang-Song edicts, memorials, and letters were available on markets and were exchanged as gifts.[264] Copied upon refined silk or paper, they were themselves the focus of art collections. Hand-written by renowned monarchs or officials, they were a medium of calligraphic connoisseurship. Instantiating particular events, they constituted the lieu de memoir for intellectual engagement with the past.

---

[262] The most important study of Yang Weizhen as a poet remains the brief section in Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, *Gen Min shi gaisetsu* 元明詩概說 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1963). Yogi Junichi 要木純一 deepens Yoshikawa's argument that Yang was an early modern citizen of an increasingly marketized society, and traces the changing image of Yang as a literary man. See his, "Yō Itei ron" 楊維楨論, *Shimane daigaku hōbun gakubu kiyō: bungakuka hen* 7 (1992): 37–64. Edmund Worthy, Jr. provided a brief biography of Yang in *Dictionary of Ming Biography: 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1547–1553. Very recently, two interesting dissertations have examined a branch of Yang's art: Zhang Huicong, "Imitation and Innovation: A Critical Study of Yang Weizhen (1296-1370) and His Yuefu Poetry," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2009); Liu Ai-lian, "Yang Weizhen (1296–1370) and the Social Art of Painting Inscriptions," (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2011). For the scholarship in Chinese, see, in particular, Huang Rensheng 黃仁生, *Yang Weizhen yu Yuan mo Ming chu wenxue sichao* 楊維禎與元末明初文學思潮 (Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 2005).

[263] Song Lian 宋濂 et al., *Yuan shi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 10.203.

[264] Royal speeches of the Zhou kings, for instance, were inscribed upon bronzes, and Tang-Song scholar-officials had already started to collect them. There was a long tradition of carving imperial documents on stones, and Pan Angxiao 潘昂霄 of the late thirteenth century, while compiling the *Jin shi li* 金石例 (Examples of Bronzes and Steles), had already paid close attention to the format and styles of Tang-Song official documents. A native of Jinan, Pan was closely associated with the scholars of the Dongping circles who were practicing imitative writings, as discussed in Chapter Two. In brief, the interests of collecting past objects and imitating past styles were often intertwined.

The writings of Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–785), the righteous official of the Tang and one of the most renowned calligraphers of the Chinese tradition, are interesting examples. Yan famously hand-copied the appointment edicts that he and his family members received. Six scrolls entered the imperial collection of the Song. As a result, throughout the Song, only privileged individuals who had received special imperial favor could access the scrolls.[265] With the fall of the Song capital in 1276, some agents of the Mongols appropriated them and brought them to the Yuan capital of Qan-balïq/Dadu. Politicians rose and fell, and thus their collections entered the market. Around 1340, the scholar-official Huang Jin 黃溍 (1277–1357), who passed the examination and enjoyed a decent career,[266] purchased one of the scrolls of Yan's hand-written appointment edict.[267] As he retired to his native place of Wuzhou 婺州 (Jinhua 金華 today) with the collection of scrolls he had acquired,[268] his disciples—including Wang Wei 王禕 (1321–1372), an achieved rhetorician contemporary to Yang Weizhen—gained the opportunity to work with the appointment edict that Yan Zhenqing had copied.[269]

Yang Weizhen probably had seen some of the scrolls that Huang gathered, since the two scholars were well connected to each other.[270] In any case, Yang's family possessed a calligraphic collection of a similar kind. His grandfather, a native of Shaoxing 紹興, flourished as a regionally renowned pharmacist during the Southern Song. Under Mongol rule, Yang's father acquired a large amount of wealth in the burgeoning commerce of the Hangzhou Bay area. Like other wealthy individuals of the times, he invested in art, and sent his sons to study humanities. As a result, Yang's elder brother, Yang Weihan 楊維翰 (fl. 14th century), gained his fame as a painter and calligrapher.[271]

Yang Weizhen himself would eventually become an accomplished collector, an identity sometimes eclipsed by his fame for poetry and calligraphy. Thanks to the education his father invested in him, he passed the *jinshi* examination in 1327. Afterward, he spent a decade as a provincial official of in Yuan-era Jiangzhe and Jiangxi. When Mongol rule started to decay, he resigned his post and spent his time in his villas in Shaoxing, Songjiang 松江 and Suzhou 蘇州. Here, he shared the zeal for antiques with many of his contemporary elites in Jiangzhe, and collecting previous documents became an integral part of his artistic explorations.[272] To cite one example, Yang personally owned the scrolls on which Zhu Xi hand-wrote his poems that he exchanged with Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133–1180), a scholar-official key to the development of

---

[265] Amy McNair, *The Upright Brush: Yan Zhenqing's Calligraphy and Song Literati Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 13.

[266] Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi*, 181.4188.

[267] Wang Wei 王禕, "Ba Yan Zhenqing gao," 跋顏真卿誥 QYW 55:342.

[268] For Huang Jin as a collector, see QYW 29:122–215. See Peter K. Bol, "Neo-Confucianism and Local Society, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century: A Case Study," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Richard von Glahn and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 241–283.

[269] Wang Wei, "Ba Yan Zhenqing gao," QYW 55:342.

[270] See Yang Weizhen 楊維楨, "Song Jinhua Huang xiansheng guili xu," 送金華黃先生歸里序 QYW 42:499.

[271] Xu Mi 徐泌, *Ming hua lu* 明畫錄 (Taibei: Mingwen shuju, 1991), *juan* 7.

[272] For art historical analyses of Yuan scrolls, see, for instance, Shane McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011). For the material context of an earlier or later period, see Zhang Yunshuang, "Porous Privacy: The Literati Studio and Spatiality in Song China," (PhD diss., UCLA, 2017); Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004). For the agency of objects, see Carl Knappett, "Animacy, Agency, and Personhood," in *Thinking Through Material culture: an Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 11–34.

Daoxue. Realizing that Zhang's original handwriting was lost, Yang copied Zhang's poems that had survived through other venues and paired his own calligraphy with Zhu Xi's. In Yang's case, the imitative recreating of historical documents is often tied with the calligraphic venture of re-rendering these characters with one's own hands.

What is more, Yang's experience illustrates how Jiangzhe elites pursued rhetoric as an art embedded in social connections. In contrast to Zhen Dexiu 真德秀 (1178–1235), who complained that social burdens eroded time available for rhetorical practices (Chapter One), Yang routinized the activities of imitative writings with his disciples. Yang led a small intellectual circle that read and discussed histories. They used the *Chun qiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), covering the period from 722 to 481 BC, and *Zizhi tongjian gangmu*, covering the period from 403 BC to 959 CE. For the histories since 960 CE, Yang himself was compiling a book intended as a sequel to *Zizhi tongjian gangmu*. Together this circle pondered over historical events, and Yang fleshed out his reflections in different formats, including question-responses between the master and disciple, treatises discussing particular figures, and what is more, rhetorical recreations of what the historical protagonists might, could, and should have said. Many of Yang's writings survive within the collection entitled as *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺 (Gleaning the Lost that Concerns the Essence of History).[273]

What is particularly valuable about this book is that disciples, two of whom named themselves Mu 木 and Wang Ming 王明, added comments to a variety of pieces. Such paratexts either introduce the context of the compositions, or shed light on earlier drafts or alternative visions over which Yang had once ruminated. For instance, the collection includes the piece of "Memorial of Gratitude Written on Behalf of An Chi-nu [literarily, 'An, the slave upon yelling']" 代安叱奴謝表—a text that illustrates how elite sociability and local politics shaped the rhetoric that Yang's circle explored.

In 618 CE, Emperor Gaozu of the Tang (586–635) appointed An Chinu, a court performer, to the prestigious position of Gentleman Cavalier Attendant 散騎侍郎. Righteous officials of the times immediately castigated this act, contending that this very position should belong to worthy individuals with proven trainings in classics, among other literary learnings.[274] Nevertheless, An Chi-nu accepted this post. Yang, accordingly, stepped into the perspective of An Chi-nu, the clown, and recreated his voice in the form of a Tang memorial expressing gratitude (*xieshang biao* 謝上表). Here, one may discern that the topic itself differed radically from the one that Chen Li composed during his examination. If the examination required candidates to write from the perspective of a monarch employing worthy individuals or from that of the worthies themselves, Jiangzhe elites had transformed the exercise into a platform where one played different roles in the form of writing an official document.

The commentaries that Mu attached informed us that Yang composed the piece for a particular event that involved him. In 1355, a performer named Jin Mengui 金門貴 (fl. mid-fourteenth century) was promoted as Secretarial Aide 記室參軍 of a powerful governor of Jiangzhe.[275] The event itself offered a telling example that even after the regularization of the

---

[273] The earliest printed edition of the book, prefaced in 1502, dates to the early sixteenth century. See Yang Weizhen 楊維楨, *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺 (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library. This edition was reprinted in 1540 (see Yang Weizhen 楊維楨, *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺, in SKCM, and again in 1835 (see Yang Weizhen 楊維楨, *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺 [printed, 1835], Fu Su-nien Library).

[274] Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 62.2375.

[275] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:438.

civil service examination, the Yuan court was still used to recruiting officials through their network of patronage. Local elites in Jiangzhe criticized such personnel arrangements with indignation. And Jin Mengui, now a provincial official, had to face such criticism. In this context, Jin acquainted himself with Yang, and asked him to "write something to release himself from the mockery." 乞言解嘲[276] Yang agreed and wrote from the perspective of An Chinu of the early Tang. Mu emphasized that the entire piece aimed to admonish Jin in a way that he would find hilarious, a commentarial act that itself aimed to exculpate Yang from his close ties with officials. Meanwhile, it is no less important to bear in mind that Yang, the renowned calligrapher, hand-wrote it on a scroll and presented it to Jin as a gift. This gift supposedly would strengthen the tie between Yang Weizhen and Jin Mengui, the rich local and the rising official, respectively.

To recapitulate, so far I have shown that, for Yang, rhetoric was an activity mediated by objects and embedded in complicated networks. In the end, the texts of his explorations found their way into the collection of *Shiyi shiyi*. Accordingly, reading *Shiyi shiyi* is to excavate, from ink on pages, the material and social world through which Yang's circles sought to recreate historical voices as a way to problematize the past, the present, and the universal principle (*li* 理). My focus below falls on a small part of *Shiyi shiyi*, namely the rhetorical devices that Yang's circle had devised, that is, their terminologies of "supplemented rhetoric," "hypothetical rhetoric," and "imitative rhetoric."[277] In what follows, I explicate these terms in turn, terms that, in my view, encapsulate the sophisticated philosophization of this circle. It is least surprising that the collection of *Shiyi shiyi* does not provide definitions for any one of them. Participants of the involved literary and language games shared an understanding of these categories. In a sense, these terms—contextually deliberated, delineated, and deployed—reject definition in the first place. Against this backdrop, I see my task as both hermeneutic and reconstructive: hermeneutic in the sense that from the textual and paratextual remains we receive, I trace how Yang's circle once did things with these terms, and reconstructive in the sense that I present my observations in the form of a guide to rhetorical terms that readers today may find convenient.

(a) *bu ci* 補辭: supplemented rhetoric

When reading a historical narrative, one may notice that some speeches or documents are not cited in their entirety. A historian, if interested in this piece, may try their best to identify the primary source, but as it often happens, the document may not have survived at all. At this point, while a historian has to acknowledge the limits of existing sources, a rhetorician gains an opportunity to practice his skills. They may aspire to re-create this lost speech or document based on their understanding of the style of the times, as well as their knowledge of related histories. If this is the case, this rhetorician is practicing the supplemented rhetoric, or *bu ci* 補辭, as Yang's circle termed it.

It goes without saying that literary efforts to supplement (*bu* 補) lost documents have a long history in China. It is well known, for instance, that Chu Shaosun 褚少孫 (fl. 1st century BC) "supplemented" the lost chapters in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (?–ca.86 BCE) *Shi ji* 史記 (Grand Scribe's Record).[278] Shu Xi 束晳 (261–300), to cite a post-Han example, was known for his effort

[276] Ibid.
[277] Wei Xiaohu, *Siku tiyao quanshu zongmu huiding, juan* 89, 2779.
[278] See Yi Ping 易平, "Chu Shaosun bu Shi xin kao" 褚少孫補史新考, *Taida lishi xuebao* 25 (2000): 151–180.

to "supplement" lost poems.[279] For Chu and for Shu, to supplement is to contribute to the completion of a certain canon, either the *Grand Scriber's Record* or the repository of poems. In Yang's case, the keyword *ci* 辭 (eloquent speech/writing or rhetoric), however, suggests different goals of supplementation. It was neither to complete an otherwise imperfect corpus nor to forge historical documents. Minimally, as a rhetorical exercise, *bu ci* 補辭 tested the practitioners' grasp of a certain genre and style. Catherine Gallagher has notably pointed out that "fictionality," as developed in England and France, "implies a paradox: one painstakingly creates believable plots, with the assumption that readers won't believe them, but will still enjoy them."[280] *Ci*-rhetoric here bears the same connotation: one painstakingly recreates a historical document in as verisimilar a way as possible, while knowing that readers are well aware that it is not true.[281]

Thus, using the term "supplemented rhetoric" (*bu ci*), Yang's circle made it explicit that rhetoric was a discipline different from that of history. For them, writing histories or compiling chronologies is an art of subtraction: it is to grasp the "grand" (大) essence during the process of which one cannot afford to include all "details" (細), as a fifteenth-century reader of Yang pointed out.[282] A rhetorician does the contrary. He must be able to "expand" (*yan* 衍) the very few words that have survived into a full-scale document as the genre requires.[283]

To cite an example, "Zisi's letter recommending Gou Bian" 子思薦苟變書 is one of the documents that Yang's circle identified as "supplemented rhetoric."[284] According to the chronicle *Zizhi tongjian*, in 377 BC Zisi (fl. 4th century BC) recommended Gou Bian to the Lord of Wei. However, from Yang's perspective, Zisi's words, as appearing as a mere 75 characters as appeared in *Zizhi tongjian*, had to be an abbreviated version. The task and challenge of "supplemented rhetoric," as Yang's disciple Mu put it, are to "extend" or "amplify" (*guang* 廣) the original argument, re-elaborating Zisi's original intention.[285] Thus, Yang's recreated version is not only longer (by 213 characters) but also in full conformity to the decorum by which a minister speaks to his superior.

In the fourteenth century, Yang Weizhen was not alone in exploring, if not re-vitalizing, the "supplemented rhetoric." Wang Wei, as mentioned above, was also fond of supplementing lost historical documents. Wang argued that supplementing the official documents from the perspective of the ancients is an effective approach of self-cultivation. During this process, one tests himself to see whether he has truly lived as an ancient.[286] As Wang saw it, if one can truly embody the virtues of the ancients, then his words will naturally be as elegant as the worthies of the past.[287] Yang Weizhen would probably not agree with Wang. Yang's focus, however, fell otherwise.

(b) *she ci* 設辭 : hypothetical rhetoric

---

[279] Shu Xi 束晳, "Buwang shi liu shou," 補亡詩六首, in *Wen xuan* 文選, ed. Xiao Tong 蕭統 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 19.272.
[280] Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," in *The Novel* vol. 1, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 336–363.
[281] The world of *ci* or rhetoric in the Chinese tradition thus offers an alternative starting point for theorizing "fictionality."
[282] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library.
[283] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:368.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286] See Wang Wei, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* (printed, 1522), Shanghai Library, *juan* 13; QYW 55:731.
[287] See Wang Wei, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* (printed, 1522), Shanghai Library, *juan* 13; QYW 55:731.

Unlike "supplemented rhetoric," a term that many rhetoricians of the times made use of, *she ci* 設辭 or "hypothetical rhetoric" is a category that Yang himself developed from earlier exegeses of the classical canon. To be more specific, imagining hypothetical situations (marked by the term *she* 設 or *sheshi* 設使) was an important part of the commentaries of the Classics. As Bruce Rusk has shown, Song elites had well explored the theme of "what if it were possible to transcend the normal constraints of time," and asked what would have followed "Had Confucius lived in the late Warring States," which was about three centuries after Confucius death.[288] Combining *she* ("to hypothesize") and *ci* (rhetoric), Yang intended this mode of composition as an exercise that starts with a scenario that did not happen in real history. In other words, if "supplemented rhetoric" requires a rhetorician to re-create a document that once existed but has subsequently been lost, "hypothetical rhetoric" then charges them with composing documents for hypothetical scenarios that never actually happened.

For instance, as *Zizhi tongjian* recounts, in 258 BC Mao Sui 毛遂 (fl. 3rd century BC) presented himself to Lord Pingyuan by talking to the latter directly.[289] Yang conceived a counterfactual scenario in which Mao could not see Lord Pingyuan in person, and had to submit a formal letter. Thus, his circle regarded this document—"Letter that Mao Sui submits to Lord Pingyuan" 毛遂上平原君書 as a case of "hypothetical rhetoric."[290] One may recall that when supplementing Zisi's recommendation for Gou Bian, Yang's task is to turn a piece of succinct advice into a lengthy speech, yet both assume that the words are textually mediated. Here, with Mao Sui, Yang is consciously emphasizing the changing mediality of communication.

This example helps to clarify how "hypothetical rhetoric" overlaps with contemporary terms of "counterfactual history," but still differs from the latter. When conceiving counterfactual historical narratives, one starts by broaching the question of what if someone had done otherwise, and then thinks about what kind of changes would follow.[291] To engage in the exercise of *she ci*, one must have already ruminated over the "what if" question to a certain extent. For instance, what if Mao Sui could not see Lord Pingyuan in person? Nevertheless, when engaging "hypothetical rhetoric," one's focus is not on what would follow after the hypothesized event; instead, the rhetorician should immerse himself in the very hypothesized instance, recreating the speech or document of the moment.

In other cases, Yang ventured to make hypotheses that would impact the course of history in more significant ways. In his "Speech on Establishing the Capital: [A Case of] Hypothetical Rhetoric" 建都言 設辭, Yang set up the scene in 202 BC when the Han emperor Liu Bang was hosting a court debate over where to establish the capital, and "the emperor ordered Zhang Liang to make the final decision." 上決諸張良[292] In actual history, Zhang Liang convinced the emperor Liu Bang to build the capital in Chang'an, but Yang decides that his "Zhang Liang"

---

[288] See Bruce Rusk, *Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 141. From exegetical exercises to discussions of real politics, elites since early China used the word *she* 設 or *she shi* 設使 to raise questions of a counterfactual nature. To cite an example, "Had there not been me in the realm, how many would have declared themselves as emperors and kings?" 設使國家無有孤,不知當幾人稱帝,幾人稱王? Thus asked the warlord Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220). Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 1.32.

[289] Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 5.176.

[290] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:383.

[291] A fictional narrative thus composed is often termed as "alternate history."

[292] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:400.

would make a different choice.[293] Instead, his "Zhang Liang" starts the argument by acknowledging what the historical Zhang Liang had contended: Chang'an has its strategic advantages because it is well protected by mountains around it and well-supplied by the Sichuan basin to its south. Then, marked by the transition phrase of "even though this is the case," 雖然 Yang introduced the central thesis that an empire should build itself upon virtue and righteousness, instead of natural barriers. Yang ascribed the following words to "Zhang Liang":

> 惟陛下不以金城天府為可恃，而以舟中敵國為可戒，則二世而亡秦者不亡，而數百年而王周者可致也。[294]
>
> I hope that your majesty does not assume that you can rely on iron citadels [to protect your capital] and heaven's treasure house [to supply your court]; instead, you should warn yourself that [if you do not cultivate your virtue, then] even those who share a boat with you can be your enemy. Thus, what caused the destruction of the Qin in two generations will not happen [to us]. We can achieve the greatness of the Zhou, which flourished for hundreds of years.

Here, Yang was paraphrasing Wu Qi's advice to Lord Wu of Wei in 387 BC, and he weaved Wu Qi's dictum into Mengzi's (372–289 BC) philosophical framework, according to which the people's support is superior to geographical advantages.[295] One may discern an important rule for "hypothetical rhetoric:" in recreating a historical document of 206 BC, the rhetorician cannot cite later authors or use tropes developed after 206 BC—otherwise the work is called "at odds with the essence" (*shi ti* 失體).[296] In Yang's case, when re-working on well-known arguments of the pre-Han period, he deliberately implied that the historical Zhang Liang could—and should—have come to this conclusion himself.

Another interesting piece that Yang produced is "Scolding Liu Bang: Hypothetical Rhetoric from the Perspective of Taigong [Liu's father]" 罵劉邦 設太公辭.[297] In 203 BC, Liu Bang's 劉邦 (256–195 BC) father Taigong 太公 fell hostage to his main rival Xiang Yu 項羽 (232–202 BC), who threatened Liu Bang that if he did not yield, his father would be boiled to death.[298] In real history, though Liu Bang was ready to sacrifice his father for the sake of his campaign, Taigong survived and eventually re-joined Liu Bang's camp. What, we may wonder, did Taigong say to Liu Bang then? While no known historical records shed light on this, Yang Weizhen imagined a situation where Taigong would find Liu Bang's action unforgivable. His "Taigong" curses "Liu Bang," telling him that "the various lords under the heaven [Liu Bang's rivalries] will slaughter you."[299] For Yang's "Taigong," this is the *histoire juste*, a history not only proper to Liu Bang (the son that would have sacrificed his father), but also the one with the right aesthetic proportions.[300]

---

[293] Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 11.357.
[294] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:400.
[295] Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 1.28.
[296] See Wang Zhiji 王之績, *Tie li wen qi* 鐵立文起, *houbian juan* 9, JBGJ.
[297] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:398.
[298] Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 10.351.
[299] 天下諸侯之兵戮汝. Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:398.
[300] Cf. Catherine Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't: The Counterfactual Imagination in History and Fiction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018), 18.

To appreciate Yang's ventures with hypothetical rhetoric, it will be helpful to bear in mind that during his times, stories of reincarnation and retribution had long served as a powerful platform for the popular imagination of historical justice.[301] To give an example, during the fourteenth century, the popular story of *Sanguo zhi pinghua* 三國志平話 (*Plain talks of the records of the Three Kingdoms*) suggests that Liu Bang received his punishment posthumously, given all his misbehaviors.[302] In this story, he is reincarnated as the Emperor Xiandi 獻帝 (181–234), the puppet and last emperor of the dynasty Liu Bang himself founded, who cannot escape the hands of Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220). Cao, as the story goes, is none other than the reincarnation of Han Xin 韓信 (231–196 BC), a key general who helped Liu Bang to unify China, but was unjustly executed by Liu. Similar to Yang's "Scolding Liu Bang," these stories also seek justice for the wronged historical figures. However, tying together otherwise unrelated historical figures with an imagined line of reincarnation and thus inventing otherwise hidden causal chains to make sense of historical events,[303] these narratives presuppose and ultimately advocate a strong deterministic worldview. Yang Weizhen explored an alternative venue for rectifying historical injustices. He was primarily interested in the critical moments when one could and/or should have acted otherwise. Moreover, justice is done, not through the karmic reincarnation that links the wronged and the wrong-doers; instead, it realizes itself in the alternative historical possibilities where individuals, in advancing their voices, opted for a different choice.

(c) *ni ci* 擬辭: imitative rhetoric

While the boundaries between "supplemented rhetoric" and "hypothetical rhetoric" are comparatively clear, the ways in which Yang's circle used the term of *ni ci* 擬辭 or "imitative rhetoric" are more complicated. In general, *ni ci* concerns what should be and should have been voiced in history. If a protagonist in history happened to be speaking for justice, then "imitative rhetoric" and "supplemented rhetoric" overlap with each other. In contrast, if the protagonist failed to act in accordance with justice, "imitative rhetoric" and "hypothetical rhetoric" overlap, as both aim to reinvent what should have been said. Thus, it is most plausible that for this circle, "imitative rhetoric" is a more generic term of which "supplemented rhetoric" and "hypothetical rhetoric" are two sub-categories—though in particular contexts, the circle would categorize a piece as a case of "imitative rhetoric" for certain purposes, such as if the piece is a draft of a tentative nature (see Introduction for the two layers of connotation of *ni* 擬, that is, to imitate and to draft).

Thus, Yang's circle used "imitative rhetoric" to engage situations that they explicitly acknowledged as unreal. His "Imitative drafting of the declaration of war in order to execute Fu Youyi" 擬斬傅游藝檄 is one of such examples.[304] Yang set up the scenario in the ninth month of 690 CE. In real history, Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705) declared herself as the imperial sovereign

---

[301] Among others, during the early Southern Song, rumors suggested that the Emperor Taizu of the Song, murdered by his younger son Taizong, decided to revenge his death; he reincarnated himself as the leader of the Jurchens, who broke into Kaifeng in 1127 and killed or kidnapped all but one descendant of Taizong.

[302] The Yuan printed version itself is adapted from earlier versions transmitted through different forms of story-telling. See Luo Xiaoyu 羅筱玉, "Ye tan Sanfen shilue yu sanguo zhi pinghua de kanke niandai ji banshi yitong" 也談三分事略與三國志平話的刊刻年代與版事異同, *Wenxian* 3 (2016): 106–123.

[303] For further discussions, see, for instance, Karl SY Kao, "Bao and baoying: narrative causality and external motivations in Chinese fiction," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (1989): 115–138.

[304] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:419.

(*huangdi* 皇帝) in that year, and in that month, her troops marched west to confront an allied attack by the Tibetans and Turks.[305] Yang was well aware that "the barbarians" had been competing for hegemony over the Silk Road, but he imagined that the Tibetans declared war on Wu Zhao to vindicate justice on behalf of the Tang imperial clan members whom she had persecuted. Thus, *Shiyi shiyi* presents the following note:[306]

> 假託於夷狄，非真吐蕃有此舉也。[307]
> [The author] passed off as a [piece] by the barbarians; this is not what the Tibetans really did.

There is a long tradition in China of lending voice to muted groups, including objects, animals, barbarians, and the very human subjects who cannot speak or prefer not to speak. After all, Sima Qian ascribed various speeches to barbarian rulers in his historical narrative. Yang's venture deserves attention first because he explicitly emphasized the unreal nature of this event.[308] What is more, in this case, Yang was not only devising a counterfactual scenario, but also pressing the very limits of imitative writing (擬).

To be more specific, Yang charged himself with a task of creating a document in "Chinese," but for the "barbarians" who were waging a war against "China." The challenge accordingly is what—if anything—the rhetorician should imitate. To what extent should he distance himself from "China" (*zhongguo* 中國, or literarily, the Central Realm) and imagine himself speaking from the perspective of the cultural and ethnic Other, that is, the "barbarians" (*yidi* 夷狄)? To what extent should he follow the rhetorical rules defining an idealized "Chinese" language? Against this backdrop, Yang himself explored different strategies. In one manuscript, as his disciple noted, Yang featured the barbarian perspective. Thus, the Tibetan "tribal chief" 酋主 cited the letter that his Turkic allies forwarded, and this Turko-Tibetan coalition articulated a pretext for attacking "China."[309] The entire thread, however, does not appear in Yang's later versions, which pursues a different strategy. In Yang's view, it is Wu Zhao, the female monarch, that brought the extraordinary disaster to "China." Thus, Yang's "barbarians" identify themselves as "all of us who are of the loyal and righteous nature." 凡我忠義[310] In doing so, Yang idealized the "barbarians" as those who were really endowed with the "Chinese" virtues and were capable of saving "China" from the abnormality of female rule.

Yang's explorations, accordingly, highlight two different potentials of the rhetorical exercises of writing historical official documents. On the one hand, rhetoric has the potential of valorizing empathy as a virtue; in this sense, one imitates others, and in so doing, one strives to appreciate what others might be thinking, even though they are "barbarians. On the other hand, rhetoric also helps to problematize different senses of "Chinese-ness." While later chapters will trace how post-Mongol rhetoricians of East Eurasia explored these two potentials, here it suffices to conclude that with Yang Weizhen's circle, rhetoric had emerged as an autonomous discipline,

---

[305] Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 240.6577.
[306] The typesetting convention of the Ming print ascribes this note to Yang himself, though it pays to emphasize that such an act itself is embedded in a transmedia practice.
[307] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:419.
[308] One may note here that during the Yuan, as the centuries before and after, stories in multiple chapters (or *xiaoshuo* novels) are used to advertising themselves as being of "real" historicity.
[309] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:421.
[310] Yang Weizhen, *Shiyi shiyi* (printed, 1502 preface), Fu Su-nien Library; QYW 42:420.

a socially and materially mediated art, the agenda of which was well encapsulated in the terminologies that it produced.

Closing Remarks: From Rhetoric to Political Thought

As I have noted above, the province of Jiangzhe was only one of the regions where rhetorical learning rose as an important discipline. In lieu of a conclusion, I make comparative historical remarks that may provide food for thought in comparative political theory.

In order to situate Jiangzhe in the wider world of the fourteenth century, it will be helpful to delineate three broad concentric spheres. The first is the Yuan Sinitic realm, the regions under the Yuan rule that also used literary Sinitic as a language of routine administration. What the involved regions—from "China Proper" to the Korean Peninsula—shared was a similar educational curriculum culminating in the same exercises of imitative writing of official documents from the perspectives of notable figures in the "Chinese" past. Building upon the literary legacies of Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn 崔致遠 (857–ca. 908) and other prominent figures of Sinitic literature of the Peninsula, Koryŏ elites like Yi Gok soon stood out as claimed rhetoricians of Sinitic. The same rhetorical curriculum materialized different political concerns and imaginations in Jiangzhe and the Korean Peninsula (Chapter Six).

Second, the development of rhetoric—understood here as the art of writing official documents—was also a shared phenomenon of importance in the Mongol world (*ulus*), which included both Sinitic and non-Sinitic regions, and stretched from the Ilkhanate Persia all the way to continental East Asia. Over the course of the fourteenth century, specialists working for different Mongol khanates compiled manuals for writing chancellery and diplomatic documents, as Michal Biran, Miya Noriko 宮紀子, and Qiu Yihao 邱軼皓 have shown recently. In the meantime, elites of different parts of the Mongol world came to varied approaches to improve bureaucratic eloquence. Minimally, writing edicts from the perspective of historical figures is not known as a part of rhetorical training in the Ilkhanate (1256–1335) and post-Ilkhanate Persia. A comparison of the rhetorical education and political thought under the (post-)Mongol Middle East and East Asia deserves further attention in future studies.

Third, the Mongol world itself belongs to an even broader Eurasian and global order. Beyond the Mongol world, the fourteenth century also witnessed the rise of the humanistic *rhetorica* in Renaissance Italy.[311] Northern Italy of the time, one may note, was linked to the Mongol order in a variety of ways—after all, through Marco Polo, the Mongol Khan did seek European talents specializing in the "trivium" of rhetoric, logic, and grammar.[312] However, the linkage was too tenuous to result in substantial exchanges of rhetorical culture between the Italian cities and their counterparts in Jiangzhe. It is more fitting and productive to think comparatively about the parallels and differences.[313]

---

311 Véronique Montagne, "Savoir(s) et rhétorique(s) à la Renaissance," *Noesis* 15 (2010): 45–68.

312 Different manuscripts of Marco Polo's travels, it pays to note, use different terms to feature what kind of specialists the Mongol khan was looking for. Here I am citing Henry Yule ed., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo* (London: John Murray, 1903), 14 (Preface, Section 7).

313 During the twentieth century, a variety of scholars have tried to tease out moments of "Renaissance" (*wenyi fuxing* 文藝復興) in Chinese history. The danger, now well-known to researchers, is that it risks imposing a Euro-centric grand narrative and impoverishing the dynamism of local Chinese societies. A more promising approach is to clarify what is comparable and what is not. Accordingly, Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, among other Japanese scholars, proposed to see the Yangs as shimin 市民, that is, Bürger or urban bourgeois of the commercial towns of the Yuan.

In terms of intellectual practices, the contemporaneity of the flowering of rhetorical cultures in both regions is impressive at first glance. When Petrarch (1304–1374) was composing his *De studio eloquentie* in 1350-1351,[314] Yang Weizhen (who died four years before Petrarch) was developing his own study of eloquence (*yanyu zhixue* 言語之學). While Petrarch went back to Cicero (106–43 BC), Yang recreated documents of the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) though the Han, among other periods. As one cannot miss, senses of antiquity and devotion to the ancient virtues are common themes in both rhetorical cultures. Simultaneously, the phenomenal differences between rhetoricians epitomized by Petrarch and Yang deserve attention. Minimally, while the institution of the civil service examination played an important role in popularizing the art of writing official documents in Jiangzhe, it is the professionalized legal education that invited youngsters to learn the craft of composing letters and delivering orations in Northern Italy.[315]

Elsewhere I discuss how Petrarch and Yang conceptualized rhetoric differently. Here it suffices to highlight the following dimension. The humanist *rhetorica* of fourteenth-century Italy, as Quentin Skinner has well demonstrated, enabled intellectuals of the time to elaborate on the concept of "political liberty" and defend the republican form of government.[316] Such ideas would not occur at all to men like Chen Li, Yang Weizhen or their fellows. However, this does not mean that the rhetorical education developed in Jiangzhe was inferior or lacked philosophical sophistication. As I read it, the rhetoric as developed in Jiangzhe evolved into a critical platform that allowed practitioners to test and to claim different possibilities in politics and history. To be more specific, Chen was well aware that in reality, the Yuan had by and large closed the possibility for local elites of Jiangzhe to participate in imperial decision making—and as we have seen, despite Cheng Jufu's 程鉅夫 (1249–1318) success, he was not even invited to the palace conference that decided upon the form of imperial examinations (Chapter Two). Nevertheless, in the middle of his examination, Chen, a mere candidate, was acting out this possibility—making this very possibility possible, relevant, and actual. If Chen's response instantiated an alternative way of claiming rights in politics, Yang's circle broached a new horizon. They believed that in every situation—historical and present, counterfactual or imagined—there are (or there could have been) better possibilities of speaking, doing, and being. A rhetorician's mission, accordingly, was to excavate, defend, and broaden such possibilities with the creative power of imitation qua imagination. Thanks to Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381), Zheng Zhen 鄭真 (*jinshi* 1371) and other Jiangzhe literati who carried on Yang's legacies, rhetorical education would play a critical role in transforming the intellectual landscape of post-Mongol East Asia.

The insight behind is that the Italian cities and the Jiangzhe towns were not only rising centers of commerce, but also enjoyed a reasonable distance from the imperial politics—either that of the Holy Roman Empire or that of the Yuan. Of course, further research is needed to test such hypothesis.

[314] See, for instance, Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 47. See also Brian Vickers, "The Recovery of Rhetoric: Petrarch, Erasmus, Perelman," *History of the Human Sciences* 3 (1990): 415–441.

[315] For an interesting case study on legal education, see Karl Shoemaker, "The Devil at Law in the Middle Ages," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 4 (2011): 567–586.

[316] Quentin Skinner, *From Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in Rhetoric and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), esp. 101–112. Cf. James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2019).

Part Two: Transformation

4. The Diffusion of Rhetorical Learning: Examination, Environment, and Everyday Thought

Introduction

In the late fourteenth century, imitative writing of official documents had become a rising field of learning not only in the Lower Yangzi Delta but also in other regions under Mongol rule (Chapter Three). Such writing earned itself a place in the recently established civil service examination, and gave rise to a variety of reference books that re-organized historical and literary knowledge for the specific purpose of crafting edicts or memorials of particular dynasties. This practice allowed a variety of individuals to articulate their political claims and conceptualize alternative possibilities in history. It attracted individuals "who exclusively devoted themselves to eloquence studies" 專為言語之學.[317] "The ethos was such" 一時習尚如斯 that authors of this period were particularly fond of the imitative writing of official documents, as noted by the eighteenth-century court academicians in charge of reviewing all books submitted to the imperial library in the four branches (*siku* 四庫).[318]

While the previous chapters have traced how such an "ethos" arose under Mongol rule, Chapters Four, Five, and Six will examine its transformation from the late fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries—that is, from the fall of the Mongols to the rise of the Manchus. During these centuries, as we shall see, imitative writing of official documents remained a compulsory part of civil service examinations in multiple regimes in East Eurasia. The very activity found new lives, however, following the transformations of the broader world: rapid population growth, continuous commercialization of the economy, large-scale dissemination of literary education, massive expansion of commercial printing, and increasing interactions between China, Korea, and Vietnam, all of which shared a similar curriculum.[319]

In China alone, the number of "licentiates" (*shengyuan* 生員), those who enjoyed the status to compete for the opportunity to participate in the provincial examinations, exceeded half a million, as William Atwell and Chen Baoliang 陳寶良 have both estimated.[320] All of these candidates had to prepare themselves for the imitative drafting of official documents, which was a compulsory part of the provincial examination prior to 1757; many more individuals, notably those who aspired to take the provincial examination and/or those who were receiving the education modeled upon the examination curriculum, engaged in imitative exercises. Importantly, over the course of the seventeenth century, thousands of individuals were exposed

---

[317] Wang Wei 王禕, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* 王忠文公集 (printed, 1522), Shanghai Library, *juan* 13. See also QYW 55:731.

[318] Wei Xiaohu 魏小虎 ed., *Siku tiyao quanshu zongmu huiding* 四庫提要全書總目彙訂 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 46.1510.

[319] See Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian Series, 1959); William Guanglin Liu, *The Chinese Market Economy, 1000–1500* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015).

[320] William S. Atwell, "From Education to Politics: The Fu she," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 333–358; Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, *Mingdai xiucai de shenghuo shijie* 明代秀才的生活世界 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2020), 193.

to similar trainings of official document writings in Chosŏn Korea—and probably no fewer in Đại Việt Vietnam (see Chapter Six).[321]

This chapter traces how this rhetorical training transformed the everyday learning and thinking in post-Mongol China—or more specifically, from the late fourteenth to the late sixteenth century. In doing so, I elaborate a method that I call "everyday thought." My use of this term, while ultimately inspired by post-Mongol intellectual culture (see below and Chapter Five), is also built upon recent studies on "everyday politics." In Ben Kerkvliet's terms, "everyday politics" denotes the processes through which ordinary individuals comply with established norms while pursuing their own goals "in quiet, mundane, and subtle expressions and acts."[322] As Michael Szonyi has shown, the commitment to everyday *politics* has the particular advantage of "crediting ordinary people with the capacity to perceive their relationship with the state and to respond to it."[323] However, given the model's emphasis on political acts, actions, and activities, it is not always sufficient to do justice to the thickness and richness of the intellectual world of ordinary individuals. Under certain circumstance, it even risks reducing ordinary individuals to mere rational agents, whose decision making is confined to maximizing benefits and minimizing costs.[324] By underscoring everyday *thought*, I draw further attention to the phenomenon that individuals may well have come upon compelling ideas as a consequence of their mundane pursuits of a pragmatic nature and their writings in formulaic genres consisting of seemingly repetitive patterns.

Put differently, previous scholars have established that when elites "inside and outside the government … evaded such control" of the imperial state, in Benjamin Elman's terms, they were able to turn "the table against the state" and revive their values.[325] Accordingly, the assumption is that intellectual innovations happened when and only when individuals broke away from the state.[326] Everyday thought as a method, in contrast, takes a different approach. It invites us to explore how ordinary individuals were able to come up with remarkable ideas—including creative forms of resistance—despite the fact that they were living under and working within an oppressive state.

---

[321] Ch'oe Yong-ho, *The Civil Examinations and the Social Structure in the Early Yi Dynasty Korea: 1392–1600* (Seoul: The Korean Research Center, 1987), esp. 1–7; Sin Ch'ŏn-sik 申千湜, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi kyoyuk kaehyŏk kwa kwagŏ unyŏng* 朝鮮前期教育改革과科擧運營 (Sŏul : Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 1999), esp. 1–36; Trần Trọng Kim, *Việt Nam Sử Lược* (Hồ Chí Minh: Nhà xuất bản văn hoá thông tin, 1999), 109; Chen Wen 陳文, *Yuenan keju zhidu yanjiu* 越南科舉制度研究 (Beijing : Shang wu yin shu guan, 2015), 45; Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels volume 1, Integration on the Mainland: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c.800-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. 372–378; Alexander Woodsite, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), esp. 169–233. Cf. Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1971).

[322] Ben Kerkvliet, "Everyday Politics in Peasant Societies (and Ours)," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36.1 (2009): 227–43. See also Michael Szonyi, *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 8. For another highly provocative approach to everyday politics or "governance," see Hou Xudong 侯旭東, *Shenme shi richang tongzhi shi* 什麼是日常統治史 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2020).

[323] Michael Szonyi, *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China*, 8.

[324] Michael Szonyi has well anticipated this challenge, against which he advanced the following caveat: "Taking these calibrations seriously does not mean reducing people in Ming times to automatons driven by rational choice but rather treating them as purposive, thoughtful agents who made self-conscious efforts to pursue what they saw as their best interests." Ibid.

[325] Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xxiv.

[326] See Wang Fansen 王汎森, *Quanli de maoxiguan zuoyong* 權力的毛細管作用 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2019), esp. 395–502.

In what follows, I start by introducing the remaking of the rhetorical curriculum under the Ming (1368–1644) empire, tracing how the imitative writing of official documents diffused itself into the *everyday* schedules of ordinary examination candidates. Then, I turn to the making of the examination questions in the broader context of the spatial diffusion of knowledge, information, and ideas. More specifically, I delve into a day in the life of an ordinary examiner to show how such *quotidian* work itself embodied rich educational philosophies. According to this examiner, as we shall see, certain crises faced by the state, such as environmental disasters, concerned everyone, not just those who were directly affected by them or those in power. Next, I analyze the making of a response for the examinations. I show how some of the candidates, even during their *mundane* pursuit of examination success, came up with compelling blueprints for hybrid forms of governments to address the unceasingly recurrent challenge of ecological degradation. In the end, I close this chapter by summarizing the merit of everyday thought as a concept by highlighting how Ming intellectuals themselves had already theorized this notion. Thus, this chapter is a case study that sheds light into the areas where the history of rhetorical learning met the history of the environmental politics. The next chapter will seek to go beyond case study, reassessing the everyday thought in China through lens of data visualization and global interaction.

The Re-making of the Rhetorical Curriculum

In the 1343, slightly before the Black Death was striking Europe,[327] an unexpected "famine plus pandemic" (Manchu: yuyumbime harkasi) struck Mongol-ruled China, a crisis from which the powerful empire would never recover, as clearly underscored by seventeenth-century Manchu historians.[328] In 1352, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, who "had been begging everywhere" (Manchu: jergi bade giohame yabufi), joined rebels that were "violently pillaging" (Manchu: durime cuwangname yabure jakade) neighboring villages.[329] After more than a decade of intensive fighting, cunning diplomacy, and imaginative institutional reforms, Zhu eventually founded his own empire, the Great Ming, and pushed the Mongols back to the Steppe. Traditionally stereotyped as a "Chinese" dynasty, the Ming is also one of several fourteenth-century Eurasian regimes built upon the Mongol legacies, as a number of prominent historians have recently demonstrated.[330] That the Ming by and large adopted the Yuan examination curriculum, a process that this section analyzes, offers another example of this phenomenon.[331]

---

[327] For the Black Death in the medieval globe, see Monica H. Green, "Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death," *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014): 9–26; for a recent case study on Florence, see William Caferro, *Petrarch's War: Florence and the Black Death in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1–21.

[328] *Ming gurun i suduri* (ca. 1665, manuscript), Palace Museum (Beijing), Box 1, book 1, folio 6. In contrast to the fourteenth-century Chinese sources that understood the fall of the Yuan as a result of mis-governance, this Manchu chronicle made it very explicit that the Mongol empire fell as a result of the natural disasters of pandemic and famine. Elsewhere, I argue that there are reasons to take this chronicle seriously.

[329] *Ming gurun i suduri* (ca.1665, manuscript), Box 1, book 1, folio 7.

[330] See Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010); Johannes S. Lotze, "Translation of Empire: Mongol Legacy, Language Policy, and the Early Ming World Order, 1368-1453" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2017); David Robinson, *Ming China and Its Allies: Imperial Rule in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). On how the Ming endeavored to reform the culture on its own, see Zhang Jia 張佳, *Xin tianxia zhi hua Ming chu lisu gaige yanjiu* 新天下之化 明初禮俗改革研究 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

[331] See John W. Dardess, "Did the Mongols Matter? Territory, Power, and the Intelligentsia in China from the Northern Song to the Early Ming," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and

Over the past decades, a large body of valuable research has been published on the Yuan and Ming examinations.[332] My main criticism of this literature is that it often presupposes a teleological narrative. As a result, the history of Yuan-Ming examinations has often been interpreted in terms of the persistence and resilience of the "Chinese" tradition under and after the alien rule. Accordingly, the implementation of the civil service examination, the hallmark of the "Chinese meritocracy," is presented as inevitable in both regimes. Here, following the methodological insights of John W. Dardess, Bettine Birge, and other scholars, I explore a different approach. I take the curricular continuity as an opportunity to observe how the Mongol legacies mattered in the formation of the cultural and intellectual landscape of post-Mongol China. Combing both well-known and barely cited documents, I trace the historically contingent process through which the curriculum, reestablished and standardized, redefined the everyday schedules of the educated population of the succeeding centuries.

In 1369, Zhu Yuanzhang, who had just declared himself emperor a year earlier, issued a decree to rebuild schools in every county and prefectural seat.[333] Simultaneously, he promulgated the following curriculum for these governmental schools in the provinces:

> 生員習學次第:
> 侵晨，講明經史，學律。飯後學書，學禮，學樂，學算。未時，習射弓弩，教使器棒，舉演重石。學此數件之外，果有餘暇，願學**詔、誥、表**、箋、疏、議、碑銘、傳記者，聽從其便。[334]
>
> The Order of Learning for Students:
> In the morning, [the students attend] lectures that explain Classics and history, and study the legal code. After [their] meal, [they] learn calligraphy, rites, music, and calculation. At one o'clock, [they] practice archery and the crossbow, receive instructions on using weapons and spears, and lift heavy stones. After learning all this, if they still have energy to spare and want to study the writing of **decrees, edicts, memorials**, memorandums, explanations, discussions, inscriptions, and biographies, let them do it.

At the time, Zhu Yuanzhang had no plan to re-establish the civil service examination at all. Instead, he envisioned a school system covering every county and prefecture, which would educate the worthy students, whose teachers would recommend the qualified ones for officialdom.[335]

Richard von Glahn (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003): 111–134; Bettine Birge, "How the Mongols Mattered: A Perspective from Law," in *How Mongolia Matters: War, Law, and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 87–104.

[332] See especially Wu Yuhuan 武玉環 et al., *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Liao Jin Yuan juan* 中國科舉制度通史 遼金元卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017); Guo Peigui 郭培貴, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 明代卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017).

[333] Sarah Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State in Ming China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 9.

[334] This decree has not been included into the Veridical Records finalized in 1418. A reason is probably that Zhu Yuanzhang promulgated a different curriculum in 1397 (see below). The curriculum of 1369, however, has survived through multiple local gazetteers. See for instance *Jiajing Shenqiu xianzhih* 嘉靖沈丘縣志 (1530), in *Tianyige cang Mingdai fangzhi xuankan xubian*, volume 78 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 1990), 2.1020; *Jiajing Weishi xianzhi* 嘉靖尉氏縣志 (1548), in *Tianyige cang Mingdai fangzhi xuankan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji shudian, 1982), 2.32b.

[335] For Zhu's vision of prefectural and county schools, see Sarah Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State in Ming China*, esp. 9-34.

Despite the pronounced emphasis of restoring the ancient way, the curriculum embodied characteristic features of Zhu's own educational philosophy, placing particular emphasis upon legal studies, physical exercises, and other practical skills, such as rites, music, and calculation.[336] The entire passage is itself modeled upon Confucius' famous teaching that one should cultivate his conduct first: "if one [still] has energy to spare, then let him use it for literary studies" 行有餘力則以學文.[337] Thus, literary training was placed after more important subjects [i.e., legal studies, rites, etc.], and took the form of a list of specified key genres that the school students could practice. The first three genres on the list are precisely decrees, edicts, and memorials. In other words, the genres featured in the Yuan examination remained important even though Zhu Yuanzhang decided not to re-establish the examination.

In the following year of 1370, however, Zhu Yuanzhang suddenly changed his mind under the rising influence of court scholars mostly from eastern Zhejiang—notably, the Jinhua masters Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381) and Wang Wei 王禕 (1321–ca.1372), who had recently been appointed as Chief Editors (總裁) in charge of the compilation of the dynastic *Yuan shi* 元史 (History of the Yuan).[338] Wang Wei drafted the very decree that reestablished the civil service examination, which was promulgated in the fifth month of 1370.[339] Overall, the decree advanced three statements, which embodied the message that Wang and Song were advancing in *Yuan shi* (see Chapter Two). First, although the examination system had been important in Tang and Song China, it was the Yuan curriculum that truly "followed the ancient [way]" (依古).[340] Second, Mongol rule fell not because the curriculum was defective, but rather because the Mongols did not employ examination graduates at all. Thus, in conclusion, the decree declared that the Ming, "having unified China and the barbarians" (統一華夷), would fully follow the Yuan design of the civil service examination, and additionally would only employ as officials those who had passed the examinations. Clearly, Wang Wei had convinced the emperor that the reestablishment of the examination was an important part of the regime's claim that it had succeeded the Mongol empire as the ruler of China, and leader of the world. Promulgating this decree in China, Zhu Yuanzhang immediately "sent envoys to bestow the decree [of establishing the civil service examination] to Koryŏ, Annam, and Champa" 遣使頒科舉詔於高麗安南占城.[341]

Read in hindsight, 1370 marked the beginning of the Ming examination, but in the context of the 1370s, it was a short-lived decision. On the second month of 1373, the year when the triannual examination was supposed to happen, Zhu decreed the abolition of the examination. The stated reason is that the graduates from the examination were merely men of "empty words" 虛文 and thus failed the emperor's expectation of "recruiting worthies" 求賢.[342]

---

[336] For Zhu Yuanzhang and his vision of legal education, see Wada Masahiro 和田正広, *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū* 明清官僚制の研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2002), 52-79.
[337] Michael Nylan, ed. *The Analects of Confucius: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), 3.
[338] MSL 1370/2/1, p.783.
[339] Lu Chongzhi 陸翀之 and Wang Xijue 王錫爵 eds., *Huang Ming guanke jingshi hongci xuji* 皇明館課經世宏辭續集 (printed, 1593), Harvard University Library, *juan* 1.
[340] MSL 1370/5/11, p.1021. Though the decree emphasized the Ming's commitment to follow the curriculum that the Mongol court formalized, the new regime made a small change. Writing rhapsody was a compulsory part of the Yuan examination since 1341; however, in 1370, it was replaced by the composition of a treatise.
[341] Ibid.
[342] MSL 1373/2/23, p. 1443.

While there is some truth behind this rhetoric, as recent studies show,[343] the changing power relationship in Nanjing deserves much closer attention. In 1370, only two months after promulgation of the decree to reestablish the examinations, Hu Weiyong 胡惟庸, who had been following Zhu ever since 1355, made a case against Yang Xian 楊憲, a key supporter of the Zhejiangese scholars at court. Having convinced the emperor to execute Yang, Hu soon gained influence as the sole chancellor. In this context, Liu Ji 劉基 (1311–1375), the Jinhua native who enjoyed the emperor's trust on civil and military policies, retired from politics because of his sickness and the emerging political atmosphere.[344] In 1371, Song Lian was demoted to Anyuan County Magistrate in Jiangxi. Even though he was soon summoned back,[345] a series of other events cost the life of his colleagues. In 1372, Wang Wei headed for Tibet as the emperor's envoy. While on route, he was redirected to Yunnan to negotiate with the Mongol Prince Basalawarmi and was unfortunately executed by the latter.[346] Subsequently, Tao Kai, the chief examiner in 1371, was demoted in 1373 and executed by Zhu in 1376.

All in all, the years between 1371 and 1373 marked an episode of estrangement between the emperor and his key scholars from east Zhejiang. The estrangement was rooted in factional politics at court but was exacerbated by some further incidents of a contingent nature (such as Wang Wei's death in Yunnan). In this context, the emperor decided to press his own educational agenda. In 1373, the court re-promulgated the 1369 curriculum as discussed above, and for almost a decade, a generation of individuals rose up within this system, enrolled in the governmental schools, and waited to be recommended to officialdom.[347] It was in 1382 that Zhu Yuanzhang changed his mind again. He decreed that the Ministry of Rites design the examination to select officials, [and] ordered that schools across the realm should expect the test in three years" 詔禮部設科舉取士令天下學校期三年試之.[348] In 1384, the court promulgated the examination curriculum, which would remain stable throughout the rest of the Ming. In fact, it would even outlive the dynasty, and it was only after the 1660s that the Manchu rulers started to explore potential modifications.[349]

Table 3 details the format of the provincial and metropolitan examinations that the Ming formalized in 1384—in comparison with its counterpart in Chosŏn Korea. It is clear that both the Ming and the Chosŏn followed the general structure of the Mongol Yuan curriculum (see Chapter Three), while each made its own modifications.[350] In the Ming, rhapsodies, which

---

[343] Hu Jixun 胡吉勛, "Hongwu shouke jinshi yanjiu," 洪武首科進士研究 *Gudai wenming* 2 (2013): 78-88.
[344] MSL 1371/11/30, p. 1144.
[345] MSL 1371/8/19, p. 1265. Though he was soon summoned back to instruct the sixteen-year-old crown prince, Zhu would not reappoint Song as his Academician until the seventh month of 1373. See MSL 1373/7/30, p. 1492.
[346] MSL 1372/1/5, p. 1314.
[347] MSL 1383/2/22, p. 2388.
[348] MSL 1382/8/1, p. 2299. The reason why Zhu changed his mind in 1382 deserves a separate study on its own. It is not an entire coincidence that this period was marked by Hu Weiyong's dominance over the bureaucracy, a power he maintained until he, himself, was executed in 1380. If Hu managed to distance the Zhejiang scholars from the emperor, he was able to perpetuate his power via the imperial personnel and school systems, which were premised upon recommendation and patronage.
[349] Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*; Wada Masahiro 和田正広, *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū*, 37-48.
[350] Overall, a candidate started with the triannual provincial examination (called the preliminary examination in Korea) and, if successful, he would earn a *juren* degree. Then, he would take the metropolitan examination in the following year (called the second examination in Korea), the contents of which were the same as the provincial one. Those who passed the metropolitan examination would then take the palace examination, which ranked all who had reached this stage and awarded them the final degree—*jinshi* in China.

represented the fallacious practice of belletrism from Zhu's perspective, disappeared, and in their place treatises were added, a modification that had already been explored in 1371. Most importantly, candidates were required to write five legal judgements, a consequence of the significance Zhu placed on legal training. The Chosŏn kingdom, the Ming's vassal state, did not follow these Ming innovations, but instead further strengthened the sections on official document writing in its own way. As we shall see in Chapter Six, these minor divergences would facilitate the development of rather different rhetorical cultures in the Yangzi Delta and on the Korean Peninsula.

Table 3 Civil Service Examinations in Ming China and Chosŏn Korea: A Simplified Comparison

Ming and early Qing (i.e., from 1382 to 1689 [with the exception of 1663 – 1668])		**Chosŏn Dynasty (*munkwa*)**	
鄉試 Provincial examination: Passes a total of 1,200 to 1,500 individuals	Part One: Three essays on the Four Books, and four essays on one of the Classics	初試 Preliminary examination: Passes a total of 240 individuals	Part One: Two essays on the Four Books and Five Classics
	Part Two: (1) One treatise 論; (2) Five legal judgments 判; (3) **One from the following: decree, edict, or memorial** 詔誥表		Part Two: (1) One from the following: rhapsody, eulogy, inscription, admonition, or record 賦頌銘箴記; (2) **One from the following: memorial or memorandum** 表箋;
	Part Three: five policy essays 策		Part Three: one policy essay 策
會試 Metropolitan examination: Passes about 300 individuals	Same as the provincial examination	覆試 Second examination: Passes 33 individuals	Same as the preliminary examination
殿試 Palace examination: Ranks the 300 individuals	One policy essay 策	殿試 Palace examination: Ranks the 33 individuals	(1) One policy essay 策; (2) **One from the following: memorial, memorandum, admonition, eulogy, edict, or decree** 表箋箴頌制詔

As far as the Ming was concerned, soon after reestablishing the civil service examination, the court under Zhu Yuanzhang also redesigned the curriculum for each level of governmental schools at different levels. In contrast to the Mongol rulers, who entrusted curriculum design to the scholars, Zhu was particularly eager to exert control over how students spent their time. In 1382, immediately after the Ming reestablished the civil service examination, the court promulgated a decree stipulating the monthly schedule for students enrolled at the Imperial University:

> 初一日假；初二日初三日會講；初四日背書；初五日初六日復講……[351]
>
> The first day [of the month], break; the second and third days, lectures; the fourth and fifth days, memorization; the sixth day, lectures again …

In 1387, the court further specified how the students of the government schools should study for the provincial examinations:

> 一、三日一次背書。每次須讀大誥一百字、本經一百字、四書一百字、不但熟記文詞、務要通曉義理。若背誦講解全不通者、痛決十下。
> 一、每月務要作課六道。本經義二道、四書義二道、**詔誥表章**·策·論·判語內科二道，不許不及道數。……違者痛決。[352]

- Every three days, students are checked for their memorization. Every time, they read one hundred characters from each of the following: The Grand Pronouncement of the Emperor, the Classic in which they specialize, and the Four Books. They should not only completely memorize the phrases and but also thoroughly understand the meaning. If one fails in both memorization and explanation of the meaning, one will be harshly beaten with ten strokes.
- Every month, students must write six pieces [to be graded by their teacher]: two exegesis essays on the Classic in which they specialize, two exegesis essays on the Four Books, and two pieces from the following [genres]: **decree, edict, memorial**, policy essay, treatise, or legal judgement. It is not permissible if one writes less than [six]. … Whoever violates this rule will be harshly beaten.

According to these rules, a student each day would read and memorize one hundred characters from certain key texts, while every three days there were quizzes that tested their memorization. Every month, there were six writing sessions, during which students wrote responses in settings modeled upon the real provincial examination. Teachers were supposed to grade, rank, and comment on these responses—out of the six pieces that a student wrote each month, one had to be a decree, an edict, or a memorial. In other words, while these students were expected to devote substantial energy to the Four Books and the Classic of their choice, they were also expected to set aside time to prepare themselves for other genres required in the examination.

Though it is unclear how the imperial university actually put into practice this schedule

---

[351] *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (Wanli edition, printed, 1587 preface) (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2000), *juan* 220.
[352] *Da Ming huidian* (Wanli edition), *juan* 220.

during this period of time, the court repeatedly emphasized these rules in the following decade.[353] The essence of the rules in turn shaped how officials perceived the education of the imperial princes. In 1408, having noticed that Zhu Gaochi 朱高熾 (1378–1425), Zhu Yuanzhang's grandson and the future Hongxi emperor, was "interested in literature and eloquence" 好文辭, his teacher Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 (1365–1444) advised:

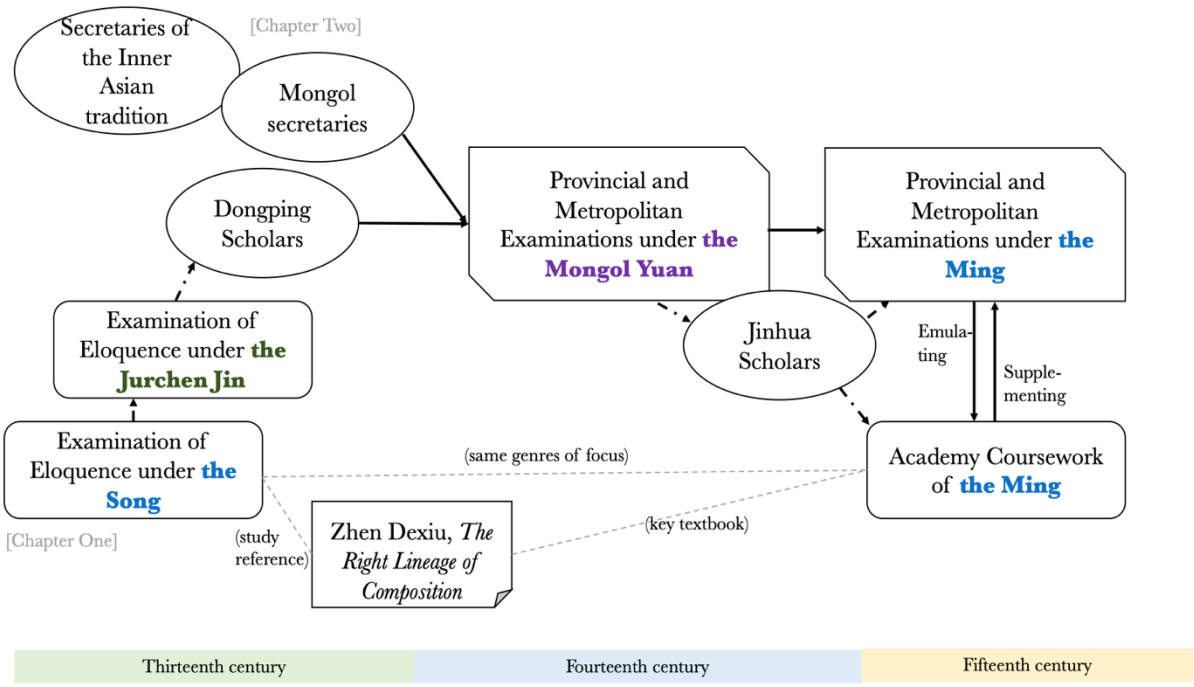
> 殿下當留意六經，暇則觀兩漢詔令。[354]
>
> Your highness should pay attention to the Six Classics; in times of leisure, then read the decrees and orders of the two Han dynasties.

This curriculum mirrored the school schedules of 1369 and 1382/1387. On top of knowledge of the classics, the prince was advised to consult the decrees and orders of the two Han dynasties. Of course, the prince was by no means expected to take the examinations. Nevertheless, Yang's advice vividly illustrates that the post-Mongol examination curriculum, which required candidates to craft official documents, also informed the pedagogical practices for princes.

The early fifteenth century witnessed a steady growth in number of licentiates and students at schools, and a key transformation that would have far reaching impact on Ming rhetorical education. In real examinations (Table 3), a candidate chose one assignment from the questions, selecting a decree, an edict, or a memorial. Recently, Hou Meizhen 侯美珍 has convincingly shown that in contrast to the Yuan period when the three genres received equal attention, Ming educators and candidates placed increasing—and eventually, exclusive—emphasis upon memorial writing.[355] An important reason behind this, as Hou has rightly pointed out, is that a memorial is by nature longer than a decree or edict, and allowed a candidate to show his rhetorical prowess in the ever more competitive examinations. While there is much truth and insight to this explanation, the demographic and institutional background behind it deserves even more attention.

[353] MSL 1397/7/20, p. 3664. Cf. MSL 1397/5/11, p. 2274.
[354] Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., *Ming shi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 148.4132.
[355] Hou Meizhen, "Mingdai xianghuishi zhao gao biao gongwen kaoshi xilun."

Figure 7 Ming "Academy Coursework" in Relation to Different Examinations



As shown in Chapter Two, the Mongol Yuan examinations recruited a relatively small number of candidates, and aimed to select secretaries capable of producing key documents for the khan, which included decrees and edicts. On average, the Yuan passed only about 117 *juren* and 21 *jinshi* per annum.[356] In contrast, the Ming reestablished the examination to train and select all civil officials for the imperial government, and the total number grew from 5,400 early in the dynasty to "more than 16,000 by the Wanli era (1572–1620)."[357] On average, the examination passed about 400 *juren* and 92 *jinshi* per year, about four times the Yuan average.[358] The larger the number of degree holders, the less likely that any one of them would rise to the key positions where they drafted decrees or edicts on behalf of the throne. Thus, starting from 1404, the Ming court had already realized that not everyone who had passed the examinations possessed the same literary talent, not to mention rhetorical prowess. To select those who were capable of crafting documents for the throne, the Ming gradually institutionalized a particular coursework at the Hanlin Academy during the early fifteenth century—thus known as "Academy Coursework" (*guanke* 館課). Accordingly, those who had earned their *jinshi* degree could apply to study this specialized curriculum—a key component of the application being 15 pieces of essays to serve as writing samples. Once admitted, students would become trainees of the Hanlin Academy, known as Excellent Gentlemen (*shujishi* 庶吉士). As we shall see below, the training at

[356] See Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, 34.
[357] For this estimation, see Charles O. Hucker, "Governmental Organization of the Ming Dynasty," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 21 (1958), 12n20.
[358] Guo Peigui 郭培貴, "Mingdai juren shuliang ji jinshi pingjun zhongshi nianling kaoshu," 明代舉人數量及進士平均中式年齡考述, Paper presented at Quanqiu hua xia Mingshi yanjiu xin shiye, Taipei, 2008.

the Academy and that toward provincial examination constituted a dynamic ecology of knowledge. Here it suffices to note that, with the standardization of the rhetorical training under the Ming, political actors of different levels focused on different genres during their studies. While the prince mainly read the decrees and edicts, the Hanlin trainees sharpened their skills for all kinds of documents.[359] By contrast, the provincial and metropolitan examinations gravitated toward emphasizing memorial writing, a skill crucial to even an ordinary official.

Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, officials and educators, in preparing candidates for provincial examinations, took the schedules the court promulgated in the 1380s as a guideline to organize teaching and quizzes. In 1517, Wang Tingxiang 王廷相 (1474–1544), the Assistant Surveillance Commissioner Supervising Education 按察司提學僉事 in Sichuan, issued the following Regulation for governmental schools of the province:

> 每月以三、六、九日作課。初旬四書義三篇，中旬經義三篇，末旬論、策各一篇，**表**、判同日各一篇，**詔、誥**俟次月作表、判日期各一篇。一月共作文十篇。[360]
>
> For each month, on days three, six, and nine [in each ten-day cycle], there [should] be lectures and tests. During the first ten days [of a month], one is to write three exegesis essays on the meanings of the Four Books; in the second ten-day period, [one is to write] three exegesis essays on the meaning of the Classics; in the last ten-day [period], [one is to write] a treatise, a policy essay, plus a memorial and a legal judgment—on the same day in the next month, one composes **a decree and an edict**, instead of a memorial and legal judgment. Overall, one composes ten pieces every month.

Compared with the decree of 1387, the workload was to increase by 40%. Every month, one was to produce ten pieces of writing to be graded, instead of merely six. The change attested to the broader situation where the civil service examination was becoming increasingly competitive. Even though Wang increased the workload on students, the relative weight of each educational component remained consistent. During the early Ming period, one out of six mock writing sessions was to be devoted to official documents; given Wang's design, among the twenty pieces one composed over sixty days, there was to be one decree, one edict, and one memorial. In other words, one was expected to devote about 15% (1/6 or 3/20) of examination preparation to the imitative writing of official documents per se. A variety of elite individuals actually made the same suggestions when teaching their own disciples. For instance, Lin Xiyuan 林希元 (1481–1565), in his "Family Instruction," proposed the following strategy for studying for the provincial examination: "if one divides [his time] into three portions, two should be devoted to the first part of the examination, while the [remaining] one [should be devoted to] the second and third part"

---

[359] Its trainings not only covered the imperial documents of "decrees, edicts, and letters of imperial seals," 詔誥璽書 and various memorials such as those of "proposal, explanation, expression and memorandum" 奏疏表箋; it also included war proclamations and announcement of victories 檄露布, as well as "prefaces, records, inscriptions, policy essays," 序記碑策 "rhapsodies, eulogies, admonitions, and commemorations" 賦頌箴銘.

[360] Wang Tingxiang 王廷相, *Wang Tingxiang ji* 王廷相集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), *juan* 3, 1167-1174. With regard to the term *zuoke* 作課, see Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, *Mingdai xiucai de shenghuo shijie* 明代秀才的生活世界 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2020), 218.

大要以三分為率二分頭場一分二場三場.[361] Presumably, Lin was instructing his sons to spend about 15% (half of 1/3) of their energy on official document writing during their examination preparation.

According to Wang Tingxiang's regulations, every year a student of the governmental school was write 12 to 18 mock official documents, on which his teacher was supposed to offer comments. Given that average candidates would choose to specialize in memorial writing, they would produce at least 12 memorials. The average length of an exemplary memorial in the examinations was about 200 to 400 characters prior to the fifteenth century, but would rocket to over 800 by the end of the sixteenth century. In other words, an average examination candidate of the sixteenth century would produce about 10,000 characters of memorials per year in their monthly drills alone, even though the predominant majority of them would never have the chance to pass the examination, let alone craft and send an actual memorial within the government. The impact of this particular training on individuals was surely tremendous, as we shall see in the following sections and chapters.

In sum, this section has analyzed some key episodes through which examination and school curricula took shape in post-Mongol China.[362] Reviewing the policies of 1369, 1370, 1373, 1382, 1384, 1404, and 1517, I argue that the Mongol emphases upon document writing had substantially shaped default assumptions about education in China. During the thirteenth century, no "Chinese" scholars had ever proposed to include the writing of official documents into the general curricula in which all aspiring officials would enroll (Chapter Two). During the late fourteenth century, in contrast, even Zhu Yuanzhang would agree that those with proper preparations should proceed to practice imitative writings of decrees, edicts, and memorials. This is not to deny that the rhetorical curriculum was also undergoing substantial changes under the Ming—a transformation to which I shall return in Chapter Five. Minimally, as a result of institutional reorganization and demographic changes, an exclusive emphasis on "memorial learning" (*biaoxue* 表學) took its shape on the daily and monthly schedules of the half million licentiates. Before appreciating its tectonic impact (Chapters Five and Six), I shall turn to analyze the routine maintenance of the examination systems.

The Making of an Examination Question

It was the twelfth day, eighth month of the year 1579. The 1,900 examinees of Shaanxi had already finished the first part of their triannual provincial examination, for which they wrote exegesis essays on the Four Books and one on the classics of their choice. On the following day, the second part of the examination would start, testing their skills of writing official documents and other genres. Before the next day began, the examiners, who were also locked in the

[361] Lin Xiyuan 林希元, *Lin Ciya wenji* 林次崖文集, SKCM:75, 12.17. Hou Meizhen identified this very informative source. See her, "Mingdai xianghuishi zhao gao biao gongwen kaoshi xilun," 明代鄉會試詔誥表公文考試析論 *Guowen xuebao* 62 (2017), 134.

[362] See John Dardess, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), esp. 183–254; Chan Hok-lam 陳學霖, *Mingdai renwu yu chuanshuo* 明代人物與傳說 (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue chu banshe, 1997), esp. 1–33; Guo Peigui, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan*, 8-9; Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi 崔承熙, *Chosŏn ch'ogi chŏngch'isa yŏn'gu* 朝鮮初期政治史研究 (Sŏul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 2002).

examination compound with the candidates, had to finalize the assignments.[363] The task fell upon Ren Zongtang 任宗湯 (16th century), the Chief Examiner 考試官 of the year in question.[364]

In this section, I use Ren Zongtang's experience on that very day—the second day of the examination—as an entry point to examine the maintenance of the imperial examinations as an institution. Already, historians of late imperial China have shown that ordinary officials, and especially their daily-life routines and mundane tasks, were critical to the functioning of the state.[365] As they "colonized government institutions and documents for their own aims," as Sarah Schneewind's phrases it, "they lengthened the reach of the state."[366] What remains particularly understudied, in my view, is the fact that many ordinary officials, while working with and making use of the imperial infrastructure, were making genuine intellectual contributions in their own ways. As a first approximation, I single out Ren with deliberation. While the significance of 1579 will be clear in the next chapter, Ren's experience was embedded in a variety of deep contexts of his time, from the career ladders of the empire to the silent transformations of the natural environment.

A native of Xiaoshan 蕭山, Zhejiang Province, Ren passed his provincial examination in 1573, but was not able to triumph in the metropolitan examination the following year. He decided to take an official appointment and was soon employed as the Instructor of the Prefectural School of Chuzhou 滁州儒學學正, a bottom-tier position under the province of the South Capital Area 南直隸.[367] As a teacher, Ren was "ordinary" 平常 and "qualified" 稱職—as the triannual personnel evaluations would describe him. The Ming state evaluated the merits of the teaching officials mainly based on how many individuals natives to the area were able to pass the provincial examination.[368] If two or more did, the Instructor of a prefectural school would earn himself the grade of "qualified," and could expect promotion afterward; if only one, then "ordinary," if zero, then he was deemed to be "unqualified." No licentiates from the Prefecture of Chuzhou were able to pass the provincial examination in 1567, 1570 or 1573, right on the eve of Ren's tenure. However, one did manage to pass the examination in 1576, and no less than two earned their degree in 1579.[369] With such a favorable record, Ren Zongtang would ordinarily have had to stay at this post until 1583, to complete the nine-year tenure, after which he would see what kind of promotion he could receive. However, the gradual degradation of the ecological system of the Yellow River, together with the sudden breakdown of the dike system around Chuzhou, dramatically changed his career trajectory.

---

[363] As the court repeatedly emphasized, "examiners in charge were not allowed to have decided upon the questions in advance, so as to prevent cheating." 不許主考官預搆以防奸弊. MSL 1515/4/14, p. 2980. See also Guo Peigui, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan*, 169.

[364] TYG XS 5:4377.

[365] See Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London: Routledge, 2005), 9.

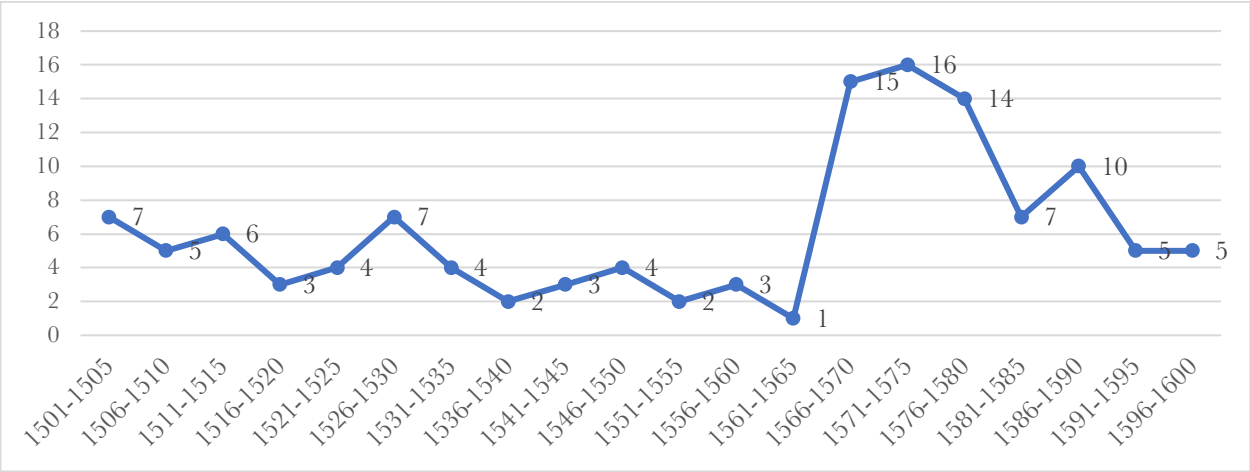
[366] Sarah Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State in Ming China*, 5.

[367] The Record of Examination (*keju lu*) of Shaanxi 1579 records Ren Zongtang as a *jinshi* of 1573 (TYG XS 5:4373). Ren, however, was not among the *jinshi* who would receive their degree in 1574. Local gazetteers confirmed that Ren was able to participate in the examination and compete for a *jinshi* degree (*Kangxi Xiaoshan xianzhi* 康熙蕭山縣志 ((1678), JBGJ, *juan* 17), but his highest degree remained *juren* during the Wanli reign and throughout his career *Wanli Shaoxing fu zhi* 萬曆紹興府志, JBGJ, *juan* 32.

[368] *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (printed, 1509 preface) (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1989), *juan* 12.

[369] See TYG XS 2:1601–1756.

Figure 8 Frequency of Reported Yellow River Floods over the Course of the Sixteenth Century



Source: Shen Yi 沈怡 et al., *Huanghe nianbiao* 黃河年表 (Nanjing: Junshi weiyuanhui, 1935), 98–122.

Starting from 1565, the frequency of floods in the lower reaches of the Yellow River escalated.[370] Despite these disasters, the decision-makers of the empire were not able to agree upon how to rebuild the dikes and redirect the Yellow River's flow (see discussions below). In 1575, the Yellow River breached the banks again in Dangshan 碭山 and Gaoyou 高郵.[371] In 1576 and 1577, flooding occurred repeatedly, bringing tremendous losses to the critical areas where the Yellow River met the Huai River, and the Grand Canal. As such, the floods not only destroyed the cultivated fields and the lives of peasants, but also jeopardized the Canal transportation, which brought supplies from the Lower Yangzi Delta to the capital at Beijing.[372] Against this backdrop, in 1577, the court dispatched the Censor of the Capital Area 直隸御史, Cui Tingshi 崔廷試 (*jinshi* 1565), to investigate the damages in the region.[373]

During this visit to Chuzhou, which lies no more than 180 kilometers away from the flooding areas, Cui met Ren Zongtang and came to admire his scholarship. Thanks to Cui's encouragement and sponsorship, Ren published his own lectures on the *Classic of Documents* (*Shangshu jiangyi* 尚書講意), an achievement that brought Ren fame "within the ocean [i.e. the known world]" 海內.[374] The connection with Cui Tingshi meant even more opportunities for Ren. During this time, censors of each province were responsible for employing examiners and co-examiners from the pool of officials who satisfied the following criteria: "is currently a

[370] See also Cen Zhongmian 岑仲勉, *Huanghe bianqian shi* 黃河變遷史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), 478-486; Ruth Mostern, "Sediment and State in Imperial China: The Yellow River Watershed as an Earth System and a World System," *Nature and Culture* 11:2 (2016): 121-147.
[371] MSL 1575/8/12, p. 934.
[372] For an overall exposition of the Ming Grand Canal, see Ray Huang, "The Grand Canal during the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1978); Peng Yunhe 彭雲鶴, *Ming Qing caoyun shi* 明清漕運史 (Beijing: Shoudu shifan chubanshe, 1995).
[373] MSL 1577/r8/14, p. 1449.
[374] *Kangxi Xiaoshan xian zhi* (1678), JBGJ, *juan* 17.

teaching official [of a different province]; is under fifty and over thirty years of age; is well-versed in literary studies and prudent in disposing himself throughout his everyday activities."[375] Thanks to his connection with Cui Tingshi, Ren Zongtang soon secured the support of Shen Han 沈涵 (*jinshi* 1571)—Cui's predecessor as the Censor of the Capital Area, but the Censor of the Shaanxi Province through 1579.[376] Shen invited Ren and seven other teaching officials to run the provincial examination of that year.

Thus, by the autumn of 1579, eight future (co-)examiners arrived at Xi'an, the provincial capital of Shaanxi. All together, they had passed their provincial examinations in six different provinces—Zhejiang, Henan, Jiangxi, Guangdong, Huguang, and Shandong—although none of them was able to earn a *jinshi* degree. In recent years, they had been teaching in different parts of the empire and their teaching experience, put together, covered all the imperial provinces with the exception of Fujian and the southwest peripheries (Guangxi, Yunnan, and Guizhou).[377] The circulation of these teaching officials and examiners, as we shall see, would in turn facilitate the circulation of specific approaches of rhetorical knowledge and training, bringing them to remote and even backward prefectures and counties of the empire.

On the surface, setting questions for provincial examinations does not appear to have been an opportunity where Ren or any of his colleagues was able to articulate their original ideas. Above all else, it was team work. The chief examiner, though responsible for finalizing the questions, was required to work with other (co)-examiners. Second, the examiners were supposed to follow precedents, crafting questions based on those that had appeared in previous examinations. Notably, the previous metropolitan examinations and the previous provincial examinations of the two capital areas (Shuntian, the North Capital Area, as well as Yingtian, the South Capital Area) set the models that other provinces should follow (see Chapter Five). Last but not least, it was known that the part of the exam requiring the writing of official documents commonly featured recycled topics that had appeared in examinations of previous years and/or in other provinces. As Li Zhuying 李竺穎 has recently counted, at least 46 questions for memorial-writing section appeared more than once throughout the Ming history.[378] In other words, examiners did not have to come up with brand new prompts. In Shandong, to cite one example, the 1549 memorial-writing assignment repeated the same question from the provincial examination of 1540.[379]

Nevertheless, some examiners did invest their intellectual and political concerns in the design of new questions, as a variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century intellectuals—Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642) and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682), for instance—have already noted.[380] To give an example, in 1498, the provincial examination of Fujian included the following prompt:

---

[375] 見任教官，年五十以下三十以上；平日精通文學、持身廉謹者。*Da Ming huidian* (Zhengde edition), *juan* 77.
[376] See MSL 1576/10/24, p. 1280; MSL 1579/4/4, p. 1798.
[377] Upon their arrival, Zhang Xianxiang 張憲翔, who had succeeded Shen Han, interviewed all of them. Indeed, while the Censor of a province invited potential examiners or co-examiners based on their personnel records, he would not decide the order of this group before checking them in person. Ren Zongtang stood out during the interview, and was selected to assume the chief examiner.
[378] Li Zhuyin 李竺穎, "Mingdai xiang hui shi erchang biaowen yanjiu" 明代鄉會試二場表文研究 (MPhil diss., Guoli chenggong daxue, 2018), 33–43.
[379] TYG XS 3:2137; TYG XS 3:2170.
[380] Shen Defu 沈德符, *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), *juan* 15; Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 651.

擬敕封宋儒楊時為將樂伯從祀廟廷裔孫謝表[381]

Draft of the Memorial by which the direct Descendant of Yang Shi, Confucian Scholar of the Song, Expressed Gratitude to the Court for Bestowing Yang with the Noble Rank of Count of Jiangle and Including Him among Those receiving Sacrifices in the Confucian Temple.

The question re-broaches a recent event in 1495, when the court endowed these honors on Yang Shi 楊時 (1053–1135).[382] To be able to produce a competent response, an examination candidate needed to elaborate on the reasons why the court included Yang in the Confucian Temple, while conferring a rank of nobility on such a scholar. Thus, they needed to have concrete knowledge this person's career and intellectual contributions. There were good reasons to give this assignment to Fujian candidates. Yang was a native of Jiangle, the province of Fujian. Thus, the question was innovative in the sense that it encouraged candidates to pay even closer attention to worthy individuals within their own locale on the one hand, and cultural policies of the imperial court on the other. Building upon this experiment, the Shanxi provincial examination of 1579 featured Xue Xuan 薛瑄 (1389–1464), the renowned scholar-official who was a native of Shanxi, in the section of memorial writing:[383]

擬以禮部左侍郎兼翰林院學士薛瑄從祀孔子廟庭子孫謝表[384]

Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which the Sons and Grandsons of Xue Xuan, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Rites and Hanlin Academician, Express Gratitude for Including Xue among Those Receiving Sacrifices in the Confucian Temple.

The question was grounded in a recent event in 1571, when the emperor promulgated the decree confirming Xue's place in the sacrificial system of the Confucian Temple. As with the previously discussed prompt of Fujian, to answer this question, candidates had to have knowledge of the political career and philosophical achievements of Xue, to the extent that they were capable of illustrating why he was selected to join Confucius in receiving the court's veneration.[385] Accordingly, in crafting this assignment, examiners in Shanxi in 1579 carried on the educational philosophy of their predecessors in Fujian in 1498. As such, the rhetorical training of writing memorials offered an opportunity to explore the areas where recent imperial politics met that of local intellectual traditions.

---

[381] TYG XS 8:6676.

[382] MSL 1495/7/7, p. 1860.

[383] It pays to note that local worthies had already appeared in the provincial examination of Shanxi in 1537, in the section of decree writing. The assignment was to produce an imitative draft of the decree by which Han employed Zhou Dang of Taiyuan and Yan Guang of Kuaiji 擬漢徵處士太原周黨會稽嚴光詔. In imitating a Han-dynasty decree, the response should illustrate the reasons for which the court employed Zhou Dang, a native of Taiyuan—that is, the provincial capital of Shanxi. Thus, the question, which had never appeared in real examinations before, tested candidates' knowledge of worthies of the provincial tradition, encouraging Shanxi literati to pay even closer attention of prominent figures of their own province.

[384] TYG XS 4:3021.

[385] Khee Heong Koh, *A Northern Alternative: Xue Xuan (1389-1464) and the Hedong School* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 1.

Ren Zongtang was well aware that Shaanxi literati were proud of their region's history. It was the home of King Wen of Zhou, as well as the land from which the powerful Qin rose, as he would acknowledge when writing the summary report of the provincial examination of 1579.[386] However, when he was reviewing tentative assignments that the group of (co-)examiners had put on the table, it was another topic that caught his attention:

> 擬河工告成廷臣賀表[387]
>
> Imitative Draft of the Court Ministers' Congratulatory Memorial on the Completion of the [Yellow] River Dikes

The question, just like its counterpart in Shanxi, was embedded in recent state affairs, notably the serious flooding described above. After the censor Cui Tingshi investigated the situation (as a direct result of which Ren Zongtang came to administer the examination in Shaanxi), in 1578, the court eventually initiated a systematic project to fix the dike system.[388] The proposed examination prompt, accordingly, would require candidates to imagine themselves as court ministers, on the one hand, and decide how the project had been completed on the other.

Should this be the assignment for memorial writing the following day? Ren had to discuss this with other (co)-examiners, during the process of which some reservations might have been expressed. Despite the importance of rivers in the empire, prior to 1579, Yingtian (the South Capital Area) was the only province that consistently tested candidates on questions related to hydraulic management—as was the case in 1492, 1501, 1540, and 1549.[389] This is mainly because this province, where Ren had been teaching, covered the areas directly exposed to the Yellow River floods and the concomitant ecological disasters. In other words, prior to 1579, a candidate taking examinations in provinces other than Yingtian, even if he had strategized carefully on what possible prompts to prepare, would have found this question to be a huge surprise.

More importantly, this memorial-writing assignment was originally designed by Hanlin Academicians for their coursework. As introduced above, the imperial Hanlin Academy offered a special curriculum of "Academy Coursework" to train the Excellent Gentlemen. At least in 1571, the Hanlin trainees were charged with drafting this congratulatory memorial for the completion of the Yellow-River dikes.[390] Given that these Excellent Gentlemen constituted a repository of the empire's future ministers, they practiced writing this Congratulatory Memorial for a concrete purpose. Sooner or later, the court would declare that it had fixed the broken dikes, and by then,

---

386 TYG XS 5:4377.

387 TYG XS 5:4377.

388 For later historians who have the advantage of hindsight, we know that the 1578 dike reconstruction project would be finalized in 1580, thanks to which there were no major floods until 1589. In 1579, however, the examiners required the candidates to imagine the future scenario when the reconstruction of the hydraulic system turned out to be successful.

389 Other than Shandong (which borders the lower reach of the Yellow River) in 1519, no other provinces tested candidates on how to manage the river in the part of policy essay. See Chen Changwen 陳長文, "Mingdai keju qushi zhong de shiwu ce yanjiu" 明代科舉取士中的時務策研究 (MPhil diss., Henan daxue, 2001), 23–38.

390 *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* 增定國朝館課經世宏辭 (printed, 1591), Shanghai Library, *juan* 3.

some of the trainees would be directly responsible for drafting the actual congratulations on behalf of the court ministers.[391]

The Ming court did not consider the contents of the Academy Coursework to be a confidential matter, nor did it forbid related information from being circulated. Academicians who taught the Excellent Gentlemen often invited their guests, visitors, and disciples to write responses for the assignments that they had recent conceived, as a result of which the Academy curriculum played an important role in shaping the literary and intellectual tastes throughout the dynasty.[392] In other words, soon after 1571, model responses circulated through informal channels centered on key governmental institutions such as the imperial universities in both Beijing and Nanjing. Some of these responses would be published in Nanjing in 1590. We do not know how Ren Zongtang—or any of his colleagues—accessed related materials as early as 1579. What can be ascertained, however, is that this team was well aware that the assignment under discussion was from the curriculum used to train future ministers.

The examinees in Shaanxi were mere licentiates, most of whom would never have the opportunity to enter the officialdom, nor the chance to craft an actual congratulatory memorial. The province of Shaanxi is about 1,200 to 1,800 kilometers away from the flooding areas. Thus, examinations within this province—just like most other provinces with the exception of the South Capital Area—had never asked candidates to write about river management. Nevertheless, Ren Zongtang decided to assign this prompt. He signed the document, passing it to copyists who would prepare for the examination on the following day.

Neither Ren nor any of his co-examiners left detailed accounts elaborating on the rationale behind this memorial writing assignment. The only place that Ren described what he did was in the preface of the *Record of Examination* of the Shaanxi provincial examination of 1579. As the Chief Examiner, he was responsible for compiling this book, which recorded the details of those who passed and the question set, and selected exemplary responses with the examiner's comments. The book was supposed to be submitted to the throne and published as a reference for future examinations.[393] In the preface, Ren explained it was the examiners' responsibility to "postulate an assortment of events to observe the talents [of the candidates]." 雜設之事以觀其才.[394] At first glance, this is the standard language by which sixteenth-century examiners and educators described the reason for testing candidates' skills in writing official documents (see Chapter Five). However, situating the memorial question of the Shaanxi examination within the broader context of writing assignments from different provinces and from the Hanlin Academy, one cannot help but realize that Ren was making a genuine point. Accordingly, the training of imitative writing of official documents would be more effective if the candidates were exposed to a wider range of "assorted" (*za* 雜) events. As such, the environmental crises were by no means a theme that only concerned those who were directly affected by them—those living in the flooded areas, or those then in power. Instead, they were events that concerned every aspiring administrator.

After the successful completion of the provincial examination, Ren was promoted to the Magistrate of Huang County 黃縣 in Shandong. In 1586, after the triennial "audience at court" at the capital and the concomitant personnel evaluation, he received sudden demotion as a result

---

[391] See Ye Ye 葉曄, *Mingdai zhongyang wenguan zhidu yu wenxue* 明代中央文官制度與文學 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2011), 201-2.
[392] Ibid.
[393] For a succinct introduction of this genre of books, see Guo Peigui, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan*, 269-283.
[394] TYG XS 5:4377.

of which he decided to leave the officialdom and retire to his native town.[395] Ren did not leave a collection of his own, nor did any of his co-examiners of 1579. In the end, all of these men sank into oblivion.

We do not know whether Ren selected the memorial-writing question out of a sense of Confucian universalism, which preaches that everyone should consider "all people are my clansman or clanswoman" 民吾同胞,[396] or whether he had in his mind a specific imagined community where citizens of the Ming should be concerned with their fellow citizens,[397] or whether there was yet another issue driving his thinking. While intellectual historians may have a gut intuition to turn away from such an episode that does not produce systematic theory, grand narrative, or deeper philosophy, everyday thought as a method invites us to concentrate on the very moments where ideas spark and take their shape through the daily activities. Such everyday intellectual input is not devoid of thickness and impact. After all, Ren and his colleagues were well aware of the gravitas of their action. Starting from 1579, the very assignment of writing memorials concerning hydraulic management would enter the repository of examination questions; thus, several tens of thousands of candidates, plus hundreds of thousands of individuals who aspired to take the provincial examinations, would need to prepare themselves for just such a possible assignment.[398]

The Making of an Exemplary Response

The previous section takes the microhistory of an examination question as an entry point to understand the maintenance of the examination system, the geographical circulation of officials qua educators, and the information order through which assignments travelled across the empire. The present section is devoted to the responses to that examination question. As a case study, this section seeks to contribute to two distinctive fields.

The first involves intellectual cultures beyond the well-studied areas in south China—such as the Lower Yangzi Delta and Jiangxi (the regions that the previous chapter examined).[399] While recent decades have witnessed growing interest in the regions that connected different regimes or cultures (be they frontiers or borderlands), what has received insufficient attention so far are the locales that do not fit into the research paradigms of frontier, transnational, or global histories.[400] Against this background, with deliberation, I have chosen a land-locked, mountainous, and backward prefecture named Jinzhou 金州 (in modern-day southern Shaanxi) as the site of focus. The second focus of this chapter section is the flourishing field of

---

395 *[Kangxi] Xiaoshan xian zhi* (1678), JBGJ, *juan* 17.

396 See Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest times to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 469.

397 As Nicolas Tackett writes, "The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) … was much more like the Song Dynasty in terms of conceptualizing itself as a Chinese nation." See his *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 283.

398 Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, xxvii.

399 For notable contributions to intellectual cultures in north China, see Iiyama Tomoyasu 飯山知保, *Kin-Gen jidai no Kahoku shakai to kakyo seido : mō hitotsu no "shijinsō"* 金元時代の華北社会と科挙制度：もう一つの「士人層」 (Tōkyō: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2011); Wang Jinping, *In the Wake of the Mongols: The Making of a New Social Order in North China, 1200-1600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018).

400 For a critical review of "periphery and locality in historical literature," see Eloise Wright, "Re-Writing Dali: the Construction of an Imperial Locality in the Borderlands, 1253-1679" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2019), 4-8.

environmental history. While many scholars have scrutinized the ways in which the imperial state—as well as the top-tier elite—reacted to natural disasters,[401] the discussion that follows directs our attention to how ordinary examinees ruminated over environmental crises affecting distant regions, and then articulated their ideas for political reform. I shall start by introducing the genre of the congratulatory memorial, and then analyze the challenge of writing such memorials for examinations. Afterward, I will zoom in on how a single candidate from Jinzhou came up with his response, and propose that it is productive to engage with the political ideas of such ordinary individuals.

Under the Ming bureaucracy, as Zi (Chelsea) Wang has shown, each prefectural and provincial office were required to send congratulatory memorials to the throne in two kinds of circumstances.[402] The first were concerned a series of festivals and days over the year, including New Year's Day (*zhengdan* 正旦), the winter solstice (*dongzhi* 冬至), and the imperial birthday (*wanshou shengjie* 萬壽聖節).[403] The second concerned special events, either when auspicious phenomena occurred or when the court announced a particular achievement (see Chapter Five).[404] Zi (Chelsea) Wang has further argued that during most of the Ming period, these memorials had no intention of conveying original ideas, because "all routine congratulatory memorials contained essentially the same text," defined by the templates that the court itself had promulgated.[405] After all, these memorials are part of the everyday practices of the bureaucracy through which the empire was "virtually," to use Wang's term, bound together. Regardless how actual congratulatory memorials functioned in the empire, examination candidates had to prepare themselves for this genre, because it was required in the provincial and metropolitan examinations. The practice of the imitative writing of congratulatory memorials is thus mundane in a doubled sense. First, even real memorials belonged to the most mundane documents within the bureaucracy. Second, the practice of learning to write imitative ones served a very pragmatic purpose: to pass the provincial examination.

The assignment of drafting a congratulatory memorial on the completion of the Yellow River dikes was challenging from at least two perspectives. First, it required some basic understanding about the geography of the Yellow River. In 1571, the Hanlin academicians expected their trainees to show in-depth knowledge of "the origin of the River" in the context of a congratulatory memorial.[406] As we shall see below, the candidates needed to equip themselves with a whole range of tropes and allusions, so that they could describe the flow of the River in parallel prose. Second, writing such a piece further required particular political acumen and savviness. Up to the early seventeenth century, published manuals for examination preparation would offer concrete advice on this regard. One of the most successful titles, *Youyi shu xu wengui* 游藝塾續文規 (Regulations for Literary Composition from the School of Wandering-through-Arts II, 1603)—hereafter *Regulations II*—explained it in the following way:

---

[401] For how local elites worked on local hydraulic projects, see, for instance, Iguro Shinobu 井黑忍, "Shanxi Yicheng Qiaozemiao Jin Yuan shuili bei kao," 山西翼城喬澤廟金元水利碑考 *Shanxi daxue xuebao* 34:2 (2011): 92–97.
[402] Zi (Chelsea) Wang, "Dilemmas of Empire: Movement, Communication, and Information Management in Ming China, 1368-1644" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017), 133.
[403] Ibid.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Ibid.
[406] *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* 增定國朝館課經世宏辭 (printed, 1591), Shanghai Library, *juan* 3.

> 合場中所用者惟進、謝、賀而已。進表則解題宜詳，如書籍則備敘其著作之由，祥瑞則遍列其生成之寔。賀表則頌聖處宜詳，解題處宜略，多有不用解題者，以不可及前朝衰颭事也。[407]
>
> Examinations only confront candidates with [three genres of memorials of expression,] those submitting [things], those expressing gratitude, and those presenting congratulations. For memorials submitting things [to the throne], it pays to unravel the topic in detail. For instance, if one submits a book, he should thoroughly explain the reason for composing this book; if [one submits something of an] auspicious [nature], he should fully illustrate the occurrence through which the event takes place. For congratulatory memorials, in contrast, the part that eulogizes the throne should be detailed, and unravelling the topic should be brief; in many cases, there is no need to unravel the topic, because one should not mention the decay or failure of the previous reign(s).

Regulations II's instructions focus on a particular concern that many candidates had: how detailed should one be when "unravel[ling] the topic," that is, when contextualizing the event? In the case of memorials presenting books or objects of an auspicious nature, according to *Regulations II*, candidates should show solid knowledge concerning why the book was important or why the occurrence was auspicious. For congratulatory memorials, however, the background knowledge one put on display should be very subtle.

Take the assignment of a congratulatory memorial on the completion of dikes as an example. If mention is made that the court had only recently finalized the project, the implication is that it had failed to finalize it earlier. The more one elaborates on the court's current achievement, the more it risks exposing "the failure of the previous reigns," as *Regulations II* underscores. At least two exemplary responses from the Academy Coursework were published in the 1590s, both of which inform us how the Excellent Gentlemen addressed this challenge. Huang Hongxian 黃洪憲 (1541–1600), when confronted with this assignment in 1571, did not "unravel the topic" at all—in other words, his handling of this assignment exemplifies what *Regulation II* advises. Between 1577 and 1579, Zhuang Lüfeng 莊履豐 (1550–?), another Excellent Gentleman in training, structured his memorial in a slightly different way. Very briefly, he unraveled the topic as follows:

> 河漕之臣，一彼一此，分疆場而迄無成功。[408]
>
> Concerning ministers in charge of the River and the Canal, one was here and one was there, each with their own domains of jurisdiction; thus, no success had been achieved.

In contrast to Huang Hongxian, who did not bother to explain why the dikes were not completed earlier, Zhuang offered a reason. According to him, the Yellow River passed through a variety of different administrative units, and, as territorial officials exercised their power only within their particular jurisdiction, coordination was needed. This was a safe observation, in part, because the

---

[407] *Youyi shu xu wengui* 游藝塾續文規 (printed, 1603), XSKQS 1718:225.

[408] *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* 增定國朝館課經世宏辭 (printed, 1591), Shanghai Library, *juan* 3.

court itself used such language.[409] More importantly, Zhuang's reasoning actually implied that the empire had been well-organized to the extent that officials administering individual administrative units had been performing their duties well, and without trespassing over jurisdictional boundaries. As such, Zhuang laid the foundations for his final conclusion: The emperor had taken timely intervention. He "employed special officials, extended the [deadline of construction] by several months, and lent them[if there were multiple "special officials"] the authority to do things at their convenience." 專有委任寬之數假以便宜.[410]

Both Zhuang and Huang's responses are important for their own sake. They remind us that the empire's water management was not confined to hydraulic engineering per se—a topic that has drawn increasingly scholarly attention[411]—but was also concerned with how the regime would culturally and rhetorically understand itself as one capable of managing rivers. Zhuang's response further underscores that even in congratulating and eulogizing the throne, it is still possible to identify some administrative problems to resolve—though one had to do so carefully and cleverly. As one may discern, when read carefully, Zhuang's response even ventures to (re-)articulate the proper responsibilities of the throne. Accordingly, the emperor was obliged to distribute his authority—an argument that candidates in Shaanxi would further press.

The Excellent Gentlemen were in a position to produce a competent response, but not so much because they were the exceptional few who had already passed the metropolitan and palace examinations. The Hanlin Academy, besides being an educational and political institution, was also a center of books, manuscripts, ritual vessels, and social connections. The Academy Coursework provided entering trainees access to the rich collections of exemplary official documents, among other reference resources. Through their daily interactions with senior academicians, they were updated with the political information that was crucial for the composition of congratulatory memorials.

Would the 1,900 candidates in Shaanxi be able to craft this congratulatory memorial then? Starting from the fifteenth century, a handful of powerful families, who were based in this provincial heartland, were able to reproduce their political success for generations, as Ong Chang Woei has well demonstrated.[412] Candidates from these families may well have enjoyed access to recent information, or even manuscripts copied from the Hanlin Academy. Here, as mentioned above, I shift our focus to the provincial hinterland, the prefecture of Jinzhou 金州. Though administratively a part of Shaanxi province since the Yuan, Jinzhou is separated from the rest of Shaanxi by the Qinling range 秦嶺 to the north and the Daba mountains 大巴山 to the southwest. Thus, Jinzhou was among the mountainous areas that were separate from the populous core areas of Shaanxi, Sichuan, Heibei, and Henan. While prior to the 1550s, only three individuals from this prefecture had been able to pass the provincial examination, the situation changed during the second half of the sixteenth century.[413]

Though the mountainous terrain limited the scope of grain cultivation, it did allow the plantation of tea trees. The continuous marketization of the neighboring regions gradually integrated Jinzhou into the commercial networks, as a result of which some local elites were

---

[409] MSL 1577/12/7, p 1508.
[410] *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* (printed, 1591), Shanghai Library, *juan* 3.
[411] See Zhang Ling, *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048-1128* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
[412] Ong Chang Woei, *Men of Letters within the Passes: Guanzhong Literati in Chinese History, 907-1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 20.
[413] See *Buzeng Anyang xianzhi* 補增安陽縣志 (printed, 1738), JBGJ, *juan* 6.

accumulating some wealth.[414] In addition, a native of the Jinzhou area, named Wei Xueceng 魏學曾, earned a *jinshi* degree in 1532.[415] Thanks to his military merits in pacifying the border plus his good relationship with the chief minister dominating the Grand Council, Wei rose to the position of Right Vice Minister of Personnel 吏部右侍郎 in 1570.[416] Wei, well aware that the governance and education in Jinzhou remained underdeveloped, deliberately "sought good officials for [Jin]zhou." 為州求良牧.[417] As a result, another seven Jinzhou natives would pass the provincial examination from 1570 to 1582, two of whom would eventually earn a *jinshi* degree. One of them named Liu Yu 劉宇.

Before reading the "congratulatory memorial" that Liu Yu composed (a full translation is offered in the Appendix to this chapter), it pays to acknowledge the limits of sources. We do not know whether Liu had access to model responses from the Hanlin Academy. We do not have the original paper and text that Liu crafted in the examination hall. What we will be reading is the version that Ren Zongtang published in the *Record of Examination*. During the mid- and late Ming period, it was common for examiners to polish the language of the exemplary response before publishing it for imperial and public (re)view.[418] Accordingly, it is possible that Ren had copyedited Liu's response in light of texts composed by Huang Hongxian and Zhuang Lüfeng. While the Appendix offers a full translation of Liu's memorial and analyzes it from the perspective of sixteenth-century "memorial learning," here I shall narrow myself to Liu's political thought.

Despite the editorial work that Ren or his colleague may have exercised, it is clear that Liu Yu structured his memorial in ways that were at odds with the models that the Excellent Gentlemen had provided. In a nutshell, Liu did the exact opposite of what *Regulations II* preached, and pressed the following questions from the very beginning of his response: Why was the court able to fix the dikes only at the present time? Why wasn't the court able to do so earlier? Accordingly, Liu presented two key problems affecting Ming Yellow River management. First was the fact that the Yellow River's course, starting from 1128, flowed into the basin of the Huai River (line 4, see Appendix for the line numbers).[419] As mentioned, it not only penetrated into a densely populated region, but also controlled the "throat" of the Grand Canal, which was the "artery" of transportation that connected the economic centers in the Lower Yangzi Delta to the capital in Beijing. Though the phrase "pursuing benefits while avoiding harms" (line 7) appears as commonplace, it bore specific connotations in the context of the sixteenth-century discourses of hydraulic management. If one prioritized the benefits of the Canal, then certain harm would follow for the Huai River basin and the agriculture there. Slightly later, Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567–1624) had succinctly recapitulated the dilemma that the court had to take into consideration:

> 今之治水者，既懼傷田廬，又恐壞城郭；既恐妨運道，又恐驚陵寢。[420]

---

[414] For the growing tax quota starting from the late sixteenth century, see *Buzeng Anyang xianzhi* (printed, 1738), JBGJ, *juan* 2.
[415] Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 228.5975.
[416] MSL 1570/12/12, p. 1296.
[417] That is Cao Jingyang 曹景暘: 萬曆間知州事時紫陽魏學曾官吏部侍郎為州求良牧. See *Jiajing Anyang xian zhi* 嘉靖安陽縣志, JBGJ.
[418] See Guo Peigui, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan*, 269-283.
[419] See Zhang Ling, *The River, the Plain, and the State*, 281.
[420] Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛, *Wu za zu* 五雜俎, JBGJ, *juan* 3.

> Those who manage the rivers today, they are afraid of hurting the land and houses, and fear destroying walls and cities; they fear compromising the canal, and disturbing the imperial burial sites.

Of course, in the context of a congratulatory memorial, Liu did not have to make a proposal on how to balance all these concerns. Nevertheless, he fully elaborated on his awareness of the complexity at hand in lines 32 to 35: the River and the Canal formed a complicated waterway system that required prudent and timely decisions.

Then, and very explicitly, Liu stated that the entire process of bureaucratic communication and decision-making lacked efficiency. Those who were well versed in the Ming politics of the times would immediately have recognized that lines 9-12 alluded to the numerous debates at court starting from the late 1560s, during which the court was not able to come up with a definite plan. However, Liu's lines re-described these concrete matters in an ornate way, full of packed allusions to previous history, which is precisely what the style of parallel prose required. To give an example, instead of saying "the court cannot come to a prompt resolution," Liu wrote "it resembles the one who aspires to build a house [but changes his plan whenever a passer-by presents new suggestions—which is an episode from the *Classic of Odes*]"[421] (line 11). While such belletrist practice may appear clunky, it actually allowed examinees to problematize the present from a distance. In effect, Liu presented a general problem of politics: For an issue as important as water management, it is imperative that the court should collect proposals and suggestions; however, as memorials with proposals were sent to the court one after another, piling up in all government halls, it would be even harder to make the final decision.

If a government is plagued with such a disease, how could it recover? Liu continued by eulogizing the throne, a required element of the genre of the congratulatory memorial. On the surface, Liu was simply illustrating how the emperor was taking care of the people, employing the worthy, and making timely decisions—the commonplace, if not cliched, terms by which an emperor was praised. However, closer scrutiny reveals that Liu was further exploiting the potentials of parallel prose. He re-described the institutional reforms the court had implemented on the one hand, and outlined how an idealized government should work on the other. By means of the former, Liu continued to show off his knowledge of recent state affairs, seeking to impress the examiner while also flattering those in power. By means of the latter, he further articulated his reflections over proper forms of governance, suggesting his thoughts on institutional reform. Liu's response is interesting, precisely because these two threads were intimately interwoven together.

Lines 21 to 25 express a single thought: the emperor dispatched specific commissioners, having the latter handle situations on the ground. An informed reader of 1579 would immediately recognize that here Liu referred to the recent employment of special officials as those "in Full charge of the River and the Canal" 總理河漕 in 1575,[422] and the reemployment of Pan Jixun. In this sense, Liu was eulogizing the court for what it had already achieved. Simultaneously, Liu added his own understandings. Accordingly, certain officials, epitomized by those in charge of river management, were to be allowed to stay in their posts for a stable period, which would last as long as "eight" years, the duration of time in which the Sage King Yu

---

[421] The couplet connects two phrases from the Xiaomin chapter of the *Classic of Odes*. That is "speeches piled up in all halls" 發言盈庭 and "it resembles the one who aspires to build a house by the road" 如彼築室于道謀. See *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (printed, 1815), 12-2.413.

[422] MSL 1577/12/7, p 1508.

pacified the floods. Liu envisioned a government that maintained a dynamic balance between centralization and decentralization: while political authority centered upon the emperor, he was responsible or even obliged to distribute this authority to the "commissioners" in the provinces. These officials, while enjoying considerable autonomy from court politics for a fairly long period, were ultimately responsible for returning their authority back to the center, upon the completion of their commissions.

It is worth stressing that Liu was not proposing a technocratic form of government, where experts specializing in water management gained power and some level of autonomy. On the contrary, Liu emphasized that officials from all branches of the government were eligible for such appointment, so long as they had proven their abilities. Thus, the idealized minister that Liu envisioned was not a specialist, but rather a politician qua rhetorician. As the latter, he would maintain efficient communication with the court, and as the former, he would consult experts, coordinate different branches, and make timely decisions based on the concrete situations where he was appointed.

In no way was Liu Yu defying imperial authority or offending any minister in power. Nevertheless, his congratulatory memorial managed to identify key political problems, and illustrate how a government would solve these problems. With this memorial, as well as other responses that stood out, Liu earned first place in the provincial examination. He would earn his *jinshi* degree in 1583, and then start his official career. As a county magistrate in Anyang, he would show his competence in hydraulic management. He successfully constructed a dike system on the bank of the Zhang River 漳水, and reestablished the irrigation canal that had been obsolete since Tang-Song times.[423] In 1600, the Secretary Supervising the Office of Work 工科都給事中 recommended Liu as a candidate for taking charge of the management of the Zhang River.[424] The decision makers, however, had never approved this recommendation. In 1607, Liu suffered further demotion, after which he retired to his home locale and contributed to the reconstruction of two irrigation canals named Gaoping 高平 and Wanjin 萬金, as the local gazetteer informs us.[425]

Certainly, Liu was not representative of the other 1,900 candidates of the Shaanxi examination of 1579 who did not win first place. Nevertheless, his response memorial is telling of the rigorous nature of the everyday training at the prefectural school of a remote and mountainous region—that of Jinzhou. In other words, during the fourteenth century, it was the elites of a vast number of locales across the empire that were together developing rhetorical learning as a way of engaging with history and politics; by the end of the sixteenth century, the imitative drafting of official documents was empowering examination candidates in different counties and prefectures to articulate their own ideas—even in the most remote and backward places. As Alexander Woodside has once written, in imperial China, "each participant in the government, from the emperor down to the county director of schools, might carry his own unique imaginary map of the ideal government in his head."[426] My research confirms not only that such notional constructs existed, but that those "participants in government" consciously employed those constructs as key criteria for candidates' entry into actual government

---

[423] *Buzeng Anyang xianzhi* (printed, 1738), JBGJ, *juan* 8.
[424] MSL 1600/9/1, p. 6571.
[425] *Buzeng Anyang xianzhi* (printed, 1738), JBGJ.
[426] Alexander Woodside, "The Divorce between the Political Center and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China," in *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900*, eds. Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 459–460.

participation via the exam. Moreover, by excavating this genre of systematic rhetorical training and testing, it gives us as historians an unprecedented vantage move away from mere speculation of these imaginary maps of ideal government and to unravel the mind of these actors.

Miranda Brown has notably pointed out that, in social scientific research, "whereas Europe is presumed to furnish 'absolute theoretical insights,' non-Western histories are consigned to supplying empirical facts that flesh out a European theoretical skeleton."[427] Thus, Brown proposes to turn the gaze to Gu Yanwu—a prominent thinker in the Chinese tradition, contending that Gu's theory about political centralization "may be used to develop new perspectives with which to study empires."[428] To recapitulate, everyday thought as method, to recapitulate, proposes that it is also possible to engage ordinary individuals as if they were a theorist as prominent as Max Weber, and to read formulaic writings of a pragmatic nature as if they were treatises or monographs.

Closing Remarks: In Praise of the Everyday

The late Ming thinker Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602) once noted:

> 日月常而千古常新，布帛菽粟常，而寒能暖飢能飽。又何其奇也！是新奇正在於平常。世人不察，反於平常之外覓新奇。是豈得謂之新奇乎？[429]
>
> The sun and the moon are constant/ordinary, but they are always new [at the same time]. As for cloth, silk, bean, and millet, these are ordinary; but they warm us when cold and feed us when hungry. How extraordinary they are! Thus, the new and extraordinary lies precisely in the plain and ordinary. People of the world have failed to discern it. They look for the new and extraordinary away from the plain and ordinary. How can they [find] what can be called new and extraordinary?

In praising the ordinary, Li Zhi reminds his audience that the obsession with the new and extraordinary can be misleading. This chapter, following his insight, has used the term "everyday" in three senses.

The first sense concerns the word's literal meaning, from the rising of the sun to that of the moon, in Li Zhi's terms. Thus, I traced how the empire established curriculums that sought to extend control over the daily schedules of the large number of licentiates and examination candidates. As we have seen, the court's power did have its "capillary effect," to use Wang Fansen's 王汎森 term. Even though the governmental schools were not always able to stick to the prescribed schedules, elites started to preach similar schedules when organizing their own time and energy. In this sense, this chapter shows that in order to delve into the world of everyday thought, we must also understand the power that penetrated into and shaped the everyday in the first place.

Second, I use the term "everyday" in the extended sense, as a synonym of ordinary and normal. The assignment that Ren Zongtang posed during the provincial examination, after all, did not strike his contemporaries as "new and extraordinary." If this had been the case, Ren

---

[427] Miranda Brown, "Returning the Gaze: An Experiment in Reviving Gu Yanwu (1613–1682)," *Fragments* 1 (2011), 41.

[428] Miranda Brown, "Returning the Gaze," 70.

[429] Li Zhi 李贄, *Fen shu* 焚書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 2.60.

would have been impeached, as a result of which he would have needed to defended himself. Liu Yu's response exemplifies the dialectic between the ordinary and the extraordinary, as Li Zhi put it. On the one hand, it was the exemplary response that stood out. On the other hand, precisely because it was the selected model text, it was the antithesis of what is revolutionary.

Third, the "everyday" has the further dimension of being mundane, sometimes, even pragmatic. Reading Ren Zongtang and Liu Yu from the lens of everyday thought, I do not mean to suggest that administering or participating in a provincial examination was not eventful—on the contrary, it would be significant in their lives in different ways. Instead, I seek to show that while both were pursuing very mundane goals—climbing the bureaucratic ladder, or struggling to stand out in a very competitive examination—each expressed their thoughts within the framework of established norms and conventions.

In the following chapters, I shall deepen the current discussion from two perspectives. On the one hand, I move beyond the case study of Ren, Liu, and Shaanxi in 1579, and reconceptualize the post-Mongol transformation by incorporating the totality of data culled from examination records. On the other hand, I situate the local experiences in China in the broader context of global interactions. As I shall propose, the excavation of everyday thought in the end offers the possibility of broaching new horizons of global political theory.

Appendix: Liu Yu on River and Government, 1579

What follows is a translation of Liu Yu's "Imitative Draft of the Court Ministers' Congratulatory Memorial on the Completion of the [Yellow] River Dikes," as published by Ren Zongtang published in the *Record of Examination* of Shaanxi in 1579. In the Chinese original, I have indented it in the way that it appears in the original printed edition, numbered the lines. I have added punctuation. In my English translation, I also divide the text into four parts, beginning with "Breaking the Topic," as Ming teachers of memorial writing would have done.

1 伏以帝德格天，懋贊川流之化；
2 神功兩地，光昭河翕之祥。萬國朝宗，四方歌頌。
3　　臣等誠歡誠忭，稽首頓首。竊惟黃河起於
4　　昆侖，通乎淮泗。溯九折而上，始窮其源。自
5　　屢遷以來，蓋非其舊。歷觀往迹，殊異今時。
6　　扼漕運之咽喉，係
7　京師之命脈。既趨利而仍避害，故舉事不易
8　　成功。水漲秋濤，訝風雷之相薄；歲咨昏墊，
9　　悲魚鱉之為鄰。或塞或疏，人心之區畫靡
10　　定；隨築隨決，河身之移徙無常。況於政餘
11　　虛文，加以事非專任，使數載盈庭之議，似
12　　三年作舍之謀。生靈隱憂，
13　國家大計，未有甚於此者也。茲蓋伏遇
14 皇帝陛下，
15 玄德淵涵，
16 睿謀渙發，

17 黻黼闡圖書之秘，
18 網羅畫舟楫之才。
19 大地遍恩，波潤澤寧惟九里
20 榮光浮德，水澄清何啻三朝。頃因河伯之橫流，
21 特敕司空而平土。行河使者，首推九列之賢；都
22 　水長丞，畢簡諸曹之彥。授之方略，假以便
23 　宜。謂：“千丈之陂，易潰於蟻穴；而八年之績，
24 　必始於龍門。思防四溢之懷襄，當藉兩涯
25 　之盤束。”乃穿高堰，再控遥堤。
26 詔令重申，率作無煩於沉壁；
27 分頒三至，歡呼實倍於投醪。驚畚鍤之如雲，快
28 　經營之不日。蛟龍蜕骨，應符漢帝之渠；罔
29 　兩鏤形，可考夏王之鼎。地靈效順，天塹增
30 　雄。障狂瀾以東，悉循故道；自清河而北，漸
31 　號坦途。金斗吕梁，銜尾見舳艫并進；牙檣
32 　錦纜，歌喉與榜泄同聲。貢
33 御府以駢填，總海錯山珍之盛；賦太倉而絡繹，
34 　極塘崇櫛比之繁。東南千里，污萊爰兹稼
35 　穡，西北九邊，飛挽信若灌輸，皆由我
36 皇上深惟億兆之安，有備無患，排此二三，其説
37 　惟斷。乃成審勢操機，利何争於尺寸；知人
38 　善使，事不襲乎尋常。蓋禹勤由己之思，德
39 　斯遠矣；惟堯切儆余之虚，功白巍然。刻三
40 　犀牛，宜勒碑而誦德；來兩黄鵠，合薦
41 廟以揚休。臣等久屬涵濡，未酬涓滴，
42 皇猷允塞，玄圭幸遘於虞庭；史筆鋪張，白馬羞
43 　稱乎漢代。伏願
44 心源常濬，
45 道岸先登，
46 修府事而九叙惟歌，
47 若雨暘而庶徵來備。
48 金繩玉牘，百銀呈川至之符；
49 紫闕朱宫，萬攸紀河清之瑞。臣等無任。瞻
50 天仰
51 聖歡躍屏營之至。謹奉
52 　表稱
53 　賀以
54 聞

[Breaking the Topic 破題]

[1] Humbly, I think: The imperial virtue matches Heaven, the luster of which has facilitated the transformation of waters and streams. [2] The divine merit stretches over the two banks, the light of which has illuminated upon the auspiciousness of river flow. Tens of thousands of polities come here to pay homage to the sovereign; people of the four directions sing songs of celebration. [3] We ministers are truly thrilled, knocking our heads over and over.

[Unravelling the Topic 解題]

Personally, I consider: The Yellow River originates from [4] the Kunlun [Mountain], reaching all the way to the Huai and Si Rivers. Tracing upstream through nine turns, one finally discerns the headstream. Since [5] the River changed its course multiple times, the current flow differs from the previous ones. Its historical sites are quite different from their counterparts today. [6] Holding the throat of the Grand Canal of transportation, it is [7] the artery of the Capital. [When fixing the dikes] one has to pursue benefits while avoiding harms; thus, it is not easy to achieve [8] success. Water rises, raising autumn waves that greet the fighting winds and thunders; upon years of flooding, one [9] mourns over those who join the community of fish and tortoises. Either to block it or to re-direct it, the human mind is not able to [10] settle the plan; breaking [the dikes] whenever they are constructed, the River migrates without a fixed pattern. What is worse, politics is full of [11] empty words. In addition, the entire issue is not entrusted to particular persons. As a result, discussions over the years have piled up in all government halls. It resembles the one who aspires to build a house [but changes his plan whenever a passer-by presents new suggestions]—he cannot finish even after [12] three years of deliberation. It concerns the disaster that jeopardizes the lives of the people.

[Eulogizing the Throne 頌聖]

[13] It is the grand concern of our realm. Nothing is more important than this. Now, fortunately, we have our [14] High Majesty the Emperor: [15] His profound virtue is deep [as a valley] and compelling [as waves]; [16] His intelligent plan is grand and elaborate. [17] Illustrious as the patterns of the imperial robe, He illustrates the elusive [truth] from maps and books; [18] with His nets, He deploys the talents of boats and ships. [19] The entire terrain is full of his favor; the wave of his grace is not confined to the nine li [of the capital]; [20] the glorious lights drift away just as does His virtues; the water is thus purified not just for three reigns. Previously, because of the deity of the River unleashed the flow without constraints, [21] He himself decreed that the Minister of Work to flatten the terrain. As for the Special Commissioner of the River, He was promoted from the worthies of the Nine Ministers. [22] As for the Grand Assistant in Charge of the River, He was selected from the outstanding officials of various bureaus. [The Emperor] instructed them on the plans, lending them the authority to do whatever they deemed [23] convenient. [The Emperor] pronounced: "Banks of a thousand *zhang*, they collapse from ant nests; the achievement that takes eight years [by which the Sage King Yu pacified the floods], [24] it starts with the dragon gate [of personnel selection]. To prevent the water from overflowing in the four directions and overwhelming the mountains, it should rely on the control from two sides." [25] Thus, the construction included the high dams, and erected protective embankments. [26] The [same] decree and order are repeated, so that the collective work does not bother to restart from the bottom; [27] rewards come one after another, and cheers outweigh the shared hardship. One will be surprised that shovels are like clouds, and find it speedy that

[28] the construction will be completed in days. The sea dragon changes its bones, echoing the canals of the Han emperors; the ghosts take their shapes, revealing the *ding* vessel of the Xia kings. The spirit of Earth submits itself; the ditch of Heaven gains further [30] strength. [The dikes] block the outrageous torrents to the east—they all follow the previous route; north of Qinghe, the terrain gradually [31] turns to be flat. The golden turn and the critical edge, thus connected, witness the advance of boats and ships. About the decorated mast [32] and the silk robe [on the sail], there resonates the singing voice and the reloading sound. Tribute [33] all together is [sent] to the imperial warehouse, which is fully loaded with the assorted delicacies from the sea and the mountains. Taxes are submitted to the grand granary without stop, [34] which is entirely ordered like fish scales and comb teeth. As for the thousands of *li* in the southeast, the wasteland can now be cultivated. As for the nine frontiers of the northwest, the flying transport pours supplies there. All these are because of our [36] Emperor: deeply is he concerned with the millions of people; now prepared, there is therefore no worries. He excludes the other proposals. His words [37] are definite decision. Thus, He discerns the situation, holding the pivot—the benefits are not confined to feet and inches. He knows the talents, excelling in [38] appointing them—his action does not follow the ordinary approaches. [As] Yu [the Sage King], he is diligent with taking actions from himself; [39] far reaching is his virtue. [As] Yao [the Sage King], he is devoted to the art of encouraging others; grandiose is His achievement. Carving three rhinoceros horns, [40] [one] should make inscriptions to eulogize his virtues. Summoning two swans, [we] need to present it to the [41] shrine to amplify this glory.

[Expressing One's Intention 述意]

We, the ministers, long since soaked in [the imperial grace], have not contributed even any drop of merit. [42] Grandiose is the imperial accomplishment. The dark jade is thus fortunate to be presented at the August Hall. Extended are the brushes of historians; the white horse [43] dwarfs [the counterparts] of the Han dynasty. Humbly, we wish [You, the emperor]: [44] the origin of the heart is always clear; [45] the band of the Way, you first ascend. [46] You will work on the governance so that the nine narratives are all songs [of eulogy]. [47] It will be as if the sun shines after it rains, so that all omens are complete. [48] Golden strips and jade records, hundreds of silver [strips] present the auspicious symbols as if the River comes. [49] Purple mansions and red palaces, ten thousand places commemorate the auspicious sign of the River being clear. We, the [humble] ministers, are not capable. Looking at [50] the sky and gazing at [51] the sage, we are extremely happy, with the utmost humility. With respect, we present [53] the memorial of [54] congratulation to [54] make [our voices] heard.

5. Memorial and Statecraft: Networks of Ideas in Post-Mongol China and the Early Modern Globe

Introduction

From 1613 to 1615, while the Jesuit Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628) was travelling from Macao back to Rome, he translated Matteo Ricci's writings about China from Italian into Latin.[430] After various changes and additions, he published them under the title *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* (Augsburg, 1615).[431] While Ricci's manuscript and Trigault's publication are well-known to students of early modern history, each contains a very succinct, extremely informative, yet so far neglected account of the imitative writing of official documents as a part of the Chinese civil service examination. With the following words, they introduced this rhetorical curriculum for the first time to the European audience:[432]

Ricci's Original Manuscript in Italian	My translation from Italian
Al secondo giorno … gli propongono varie cose accadute nelle historie antiche, o che possono accadere; e sopra queste fanno tre discorsi, dicendo il loro parere sopra quei casi o avisando al re quello che si deve fare.[433]	On the second day, … [the examiners] offer them [the examinee] various things that happened in the ancient history, or that could happen. And on each theme, [the examinees] produce three *discorsi*, expressing their opinion on these cases or advising the king what should be done.
Trigault's Latin Translation (1615)	My translation from Latin
Die altero, … tria proponuntur, quae olim ex veterum Annalibus eruta contigere, vel alia quaedam, quae imposterum poterunt evenire, ternis singuli scriptionibus sententiam suam	On the other day … put forth are three things from the past, drawn from the chronicles of the ancient times, or some other things which could happen in the future. Each [examinee], by means of three pieces of writing, expresses his

[430] See D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 46–47.

[431] See D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land*, 44–73; Nicolas Standaert, "The Transmission of Renaissance culture in Seventeenth-Century China," *Renaissance Studies* 13.3 (2003): 367–391. For sixteenth-century European writings about China that Ricci may or may not have consulted, see Gaetano Ricciardolo, "Il Libro Primo dei commentari del ricci e gli scritti europei del XVI secolo sulla Cina. La loro natura e la loro relazione" *Mondo Cinese*, 26.1 (1998): 25–37; Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Volume I (The University of Chicago Press, 1965), esp. 742–56.

[432] Though a variety of publications prior to Trigault (1615) offered descriptions of the Chinese examination, none of them mentions this aspect. Gaspar da Cruz' *Tratado das cousas da China* (1569) and Bernardino de Escalante's *Discurso de la navegacion* (1577), both early monographs devoted to China, briefly mention that every three years there was an examination that selected officials (see Lach above). The first published monograph that actually delved into the contents of the Chinese civil service examination is Juan González de Mendoza's *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China* (Rome, 1585). Though it is commonly believed that Mendoza derived the contents of the book from Bernardino de Escalante, only the former specifies that the examinations selected and favored "those who know well the laws of the country" (Spanish: poniendole sobre todo y reparadomas en que sepan bien las leyes del Reyno). See Libro III, p.108.

[433] The original Italian text was published only in the twentieth century. See Matteo Ricci, *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci, S. I.: I commentari della Cina* (Macerata: Premiato stab. tip. F. Giorgetti, 1911), 28.

dicunt, aut Regem dato libello moment, quid eo in casu faciendum è Regni bono videretur.[434]	view, or advises the king by submitting a memorial as to, in that situation, what seems the best thing to do for the good of the kingdom.[435]

(See the last section for a closer comparison between the two renditions.)
Given that neither Ricci nor Trigault had participated in real examinations in China, it is not surprising that they had not fully fathomed how this institution actually worked.[436] Nevertheless, thanks to their informants, the Jesuits were able to advance three insightful observations about this system.[437]

First, as Ricci had already pointed out, the themes of these assignments were not only drawn from the "ancient history" (Italian: historie antiche), as discussed in Chapter Three,[438] but could also be based on some events that might happen in the future, as we have seen in Chapter Four. Second, Trigault further added that the focus of this part of the examination was not *discorsi* (discourse or treatise, to be discussed below), as Ricci assumed; instead, particularly important was the genre of "*libello*" (approximately equivalent to "memorial"), by which a minister presented his view to the ruler. Third, as the Jesuits underscored, the "*libello*" was supposed to advise the throne on "what seems the best thing to do." In doing so, the Jesuits were actually comparing the memorial writing section in the Chinese examination to the flourishing advice literature in Europe, not only the well-known genre of the mirror for princes,[439] but also the specific practices of presenting specific proposals to the throne, as we shall see below.

This chapter seeks to situate Ricci and Trigault's thoughts in the broader contexts of post-Mongol China, early modern Europe, and the emerging horizon of global interactions. In doing so, I explore a new approach that combines the history of Chinese rhetorical training with global intellectual history.[440] My purpose is *not* to take missionaries' observations as an alternative perspective to re-evaluate what we know of Chinese institutions—a strategy familiar to historians of the civil service examination.[441] Nor do I read Jesuits as mere accommodators who "adapted

---

[434] Nicolas Trigault, *De christiana expeditione apud Sinas* (Lugduni: Sumptibus Horatii Cardon, 1615), 41.
[435] I thank Zhang Zhengyuan for corrections to my previous translations from Latin. Louis J. Gallagher has offered an English translation in the mid-twentieth century; it pays to note that despite his emphasis that he translated it from Latin, his rendition of this passage seems to be informed by the French translation of 1616. See his *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583–1610* (New York: Random House, 1953), 37.
[436] For instance, the examinee would by no means compose three pieces of writing as the second part of the examination. See Chapter Four.
[437] A number of prominent scholars have shown the importance of Chinese informants in shaping the Jesuits' writings about China. See Nicolas Standaert, *Chinese Voices in the Rites Controversy: Travelling Books, Community Networks, Intercultural Arguments* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2012); Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Entanglements of a Man Who Never Traveled: A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian and His Conflicted Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).
[438] Trigault, interestingly, underscored that the themes were drawn specifically "from chronicles of the old [times]" (Latin: ex veterum Annalibus).
[439] See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought*, volumes 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 113–138.
[440] For the framework of global intellectual history, see Samuel Moyn and Andrew Satori, "Approaches to Global Intellectual History," in Global Intellectual History, eds. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Satori (New York: Columbia University, 2013), 3–32.
[441] Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), e.g. 270. A large body of scholarship in Chinese takes this approach, which often risks reading missionary writings out of context. See, for instance, Sun Banghua 孫邦華, "Ming Qing shiqi zaihua xiren shiye zhong de kejuzhidu tezheng yu zuoyong" 明清時期在華西人視野中的科舉制度與作用, *Fujian luntan* 9 (2006): 74–79.

messages to different audiences," or even as mere intermediaries whose "proto-sinological" publications informed "big-name" philosophers such as Montesquieu or Leibniz.[442] Instead, I take each missionary together with each translator and reader of their writings as thinkers for their own sake[443]—the same way as I approach ordinary examiners and examination candidates in East Eurasia as theorists and philosophers (Chapters Three and Four). I trace how each individual—be they European or Chinese, global traveler or local examinee—approached the shared problematic of how to speak to the ruler through the interconnected networks in which they found themselves.[444]

By integrating a close reading of sources in multi-languages and data visualization, I make four arguments in the following sections. First, what Ricci and Trigault had noticed in fact represented a key transition in the rhetorical training in China, which, over the long sixteenth century, had given rise to a compelling theory about eloquence and "statecraft"—or *jingshi* 經世 (literally, ordering the world) in Chinese. Second, this theory problematized the assumption that profound thought—such as ideas of ordering the world—required breaking free of bureaucratic communication, and proposed instead that profundity could "reside" (*she* 舍) in official documents, even in those most formulaic in nature. Third, the maturation of this theory in the field of the civil service examination formed a key but much overlooked part of the intellectual landscape out of which Chinese statecraft (*jingshi*) learning was developed. Fourth, the theorization of eloquence as the everyday home of statecraft in post-Mongol China—as well as its metamorphoses in Latin, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and English contexts—constitutes one important element of an emerging global political theory, a framework that I shall elaborate upon at the end of the chapter.

On the Examination (I): Memorials through Data Visualization (ca. 1400–1700)

This section offers a bird's-eye view of the changing content of the official document writing section of the provincial and metropolitan examination—a transformation that I shall call the statecraft turn. I start by offering a critical overview of the key scholarship on top of which I build my argument. Then I explain my method of network analysis, which traces the changing topics and focus of the examinations and will lay a starting point for a subsequent close (re-)reading of examination questions and answers.

In his monumental study on civil service examinations in late imperial China, Benjamin Elman challenged the received wisdom that Ming examiners only read responses from the first part of the examination, the (in)famous eight-legged exegetical essays on the Four Books and the

---

[442] See D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land*, 5; Nii Yōko 新居洋子, *Iezusukaishi to fuhen no teikoku: zaika senkyōshi ni yoru bunmei no hon'yaku* イエズス会士と普遍の帝国: 在華宣教師による文明の翻訳 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2017), 41. For "accommodation" and renaissance rhetorical theory, see Andrés I. Prieto, "The Perils of Accommodation: Jesuit Missionary Strategies in the Early Modern World," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4:3 (2017): 395–414.

[443] This, it pays to note, differs from efforts to reconstruct the system of political thought, if any, that Jesuits shared. Cf. Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c.1540–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Thierry Meynard, *The Jesuit Reading of Confucius* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

[444] I am particularly indebted to Prof. Nakasuna Akinori 中砂明徳 and his "Makao Mekishiko kara mita ka'i hentai" マカオ・メキシコから見た華夷変態, *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Kiyō* 52 (2013): 95–194; Prof. Dominic Sachsenmaier, and his *Global Entanglements of a Man Who Never Traveled: A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian and His Conflicted Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), esp. 1–17.

Classics. Proposing that these examiners took considerable care in evaluating all three parts of the provincial and metropolitan examinations,[445] Elman has further demonstrated that the conceptual roots of Qing evidential research (*kaozheng* 考證) "began in the mid-Ming." In his own words, "earlier efforts to date its beginnings to the seventeenth-century Ming-Qing transition are unsatisfactory."[446] In contrast to Elman who mainly focused on the policy essays, Hou Meizhen 侯美珍 is one of the very few scholars who has paid close attention to the official document section in Ming provincial and metropolitan examinations. As already discussed in the previous chapter, Hou has convincingly shown that this section of the Ming examination gravitated toward an exclusive emphasis upon memorial writing—an observation that Trigault had also advanced.[447] Hou's student Li Zhuying 李竺穎 has systematically categorized Ming examination questions, which greatly facilitates further study. What is more, Li has pointed out that over the course of the Ming, "the contents [of memorials in provincial examinations] became ever more eulogistic, language ever more flamboyant, and parallels constructions ever more regulated."[448]

Following Hou's and Li's pioneering studies, I shall confine myself to the memorial section of the examinations. In doing so, my purpose is not to evaluate the style and the language of the examination responses—a task that deserves further attention for future studies. Instead, building upon Elman's approach, I seek to understand what exactly the memorial writing section of the examinations expected candidates to know and to do. Instead of seeing the post-Mongol examination as a mere precursor of later intellectual trends, however, I hope to excavate ideas from ordinary examiners and examinees, and to appreciate these insights for their own sake.

Accordingly, I have systematically surveyed the *Records of Examinations* (*keju lu* 科舉錄). Under both the Ming and the Qing, the court required examiners to publish this kind of book according to a particular formula that included the examination questions, the exemplary responses, and examiners' comments elaborating why the selected responses stood out (see Chapter Four). Among 314 extant Ming *Records of Examination*, 297 are available in reprint; of the remaining 17, I have managed to gain access to 9 previously inaccessible ones in the course of my archival research. Also covered in the following discussion are 23 Qing *Records of Examination*, produced for the most part during the period 1652 to 1700. I read all of these texts in constant reference to a large number of commercially printed examination manuals and sample memorials that were compiled and circulated in China, Korea, and Vietnam. The sheer quantity of the materials that has survived in turn poses a methodological question, as Thomas J. Mazanec has pointed when working with another large corpus of materials: "how to describe

---

[445] See Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, xxxiii. Given recent scholarship in Chinese, it appears that it is in fact from the late sixteenth century that the court and the examiners started to pay more attention to the second and third parts, which had fallen into neglect during theprevious periods. In addition, though examiners took care in commenting on the exemplary memorials and policy essays they selected and published, they did not have enough time to read every single piece. See Guo Peigui 郭培貴, *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 明代卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), 170, 225-227.

[446] Benjamin Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 451.

[447] Hou Meizhen 侯美珍, "Mingdai xianghuishi zhao gao biao gongwen kaoshi xilun," 明代鄉會試詔誥表公文考試析論 *Guowen xuebao* 62 (2017), 134.

[448] Li Zhuyin 李竺穎, "Mingdai xiang hui shi erchang biaowen yanjiu" 明代鄉會試二場表文研究 (MPhil diss., Guoli chenggong daxue, 2018), 106.

changes in the large-scale development" of these texts "without simply generalizing from close readings of a few emblematic texts?"[449]

One approach is to map out in visual form the knowledge needed to succeed in the examination, as I have tried to do in Figure 9. In this diagram, each node represents an item of knowledge, and each edge indicates the frequency that these two items appear in the same examination question. For instance, in the case of the assignment from the province of Shuntian (North Capital Area) for the year 1474, which asked the examinees to imagine the memorial Sima Guang wrote to submit *Comprehensive Mirror for Governance* 擬司馬光進《資治通鑑》表,[450] an edge would appear linking Sima Guang and his book. Overall, Figure 9 is based on 395 real questions from 1399 to 1642. It is thus composed of 436 nodes and 956 edges. I further divide nodes into seven categories. Those in purple designate the emperor; green, specified individuals identified by name; white, groups of unspecified individuals ("the various ministers," for instance); yellow, particular books or objects; blue, state affairs involving auspicious events or ritual; red, state affairs involving barbarian, famine relief, or war; grey, other kinds of refernts (especially official positions).

In the figure, one observes that two clusters of knowledge are particularly important. Cluster I (at the top of Figure 9) contains five scholar-officials of the eleventh century: Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 (1007–1072), Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052), Fu Bi 富弼 (1004–1083), and Wen Yanbo 文彥博 (1006–1097). Examination candidates were often required to write memorials on their behalf, expressing gratitude for employing them as an academician or grand councilor. Cluster II (lower part of Figure 10) involves a totally different group of nodes, representing memorials composed on behalf of some unspecified groups of ministers, often speaking to the current monarch (in purple) on current events or events that could happen—be it the occurrence of an auspicious sign or military situation.

What explains these two clusters? As it turns out, these two clusters represent an important temporal shift: while the average year of the upper cluster is 1531.3, that of the lower is 1601.5. Thus, between the 1530s and 1600s there was an important transformation in the sorts of examination questions that were asked.

Figure 10 then traces this diachronic change in detail, making use of data that spans the period from the mid-Ming through the early Qing. In this figure, green blocks designate examination assignments that refer to a named official; blue, state of affairs involving auspicious events or ritual; red, state of affairs involving barbarians; grey, those that do not belong to any of the above. By categorizing memorial questions in this way, the temporal transformation indicated by the clustering in Figure 9 can be dated with further precision. The shift is first noticeable in the metropolitan examination of 1474; the provincial examinations gradually followed suit: the two capital regions came first—Yingtian (South Capital Area) in the same decade, and Shuntian (North Capital Area) in the 1510s; and then the Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, and Shaanxi examination no later than the 1560s; and finally, the southern and southern western provinces, no later than 1576. The dotted line in Figure 10 thus marks the threshold of transition. Before it, the memorial writing sections of examinations tended towards Cluster I-type knowledge; afterwards, they focused more on Cluster II-type knowledge.

---

[449] For a relevant methodological discussion, see Thomas J. Mazanec, "Networks of Exchange Poetry in Late Medieval China: Notes toward a Dynamic History of Tang Literature," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 5.2 (2018): 322–359.

[450] TYG XS 1:22.

Figure 9 Knowledge Graph of the Memorial Part of Provincial and Metropolitan Examinations, the case of the Ming (1368–1644)

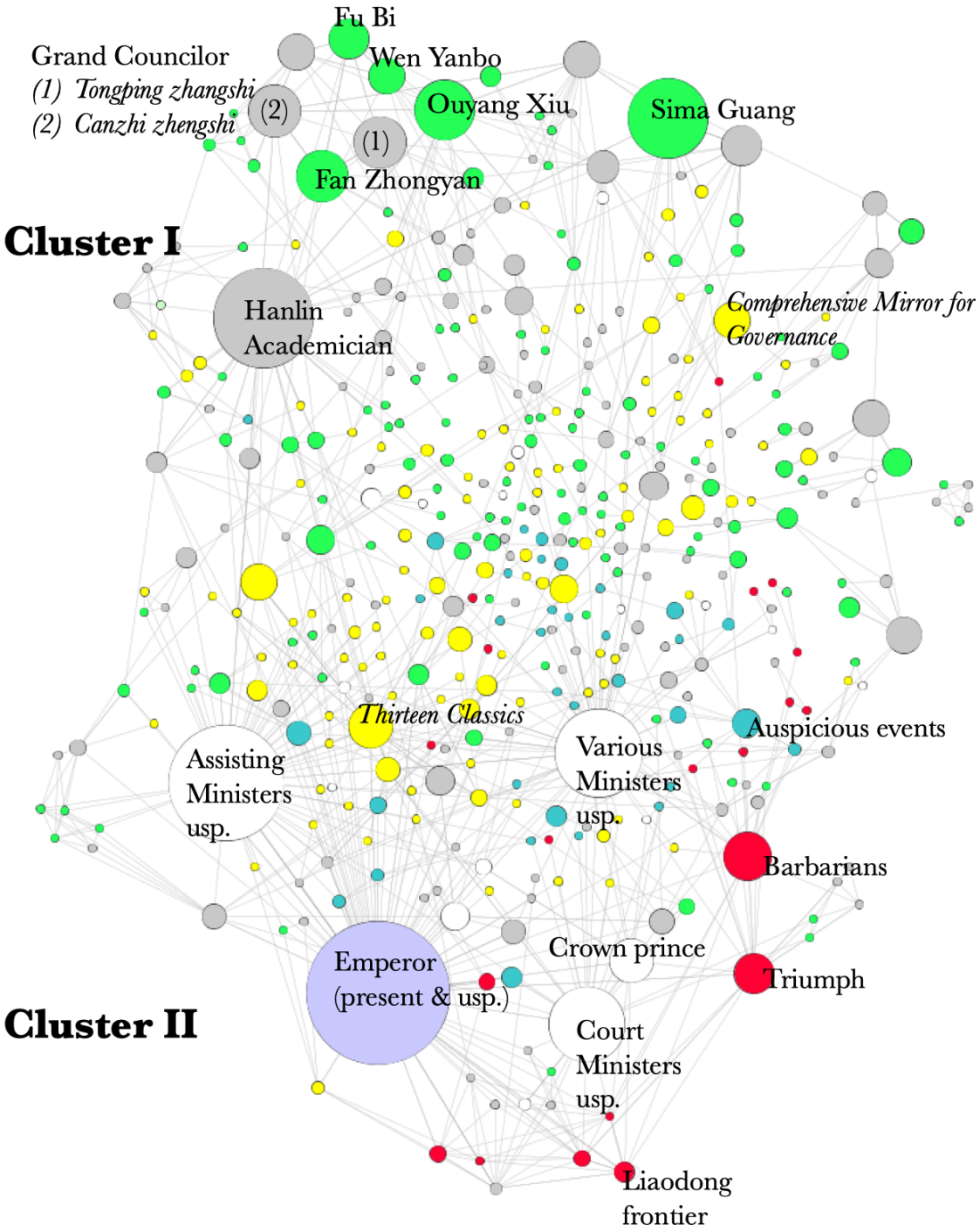
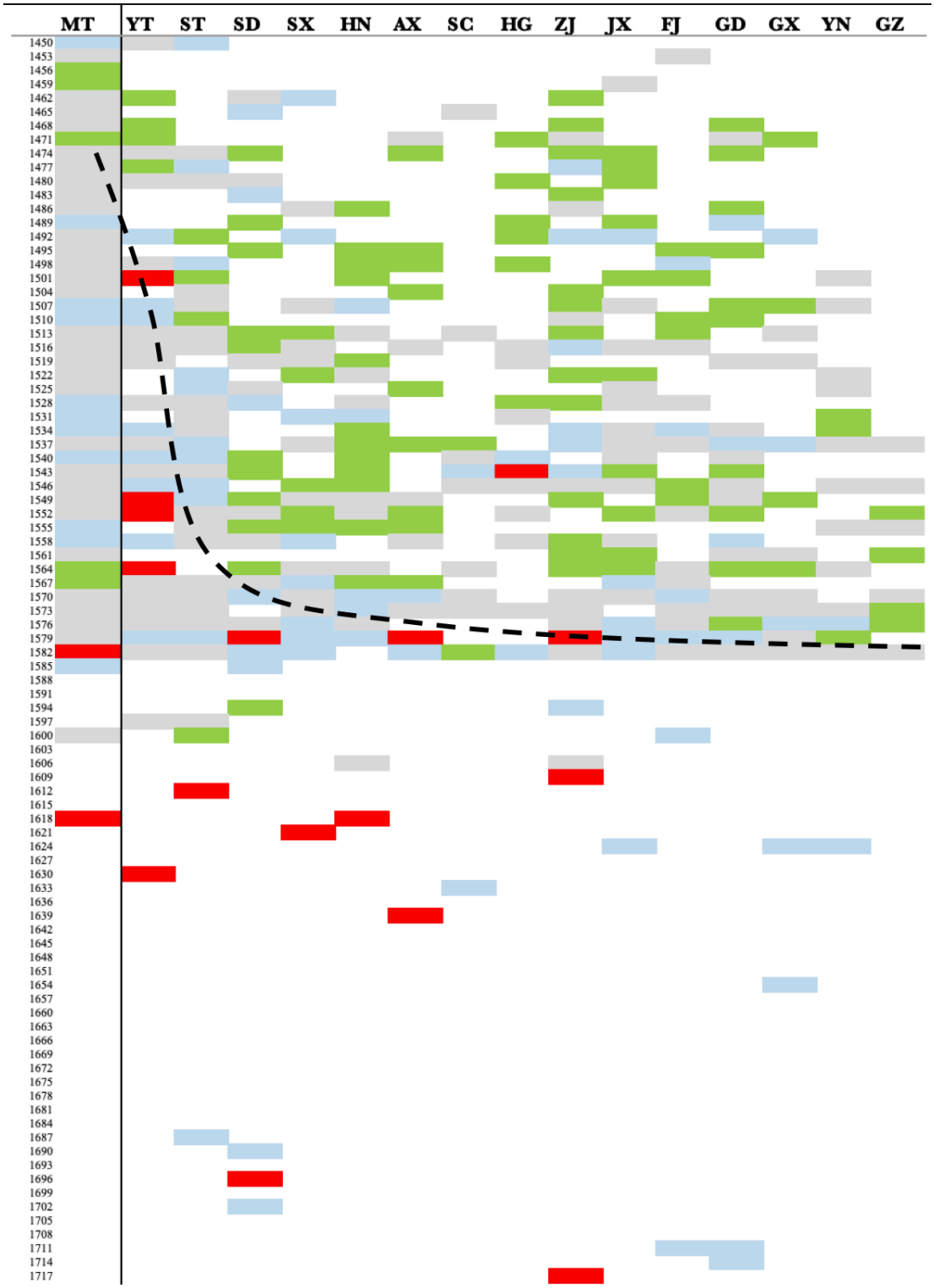


Figure 10 Thematic Distribution of the Memorial Writing Part of the Provincial and Metropolitan Examinations, 1450–1700



To give some examples, the Shaanxi question in 1579 asked examinees to write the memorial of congratulation on the completion of dikes, which is precisely the case study on which I focus on in Chapter Four.[451] In the very same year, the question in Zhejiang asked examinees to imitatively draft the memorial to congratulate the throne for the recent event in which the barbarian leader Altan Khan and the Tibetan Sonam Gyatso pleaded to submit their tributes (擬虜酋俺答率西夷烏思藏鎖南堅參等求貢方物群臣賀表).[452] In Guangxi in 1582, one needed to draft the memorial with which the Ming Academician Li Xian 李賢 (1409–1467) presented the *Grand Gazetteer of the Ming* 大明一統志 to the throne.[453] In other words, these examples from the memorial writing section of provincial examinations reflect a distinct turn to *jingshi* statecraft concerns in the expectation that degree recipients demonstrate concrete knowledge of geography, frontier pacification, and hydraulic management. Moreover, this turn to *jingshi* occurred first in Yingtian and Shuntian during the early sixteenth century, and then to other provinces in the 1570s.

Here, it is worth stressing that the Ming waged three major campaigns from 1592 to 1600—against the Mongols, Japanese, and the tribal leaders in Guizhou. In 1618, the Manchus formally declared war against the Ming, and destroyed the Ming field troops in the battle of Sarhū of 1619. In other words, the changing content of the Ming examinations were not a consequence of the financial and military crises that characterized the last three decades of the empire. Starting from 1618, the memorial questions in provincial examinations were predominantly concerned with the Liaodong frontier, and the ongoing war with the Manchus (see Figure 9). To cite one example, in 1634, the metropolitan examination focused on the military crisis of 1621:

> 擬上覽文書奏遼河西情隨勑吏部都察院諭大小臣工各殫力協心輸忠盡職羣臣謝表天啟元年[454]
>
> The emperor has read the memorials on the situation west of the Liao River. He then orders high and low officials of the Department of Personnel and the Chief Surveillance Bureau to devote all strength, share the same mind, contribute loyal deeds, and fulfill all duties. Imitatively draft the memorial by which all the officials express their gratitude. The first year of Tianqi (1621).

The increasing emphasis upon frontier matters in the 1630s is better understood as the continuation of the development that began in the 1470s. As I shall show in Chapter Six, late Ming rhetorical training became one of the places where the individuals from across the entire empire presented their views on how to counterbalance the rise of the Manchus. For this reason, the Manchu rulers, after their conquest of China in 1644, paid close attention to books, collections, and manuals of memorial writings, and sought to keep many of them out of circulation. While the Manchu dynasty shifted the empire's strategic concern away from the northeastern frontier, the emphasis upon statecraft continued defining the memorial writing section in Qing provincial examinations, as Figure 10 shows. To give only one example, the question of the Shandong provincial examination of 1696 was as follows:

---

[451] TYG XS 5:4393.
[452] TYG XS 8:6497.
[453] TYG XS 10:8366.
[454] Ma Shiqi 馬世奇, *Danning ju wenji* 澹寧居文集 (printed, ca. 1644), Nanjing Library, *juan* 2.

擬上以噶爾丹遠阻聲教親總六師討之神謨獨斷計日蕩平永清沙漠海寓共慶乂安群臣賀表 康熙三十五年[455]

Galdan has blocked the civilizing transformation of distant regions; the Emperor himself has commanded the Six Armies to fight against him. Thanks to his divine judgment and decisions made by Himself, [the Dzungar] were quashed within days, the entire desert was cleansed forever, and the entire realm is celebrating the peace. Imitatively draft the memorial by which the various ministers congratulate the throne for this. The 35th year of Kangxi (1696)

Overall, how the memorial writing section of the civil service examination evolved under Manchu rule is a subject that requires closer analysis in future studies.[456] Here, it suffices to note that especially under Shunzhi (1644-1661) and Kangxi reign (1662–1722), the training laid particular emphasis on how to broach statecraft concerns with a Sinitic document in a Manchu-centered court.

On the Examination (II): Interpreting the Statecraft Turn

The shift from Cluster I to Cluster II reflected in Figures One and Two, as this section will argue, is not only a shift from imitating Tang-Song officials to imitating their more recent (Ming or Qing) counterparts;[457] it involved both a paradigm shift in rhetorical education and the rise of a statecraft theory. Throughout this transformation, three key arguments took full shape from the field of civil service examinations. First, the use of imitation to embody the virtuous characteristics of past officials, a goal of Cluster I examination prompts, was insufficient if one seeks to use memorials to impact the bureaucratic realm. Second, an aspiring or potential official should be equipped not only with knowledge of historical situations, but also with a working knowledge of the activities of specific branches of the bureaucracy and of recent events of significance—ranging from recent construction projects to the pressing situation on the Liaodong frontier. Third, as a consequence of the in-depth knowledge one has of particular situations, it is both possible and imperative to "order the world" (the literal meaning of *jingshi*) through the mundane activities of presenting gratitude or congratulations to him. Although overlooked today, these ideas once exerted far-reaching influences upon intellectual trends in China, a fact that I shall further elaborate upon in the next section. In this section, I shift from distant to close reading. In contrast to the previous chapter which is an in-depth case study of a particular examination question and response, here I take visualized data as a map to guide my textual analyses of a large number of examination prompts, model response, and the examiner comments on the model response.

At first approximation, questions from Cluster I, while emphasizing knowledge of historical figures, events, and styles, required the examinees to speak on behalf of specific, exemplary figures in the past. In doing so, one was supposed to emulate their dispositions, and

---

[455] *Zhongguo keju lu huibian* 中國科舉錄彙編, 13:459–460.

[456] A reason is that due to the Covid-19 outbreak, I am no longer accessible to a variety of Qing sources.

[457] Li Zhuyin, *Mingdai xiang hui shi erchang biaowen yanjiu*, 106. For "the emergence of a new emphasis on contemporary specialized knowledge in sixteenth-century China," see Nathan Vedal, "From Tradition to Community: The Rise of Contemporary Knowledge in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 79.1 (2020): 77–101.

ultimately "approximate the ancients" 庶幾乎古人, as Wang Wei 王禕 (1321–1372), the fourteenth-century rhetorician of Jinhua, emphasized.[458] During the fifteenth century, examiners generally followed this approach. For instance, in 1477, the provincial examination of Shuntian required the candidates to imitatively draft the memorial by which Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), the Daoxue philosopher, thanked the throne for appointing him as palace lecturer. The responses that stood out "utilized Cheng's words in the memorial" 表間用程子語.[459] The examiner further commented that this must be someone "who had read his [that is, Cheng Yi] book and want to emulate his learnings" 嘗讀其書而欲學其學者.[460] To cite another example, in 1543, the provincial examination of Henan required candidates to write on behalf of Fan Zhongyan together with his close colleague Han Qi 韓琦 (1008–1075). A good response, as the examiner underscores, needed show "the supreme integrity of Han and Fan" 韓范立朝大節.[461]

At least in some cases, examiners also expected candidates to utilize such knowledge in ways that addressed the politics of their own times. For instance, the provincial examination of Henan in 1519 required candidates to imitatively write the memorial by which Sima Guang of the Song thanked the throne for his appointment as Administrator of the Remonstrance Bureau (擬宋以司馬光知諫院謝表). On its surface, the question is about Sima Guang and the responsibility of officials of remonstrance (cf the case of Chen Li in Chapter Three). However, one of the co-examiners, in commenting upon the exemplary response, revealed the key to this assignment:

> 司馬光心事，惟以建儲為第一義。此表收尾及之，可與言天下大事矣。讀之終篇不覺起敬。[462]
>
> Concerning what was on Sima Guang's mind, most important was the establishment of the crown prince. This memorial mentions it in the end. [The candidate] is someone with whom one can discuss grand matters of the realm. After reading this, one cannot help but feel respectful [toward the candidate].

In 1061, when Sima Guang was appointed to the Bureau of Remonstrance, the court officials were deeply worried about the fact that the emperor—Renzong of the Song 宋仁宗 (1010 – 1063)—had no successor because all his sons had died prematurely.[463] A qualified examinee of 1519 was expected to demonstrate an awareness of the historical situation of 1061, and on this basis reconstruct Sima Guang's likely concern. Sun Yingkui 孫應奎 (1486–1570), the examinee who produced the exemplary response, closed the memorial on behalf of Sima Guang with the following:

> 伏願……早建元良，軫念宗祧之重。[464]

---

[458] Wang Wei 王禕, *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* 王忠文公集 (printed, 1522), Shanghai Library, *juan* 13. See also QYW 55:731.
[459] TYG XS 2:1079.
[460] TYG XS 2:1079.
[461] TYG XS 4:3436
[462] TYG XS 4:3266.
[463] Li Tao 李燾, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 193.4677.
[464] TYG XS 4:3267.

> Humbly … I hope that [Your Highness] will fully recognize the importance of the continuity of the lineage and establish the crown prince sooner [rather than later].

Broaching this issue of imperial succession, the candidate not only showed his awareness of the historical situation of 1061, but also alluded to the problem affecting his own times. At that moment, in the year of 1519, the ruling emperor—Zhu Houzhao 朱厚照 (1491–1521) or the Zhengde emperor—had neither produced a son nor declared an heir.[465] This is why the examiner praised the candidate as someone capable of handling high politics. Indeed, both the examiner and the examinee can be said to have been clairvoyant. Only two years after this examination was graded, the succession crisis and subsequent Rites Controversy that had plagued Song politics of the 1060s recurred once more, resulting in the Grand Rites Controversy (1521–1524) during which the new emperor and the majority of officials ended up embroiled in lasting and violent confrontations.[466]

In brief, examiners of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries assumed that if a candidate managed to express what an exemplary official in the past had in mind, he was necessarily capable of "discussing grand matters" of state in the present. However, over the course of the sixteenth century, more and more examiners would cast doubt on this assumption. In 1558, examiners of the Shuntian provincial examination made the following observation:

> 人臣進言，□德乃忠之大者，而以達意為難。[467]
>
> Concerning presenting words to the throne, being virtuous is the most important part of loyalty. Difficult is how to convey one's intentions.

The comment was in reaction to Confucius' teaching that "With regard to eloquence, it suffices if it conveys" 辭達而已矣, on which Zhu Xi commented: "eloquence stops at the point one conveys the intention, and does not value abundance and beauty." 辭取達意而止不以富麗為工.[468] In contrast to Confucius and Zhu Xi, who considered the ability to communicate one's thought to be a straightforward task, the examiner's comment makes an alternative argument: even if one embodies various virtues central to loyalty, to convey what is on one's mind to the emperor can still be very difficult. It is plausible to assume that the comment was addressing the contemporary fact that upright ministers were being violently and repeatedly punished because of their loyal words of advice to the throne. During the Grand Rites Controversy, for instance, hundreds of officials at court were beaten, some even to death.[469] However, the examiner's comment had two further implications about the goal of rhetorical training.

The first concerns the fact that, in the provincial examination, a candidate started with exegetical essays on the Four Books and on one of the Classics. The premise behind the decision

---

[465] Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., *Ming shi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 16.210.
[466] See James Geiss, "The Chia-ching reign, 1522-1566," in *Cambridge History of China,* eds. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7:443–450.
[467] TYG XS 1:656.
[468] Zhu Xi 朱熹 ed., *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016), *Lunyu*, 15.170
[469] Against this backdrop, in 1534, an examiner of the provincial examination of Yingtian noted in his comment that "the words by which ministers spoke to the throne are the hardest to present." 臣子對君之辭最不易言. TYG XS 2:1337.

to prioritize this section of the examinations by placing it first was that meditating on classical texts in this way was supposed to cultivate the virtue of students preparing for the exams. With this in mind, it becomes clear that the comment cited above implies that this component alone was insufficient to train and select a competent politician capable of conveying his good intentions in the political realm. The second implication concerned the section of the examination in which one composed the sub-genre of memorials that required the use of four-six parallel prose.[470] In doing so, one had to follow strict euphonic rules, while citing a variety of classical allusions as well as literary tropes. Even though these memorials presupposed the emperor was the audience, they radically depersonalized the emperor. The challenge, in other words, was *not* how to find a way to express oneself to the emperor based on the specific personalities of the latter. Instead, it concerned how to articulate sophisticated ideas by means of a formulaic genre that required "flowery" 華 languages.

If one's virtue alone does not guarantee one's ability to express oneself efficiently through these genres, what kind of training would help? Liang Chu 梁儲 (1451–1527), when serving as the Chief Examiner of the provincial examination of Shuntian of 1501, explored this question. The assignment he designed was to ask the examinees to compose the Imitative Draft by which Kou Zhun of the Song Expressed Gratitude for His Appointment as State Finance Commissioner 擬宋以寇準為三司使謝表.[471] Liang detailed his expectation in his comment to the exemplary response that he had selected:[472]

> 萊公志大才高，議論頗英發，然亦有疏處。此表設以身、處其地、代其言。顧詳審周密如此。使公在當時見之，不知果謂何如耳。[473]
>
> Laigong's [Kou Zhu] aspiration is grand, his talents, high. His discussions are quite outstanding and impressive, but there are moments of deficiency. With this memorial, [the candidate] imagines himself [in the position of another], dwells upon [Kou's] situation, and speaks on Kou's behalf. It is so meticulous and prudent. Assuming that [Kou Zhun] had read this, I don't know what he would have thought.

This comment starts with a subtle understanding of the relationship between moral disposition and political speech. Accordingly, a certain moral character—for instance, having grand aspirations—allows one to offer impressive addresses; but this same praiseworthy characteristic could also constrain one's speech, to the extent that he would fail to communicate effectively all the subtle nuances of one's thoughts. If an outstanding moral character does not guarantee a best memorial in all circumstances, what should the examinee do then?

Zhu Xi, in his commentary to the *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸 advises that "[The ruler should] place oneself in another's position in order to know his heart." 設以身處其地而察其心也.[474] For Zhu Xi, the ideal ruler was to exercise his imaginative power, assuming that he were a

---

[470] For the actual use of these memorials in the Ming bureaucracy, see Zi Wang, "Dilemmas of Empire: Movement, Communication, and Information Management in Ming China, 1368–1644" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017), 133-137.
[471] TYG XS 1:151.
[472] Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, *juan* 190, 5040.
[473] TYG XS 1:151.
[474] Zhu Xi ed., *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, *Zhongyong*, chapter 20, p.30.

minister.[475] Building upon Zhu's argument on imaginative empathy, Liang Chu redefined the rhetorician's task: he should imagine himself in a specific situation, so as to determine the most apposite turns of phrase. In Kou's case, given that he was taking up the position of State Finance Commissioner, prudence and meticulousness—which Kou lacked in actual fact—was of pivotal importance. Having realized this, the examinee was in a position to produce an excellent imitative draft on behalf of Kou, which, in Liang's view, would be even better than what the actual Kou Zhun would have produced, at least from the perspective of its rhetoric. In essence, Liang had alluded to the potentials of imitative drafting to explore counterfactual historical themes, a point that I shall return in the next chapter. Here it suffices to note that Liang was shifting the focus of training from imitating the worthies of the past—either their language or their personality—to improving upon the flaws of great men of the past based on concrete understanding of the specific situations. Put differently, the key to the ability to communicate appropriately in a particular political or bureaucratic context—such as in the position of State Finance Commissioner—does not lie in a perfect moral character; instead, it lies in a critical awareness of what kind of situation requires what kind of disposition.

Mid-sixteenth-century examiners would further develop Liang's argument, the consequence of which was that examinees would sharpen their skills at finding the right language to articulate their thoughts. In 1537, the Shanxi provincial examination asked examinees to compose an "Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Zhang Sixun of the Song Presented the New Armillary Sphere." 擬宋張思訓進新渾儀表. An "armillary sphere" is an object that models the position of celestial bodies, including the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars. In presenting this instrument to the throne, the rhetorician's task was to introduce what it was, and why it mattered for the regime. In the examiner's terms, the challenge concerned how to illustrate the normative principles, "the Way" 道, with reference to the concrete "instrument" 器 at hand.[476] The exemplary response from this examination prompt began the memorial by succinctly exposing the importance of observing Heaven and following its patterns (on the principle that the patterns of the heavens are normative and so ought to be put into practice in the human realm). Then, it narrowed down its focus to the significance of the armillary sphere itself, a tool used to better comprehend the heavenly patterns. Having acknowledged that the ancient ways of building "the armillary sphere, together with the institutions for maintaining it, have long been in decay" 渾儀之制久廢,[477] the memorial briefly explains the current design, as reconstructed from the ancients:

---

[475] Based on a full appreciation of the circumstance of the minister, the ruler will then be able to discern the heart or intention of his minister. Zhu's argument is further derived from his belief, it pays to note, that "all human beings," from the emperor to commoners, shared a same affective and cognitive "heart" (人同此心). For a very provocative reading of this passage, see Ling Hon Lam, *The Spatiality of Emotion in Early Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 63. Rather insightfully, Lam has pointed out that Zhu does not mean that one's heart has "hidden his innermost self;" however, I do not think that Zhu's theory "makes sense with this notion of the heart, which entails the extreme exteriorization of emotion."

[476] "In reading [the memorial, I have the feeling that] the Armillary Sphere appears before my eyes. If not someone who really comprehends the Way and the instrument, who else is capable of doing this!" 讀之渾儀在目，非達于道器者，其誰能之！ TYG XS 3:2680

[477] TYG XS 3:2681. For Zhang Sixun's "On the Design and the Institution of Armillary Sphere," 敘渾儀制度 see QSW 5:332.

地隱天中，盡地輪、地足、地軸，	The earth is hidden in the heaven [in this model], delineated by the earth wheel, earth edge, and earth axle.
奩浮水上，周中闕、小闕、定闕。[478]	Its case floats over the liquid, surrounded by the middle pivot, the small pivot, and the fixed pivot.

After laying out these details, the memorial then reminds the throne that a minister is merely capable of producing such a mechanical device; it is up to the throne to put the way of the Heaven into practice—or, in the words of the memorial itself, "to elevate the ten thousand states to the great plan, returning all to the Yellow Orbit." 升萬國于大猷同歸黃道.

To cite another example, in 1546, the Jiangxi provincial examination required candidates to write an "Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Ministers Thanked the Throne for Bestowing the *Selected Essentials of Medical Prescriptions*." 擬頒賜醫方選要群臣謝表. As such, the examiners expected the candidates to elaborate on what it meant that the throne promulgated a collection of medical prescriptions. The exemplary response began by eulogizing the emperor for "taking [the sickness of his] people as injuries [to his own body]" 視民如傷. Thus, "deep is his considerations [for the people]; grandiose is his way of ordering the world." 深懸孔思經世洋洋. Having broached the parallel between the health of the people and the ordering of the realm, the responses then explored the double meaning of the word *zhi* 治—that is, to cure a physical body, on the one hand, and to govern the realm properly by remedying problems, on the other.[479]

In both of the aforementioned essay prompts, the expectation was no longer that examination candidates would emulate the moral characteristics of specified officials—be it the tenth-century early Song astronomer Zhang Sixun, or the unspecified court ministers in the last example. Instead, both assignments required candidates to invoke a specific body of knowledge—astronomical or medical, respectively—as a starting point to lay out the vision of an idealized polity that delineates clearly the throne's responsibility. It is worth stressing that the essay prompts did not in fact promote some technocratic ideal, by which experts of specialized fields were recruited to rule the regime (see Chapter Four); instead, it instantiated the further development of the rhetorician's ideal of eloquence. Accordingly, every aspiring official should have some basic knowledge of a wide range of different fields, and be able to express his intentions in the context of all kinds of different situations.

In 1564, the examiners in Shanxi delved into the relationship between virtue, eloquence, and statecraft knowledge. The prompt read "Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Qiu Jun, Right Vice Minister of Rites, Presented *Supplements to the Extended Explications of the Great Learning*" 擬禮部右侍郎丘濬進大學衍義補表.[480] The examiner's comments on the exemplary response states:

> 文莊平生經濟之略，備在此書。子能悉其忠悃之實，而發以驕麗之詞，可謂盡其心事矣。[481]

[478] TYG XS 3:2681.
[479] TYG XS 6:5199.
[480] TYG XS 4:2858
[481] TYG XS 4:2858

> Wenzhuang's [i.e. Qiu Jun] considerations for ordering the world and saving the people throughout his life are all here. You [the candidate] are capable of completely understanding his substantive loyalty and sincerity, and articulating it with flamboyant and splendid words. This memorial, one may say, has fully represented what is in his mind.

In his *Supplements to the Extended Explications of the Great Learning*, Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1421–1495) offered statecraft knowledge for a whole range of fields: personnel, currency, state finance, and the administration of the military, among other themes. Despite the book's comprehensive coverage, it does not fully represent "what is in his mind." Statecraft considerations, together with his moral qualities of "loyalty and sincerity," still needed to be expressed and thereby brought into the courtly realm of political communication. It pays to note that the comment is not a defense of belletrism, even though it praised the examinee for "flamboyant and splendid" language. Quite the contrary, it articulates a particular notion of political duty that would define rhetorical education in the following decades: Even under the very circumstances where communication required ornate, well-crafted, and eulogistic languages, it is still normative to reveal one's moral disposition and explicate problems of statecraft considerations, synthesizing all these elements into eloquent speeches that effectively admonish the throne.

Up to the 1560s and 1570s, a different approach to rhetorical training came into maturity. Accordingly, candidates no longer spoke on behalf of prominent figures in the past, but from the perspective of unspecified ministers of the present; instead of emulating the virtues of past figures, or using past figures to comment on problems of statecraft, model examination essays examined a whole range of recent state affairs. It is these sorts of examination assignments that formed the core of Cluster II in Figure 9. For instance, in the provincial examination of Shaanxi in 1570, the prompt reads:

> 擬三殿工成欽定名額頒示中外廷臣賀表[482]
>
> Imitative draft of the memorial by which court ministers congratulate the throne on the following event: three palaces have been constructed, and the emperor has named them respectively, and announces this decision to the realm.

Critically, the question did not inform candidates of the specific names of these three palaces. The examinee who authored the exemplary response started his memorial by showing his knowledge of current state affairs:

> 嘉靖四十一年某月某日，恭遇大工告成，欽名三殿曰皇極中極建極；左右樓曰文昭武成；門曰會極、歸極。[483]
>
> In such-and-such month of such-and-such day of the forty-first year of the Jiajing era [1562], [I] respectfully came across [the news] of the completion of the grand construction. The emperor himself named the three palaces the August Pole, the Middle Pole, and the Established Pole; the left and right pavilions were called Literary

[482] TYG XS 5:4320.
[483] TYG XS 5:4320.

Illuminations and Military Achievements; the gates were called Meeting of the Poles, and the Return of the Poles.

The building of new palaces conjures mixed connotations in political theory of the times. On the one hand, the architectural design of the palaces instantiates the political and cosmological order over which the emperor presides. On the other hand, the expenditure of resources to construct grand buildings exemplifies the imperial vice of extravagance. The examiner's comment illustrates this ambivalence. The examiner's comment is perhaps suggestive of this ambivalence:

土懋鼎新，名崇三極。先皇弘功，未易揄揚。[484]

New buildings have been erected on the ground; they are honored with the names of Three Poles. This grand achievement of the previous emperor is not easy to elaborate and amplify.

Thus, a good answer to the prompt ought to eulogize the throne for his achievement in rebuilding the political order as embodied by the imperial residence, while simultaneously admonishing against the pursuit of extravagance. Likewise, examiners in the late sixteenth century would describe a competent response as follows:

忠愛溢於鋪敘之外，規諷舍於陳謝之中。[485]

[The examinee's] loyalty to the realm and love of the throne flows out of his narrative [of the event]; the admonitions reside within his expression of gratitude.

The comment re-iterates a basic goal of memorials, that is, to express one's "loyalty [to the realm] and love [of the throne]"; simultaneously, it makes it explicit that a competent rhetorician would not try to separate admonitions and political thought, on the one hand, from belletrist practices and the production of routine bureaucratic communication, on the other. Instead, he would take the latter as a "residence" (*she* 舍) of the former.

By the turn of the seventeenth century, the consensus had well been forged that such training was foundational to "ordering the world." *Mingshan ye* 名山業 ([Examination] Work [that Deserves to be Preserved] in Famous Mountains), a popular reference book for the civil service examination, succinctly explains that "the way of ordering the world and saving the people dwell in the parallel prose [of the memorials]." 排偶之中自寓經濟.[486] Here, the official documents in parallel prose are further metaphorized as the "house" (*yu* 寓) of statecraft. Prominent scholars soon followed suit in expressing this principle. Chen Wenzhu 陳文燭 (1525–ca.1600), an influential intellectual in Nanjing, traced this tradition back to antiquity, when prefacing the collection of imitative writings (and other compositions) that trainees of the Hanlin Academy produced (see Chapter Four):

---

[484] TYG XS 5:4320.

[485] TYG XS 5:3681

[486] The book itself does not seem to have survived. Recited from Wang Zhiji 王之績, *Tieli wenqi* 鐵立文起, in JBGJ, *houbian juan* 9. For another example, see Wang, Shizhen 王世貞 ed, *Er san chang jingji kao* 二三場經濟考 (printed, 1628-1644), Hubei Provincial Library.

> 湯武代興。而伊尹之訓。周公之詩。郁郁乎文哉。即三代有道之長。而當時所以經世者。何嘗一日不在朝廷之上邪？[487]
>
> When Tang [of the Shang] and [King] Wu of [the Zhou] rose, [there came] the Admonition of Yi Yin and the poems of Duke Zhou. Illustrious are these words. These were the leaders of the Way of the Three Dynasties [of the antiquity]. Did [concern with] the ordering of the world ever leave the court for a single day?

In this way, Chen argues both that the way of statecraft resides in official documents and that it was not a recent or contemporary phenomenon. Indeed, this was how things worked in antiquity, when the sage kings ordered the world with the documents and teachings they issued from the court. Chen, accordingly, characterized this ideal as "world-ordering grand eloquence" (*jingshi hongci* 經世宏辭), and contended that this should be the ultimate goal of the rhetorical education. The seventeenth-century scholar and philosopher Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692) would repeat this point. In his words, memorial writing, if properly designed, should allow examination candidates to "practice and learn the way of ordering the state and assisting the people." 習知經國長民之道.[488] Following Wang, Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801), a member of the very last generation of intellectuals trained to produce imitative writings for examinations, would further develop this thread. Over the course of the twentieth century, Zhang was rediscovered as the grand philosopher of the eighteenth century.[489] It is often claimed that the originality of Zhang's statement lies in the fact that he historicizes the classics, treating them as official documents of the ancients. This interpretation results from ignoring what Ming examinees and thinkers—as represented, for example in *Mingshan ye* or the writings of Chen Wenzhu—had struggled to articulate. For example, at the very beginning of his *Wen shi tongyi* 文史通義 (Comprehensive Studies of the Literary and Historical), Zhang wrote a key statement that has often been misunderstood and so requires some explanation:

> 六經皆史也。古人不著書。古人未嘗離事而言理，六經皆先王之政典也。[490]
>
> The Six Classics are all documents of the historical [regimes].[491] The ancients did not compose books [for themselves]. The ancients never discussed [abstract] principles apart from [concrete] things. The Six Classics are all canons of governance of previous kings.

---

[487] *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* 增定國朝館課經世宏辭 (printed, 1591), Shanghai Library.

[488] Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, *E meng* 噩夢, in XSKQS 945:23.

[489] David S. Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsüeh-Ch'eng, 1738-1801* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), esp. 1–12; Yu Ying-shih 余英時, *Lun Dai Zhen yu Zhang Xuecheng* 論戴震與章學誠 (Taipei, Sanmin, 2016), 55–69; Yamaguchi Hisakazu 山口久和, *Shō Gakusei no chishikiron: kōshōgaku hihan o chūshin to shite* 章學誠の知識論：考證学批判を中心として (Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1998).

[490] Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, *Wen shi tong yi jiaozhu* 文史通義校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 1.

[491] This thesis is often misread as "the Six Classics are all histories." Here, what Zhang actual meant by *shi* 史 is the official documents that ancient scribes produced. For in-depth discussion, see Yamaguchi Hisakazu 山口久和, "Shō Gakusei *Bun shi tō gi* no genko kan" 章学誠『文史通義』の言語観, *Kenkyū ronshū* 97 (2013): 125–143.

Zhang was drawing insight from the field of rhetorical training, attacking the dualism that separates ordinary affairs or concrete "things" on the one hand from profound principles on the other. For Zhang, once one has overcome this dualism, one is not only in a position to craft official documents that contribute to the ordering of the world, one also gains a vantage point to rethink the overall methodology of humanistic studies.

In sum, this section has shown that the memorial writing section of the civil service examination was tied to a sophisticated theory linking eloquence to statecraft, and writing to thought. While its far-reaching impact deserves further attention in future studies, in the next section I shall focus on just one way it reshaped the intellectual mainstream in China.

Beyond the Examination (I): From Memorial Writing to Statecraft Learning

It is well known that *jingshi* statecraft, though having a long history in China,[492] emerged as the center of a series of intellectual movements in the late imperial China—especially during the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.[493] Though a large body of valuable studies has been published on how a particular person (or group of people) approached *jingshi* statecraft, there is a lack of extant studies on the long-term transformations of this idea. As a result, it remains unclear what *jingshi* "did and did not mean," as William Rowe has pointed out,[494] and how it evolved prior to the dynastic crises of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, as Benjamin Elman and Yang Nianqun 楊念群 have respectively noted.[495] This section addresses these two questions from a new perspective. Instead of seeing *jingshi* as a mere concept, I approach it as a node—or rather a cluster of nodes—through which a great variety of persons and actions, texts and contexts, institutions and movements, clichés and innovations were interconnected to each other. More specifically, I contend that the *jingshi* movements that developed in late imperial China were derived from, indebted to, and in reaction against the practices and theories emerging from the civil service examination of which memorial writing was a constitutive part.

In the 1550s, Hu Zanzong 胡纘宗(1480–1560), a native of Shaanxi and a capable administrator involved in hydraulic management, wrote down his own reflections on the examination curriculum:

> 舉闈判語，於藝文無補，於律法不相涉……愚欲改擬漢唐宋奏議一道，以觀諸士子入官事君之端，幾欲奏請而竟未也。[496]

---

[492] For recent studies on *jingshi* in early and medieval China, see Zhang Guogang 張國剛, *Zhi shu Zhou Qin Han Tang de jingshi zhi dao* 治術 周秦漢唐的經世之道 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2020); Conrad Schirokauer and Robert Hymes, "Introduction," in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[493] See Frederic Wakeman, "The *Huang chao jing shi wen bian*," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 1.10 (1969): 8–22; Peter Mitchell, "A Further Note on the *Huang chao jing shi wen bian*," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 2.3 (1970): 40–46; Chang Hao, "On the Ching-shih Ideal in Neo-Confucianism," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3.1 (1974): 36–61; Huang Kewu 黃克武, "Jingshi wenbian yu Zhongguo jindai jingshi sixiang yanjiu" 經世文編與中國近代經世思想研究, *Jindai Zhongguo shi yanjiu tongxun* 2 (1982): 83–96. Catherine Jami et al. eds., *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[494] William Rowe, *Saving the World: Chen Hongmou and Elite Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3.

[495] Benjamin Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 451. Yang Nianqun 楊念群, *Bai nian Qingshi yanjiushi: Sixiang wenhua juan* 百年清史研究史 思想文化卷 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2020), esp. 56–85.

[496] Hu Zanzong 胡纘宗, *Yuanxue bian* 願學編, in JBGJ, *juan* 2.

> Within the examination, the composition of legal judgments does nothing to supplement [training in] literary writing, and has nothing to do with the legal codes. … I aspired to replace [legal judgments] with one imitative writing of Tang or Song [memorials of] proposal and discussion, so as to observe the foundation from which candidates would enter officialdom and serve the monarch. I almost wanted to memorialize the throne, but eventually I did not submit it.

While the sixteenth-century examiners were expanding the topics and themes covered in the memorial writing section of the examination, Hu Zanzong proposed that this was not sufficient. For him, candidates should not only write memorials of expression, but also those of proposal and discussion 奏議, the very genres that would allow candidates to engage in statecraft discussion at another level—that is, to propose what the state should do and/or to discuss the pros and cons of different policies. Hu's words instantiated a broader intellectual horizon where elites of different backgrounds ruminated over the limits of the official document writing part of the examinations. During this process, they further developed the idea of *jingshi* that was taking a more and more sophisticated shape in the field of civil service examination.

It is well known to historians of the Chinese book that starting from the 1560s, an increasing number of printed books featured the term *jingshi* or *jingji* in their titles.[497] These late Ming efforts culminated in the *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編 or the *Ming Statecraft Collection*, published in 1638, which in turn laid a model for at least 23 books published during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[498] The publication of these titles—which happened in the context of a flourishing print culture, the development of literary associations or societies, and pressing dynastic crises—has been the subject of close analyses.[499] Here I shall not repeat arguments that other scholars have made. Nevertheless, the ways by which these books built upon on-going efforts to reform the examination—and especially those of memorial writing—demands closer attention.

A much-overlooked phenomenon is that many of these statecraft collections started with the kind of memorials that could have appeared in the provincial and metropolitan examinations. For instance, the very first of the five hundred volumes of the grandiose *Ming Statecraft Collection* featured the following two memorials:

(a) 進大明律表 Memorial Submitting the *Code of the Great Ming*
(b) 進元史表 Memorial Submitting the *History of the Yuan*[500]

These memorials echoed with a variety of assignments that had appeared in real provincial and metropolitan examinations over the course of the Ming, for example, (a) in Zhejiang in 1471 and Guangxi in 1582 (on the *Grand Gazetteer of the Great Ming*), in Henan in 1531 (on the *Collected Rituals of the Great Ming*), in Sichuan in 1546 (on the Ming calendar), in Shuntian in 1549 and Shaanxi in

---

[497] See for instance Xie Yang 解揚, "Wan Ming jingshi leishu bianzuan de shiyong zhuiqiu" 晚明經世類書編纂的實用追求. *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo xuekan* 8 (2013): 445–471.
[498] Huang Kewu, "Jingshi wenbian yu Zhongguo jindai jingshi sixiang yanjiu," 86.
[499] William S. Atwell, "From Education to Politics: The Fu she," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 333–358; Han Chenghua 韓承樺, "Pingjie liang'an youguan jingshi wenbian de yanjiu gaikuang" 評介兩岸經世文編的研究概況. *Shi yuan* 23 (2011): 205–238.
[500] Chen Zilong 陳子龍 et al. eds., *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編, in SKJH, *jibu* 22:120-121.

1582 (on the *Collected Statutes of the Great Ming*); and (b) in the metropolitan examination in 1477, in Henan in 1552, in Shandong in 1558, and in Guangdong in 1561 (all submitting the History of the Tang). Of course, of the over 3,300 pieces incorporated into the *Ming Statecraft Collection*, no more than a handful are such memorials of expression 表 that could have appeared in examinations. Over two thousand are memorials of explanations 疏—that is, memorials sent to the throne to unpack a problem to the throne while proposing solutions. Many others are memorials of proposal 奏 and discussions 議—genres that Hu Zanzong sought to add into the provincial and metropolitan examinations. Ultimately, as the compiler Xu Fuyuan 徐孚遠 (1600–1665) and Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608–1647) put it in the very first entry of the organization principles of the collection, these pieces were supposed to "elaborate and amplify the grandiose and the beautiful" 揄揚盛美, which is precisely the default criteria for memorial writing in the examinations.[501]

This is not to deny, however, that the *Ming Statecraft Collection* did not deepen the line of criticism of the examination curriculum that previous Ming authors had expressed in more moderate tones. In his preface to this book, Feng Mingjie's 馮明玠 (*jinshi* 1622) asserted:

> 利祿之路既繇科目，科目之設必以文辭……所以經世之術皆壞在文字之中、語言之內，荒唐紕繆為弊已極……[502]
>
> The road to official salaries is premised upon civil service examination, and the civil service examination test nothing but writing and eloquence. … For this reason, the practice of ordering the world decays within the realm of words and speeches. Ridiculous, fallacious, it is extremely corruptive.

This statement has since long been read as a critique of the famous or infamous eight-legged essays, that is, the first part of the three-part examination. However, in the seventeenth-century context, the line's primary criticism in fact concerned the writing of memorials and policy essays. Feng proposed an alternative approach to understand different dimensions of *jingshi*:

> 有經世之才，必濟以經世之學。有經世之識，始抒為經世之文。才與學與識兼備，而人**重**焉，雖無文可也。才與學與識兼備，而文行焉，雖欲無文而亦不可得也。[503]
>
> If one has the talent to order the world, one must have been assisted by the learning of ordering the world. After being equipped with the wisdom of ordering the world, one can then produce writings on ordering the world. If talent, learning, and wisdom are complete, then one's person is weighty—it is fine even if one lacks literary ability (*wen*). Talent, learning, and wisdom being complete, his literary skill (*wen*) itself will be effective—even if he does not want to have literary skill, it is impossible.

[501] Chen Zilong et al. eds., *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, in SKJH, *jibu* 22:49.
[502] Chen Zilong et al. eds., *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, in SKJH, *jibu* 22:31.
[503] Chen Zilong et al. eds., *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, in SKJH, *jibu* 22:30.

The keyword "weighty" (*zhong* 重) alludes to Confucius' teaching that "if a noble person lacks weightiness, then he is not authoritative; his learning will not be solid." 君子不重則不威學則不固.[504] A person of such weightiness—a quality often assumed to imply reticence—is already complete, according to Feng. Even if he does not venture to pursue literary skills, he is already equipped with such skills and his speeches and writings must be effective (*xing* 行)—an allusion to the *Zuo Tradition*: words without literary skills do not reach afar. 言之無文行而不遠. Accordingly, Feng was not so much discrediting eloquence, but rather sublating it under the complex of talent-learning-wisdom. Thus, in the end, Feng preached:

> 吾願世之有志經世者，斂其才識而一用之於學。豈惟多識畜德，為世鉅儒；雖以阿衡管葛自處可也。何利祿之足云？[505]
>
> I hope that those who have the aspiration to order the world will conceal their talents and wisdom and devote themselves to learning. This is not just to broaden one's wisdom and to nurture virtue, so that one can be a grand Confucian scholar; [as such] one conducts oneself as E Heng [that is, Yi Yin], Guan Zhong and Zhuge Liang. How can benefits and salaries be worth mentioning?

Yi Yin 伊尹 (ca.16th century BC), Guan Zhong 管仲 (ca.725–645 BC) and Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) lived as recluses before the ruler came to them, inviting them to assume grand councillorships and thereby to take part in the ordering of the world. Accordingly, while the Ming examination curriculum required every candidate to practice the art of memorial writing to prepare for their future career, Feng was arguing that even if one has no intention to participate in the examination, there were still reasons to read through the collection of over two thousand pieces of memorials of different kinds. Thus, Feng's preface is by no means a manifesto that seeks to divorce the pursuit of eloquence from that of statecraft; instead, it seeks to divorce the ordering of the world from the pursuit of an actual official career. Accordingly, for someone who had no aspiration to serve the throne, he should not confine himself to cultivating morality, contributing to lineage organizations, or promoting local welfare. Instead, he, too, should be equipped with the "talent, learning, and wisdom" that would allow him to speak eloquently and convincingly through bureaucratic genres and on concrete matters of imperial governance. Ironically, this is precisely the goal of the imitative writing session of the examination system that Feng castigated, which required every candidate to be able to speak on behalf of officials, even though they were not (yet) employed.

Feng's preface, in sum, instantiates a way by which seventeenth-century thinkers sought to reassemble the relationship between eloquence and statecraft. It goes beyond the purpose of this section and this chapter to enumerate how different intellectuals approached this theme. Here, it suffices to note the discussion so far has offered a new genealogy and new understanding of *jingshi*. Accordingly, *jingshi* statecraft, as developed out of rhetoricians' training, is not so much about pragmatism, legalism, or technocracy, as some previous researchers have asserted. Instead, it instantiated a unique commitment to do things within the realm of official documents. Put differently, this *jingshi* statecraft is about how to broach specific issues, discussions, and proposals

---

[504] Zhu Xi ed., *Sishu zhangju jizhu* , *Lunyu*, Chapter 1, p.150

[505] Chen Zilong et al. eds., *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, in SKJH, *jibu* 22:32.

in a political sphere centered upon a court while mediated through bureaucratic communication.[506]

Beyond the Examination (II): Lost and Regained in Translation

The changing conceptualization of eloquence and statecraft in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century China can offer a new starting point for comparative history and political thought. After all, as Quentin Skinner has famously demonstrated, while fourteenth-century Italy witnessed the re-emergence of Roman rhetorical ideas, in the course of the seventeenth century, the teaching of rhetoric began to be questioned and discredited.[507] Though the parallels between the western and eastern sides of Eurasia are intriguing (see the dissertation Conclusion), here in lieu of closing remarks, I would like to offer a small connected history, involving the reception of Chinese rhetorical training in western Europe.

At the beginning of this chapter, I treated Ricci's and Trigault's descriptions as being clear in meaning. At this point, it should be noted that for early modern European readers, both Ricci's and Trigault's accounts were full of ambiguities. In particular, it was unclear what exactly they thought Chinese examinees should write. According to Ricci, one should compose three *discorsi*, via which one either expresses his view or advises the king. The term *discorsi* refers to a rising genre in northern Italy where Ricci was from. Niccolò Machiavelli brought this genre to the center of intellectual culture with his *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (published with papal authorization in 1531). It is possible to read Ricci as an accommodator, who re-described the Chinese official documents as *discorsi* so as to highlight the richness of the former to his European audience. This approach, however, risks impoverishing the ingenuity of Ricci and his Chinese interlocutors. As shown above, the Chinese during the sixteenth century were explicitly deconstructing the boundaries between official documents, written in formulaic prose, and the profound learning needed to manage the realm. Ricci, in his manuscript, re-advanced this argument.

Reading Ricci, Trigault had noticed that the examinee may only produce one document, instead of three. His Latin translation is thus a compromise between his new information and Ricci's original manuscript. Accordingly, "either one speaks his views via three writings, or one presents a libello to the King" (La: ternis … scriptionibus sententiam suam dicunt, aut Regem dato libello moment). For his European readers, this line was perplexing, and became the focus of misunderstanding and reinterpretations.

---

[506] It might be helpful to compare my understanding with that of Rowe. In his groundbreaking case study of an eighteenth-century official, Rowe proposed that (emphases and numbering being mine):

> In the view of one well-informed scholar the essence of *jingshi* was **(i)** turning away by officials from a normative Confucian style of administration (based on moral exhortation and personal example), **(ii)** a renewed preference for **practical manipulation** of institutions and organizations (a style of governance tainted in the more orthodox view by association with the amoral Legalist agenda), and **(iii) an unabashed acceptance** of pursuing wealth and power as proper political goals. (William Rowe, *Saving the World*, 3)

All these three statements are insightful (though I find terms such as "Confucian style" and "Legalist agenda" ambiguous, if not misleading—no *jingshi* thinkers of the eighteenth century would cast themselves as men turning away from Confucianism). However, it pays to emphasize that both the "practical manipulation of institutions" and "unabashed acceptance" of specific pursuits presupposed discursive engagement within and beyond bureaucratic communications. However, it is true that the question of how to speak to the throne (that is, the eloquence dimension of the *jingshi* ideal) became even more complicated in Manchu-ruled China.

[507] Quentin Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

Both Ricci and Trigault were well aware that after official document writing, examinees proceeded to the third part of the examination, which consisted of policy essays. However, the next generation of Jesuits, who depended on their accounts, ended up conflating the two parts. The writings of Álvaro Semedo, which were first published in Spanish and then in a variety of other languages including English, used a variety of descriptions from Trigault. The published edition is suggestive of how Semedo—and his translators—understood Trigault. In particular, Semedo's account suggested that Chinese candidates wrote three policy essays during the second part of the examination.

Álvaro Semedo, *Imperio de la China, i cultura evangelica en èl, por los religios de la Compañia de Iesus*, 1642	Álvaro Semedo, *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*, 1655
Entran la vez segunda a los doze del mes. Procedese con ellos como con essotros, con la diferencia, de que los puntos que se les dan son solamente tres, i sorbre dudas pueden ocurrir en materias de gobierno, para entender el modo de portarse en ellas, i aconsejar al Rey.[508]	The second time they enter again, on the twelfth day of the month, where they are proceeded with as before, excepting that they give them only three points, concerning such doubts and difficulties, as may occur in matter of government; to understand, how they would behave themselves in it, and how they would advise the King.[509]

Other European readers who had no opportunity to visit China had to try to make sense of Trigault's passage by themselves. Right after the publication of *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas*, a series of vernacular translations were soon published. A close reading of the vernacular renditions offers us unique insight into the ways the translators struggled with the text:

The Vernacular Renditions of the Trigault (1615)	**My Translations of the Vernacular renditions**
D. F. de Riquebourg-Trigault's French translation (1616) Le iour suiuant, … on leur propose trois chose tiree des Annales des anciens, qui sont autre-fois arriuees, ou quelques autre qui pourront à l'aduenir arriuer. Ils dissent chascun leur aduis en trois escrits, ou par vn libelle aduertissent le Roy de ce qui leur semble bon estre à faire en ce cas pour le bien du Royaume.[510]	On the following day, the examinees are provided with three things drawn from the chronicles of the ancients, which took place in the past, or some others that could take place in the future. They each give their views respectively in three writings, or by means of a *libelle* they advise the king with regard to what appears good for them to do in this situation for the good of the kingdom.
German Translation (1617)	

[508] Álvaro Semedo, *Imperio de la China, i cultura evangelica en èl, por los religios de la Compañia de Iesus* (Madrid: Impresso por Iuan Sanchez, 1642), 65.
[509] Álvaro Semedo, *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China* (London: Printed by E. Tyler for John Crook, 1655), 43.
[510] Nicholas Trigault, *Histoire de l'expedition chrestienne au royaume de la Chine entreprise par les PP. De la compagnie de Jesus* (Lyon: Horace Cardon 1616), 57.

Bnnd [sic.] dann uber drey tag drey fäll die sich vor alten Jaren begeben haben/ oder in fünfftig begebe mochten/ uber jeden insodernheit ihr gutachten anzuzeigen wie sich der Ronnig darinn verhalten mocht.[511]	Then on day three, they are given three things that happened in the old years, or may happen in the future. On each particularity he [the candidate] shows his opinion on how the king may behave in the [situation].
Duarte Fernandez's Spanish Translation (1621) El segundo dia, … se les proponent tres cosas sacadas de los anales antiguos, que sucedieron en tiempos passados, o algunas otras que puedé suceder en los venideros, cada uno en trese critos dize su parecer, o en un memorial advierten al Rei lo que en el caso devriá hazerse para prouecho del reino.[512]	On the following day, they are provided with three things taken from the ancient annals, which happened in past times, or some others that may happen in the future. Each [candidate] speaks his opinion in these three cases, or in a *memorial* advises the king what in this case should be done for the benefit of the kingdom.
Antonio Sozzini's Italian Translation (1622) Nell' altro giorno, … li danno trè altri punti, leuati dalle medolle dell' historie Chinesi, ò siano auuenute, ò d'auuenire; e sopra di ciò ciascheduno con trè formule di scriuere, dice il suo parere, ouero fattone memoriale lo dà al Rè: oue dice quello, che è ben di fare per beneficio del Regno.[513]	On the other day, they give him three other points, raised from within Chinese history, either having happened or to happen in the future. And on these, each [candidate], with three formulas of writing, speaks his opinion, or produces a *memoriale* [that] he gives to the King: where he says what it is good to do for the benefit of the Kingdom
Samuel Purchas's English translation (1625) The next day out of the Chronicles, or other three Cases of Politic are propounded, wherein each which three Theames or Writing expresse their minde, or Libel-wise admonish the King what were fittest to be done.[514]	

Two points of confusion are evident in translations of Trigault's Latin rendition of Ricci: What is a *libello*? How is it related to or different from the three "writings"? The French translator, who was also Trigault's nephew, D. F. de Riquebourg-Trigault, used the French cognate *libelle* to translate *libello*. French readers of the times would have been familiar with the genre of *libelle*. But this genre consisted specifically of pamphlets criticizing public figures. Given

511 Nicolas Trigault, *Historia von Einführung der christlichen Religion in das große Königreich China durch die Societet Jesu* (Augsburg: Antoni Hierat von Cöllen 1617), 28.
512 Nicholas Trigault, *Istoria de la China i cristiana empresa hecha en ella: por la Compañia de Iesvs* (Sevilla: Gabriel Ramos Veiarano 1621), 18.
513 Nicolas Trigault, *Entrata nella China dè padri della Compagnia del Gesù* (Napoli: Lazzaro Scoriggio, 1622), 29
514 Samuel Purchas ed., *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Volume XII (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1905-07), Book II, Chapter VII, p. 411.

the political crisis under the regency of Marie de' Medici (1575–1642), the publication of *libelle* reached a new peak from 1614 to 1617, as Christian Jouhaud shows.[515] They "are sold in secret, purchased at a high price, have no value at all—they are worse when coming from a rude, ignorant, and bad-mannered populace," as a 1620 treatise lambasting the genre put it.[516] For Riquebourg-Trigault, however, *libelle* had constructive merits, at least in the context of the imagined Chinese monarchy. This genre was useful, not so much because it fostered an underground public sphere of revolutionary potential, as Robert Darnton argued in the late twentieth century;[517] instead, despite its slandering tone, it "advises" the throne on what to do "for the good of the kingdom." It would be over-interpretation if one ventures to assert that Riquebourg-Trigault imagined the Chinese monarch to be enlightened enough to be receptive of attacks from *libelle*. Nevertheless, given the contested nature of the *libelle*'s context at this time, it is certain that Riquebourg-Trigault was exploring the boundaries that existed between slandering and advising the throne. Moreover, the vehicle he uses here to navigate through those contested spaces is built with his received information about China.

The French translation in effect differentiates the *libelle* from the kind of *escrits* (writing) by which one gives one's opinion. In doing so, the textual surface alludes to the *donneur d'avis*, a type of adviser that flourished under the reign of Henry IV (1533–1610) and Louis XIII (1601–1643)—that is, precisely when the book was published. As Daniel Dessert, Françoise Bayard, and other scholars have demonstrated, starting from the early seventeenth century, the *donneur d'avis* presented summaries of projects to the French king in return for monetary rewards if their ideas were accepted.[518] In other words, a French reader of the 1610s might be left with the following impression about the Chinese examination: either the examinee presents three writings proposing reforming projects to the king in the way that *donneur d'avis* did; alternatively, he advises the king in a critical, almost slanderous, way that was in line with the *libelle* pamphlets.

In his Spanish translation, Duarte Fernandez, citizen of Seville, offers a slightly different interpretation. He suggested that the candidates had the option to present a *memorial* (as he translates *libello* into Spanish) to advise the King, or simply present his opinions to a broader audience. In the Spanish context, *memorial*—just like *libelle* in France—was a flourishing genre. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Spanish elites, having perceived the decline of this once great monarchy, started to propose "remedies" (*remedios*) to their king. A variety of intellectuals, labeled as *arbitristas*, started to author *arbitrios*, which documented the illnesses afflicting the kingdom and proposed reforms. And the same group of persons also published a variety of *memorial*. Representative achievements including Martín González de Cellorigo's famous *Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración a la República de España* (Memorial of the necessary policy and useful restoration of the Republic of Spain) published in 1600.[519] In other words, if a French reader may have found the Chinese examinee doing something similar

[515] Christian Jouhaud, "Les libelles en France au xviie siècle: action et publication," *Cahiers d'Histoire* 90 (2003), 31.
[516] Ibid.
[517] Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), esp. 29–36.
[518] Cf. Daniel Dessert, *Argent, Pouvoir et Sociëté au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1984); Françoise Bayard, *Le Monde des Financiers au XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988).
[519] For the importance of this *Memorial*, see John Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 121.

to a *donneur d'avis* or a *libelliste*, his Spanish counterpart would be sifting the same information through the discursive lens that characterized their *arbitristas*.[520]

The German translation, a highly abridged adaptation the producer of which remains unclear, deliberately simplified the entire passage; as a result, readers were told simply that the examinees wrote their opinions. Nevertheless, the German translator had underscored that examination candidates should write these documents based on the "very particularity of each [situation]" (Ge.: jeden insonderheit [sic.]).[521] Last but not least, Samuel Purchas, the Essex-born abbot who translated Trigault's work into English, found it difficult to render "libelo" into his language. Trying to explain what a *libello* was (or in his term, a "Libel-wise" document), Purchas actually suggested that in the end the examinees were supposed to "expressee their minde," and this is precisely what *biao* 表 (memorial of expression) literally means.[522] Despite the fact that the German and English translators were reading about the Chinese examination through a Latin rendition of Italian writings on China, their interpretative interventions had actually captured two key criteria that the Ming examiners would emphasize—that is, *guijian* 規諫 (to admonish) and *chuqidi* 處其地 (into the situation).

All these translators are minor or even anonymous figures in their own cultural tradition. Even though their translations attested to the popularity of Trigault's work, as I have already stated in the dissertation introduction, the overall impact upon the European intellectual mainstream was probably limited. In other words, it is a sheer mistake if one plays up the impact of these publications about China to construct an argument concerning China's impact on the Enlightenment in Europe. Here, my contention is different. I propose that these minor or even anonymous translators were in their own ways theorizing political speech and communication—just as European missionary travelers and Chinese examiners and examinees were doing in their respective contexts. Their various renditions, in effect, destabilized the boundaries of different political actions: to slander the king, to offer him advice, to sell him projects, to admonish him, to propose reforms vis-à-vis the general public, or to publish treatises on general matters. In their own ways, these European missionaries and translators were making their own contributions to spheres of political communication.

In this sense, I see all the aforementioned figures—from the European translators and Chinese examinees—as everyday philosophers who once took part in a broader picture of global political theory. By the term "global political theory," I do not mean theories of the globalized politics, nor the global circulation of well-known political theories—approaches that other scholars have explored.[523] Instead, I take the global turn as a turn to ideas overlooked in their own traditions, to the voices of ordinary and underrepresented individuals, and to the ways by which these individuals and ideas were entangled with each other through different nexuses. Put

---

[520] See Anne Dubet and Gaetano Sabatini, "Arbitristas. Acción política y propuesta económica," in *La Monarquía de Felipe III*, eds. José Martínez Millán and María Antonieta Visceglia (Madrid, Fundación Mapfre, 2008): 867–870. As Sina Rauschenbach and Christian Windler recently pointed out, until 2016, very few works had analyzed "the parallels" between the French and Spanish movements to improve the financial and overall well beings of these kingdoms—not mentioning the social and political theories behind, which have since long been overlooked. See Sina Rauschenbach and Christian Windler, "Introduction," in *The Castilian 'Arbitristas' and the Cultural and Intellectual History of Early Modern Europe* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 7.

[521] Nicolas Trigault, *Historia von Einführung der christlichen Religion in das große Königreich China durch die Societet Jesu* (Augsburg: Antoni Hierat von Cöllen 1617), 28.

[522] Samuel Purchas ed., *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Volume XII (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1905-07), Book II, Chapter VII, p. 411.

[523] See the various chapters in David Held and Pietro Maffettone eds., *Global Political Theory* (London: Polity, 2016).

differently, global political theory in this sense seeks to situate the "everyday thought" as excavated from local contexts—see Chapter Four—in the broader context through which different locales were interconnected. Taking this approach, the next chapter will zoom in on the transcultural and translocal nexuses in East Eurasia, to excavate counterfactual imaginations and theories of possibilities.

6. Counterfactual Imagination in Seventeenth-Century China and Korea: A Translocal History of East Eurasia

Introduction

Today, imagining counterfactual historical scenarios is a popular practice among amateurs and social scientists. "What if such-and-such had happened otherwise?"[524] These questions are not only fun to think about, but also provide a powerful tool for exploring philosophical themes ranging from individual agency in history to the possibility of justice, as Catherine Gallagher and other scholars have shown.[525] Despite the growing interest in counterfactuality in historical and literary studies, researchers so far have assumed that it was the early modern Europeans alone who, thanks to their "metaphysics of possible worlds" and their tradition of narrative fiction, developed and popularized this form of imagination.[526] This chapter provides an alternative narrative of the development of counterfactualism, broadly understood in the present context as a kind of historical imagination that envisions alternative possibilities that had historical figures acted otherwise.

Soon after the Mongol Empire (1206–1368) made imitative writing on behalf of prominent figures in the past a compulsory component of the civil service examination (Chapter Two), students of rhetorical learning started to press the questions of what historical figures could and should have said, and what would have happened if they had decided to speak/act otherwise. To give an example, in actual history, Zhang Liang 張良 (251–186 BC) convinced the founding Western Han emperor in 206 BC to build his capital in Chang'an. However, one may ask: What if Zhang Liang had decided that the empire should establish its capital instead in Luoyang, another city? What kind of argument would Zhang have offered? And what would have been the outcome had Zhang convinced his emperor to make Luoyang the capital? As described in Chapter Three, Yang Weizhen 楊維楨 (1296–1370) termed this mode of counterfactual exploration "hypothetical rhetoric" 設辭, and developed it as a way of embarking upon historical and philosophical discussions. Because both Ming China (1368–1644) and Chosŏn Korea (1392–1897) subsequently adopted the Mongol-initiated curriculum, millions of individuals in China and tens of thousands in Korea were obliged to write official documents on behalf of prominent figures in the past, as a part of their preparation for the civil service examination (Chapter Four). Not surprisingly, the outcome was the flourishing of counterfactual explorations in the form of "hypothetical rhetoric," to borrow Yang's term, especially in the two regions, namely the Yangzi Delta and the Korean Peninsula.

In what follows, I historicize the development of such counterfactual explorations with a focus on two figures: Xu Yunlu 徐允祿 (1565–ca.1640), a local literatus based in Suzhou, a prosperous city of Ming China;[527] and Cho Ch'anhan 趙纘韓 (1572–1631), a scholar-official of

---

[524] See, for instance, John Collings Squire, *If It Had Happened Otherwise* (London: Longmans, 1931).

[525] Catherine Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't: The Counterfactual Imagination in History and Fiction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018), 1; Roland Wenzlhuemer, "Counterfactual Thinking as a Scientific Method," *Historical Social Research* 34:2 (2009): 27–54.

[526] Catherine Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't*, esp. 2–9. See also Nicholas D. Paige, *Before Fiction: The Ancien Regime of the Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 1–35.

[527] We do not know when Xu Yunlu died. When he wrote his self-portrayal, he was already over 60, and he passed away prior to 1644. See Xu Yunlu 徐允錄, *Simian zhai ji* 思勉齋集 (printed, 1658), Shanghai Library, *juan* 10, "自像題."

Chosŏn Korea.[528] I have chosen these two individuals not merely because their counterfactual imaginations attest to the post-Mongol transformations in the respective regions they inhabited. Tracing their respective, connected, and shared experiences, I explore a relatively new approach to history that I call "translocal history in the Eurasian context." To be more specific, while recent decades have witnessed growing interest in studying the diplomatic relationship and cultural exchange between Ming China (1368–1644) and Chosŏn Korea (1392–1897),[529] I propose that it is no less productive—and indeed sometimes imperative—to think about the connections and parallels between specific locales against the broader backdrop of the East Eurasian sphere. This chapter accordingly examines Cho's and Xu's rhetorical exploration, counterfactual imagination, and political thought through the lens of four geographical arenas of different scale. It will be helpful, therefore, to lay out the four arenas here, from the most expansive to the most particular.

The first is the seventeenth-century East Eurasian sphere, which, together with its changing political landscape, constituted a background shared by both Xu Yunlu and Cho Ch'anhan. While many of Xu's in-laws died during the attacks of the "Japanese" pirates (倭寇 Chinese: *wokou*, Korean: *waeu*; Japanese: *Wakō*), Cho's family simply suffered traumatic losses during the Japanese invasion of Korea (1592–1598).[530] By the 1620s, both were critically aware that the rising Manchu polity would pose a severe threat to their regimes, and both, in their own way, sought to advise the rulers or the decision-makers of the emerging crises.[531] In other words, though Xu and Cho were separated by thousands of kilometers by the land route and had probably not heard of each other, their life worlds were linked together through the common challenges that they faced.

---

[528] For a brief introduction to Cho Ch'anhan's life, see Pak Jeong Min 朴貞珉, "Chosŏn junggi sŏin'gye muninŭi chŏngch'ijŏng pulman'gwa munhakchŏng taeŭng" 조선중기 서인계 문인의 정치적 불만과 문학적 대응, *Tongbanghan munhak* 63 (2015): 217–246; Pak Jeong Min 朴貞珉, "Hyŏnju Cho Ch'anhan ŭi Sinroo Sangryangmun yŏn'gu" 玄洲 趙纘韓의 蜃樓上樑文 연구. *Tongbanghan munhak* 57 (2013): 221–252.

[529] For the inter-state system prior to the fourteenth century, see Furumatsu Takashi 古松崇志, "10-13 seiki takoku heizon jidai no Yūrashia tōhō ni okeru kokusai kankei," 10-13 世紀多国並存時代のユーラシア東方における国際関係, *Chūgoku shigaku* 21 (2011): 113–30. For the Yuan/Koryŏ relationship, see Kim Tangt'aek 金塘澤, *Wŏn kansŏp ha ŭi Koryŏ chŏngch'isa* 元干涉下의高麗政治史 (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1998); David M. Robinson, *Empire's Twilight : Northeast Asia under the Mongols* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009). For the relationship between Chosŏn and Ming/Qing, in particular, Kirk W. Larsen, "Comforting Fictions: The Tribute System, the Westphalian Order, and SinoKorean Relations," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13.2 (2013): 233–257; Timothy Brook et al., *Sacred Mandates: Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), esp. 25–56; Wang Sixiang, "Co-constructing Empire in Early Chosŏn Korea: Knowledge Production and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1392–1592" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015); Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616–1911* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

[530] See Xu Yunlu, *Simian zhai ji* (1658, printing), Shanghai Library, *juan* 9, "自像題." For a recent study of the "Japanese" pirates, see Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang eds., *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550–1700* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016). *Wokou/waegu* was also a serious problem in Chosŏn Korea. See M.S. Seoh, "A Brief Documentary Survey of Japanese Pirate Activities in Korea in the 13th-15th Centuries," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1.1 (1969): 23–39. For Cho's life, for instance, Yun Haengim 尹行恁, *Sŏkchae go* 碩齋稿 (manuscript, late 19th century), Kyujanggak Library (古 3428-270-v.1-11), *kwŏn* 18, "外六世祖玄洲先生墓誌銘 幷序外六世祖玄洲先生墓誌銘 幷序"), also in HMCG:287, 337a.

[531] Prior to 1636, the Manchus refereed to themselves as Jurchens. For the sake of convenience, I shall refer them, both pre and post 1636, as Manchus. For the changing Manchu identity, see Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

The second arena was the polity. Xu and Cho belonged to two different polities, the Ming empire, and the Chosŏn kingdom, respectively, the latter being a vassal or tributary state of the former (see Chapter Five).[532] The two regimes, besides sharing common legacies of Mongol rule and besides maintaining close diplomatic exchanges with each other, established a similar examination curriculum (Chapter Four).[533] It turns out that Xu and Cho were representative of the sorts of individuals who received Sinitic rhetorical educations in their own respective regimes. Xu Yunlu was among millions of ordinary examination candidates in China. Over 99% of them, as Benjamin Elman has shown, would never pass the provincial examination and thus even attain a mid-level *juren* degree.[534] In Chosŏn Korea, however, education in literary Sinitic was confined to a limited number of clans that had monopolized access to the royal bureaucracy. As Edward Wagner and then John Duncan have demonstrated, descendants of old Koryŏ (918–1392) aristocratic clans (*yangban* 兩班) "continued to dominate the examination system" and the Chosŏn bureaucracy.[535] Cho was a descendant of one such clan, the Hanyang Cho 漢陽趙氏 (see Figure 11 for the genealogy). Even though Cho's lineage was in decline (see Section Three below), it was nevertheless enmeshed in the "hereditary factionalism" of Chosŏn politics during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[536] In other words, the similar rhetorical curriculums that the Ming and the Chosŏn had established set another common background of Xu's and Cho's intellectual world, though Xu and Cho differed dramatically from each other in terms of their social and political status.

The third arena was the region or urban center. From the perspective of the distinct promulgated curriculums, the Ming and the Chosŏn should be treated as two distinct entities; however, from the perspective of intellectual cultures, it is helpful to pay attention to the direct connections and parallels not only between the Yangzi Delta and the Korean Peninsula but also between Suzhou Prefecture specifically and the Hansŏng capital area.[537] Beginning in the late thirteenth century, the Mongol court mobilized troops and resources directly from the Yangzi

---

[532] For Chosŏn's status under the Ming, see Wang Sixiang, "Co-constructing Empire in Early Chosŏn Korea," esp.19–44.

[533] During Xu and Cho's times, an increasing number of Chinese and Korean scholars were aware of the similarity and differences between the examination curriculums of the two countries. To give an example, No In 魯認 (1566–1622), who was captured to Japan and find his way to China in 1599, discussed extensively with his Chinese interlocutors about the examination curriculums. See his, *Kŭmgye ilgi* 錦溪日記 (Kwangju: Naju mokhyangt'o munhwa yŏn'guhoe, 1999).

[534] Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), esp. 239–250.

[535] John Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 144. John Duncan ranked the Hanyang Cho as the ninth most powerful clan by the early fifteenth century. See also Yi Sŏng-mu 李成茂, *Chosŏn ch'ogi yangban yŏn'gu* 朝鮮初期兩班研究 (Kyŏnggi-do: Han'guk Haksul Chŏngbo, 2001), esp. 1–39.

[536] On "hereditary factionalism," see James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyongwon and the Late Choson Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), esp. 63–64; on Cho Ch'anhan's line, see Pak Jeong Min 朴貞珉, "Chosŏn junggi sŏin'gye muninŭi chŏngch'ijŏng pulman'gwa munhakchŏng taeŭng," 217–246.

[537] Xu and Cho flourished in two different geographical and cultural zones—namely, the Yangzi Delta and the Korean Peninsula, two regions of about the same size (ca. 210,000 km^2). The population, however, differed. Around 1630, the estimated population of the Korean Peninsula was around 11 million, while that of the Yangzi Delta ranged from 18 to 20 million. See Kwŏn T'aehwan 權泰煥 and Shin Yongha 愼鏞廈, "Chosŏn wangjo sidae in'gu ch'ujŏng e kwanhan ilsiron" 朝鮮王朝時代 人口推定에 關한 一試論, *Tonga munhwa* 14 (1978), 326; cf. Kim Hyŏnyŏng, *Komunsŏ rŭl t'onghae pon Chosŏn sidae sahoesa* 고문서를 통해 본 조선시대 사회사 (Sŏul: Sinsŏwŏn, 2003); Li Bochong 李伯重, *Duo shijiao kan Jiangnan jingji shi* 多視角看江南經濟史 (Beijing: Sanlian, 2003), 143; Cao Shuji 曹樹基, *Zhongguo renkou shi Ming shiqi* 中國人口史 明時期 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2000), 445.

Delta to send to the Korean Peninsula and vice versa, which in turn tightened the direct connections between them.[538] By the fifteenth century, it was the agricultural development specifically in the Yangzi Delta that Chosŏn elites aimed to emulate, as Yi Taejin 李泰鎭, one of the leading historians of the Chosŏn dynasty in Korea, has well pointed out.[539] While Suzhou was a commercial center of the Yangzi Delta, Hansŏng was the cultural and political center of the Korean Peninsula. As we shall see, Xu Yunlu was a native of the Suzhou area and spent his entire life there; similarly, not only did Cho Ch'anhan's clan originated from Hanyang (Hansŏng), his family had been residents of this city for generations (see Figure 12). In this sense, Xu's and Cho's respective experiences help shed light on two vibrant urban centers of the early seventeenth century. It is also worth mentioning that, especially since the sixteenth century, if not earlier, Suzhou and Hansŏng emerged as two key centers of print and intellectual culture.[540] Ultimately, our knowledge of Xu's and Cho's experiences are substantially mediated by the different ways by which elites of Suzhou and Hansŏng utilized printing technologies (see Section Four below).

The fourth arena consisted of the respective *educational institutes*. Xu's social and intellectual life, as we shall see, centered on the Suzhou Prefectural School. Cho, in contrast, was once the Supervisor 學諭 of the Chosŏn royal academy, the Sŏnggyun'gwan 成均館 (literarily, the institute that accomplishes balance). In sum, Xu's and Cho's experiences are about two rhetorician-qua-thinkers, embedded in two very different educational institutions, which were nevertheless located at the heart of two comparable regions and two closely-connected polities, both of which were in turn built upon the post-Mongol order and faced similar challenges.

Xu's and Cho's literary collections, two books that remain understudied in their own right, are key sources for this chapter. Combining other sources ranging from epitaphs and family genealogies to steles, I will situate the making of their rhetorical writings in the very economic, material, social and political contexts in which Xu and Cho once lived. Tracing the histories of each surviving copy of the respective seventeenth-century books, I combine close readings with on-site fieldwork at the Suzhou Prefectural School and the Sŏnggyun'gwan Academy, both of which remain educational institutes today. My argument, simply put, is that while rhetorical education gave rise to counterfactual imaginations in categorically different ways

---

538 Concerning how Korean entertainment culture was brought to the Yangzi Delta during the fourteenth century, see Xi Lei 喜蕾, *Yuandai Gaoli gongnuzhidu yanjiu* 元代高麗貢女制度研究 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2003), 168–172.

539 Yi Taejin 李泰鎭, *Chosŏn yugyo sahoe saron* 朝鮮儒教社會史論 (Sŏul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 1989), esp. 3–10. A deeper background is that slaves remained an important part of seventeenth-century Korean society, while laborers of different forms of dependent status flourished in the Yangzi Delta. For the former, see Edward W. Wagner, "Social Stratification in Seventeenth Century Korea: Some Observations from a 1663 Seoul Census Register," *Occasional Papers on Korea* 1 (1974): 36–54. For a comparative study of household registries in two regions, see Zhu Mei 朱玫, "Shisan shisi shiji Zhong Han hukou wenshu dengzai shixiang de duibi yanjiu" 十三十四世紀中韓戶口文書登載事項的對比研究, in *Zhongguo gu wenshuxue yanjiu chubian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019): 249–262.

540 For a brief overview of printing in Korean history, see Pow-key Sohn, "Early Korean Printing," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 79.2 (1959): 96–103; for printing in China and Korea from world historical perspectives, see Peter Burke and Joseph McDermott, "The Proliferation of Reference Books, 1450–1850," in *The Book Worlds of East Asia and Europe, 1450–1850: Connections and Comparisons*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott and Peter Burke (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), 237–282; for an exemplary study of print culture in eighteenth-century China and Korea, see Suyoung Son, *Writing for Print: Publishing and the Making of Textual Authority in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), 127–195. For the exchange of literature during the seventeenth century, see No Kyŏng-hŭi, *17-segi Chŏnban'gi Han-Chung Munhak Kyoryu* 17 세기 전반기 한중 문학 교류 (Kyŏnggi-do: T'aehaksa, 2015).

in China and Korea, both Xu's and Cho's insights provide potential fodder for rewriting the history of the foundations of modern political thought. Sections Two and Three below examine the worlds of Xu and Cho, allowing me to detail my interventions against more specific arguments in the respective fields of Chinese and Korean histories. Section Four then brings Xu's and Cho's experiences together, situating their political imaginations against the broader narrative of global intellectual history of the seventeenth century.

Xu Yunlu (1565–ca.1640): Excavating Possibilities from the Past

A native of Jiading (modern-day Shanghai), Xu Yunlu entered the Suzhou Prefectural School no later than the 1590s. His grandfather studied there, as did his father, yet neither of them had been able to pass the examination and earn a degree.[541] Nor would Xu Yunlu, although he spent most of his life there, first as a student, and then, as time went on, in a position senior enough to give lectures as an instructor. Just like his father and his grandfather, Xu Yunlu struggled with poverty, to the extent that his wife and sons had to "eat husks, wearing worn-out clothes" 噉糠覆弊衣.[542] Xu earned extra money by writing elaborate letters on behalf of wealthy residents of Suzhou. In other words, while at school, he practiced writing memorials congratulating the throne, as the curriculum required (see Chapter Four), in reality he had to write letters on behalf of local wealthy individuals, congratulating the elders on their birthdays. While Xu Yunlu had never earned a position in the imperial bureaucracy, nor issued official documents in his own name, he was creative in using official documents as genres to make sense of his own surroundings.

This section, far from a full intellectual portrait of Xu, focuses on his counterfactual explorations and his approach to politics, which I call "an archaeology of possibilities." For this purpose, I start by briefly introducing the development of counterfactualism in the training of imitative drafting of official documents. Then, I delve into Xu's particular relationship to the Suzhou Prefectural School in 1621. Finally, I trace the influence of Xu's rhetorical qua counterfactual ventures after the Manchu conquest in 1644.

In the previous chapter, with the aid of data visualization, I have shown that over the course of the sixteenth century, examination assignments requiring the imitative drafting of official documents placed increasing emphasis on the composition of memorials concerning events of the recent past or possible events in the near future. Not reflected in Figures 9 and 10, however, is the fact that some examiners sought explicitly to explore how imitative writing might engage "hypothetical" (*sheshi* 設使 or *shi* 使) scenarios that did not happen in actual history—or counterfactualism, as defined above.

For instance, the provincial examination of Shanxi in 1516 asked the examinees to write an "Imitative Draft by which Hu Anguo of the Song Presented the *Commentary on Spring and Autumn* [to the Throne] Eighth Year of the Shaoxing Era [1138]" 擬宋胡安國進春秋傳表 紹興八年.[543] The prompt informs the examinees that the event happened in 1138. This was nine years after the Jurchen Jin seized the Song capital Kaifeng in 1127, and was at the middle point of the Song-Jin war, which would end in 1142 with a treaty confirming Song's survival yet with a territory confined to southern China. The actual memorial that Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074–1138)

[541] See Xu Yunlu, *Simian zhai ji* (printed, 1658), Shanghai Library, *juan* 10, "東海氏世略."
[542] Ibid., Qian Qianyi, "徐女廉遺集序."
[543] TYG XS 3:2588.

submitted in 1138 had survived at the time of the examination in 1516 and is still accessible today.[544] Hu Anguo's text used the *Classic of Spring and Autumn* to remind the throne that "the barbarians subvert China" 夷狄亂華.[545] In 1516, the exemplary response selected by the examiners further developed this point. This response, in which the Ming examinee (named Zhang Bangjiao 張邦教) wrote on behalf of Hu, advanced a particular political and military agenda for the purpose of avenging the Jin invasion of 1127 and recovering the land lost to the "barbarians." One of the examiners—Xiao Hang 蕭珩—praised this response in the following way:

> 使宋人行此表於紹興之前，可以無中原之虞；行此表於紹興之後，可以無偏安之恥。讀此文尚可為宋人三嘆也！[546]
>
> Let the Song act [or, had the Song acted] in accordance with this memorial before the Shaoxing reign [that is, 1131], there would not have been worries about the Central Plain [being lost to the Jurchens]; let the Song act [or had the Song acted] in accordance with this memorial starting from the Shaoxing reign [that is, from 1131 to 1141], there would not have been the humiliation of the regime being confined to one region. Reading this essay, one cannot help but sigh for the Song over and over!

In some cases, the Ming examiners believed that their examinees, while writing on behalf of prominent Song officials, had produced memorials that were even better than the actual ones that the Song officials themselves had authored (see Chapter Five). Here, the examiner did not compare Zhang Bangjiao's piece with the memorial that Hu Anguo himself submitted. Instead, he ventured to imagine that if the Song decision-makers had read Zhang's memorial and decided to follow what Zhang had proposed, the Song would not have lost the Central Plain.

Xiao's comment is of particular significance in the history of rhetorical training and counterfactual imagination. During the fourteenth century, Yang Weizhen, with his term "hypothetical rhetoric," explored how historical actors could have written otherwise in their documents submitted to the court. When engaging with "hypothetical rhetoric," the rhetorician should immerse himself in a very hypothesized instance, recreating the speech or document of the moment. Though such speeches or documents, like the ones Yang crafted with his circle, often contained implications of what would follow if their recommendations were indeed implemented, the focus was not on the outcome. Unlike Yang, Xiao envisioned counterfactualism in an alternative way that indeed imagined what kind of changes would follow. With the imitative draft of Hu Anguo's memorial, Zhang Bangjiao in 1516 came up with a plan for the Song to defend its territories. As Xiao read it, this imitative memorial crafted in 1516, if it had been available to and adopted by the Song decision-makers either in the 1120s or of the 1130s, would have changed the entire history of the Song. Having realized this, Xiao sighed over and over.

Accordingly, no later than the early sixteenth century, examination candidates, while practicing the writing of official documents, were well aware that behind their re-creation of memorials might lie alternative possibilities of historical trajectories. Students at the Suzhou Prefectural School, as we shall see, were no exceptions. The school was one of the most

---

[544] QSW 146:144.
[545] QSW 146:144.
[546] TYG XS 3:2588.

prestigious institutions in the region, if not the whole of China, enjoying a glorious history that dated back to 1035 CE.[547] It is true that beginning in the 1610s, its fame was eclipsed by the Donglin Academy, a private institution founded in 1606 and centered in Wuxi, about 40 kilometers north of Suzhou.[548] Nevertheless, the Suzhou Prefectural School remained one of the most important public schools, and was home to 380 students with governmental stipends and thousands who supported themselves in other ways.[549]

Up to the late Ming, students and instructors at this school paid close attention to recent state affairs—either because they were concerned with "the affairs of the family, the state and all-under-Heaven" 家事國事天下事, as Donglin educators required their students to be, or because they were concerned with potential examinations in the future.[550] In 1621, the Ming lost another decisive battle to the Manchus, as a result of which it lost most of its territory in Manchuria.[551] The news of the military fiasco soon arrived from the frontier to the Prefectural School of Suzhou.[552] The threat was remote, but instructors and students were discussing its impact, and Xu Yunlu, the student-turned-instructor of this school, was among the most enthusiastic debaters: "Whenever talking about … the grand affairs of the military and of politics, he gathered up his gown, straightening his hat—he participates in the discussions and debates, [his words] gushing out [like torrents]" 談及……軍國大事攝衣整冠論辯鑾涌.[553]

Given the emerging situation of 1621, after which the Manchus had taken all territories east of the Liao River, as Xu reasoned, the capital of Beijing was exposed to direct Manchu attack. Thus, for the safety of the throne and the imperial government, the court needed to relocate itself to the south. Having reached this conclusion, Xu decided to do something, even though he held no official position at all. He sought to initiate a public awareness campaign—that is, to convince his fellow students and especially local elites of the prosperous Yangzi Delta that the empire must change its capital. He hoped that such collective awareness, if not public opinion, would in turn influence decision-making in Beijing.

In order to convince a broader audience that it would be better to relocate the capital to the south, Xu faced at least two challenges. On the one hand, he was only a marginal figure in the elite society of Suzhou. On the other hand, as we shall see, it was very difficult to broach the proposal that the throne should retreat to the south—after all, moralists were likely to read such an idea as evidence of cowardice. It is these two challenges that command our attention first.

Concerning Xu Yunlu's connections, unlike his father, who tried to make a fortune in Shanxi where a remote relative of the Xu lineage had earned an official position,[554] Xu Yunlu had barely received any support from his own lineage. He married a certain Ms. Pan 潘, a daughter of Pan Yuanbi 潘元弼 (fl. 16th century), whose family history is also revealing of the social reality of the sixteenth-century Yangzi Delta. Dating back to the 1500s, the Pan family once enjoyed decent-sized estates in this area and some members were even appointed to the

---

[547] Yang Jingru 楊鏡如, *Suzhou fuxue zhi* 蘇州府學志 (Suzhou: Suzhou daxue chubanshe, 2013), 7.

[548] For the Donglin movement, see John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and its Repression, 1620-1627* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), esp. 1–8;

[549] Yang Jingru, *Suzhou fuxue zhi*, 893.

[550] See Tan Xiu 談修 et al., *Donglin shuyuan zhi* 東林書院志 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2011), 162.

[551] Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616–1911*, 21–49.

[552] For Ming information order, see Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), esp. 49–52; Wang Zi, "Dilemmas of Empire: Movement, Communication, and Information Management in Ming China, 1368-1644," 59–106.

[553] Xu Yunlu, *Simian zhai ji* (1658, printing), Shanghai Library, Qian Qianyi, "徐女廉遺集序."

[554] See Xu Yunlu, *Simian zhai ji* (printed, 1658), Shanghai Library, *juan* 10, "東海氏世略."

position of county magistrate's assistants. However, the *wokou* pirates destroyed their home base and multiple family members died, including Pan Yuanbi's father. Suddenly impoverished, Pan Yuanbi's elder brother sold himself as a male dependent (入贅) to a rich Zhuang 莊 family, so as to support himself and Pan Yuanbi. While neither of them was able to pass the provincial examination and earn a *juren* degree, Pan Yuanbi made a huge fortune in commerce, to the extent that he was able to purchase back the ancestral land, redeem his brother from the Zhuangs, and rebuild the clan shrines. Under his support, many sons of the Pan family studied at the Suzhou Prefectural School. Pan Run 潘潤 (fl. early 17th century), a younger generational member of this family, was the very disciple of Xu Yunlu who helped to compile his collection after Xu's death. Overall, Xu had barely travelled beyond Suzhou.[555] Even though he was connected to some intellectual and commercial elites in Suzhou, he was hardly one of them. His collection contains rich information about how a learned man below the stratum of high elites struggled with economic difficulties, and experienced epidemics, including smallpox, while simultaneously pondering over the grand matters of the realm.[556]

Had Xu been among top-tier decision-makers of the empire, however, it would still have been very hard to broach, not to mention implement, the policy of relocating the capital to the south. Moralists would have castigated whoever proposed such an idea as a coward. Cho Ch'anhan, whom I shall turn to in the next section, personally understood the consequences of such a proposition. On the fourth day of the sixth month of 1619, Cho, the Concurrent Vice Recipient of Edicts 同副承旨 (3a), advised his king to temporarily relocate the royal court to the Ganghwa Island. Cho reasoned that the island, which "faces water in all directions" 四面面水, would be able to stop the "barbarian" cavalry and thus protect the throne from the Manchu attacks. [557] Cho's peers found this suggestion to be heinous, and the Chosŏn Bureau of Surveillance (司憲府) immediately impeached Cho:

> 古今天下，安有置防禦於度外，只爲出避之擧，而先送宮人、宦寺(之事)乎？(未滿一哂，)請(命) 趙纘韓罷職。[558]
>
> From antiquity to the present, for everywhere all under heaven, how can one set the defense aside from consideration? How can one occupy oneself with nothing but going out to hide from danger, while sending the courtesans and eunuchs out for safety? Such proposals are less than a joke, and we plead to dismiss Cho Ch'anhan from his official post.

As we shall see, the fact that Cho had once advised the king to hide on the island would later become a stain that haunted Cho's later career. The rhetoric that the Chosŏn Bureau of Surveillance deployed, however, merits our attention. "For everywhere all under the heaven,"

---

[555] Once he went as far north as the southern bank of the Yangzi River, about 25 km north of Suzhou, and this was far enough for him to compose a memorial addressing the local deity there. See Xu Yunlu 徐允錄, *Simian zhai ji* (printed, 1658), Shanghai Library, *juan* 11, "投江陰神疏".

[556] For Xu Yunlu on poxes, see Qiu Zhonglin 邱仲麟, "Mingdai yijiang de doushen miao yu doushen xinyang," 明代以降的痘神廟與痘神信仰 *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 84 (2017): 785–915.

[557] See CSSL 1619/6/29, p. 101.

[558] CSSL 1619/7/3, p. 133.

the proposal to relocate the throne to a place of safety is "less than a joke." Xu Yulu's peers would have agreed with this.

In the Ming context, however, there was one more reason that elite individuals would not consider the relocation of the capital as an option. In 1449, the Mongols invaded the Ming empire.[559] After crushing the Ming field armies and capturing Emperor Yingzong 英宗 (1427–1464) as hostage, they marched to the vicinity of Beijing. Though the Ming put a new emperor on the throne, many officials were ready to send the imperial family to Nanjing, the original capital of the founding emperor's choice. Yu Qian 于謙 (1398–1457), the Director of the Ministry of Warfare 兵部尚書 (2a), silenced such opinions, coordinated an effective defense, and forced the Mongols to retreat. Thanks to his leadership, the Ming was even able to pacify the Mongols to the extent that the Mongols sent Yingzong and other hostages back unharmed.

Ever since 1449, Yu's military and diplomatic triumph had redefined the default position in Ming policy debates concerning the relationships with the Ming's steppe neighbors. For any individual who aspired to broach the argument for relocating the court to the south, their opponents would simply raise Yu Qian as the counter example, arguing that history had taught them an important lesson: fleeing to the south was not a solution. Against this background, the questions that Xu was facing in the autumn of 1621 were as follows: What if lessons from history had become a burden on contemporary political decision making? In other words, the past teaches us that to fight leads to triumph, but in the current situation, what we really need to do is to retreat. Under such a circumstance, shall we re-write history, distorting it for our own purposes? Or shall we forget about history entirely, saying this is a brand new situation? Xu Yunlu found a third way. He sought to liberate his peers and contemporaries from the burden of history.

Xu Yunlu wrote two documents on behalf of Yu Qian's major opponent in 1449. He explained his intentions in the following way:

> 余閱國史，至已巳之變，徐珵倡南遷之議，于謙以爲可斬，卒排其說，死守力戰，京城復安。論者遂謂珵爲邪妄，遺毀至今。愚謂珵亦知勇功名之士，豈邪妄者？其所云南遷，史畧而不詳，然諒其必有説也。于謙之功雖成，而俗儒苦不知變，其患將見于今日。……而論者終不敢言修葺南京以待巡省，徐武功有知，亮其九原之不能安也。故特于暇日抒其必然之情，擬書二通，亦草野芹曝之獻云爾。天啓辛酉秋日識。[560]

> When I read the history of our realm, insofar as the Incident of Jisi (1449) is concerned, Xu Cheng proposed to relocate the court to the south. Yu Qian thought that Xu should be executed, and eventually rejected this idea; [Yu insisted on] defending [the capital] to the death, and fought with all his strength. [Thanks to Yu,] the capital was saved. Since then, those who discuss this issue consider Xu Cheng as the vicious and erroneous one, and their disparagement of him has lasted until today. In my view, [Xu] Cheng is also a wise and courageous man of achievements and merits. How can he be simply vicious and

[559] For the military background, see Frederick W. Mote, "The T'u-Mu Incident of 1449," In *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, edited by Edward L. Dreyer, Frank Algerton Kierman and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[560] Xu Yunlu 徐允錄, *Simian zhaiji* 思勉齋集 (1658, printing), Shanghai Library, *juan* 12, "擬武功伯徐天全先生與政府暨樞部二書."

> erroneous? He proposed to relocate [the court] to the south; historical records skip over [his proposal] and do not detail [his arguments]; however, I assume that he must have had his own reasons. Though Yu Qian's accomplishment is evident, mediocre scholars do not understand changes; the problems [embedded in Yu's original strategy] will eventually emerge today … Those who discuss [the frontier matters] do not dare to propose the renovation of Nanjing to wait for the imperial court to visit. Had Xu [Cheng] been aware of [the situation today], he, I assume, would not be peaceful in the underworld [of the dead]. Thus, I take time from [my] days of leisure to elaborate on the situation that must be so. Imitating him, I draft two letters from Xu Cheng's perspective. Such are the worthless contributions from this unemployed one [i.e. from me]. Written in the autumn of 1621.

At first glance, Xu Yunlu described his task as that of reevaluating a historical figure. His protagonist is Xu Cheng 徐珵 (1407–1472), who in the received historiography had been stereotyped as a vicious minister and the coward for attempting to convince the court in 1449 that it was necessary to retreat to the south.[561] Xu Yunlu, however, sought to turn this case over (*fan'an* 翻案), stating that Xu Cheng, the "wise and courageous" one, "must have his own argument" 其必有説也.

A closer examination, however, reveals that Xu Yunlu was not interested in what Xu Cheng might have said in actual history—a speech that was lost to "historical records" in his terms. Instead, he conceived of an alternative historical setting when he started his documents:

> 珵閱邸報，見門下具疏議重處南遷者。夫建議南遷者正珵也。
>
> [I, Xu] Cheng, have read the gazette. I see your Excellency has memorialized the throne; accordingly, those [who broach the idea] of relocating the court to the south will be heavily punished. The one who has proposed to move to the south is precisely I, [Xu] Cheng.
> [And the entire letter to Yu Qian starts from here.]

In actual history, Yu Qian silenced his opponents with the threat of the death penalty, after which Xu Cheng fell silent. In Xu Yunlu's setting, "Xu Cheng," regardless of the capital punishment, submitted his opinions in written form not only to the Grand Councilor Chen Xun 陳循 (1385–1462), who was a key supporter of Yu Qian,[562] but also to Yu Qian himself.[563] In other words, Xu Yunlu was not imitatively recreating the argument that the historical Xu Cheng had once made in actual history, before Yu Qian announced the death penalty; rather, Xu Yunlu pressed the following question: What if Xu Cheng had insisted upon his proposal, even

---

[561] Cf. Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., *Ming shi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 10.139, 170.4545.
[562] See, for instance, MSL 1449/8/16, p. 3509.
[563] The genre that Xu Yunlu composed, *shu* 書 or letters, deserve some attention. In real examinations, one imitatively drafted either a decree, an edict, or a memorial. Outside the realm of examination preparation, literati enjoyed the imitative writing of letters on behalf of notable figures in the past—at least in some cases, these letters appear as quite different from official communications with the bureaucracy. The letters that Xu Yunlu imitatively drafted, however, belong to a specific subgenre of letters, that is, letters addressing decision-makers. In other words, if memorials are the genres by which ministers present their voices to the throne, it is with these letters that officials of lower ranks (or sometimes commoners) spoke to those of higher ranks.

after Yu Qian decided to silence his opponents? What would Xu Cheng have written? Thus, when Xu stated that he aimed to elaborate on "the situation that must be the case" 必然之情, he did not mean that Xu Cheng must have said this. Instead, *biran* 必然 refers to the proper order of things. He was envisioning a *histoire juste*—the history not only proper to Xu Cheng in 1449 but also one that would have *necessarily* followed *if* everything had followed the right normative order.[564]

In the letter to Chen Xun, Xu Yunlu's "Xu Cheng" emphasized that he proposed to relocate the court to the south "not because of his insanity" 非由風狂, but of his calculation of "what must be so" 其有必然者. He then advanced three arguments for relocating the capital to the south. First, a truly loyal minister should not expose his monarch to danger, especially in situations when his monarch has the alternative to be safe. Second, given the particularity of 1449, relocating the court to the south entailed only a strategic advantage, and would not have brought any turmoil in the north—thus, it differed from previous cases, including the seemingly similar situations of the Song dynasty following the Jurchen conquest. Third, the Ming was also different from the Song because the capital had originally been in Nanjing, and Nanjing indeed remained a secondary capital.[565]

In the letter to Yu Qian, Xu Yunlu's "Xu Cheng" further invited Yu to ruminate over the following situation:

> 若夫兀良哈三衛，則我北京艮背之處也。女直遼東一帶，則我北京左肩之方也。之二敵者，門下能保其長弱乎？能禁其必不出豪傑乎？漢索戎索能料其必受羈縻乎？萬一之二敵者，禍心忽發，長驅傅關，一日整兵，不十日而至于郊矣。又不十日而薄于城矣。以粮則自可轉輸不假抄掠，以兵則自可抽添不憂消潰。何也？以其密邇也。此其爲東西隣相閧之勢也。勢無主客，彼張則我困。設門下是時而統元戎，操國柄，則亦將如今日之議？[566]
>
> Concerning the three garrisons of Uriankhai, they are the northeast gate of our Beijing. Concerning the Jurchen region and Liaodong [that is, Manchuria], they are the left shoulder of our Beijing. With regard to the two enemies there [that is, the Mongols of Uriankhai and the Manchus of Manchuria], can your excellency guarantee that they will remain weak forever? Can you prevent heroes from emerging out of these regions? Can you be sure that the Han and barbarian groups [in these regions] will necessarily be bridled? Just in case [either of] these two enemies suddenly comes to the disastrous intention [of rebelling], charging all the way to the palace; it takes only one day to gather the troops, and within ten days they will arrive in the vicinity [of the capital], and within another ten days they can press the city. In terms of food provisions, they can manage the transport without relying on pillaging; in terms of troops, they will be free to mobilize or add [further soldiers] without worrying that some would scatter. Why? Because [our capital] is close to [their heartland]. Because this is the situation where the east and the

---

564 This is precisely how Louis Geoffroy-Château advertised his *Napoléon Apochryphe* (published initially as *Napoléon et la conquête du monde*). See Catherine Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't*, 55.

565 Xu Yunlu 徐允錄, *Simian zhai ji* (1658, printing), Shanghai Library, *juan* 12, "擬武功伯徐天全先生與政府暨樞部二書."

566 Xu Yunlu 徐允錄, *Simian zhai ji* (1658, printing), Shanghai Library, *juan* 12, "擬武功伯徐天全先生與政府暨樞部二書."

> west neighbors press together. Position does not discriminate hosts and guests; if they are advantageous, then we are jeopardized. If this time, your excellency commands the military and arbitrates the state affairs, would you still insist upon today's discussion [that the court would not be relocated to the south]?

This was precisely the situation that the Ming was facing in the 1620s. Xu Yunlu aimed to show that in the actual history of 1449, Yu Qian had failed to take these potential changes into consideration. In other words, had Yu Qian been able to foresee how Mongolia and Manchuria would change between from 1449 and 1621, Yu himself would have reached the conclusion that the Ming should relocate the imperial court back to Nanjing, as early as 1449.

Unfortunately, in actual history, Yu Qian had missed the opportunity to reach this conclusion, because, as Xu Yunlu reminded his audience, Xu Cheng was not able to present his viewpoints. In other words, central to Xu Yunlu's concern is the possibility of broaching a proposal and presenting one's idea. In 1449, political pressure denied such possibilities; and in 1621, purported lessons from history also denied such possibilities. Xu Yunlu, in contrast, sought to make such possibilities possible.

Having drafted these two documents, he then sent them to many of his friends, some of whom had started their careers as officials. In the winter of 1621, a number of his friends received his letter and reacted with astonishment, as one of the recipients recounted 36 years later:

> 詞垣諸人咸吐舌弗能收，余心不以為不然，而未敢言也。[567]
>
> Every one of the literary realm, deeply astonished, were not able to accept [Xu Yunlu's point of view]. Even though in my mind I did not disagree [with Xu], I did not dare to speak [about it].

This recipient was Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664). As early as 1600, Qian was merely an eighteen-year-old student who had just arrived at the Suzhou Prefectural School. One day when all students were gathered on the ground, awaiting the Prefect of Suzhou to visit the campus, Xu, the senior student, broke into the crowd looking for Qian. In front of everyone, Xu expressed his appreciation of Qian's talent, and thus started their friendship. Not long after, Qian transferred himself to the Donglin Academy, where he rose as a leading figure of the literary realm and of the Donglin partisans. Over half a century later, when Qian was old and grey, he would still recall this moment when he was the honored youngster. Also memorable for Qian was the Xu's letter, which was over ten-thousand characters in length and appeared on his desk at the Household Administration of the Heir Apparent 詹事府 in Beijing in 1621.[568] Qian, just like Xu Cheng in the actual history of 1449, was silenced; he did not dare to speak—to speak about the proposal of capital relocation.

By the 1650s, Qian felt deep regret that he had kept silent. In 1644, the Manchus took Beijing. In the following year, they conquered Suzhou and much of the Lower Yangzi Delta. Resistance to the Manchus persisted especially along the coastline and from maritime bases throughout the 1650s. In 1657, Qian decided to publish Xu Yunlu's collection. In his preface, Qian singled out Xu Yunlu's imitative writings on behalf of Xu Cheng, underscoring the fact

---

[567] Xu Yunlu, *Simian zhai ji* (1658, printing), Shanghai Library, Qian Qianyi, "徐女廉遺集序."
[568] Ibid.

that as early as 1621, Xu had come up with a viable plan to free policy makers of their historical burden, and by this means save the Ming. Printed copies brought Xu's writings to a broader audience, intensifying nostalgic sentiments among readers of the mid- and late seventeenth century. Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709), for instance, would note: "twenty years prior to [the fall of Beijing], an old student was able to broach [such a plan]" 二十年前一老書生發之.[569] For Zhu as for many other readers, the book in print served as a lieu de memoire, a material site commemorating the possibility through which the Ming could have survived the Manchu challenge.

Not surprisingly, the Manchus soon censored Xu's collection.[570] It fell out of public view until a copy of it resurfaced in Suzhou after the anti-Manchu Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864), and later entered the personal collection of Wang Peisun 王培孫 (1871–1953), an anti-Qing revolutionary qua educator.[571] Fortunately, Wang's copy has survived, through which I have excavated Xu Yunlu's imaginations, together with Qian's regrets.

Xu Yunlu, in sum, was one of over a million Ming individuals studying for the civil service examination during the early seventeenth century. As a part of the educational curriculum, they practiced the imitative writing of official documents. A question underpinning this section is what this particular sort of rhetorical training meant for the overwhelming majority of them, who would never earn a position in the imperial bureaucracy and never have the opportunity to compose actual memorials to the throne. Many examination candidates shared Xu's experience: having repeatedly failed the examination, they used their rhetorical skills to earn some extra money, presuming they were fortunate enough to be hired to write congratulation letters in their locale. Xu, however, utilized the form of imitative writing of official documents to do something more: to imagine what historical individuals could have said and done. For Xu—and notably for Qian Qianyi who read his writings and sponsored their publication—in the very possibility that "Xu Cheng" could have insisted upon his proposals lay the possibility that the Ming could have better disposed itself vis-à-vis the rise of the Manchus. How did other educated individuals of post-Mongol East Eurasia experience the tectonic changes associated with the rise of the Manchus? What did the rhetorical training mean for them? To begin to respond to these questions, we turn to the Korean Peninsula.

---

[569] Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, Jingzhi ju shihua 靜志居詩話, recited from Yu Yue 俞樾, Cha xiangshi sanchao 茶香室三鈔 (1899 printing), *juan* 3.

[570] For the background, see Timothy Brook, "Censorship in Eighteenth-Century China: A View from the Book Trade," *Canadian Journal of History* 23:2 (1988): 177–196

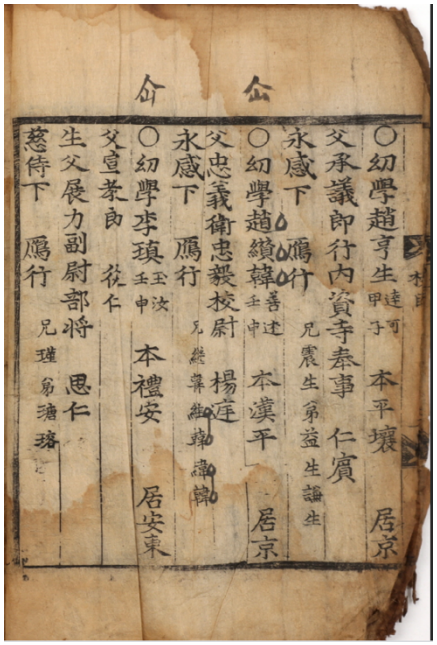
[571] Shanghai Library, archival records of acquired rare books, entry *Simian zhai ji*.

Figure 11 Genealogy of Hanyang Cho, as it appears in the nineteenth-century *Man'ga bo* 萬家譜

http://kostma.aks.ac.kr/FamilyTree/PersonIndex.aspx?mode=10&personid=pd052161&person_uci=G002+AKS-KHF_13C870CC2CD55CB1572X0, accessed on December 23, 2020



Figure 12 The Examination Registries (1601) Featuring Cho Ch'anhan



萬曆二十九年辛丑司馬榜目
Mallyŏng 29 nyŏn shinch'ung samabangmok
http://people.aks.ac.kr/front/imageView/imageViewer.aks?exmId=EXM_SA_6JOb_1601_150035, accessed on December 23, 2020.

The registry illustrates that Cho Ch'an-han, a descendant of the Hanyang Cho, was a resident of the capital, and son of Cho Yangchŏng.

Cho Ch'anhan (1572–1631): Reclaiming Possibilities for the Future

In 1641, Hansŏng, the capital of Chosŏn, was starting the process of recovery after the traumatic war of 1636–7 (Pyŏngja horan 丙子胡亂, or the "barbarian calamity of the year of pyŏngja/*bingzi*"). The Manchus had pressed into the Korean Peninsula in 1636, and in the following year, the Chosŏn king was forced to surrender in the Namhan Fortress. Beginning in 1637, Chosŏn was no longer a vassal state of the Great Ming, the perceived center of civilization in the Chosŏn imagination, but rather that of the newborn Aisin Gurun (), the golden state of "barbarians."[572] Indeed, many intellectuals and officials of the Peninsula found it difficult to accept the emerging geopolitical situation, including Shin Ch'ŏnik 愼天翊 (1592–1661). Declining all official employment, he fashioned himself as a recluse and a Ming loyalist. He devoted himself to a series of literary and compilation projects and in 1641, he was to finalize the collection (*munjip* 文集) of Cho Ch'anhan's works.[573]

Cho had been Shin's teacher. When the latter was still a teenager, he started to follow the former, treating his "teacher in the way that a son treats his father and mother" 事師如父母.[574] After Cho assumed the position of Supervisor of the Sŏnggyun'gwan, Shin studied there, and in 1612, he earned first place in the palace examination, just as Cho had done seven years earlier.[575] Indeed, the disciple and his master shared a lot in common. Both belonged to a prominent clan that had been serving the king at least since the Koryŏ times (918–1392), and both also were scions of declining lineages that had been increasingly marginalized in recent generations.

Furthermore, both had shown outstanding literary talent during their early years, and both valued examinations as an opportunity to enter the bureaucracy. However, the reality of factional politics meant that even with their established literary fame, their political careers were doomed to be rough. During the tumultuous 1610s and 1620s, when the kingdom was facing the threat of the Manchus and a series of rebellions, Cho rose as a rhetorician minister by the side of King Kwanghae (1575–1641), and Shin gradually climbed the bureaucratic ladder at Kwanghae's court. However, two turning points changed Cho's career. In 1619, Cho advised the throne to relocate the court to the Ganghwa Island, as a result of which moralists fiercely impeached him, as discussed above.[576] In 1623, with King Kwanghae's sudden deposition, the political climate changed dramatically. The court under King Kwanghae's successor King Injo (1595–1649) purged the previous supporters of King Kwanghae, including Cho.[577] Cho was again demoted. In 1624, when King Injo was in jeopardy during a rebellion, Cho, purportedly due to illness, failed to appear at the royal audience on time.[578] His opponent further questioned

---

572 Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616–1911*, 21–49; Sun Weiguo 孫衛國, *Cong zun Ming dao feng Qing: Chaoxian wangchao dui Qing yishi zhi shanbian* 從「尊明」到「奉清」 朝鮮王朝對清意識之嬗變，1627-1910 (Taipei: Taida chubanshe, 2019); Haboush JaHyun Kim, "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea," in Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea (Leiden: Brill, 1999): 46–95.

573 Cho Chan-han 趙纘韓, *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集, in *Han'guk munjip ch'onggan*, v.79, 438a.

574 Song Hwan'gi 宋煥箕, *Sŏngdam jip* 性潭集, *kwŏn* 17, "參判愼公神道碑銘 幷序," in *Han'guk munjip ch'onggan*, v.244, 399c.

575 Ibid.

576 CSSL 1619/7/3, p. 133.

577 On Cho and the Northerner Faction (Pugin), see Seung B. Kye, "In the Shadow of the Father: Court Opposition and the Reign of King Kwanghae in Early Seventeenth-Century Choson Korea" (PhD diss. University of Washington, 2006), esp. 175.

578 CSSL 1624/2/15, p. 29.

his loyalty and devotion to the court, and ousted him from the central government.[579] He died in 1631, on his way to another provincial post, at the age of sixty. Precisely at this point, Shin decided to "turn his body away from politics" 以身遁去.[580]

In 1641, ten years after Cho's death, his younger son Cho Bi 趙備 (fl. 17th century) received a mid-level official position. He then approached Shin, asking him to edit Cho Ch'anhan's writings for printing. At first glance, the compilation and concomitant publication followed the norms of seventeenth-century Korea. The sons of an notable scholar-official typically initiated the project, and the anthology would be titled in terms of the style name of the deseased—thus *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集 (Collection of Hyŏnju [Cho's style name]). Accordingly, printing was less intended to distribute the book widely and more to commemorate this individual. As the preface of the 1710 reprint states, the book was to be sent to "sons and grandsons [of Cho Ch'anhan] among other relatives and old friends" 子孫及若干親舊間.[581] In other words, Cho Ch'anhan's collection differs substantially from that of Xu Yunlu's. In Xu's case, it was a literary and political leader, Qian Qianyi, that initiated the printing process, calling for attentions to be paid to the very historical possibilities that Xu had once envisioned. Xu highlighted that he composed the imitative writings in 1621, vis-à-vis the on-going military crisis. Cho's collection, in contrast, follows all the established practices among the Chosŏn aristocrats: no piece was dated, and very few are datable. The way that Cho addressed the current state of affairs in his poetic and imitative writings is something that his descendants and editor would deliberately cover up.

Cho's collection, however, does have a distinctive feature: for each genre (according to which collected works were typically organized), pieces that Shin Ch'ŏnik had selected were incorporated into a separate volume, followed by additional volumes that included pieces that Cho Bi found to be important. No explicit accounts have been left elucidating this organizational structure—it is not implausible that Shin Ch'ŏnik (the disciple) and Cho Bi (the son) seemed to disagree upon the organizational structure of the collection. While the latter found it natural to include a variety of manuscripts that had survived, the former was only willing to incorporate a few pieces into the collection proper. What can be ascertained, however, is that Shin had his own vision of which pieces best represented his master's literary and rhetorical achievements.

In this section, I examine the making of Cho's collection with a focus on the imitative writings of official documents. In recent years, Cho Ch'anhan has started to elicit attention from Korean scholars who specialize in Sinitic literature as it developed in the Peninsula. Building upon their works, I trace Shin Ch'ŏnik's editorial process, questioning how he ended up featuring some of Cho's rhetorical exercises while setting aside others. As I shall show, while Shin had managed to show that his master "alone was exceptional in surpassing [others of the Peninsula]" 獨超然, Cho's imitative writings broached new horizons in Korean intellectual history and political thought.

Table 4 Imitative Writings of Official Documents in *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集

卷十門人愼天翊攷	**Volume (*kwŏn*) Ten, based on the**	卷十一	**Volume (*kwŏn*) Eleven**

[579] Ibid.
[580] I Minbo 李敏輔, *P'ungsŏ jip* 豊墅集, *kwŏn* 13, "素隱愼公墓碣銘," in HMCG:232, 550c.
[581] Cho Chanhan 趙纘韓, *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集, in HMCG:79, 439a, Cho Kusang 趙龜祥, "玄洲集識."

	evidential studies of Shin Ch'ŏnik, the disciple [of Cho]		
擬托孤丞相亮詔	Imitative draft of the decree by which [Liu Bei the Emperor] Entrusted His Son to the Grand Councilor [Zhuge] Liang	擬漢高祖拜韓信爲大將制 乙巳之下○庭試上	Imitative Draft of the edict by which the King of Han appointed Han Xin as the Grand General
擬殷高宗賜傅說用汝作霖雨制	Imitative Draft of the Edict that King Gaozong of Yin Bestowed to Fu Yue, "Making You as the Three-day Rain."	擬唐翰林學士武平一謝加賜一枝綵花表	Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which the Tang Hanlin Academician Wu Pingyi Thanked the Throne for Bestowing Him a Colored Flower
封竹夫人制	Edict Endowing the Title of Lady Bamboo [that is, bamboo pillow]	擬晉姚馥謝拜酒泉太守表	Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Yao Fu of the Jin Dynasty Thanked the Throne for Appointing Him the Prefect of Jiuquan
擬漢王嬙請勿嫁單于表	Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Wang Qiang Petitioned Not to Marry the Chanyu	擬宋范質謝拜同平章事表	Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Fan Zhi of the Song Dynasty Thanked the Throne for Appointing Him Grand Councilor
		擬秦朝群臣賀平六國定天下表	Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which the Ministers of the Qin Congratulated the Throne for Pacifying the Realm
		擬宋翰林學士歐陽脩等進獻唐史表	Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Ouyang Xiu of the Song Dynasty Presented the *History of the Tang*

To structure Cho's imitative writings of official documents, Shin followed the convention of organizing them by the following three genres: first decrees 詔, then edicts 制, and then memorials 表—the three genres that were central to the civil service examination under the Mongol Yuan and the Chosŏn Korea.[582] Indeed, by the 1640s, many would view Cho as a rhetorician who excelled in the genres required in "examination hall" 場屋 that were drilled in academies 館閣.[583] However, Shin sought to deconstruct this stereotype. What he chose to exclude deserves equal attention as what he chose to include.

In 1605, Cho won first place in the palace examination.[584] As recorded by Kwŏn P'il 權韠 (1569–1612), a prominent poet and political critic of the times:

> 擬作漢王拜韓信爲大將詔書。句句可誦。遂擢第一。[585]
>
> [During the palace examination, Cho Chanhan] imitatively drafted the edict by which the King of Han appointed Han Xin as the Grand General; every line of it is worthy of reciting. Thus, [Cho] was ranked first.

However, Shin deliberately set this imitative edict aside, using another piece instead. The text he selected was the "Imitative Draft of the Decree by which [Liu Bei the Emperor] Entrusted His Son to the Grand Councilor [Zhuge] Liang." The piece refers to a particular moment in Chinese history when Liu Bei 劉備 (161–223), on his death bed, told Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) the following words, according to the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Records of the Three Kingdoms) of the third century:

> 若嗣子可輔，輔之；如其不才，君可自取。[586]
>
> If [my] heir is worthy of assisting, then assist him; if he lacks talents, you can take the throne yourself.

Zhuge Liang, deeply touched, devoted the rest of his life to support Liu Bei's heir. Thus, ever since the third century, readers of this episode have praised Zhuge's loyalty, together with Liu's willingness to trust him. In the course of the seventeenth century, it is worth mentioning that the Spanish missionary Domingo Fernández Navarrete (1631–1689), who later became Bishop of Santo Domingo, was deeply impressed by the dialogue between Liu Bei ("el Emperador Chao Lie") and Zhuge Liang ("Ko Leang").[587] He praised Zhuge in terms of his sincerity, glorifying

---

[582] It is worth mentioning that in Ming examinations, the memorial alone rose to be the single most important genre. See Chapter Four.

[583] Cho Chan-han 趙纘韓, *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集, in HMCG:79, 207b, Yi Sik 李植, "玄洲集敍."

[584] See Pak Jeong Min, "Chosŏn junggi sŏin'gye muninŭi chŏngch'ijŏng pulman'gwa munhakchŏng taeŭng," 218.

[585] Kwŏn P'il 權韠, *Sŏkchu jip* 石洲集, *kwŏn* 2, "師友錄," in HMCG:75, 125c.

[586] Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 35.918.

[587] Domingo Fernández Navarrete, *Tratados Historicos, Politicos, Ethicos, y Religiosos de la Monarchia de China* (Madrid, En la Imprenta real, por J. García Infançon, a costa de F. Anisson, 1676), Trat. 2; Cap. XIII; S. 21, p. 96. For Navarrete's life and travel to China, see J. S Cummins, *A Question of Rites: Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China* (Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1993); Dominic Sachsenmaier. *Global Entanglements of a Man Who Never Traveled: A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian and His Conflicted Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 53.

him as analogous to St. John the Baptist, and eulogized Liu Bei in terms of his piety, comparing him to St Louis of France:

> Que mas dixera San Luis Rey de Francia a su hijo, y heredero?[588]
>
> What could St Louis King of France have said more to the purpose to his Son and Heir?

Unlike most readers up to the seventeenth century, from the Chinese elites to the Spanish observers, Cho Ch'anhan was not interested in this episode because of its potential for depicting an idealized relationship between the monarch and his minister. Rather, Cho turned this episode into an opportunity to problematize the normative foundation of a hereditary monarchy. A key part of his imitative "decree" reads:

國家公器，	The state is a public vessel. [Thus,]
可輔則可輔，難容父子之私。	[Concerning the heir,] if he is worthy of assisting then assist him; this has nothing to do with the private concerns between fathers and sons.
與賢則與賢，無拘君臣之義。	[Concerning the throne,] it should belong to the worthy and this should happen; [this transferal of rulership] is not confined to the normative principle bounding monarchs and ministers.

Chosŏn elites, like their counterparts in China, believed that in the remote antiquity when the sage kings of Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 ruled over the civilized realm, they adhered themselves to the principle that only the worthy can execute monarchical power. Thus, by the end of their life, they yielded the throne to those considered worthy. However, with the rise of the Xia dynasty, rulers started to pass the throne to their son (or offspring) and hereditary succession became the normative principle based on which Chinese empires functioned.[589] Against this background, Cho re-advocated the way of the past, a radical political philosophy according to which only the worthy should rule as monarch. Being the heir apparent was not, he argued, sufficient to qualify one's right to succeed the throne. Equally, being merely a minister under the previous monarch was not cause to deprive one from ascending the throne. At this point, it becomes clearer that Shin Ch'ŏnik selected Cho's writings with deliberation. He set aside the well-known piece with which Cho earned first place in the palace examination, and instead featured the one that epitomized Cho's explicit critique of hereditary monarchy.

Before further analysis of Shin's agenda, it is important to stress that Cho used a distinctive style to craft Liu Bei's decree, that is, parallel prose in four and six characters or s*aryuk pyŏllyŏ* 四六騈儷 (four-six parallelism) in Korean. Both Chosŏn and Ming elites were well aware that four-six parallelism as a style developed after the fall of the Han (202BC–220CE) and emerged gradually from the fourth century onwards. Since the sixteenth century, Ming intellectuals increasingly emphasized that one should use the language of Han times to write Han decrees, and that of Tang times to write Tang edicts. To give an example, the scholar Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605–1645), contemporary to Cho Ch'anhan, argued that many previous

---

[588] Navarrete, *Tratados Historicos, Politicos, Ethicos, y Religiosos de la Monarchia de China*, 96.
[589] See Yuri Pines, "Disputers of Abdication: Zhanguo Egalitarianism and the Sovereign's Power," *T'oung Pao* Second Series, 91.4/5 (2005): 243–300.

Ming authors had committed the mistake of anachronism in using four-six parallelism to imitate Han decrees, especially those Liu Bei would have issued.[590] Precisely when the Ming literati started to elaborate on their principle of stylistic historicism, their Chosŏn counterparts advocated their stylistic universalism, in my terminology; that is, they made the deliberate decision to elevate the four-six parallelism as a universal Sinitic style to the extent that they used it to imitate any document of any period and of any region. Thus, when Chosŏn elites imitatively wrote Han or even pre-Han official documents, they chose to use four-six parallelism even though they were well aware of the fact that this is a style that originated from the Eastern Han.[591]

The second piece that Shin Ch'ŏnik featured in Cho's collection offers another example of stylistic universalism: the "Imitative Draft of the Edict that King Gaozong of Yin Bestowed to Fu Yue, 'Making You as the Three-day Rain'" 擬殷高宗賜傅說用汝作霖雨制. King Gaozong, as a historical figure, had been a ruler of the Yin—better known today as the Shang—dynasty (ca. 1700 to 1040 BC). It goes without saying that Chosŏn elites knew that four-six parallelism had not been developed as of this period. Nevertheless, Cho showcased that it was nevertheless possible to craft such an edict in four-six. In fact, it was only in Chosŏn that rhetoricians tested the viability of engaging the remote antiquity with four-six. Shin Ch'ŏnik, in featuring Cho's imitative edict of the Yin/Shang king, aptly captured a distinctive literary and intellectual movement in Korea.

Cho Ch'anhan was by no means the first to explore counterfactual imagination with rhetorical exercises in the Korean tradition. Prior to him, the most prominent figure is probably Na Sech'an 羅世纘 (1498–1551), two generations earlier than Cho. Like Cho, Na, having passed the examination, climbed the bureaucratic ladder to become the Supervisor of the Sŏnggyun'gwan.[592] Though it is probable that both Na's and Cho's imitative writings were composed during or not long after their days at the Sŏnggyun'gwan, it cannot be ascertained given that the surviving pieces are not dated.

Na's representative piece includes the "Decree by which Emperor Wudi of Han Pardoned His Crown Prince, Ordering [Soldiers] Not to Chase after Him." 擬漢武帝赦皇太子勿追捕詔[593] This refers to a famous incident in the history of the Han dynasty. In 91 BC, the crown prince Liu Ju 劉據 (128-91 BC) was forced to raise arms against his father, Emperor Wudi.[594] With his troops defeated, Liu Ju fled from the capital. In actual history (that is, according to *Han shu* 漢書), Emperor Wudi, though reportedly touched by a memorial calling for his mercy and leniency, did not stop troops from pursuing his son Liu Ju.[595] As a result, Liu Ju

---

[590] Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀, *Bao'an yigao* 豹菴遺稿, *juan* 7, "擬漢昭烈皇帝伐孫權告廟文," in JBGJ.

[591] While in a separate essay I trace the stylistic divergence in post-Mongol China and Korea, here it is important to distinguish stylistic universalism from counterfactual historical imagination. It is true that in Chosŏn, a great many rhetorical exercises started with a kind of what-if question: What if the involved protagonist, say, Liu Bei, would have used the style of four-six, though in actual history, the style had not yet been developed? However, it helps to differentiate this mode of exploration from historical inquiries such as: What if Liu Bei refused to entrust his heir to Zhuge Liang? Cf. Ha Chi-yŏng, *18-segi Chin-Han Komunnon ŭi Chŏn'gae wa Sirhyŏn Yangsang* 18 세기 진한 고문론 의 전개 와 실현 양상 (Sŏul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2019), passim.

[592] Na Sech'an 羅世纘, *Songjae yugo* 松齋遺稿, *kwŏn* 4, "年譜," in HMCG:28, 107a.

[593] Na Sech'an, *Songjae yugo*, *kwŏn* 3, in Han'guk munjip ch'onggan, v.28, 104b.

[594] For a recent study of this incident in English, see Liang Cai, *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 135–152.

[595] Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 63.2744, "書奏，天子感寤."

was soon besieged and committed suicide. A year later, Emperor Wudi eventually realized that Liu Ju was in fact innocent; it was a vicious courtier that he had mistakenly trusted that manipulated him, pressing his son into a situation where he had to fight for self-survival.[596] But his son was already dead.

Na questioned what Emperor Wudi could have done during the critical moments back in 91 BC, when Liu Ju was still at large. The opening of the "decree" summarizes Na's argument:

盜言孔甘，久蔽骨肉之眞性。	The deceitful words are greatly sweet; since long they have eclipsed the true nature of [the relationship of] bone and flesh [that is, between father and son].
天理未泯。自激慈愛之良能。[597]	The heavenly principle has not faded away; this alone raises the good capacities of kindness and love.

According to Na, even though Emperor Wudi had not fully grasped what was happening behind the scene in 91 BC, he should have prioritized the deep bond between father and son over rumors and hear-say. It is imaginable that Na had in mind the Chosŏn politics of his own times, when the mistrust between the king and his son(s) plagued the royal succession (or *wangcha ŭi nan*, the catastrophe of princes).[598] However, in the absence of concrete textual and paratextual evidence, it will be more prudent to suspend the interpretative impulse to tie Na's piece to some particular events of early Chosŏn times. What can be ascertained is that for Na, counterfactual ventures offer a provocative tool for elaborating upon principles of Confucian philosophy.

Since the fourteenth century, Korean elites gradually began to promote the Daoxue (or Neo-Confucian) learning that Zhu Xi advocated (see Chapter One). During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Korean tradition of *Chuja hak* (朱子學, Master Zhu [Xi's] Learning) matured, marking "an unusual accomplishment" in the history of world philosophy.[599] Na re-described Emperor Wudi's situation with the terminology of Zhu Xi's learning. Accordingly, as human beings, all people—bey they emperor or commoner—are originally good. Their "true nature" (真性) is originally complete in the sense that it encompasses all the good potentials or capacities (良能), which, as Na enumerated, included "kindness" and "love" toward one's own son. In other words, one is originally endowed with the moral qualities to act in accordance with the heavenly principle (天理). However, as one grows, one's "true nature" can be muddied under the external influences—how this happened was a key theme of debate among Korean Confucians during Na's times. If this happens, the heavenly principle fades away, and individuals act upon their vicious desires, as Emperor Wudi did in 91 BC. The counterfactual scenario that Na set up against this backdrop is clear: Had Emperor Wudi maintained his "true" moral nature, what kind of action would he have taken? For Na, his counterfactual history is the *histoire juste*; it concerns what should have happened had the "heavenly principle" not been eclipsed by the humanly desire. Cho Ch'anhan, as I shall show, took a further step, with the "Imitative Draft of the Memorial by which Wang Qiang Petitioned Not to Marry the Chanyu."

---

596 See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, esp. *juan* 63, 2741.

597 Na Sech'an, *Songjae yugo*, *kwŏn* 3, in Han'guk munjip ch'onggan, v.28, 104b.

598 For an incident that occurred during Na's early years, see CSSL 1507/6/10, p.6.

599 Cha Joohang, "The Civilizing Project in Medieval Korea: Neo-Classicism, Nativism, and Figurations of Power," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2014), esp. 1–9.

In 33 BC, Emperor Yuandi of Han (75–33BC) sent Wang Qiang 王嬙 (courtesy name Zhaojun 昭君, 51–15 BC), a palace lady, to marry Hu-han-ye 呼韓邪 (d. 31BC), the leader of the Steppe-based Xiongnu confederation, which at that time posed a substantial threat to the Han empire.[600] Wang Qiang accepted the imperial command as her fate, and throughout the subsequent ages her acquiescence was seen as an act of self-sacrifice for the sake of the empire. This interpretation became a recurring theme in East Asian political rhetoric, historical thinking, and literary exploration. It was, in Wai-yee Li's terms, "the cipher for a range of oft-poeticized experiences and emotions, including exile, nostalgia, longing for home, unrecognized worth, [and] the obligation to fulfill one's public duty that takes precedence over private inclinations."[601] During the mid- and late Ming era, a variety of literati explored the imitative writing of memorials on Wang Qiang's behalf, imagining how she would express her sorrows and complaints in the highly formulaic genre of the expression of gratitude. Song Cunbiao's 宋存標 (1601–1666) "Imitative Draft by which Wang Qiang Expressed Her Gratitude to Emperor Yuandi of Han on Departing the Pass" 擬王嬙出塞謝漢元帝書, one such imitative piece, attests to the popularity of writing on behalf of Wang Qiang in the late Ming Yangzi Delta.

Cho Ch'anhan's "Wang Qiang," however, would not thank the throne and accept her fate. To put it in another way, Cho conceived an alternate historical scenario according to which his "Wang Qiang" had made up her mind to decline the imperial order. Thus, she instead presents a memorial to the throne, explaining the reasons why she would not marry a barbarian leader, opening with the following lines:

天子有命。敢緩萬里之行。	Even though the Son of Heaven has issued his command, I dare to suspend my journey of ten thousand miles.
匹婦含冤。願得一言而死。[602]	[This is because] a single woman is wronged; she wishes to make her words heard before being sentenced to death.

Cho then turned the body of the memorial into a political satire. In the terms of his reimagined "Wang Qiang," "since antiquity, to pacify the barbarians" has been the task of women, and for this reason, the court must be cautious with regard to whom they send. "Wang Qiang" then explained that she lacked an appealing appearance and, therefore, she was not a proper candidate for this mission. Readers of Cho's piece knew that in actual history, Wang Qiang, despite her outstanding beauty, lacked the resources to bribe the palace painter, who in turn presented her as an ugly woman in the registration roll that the throne would review. In other words, Cho, using the voice of a reimagined "Wang Qiang's" voice, depicted a regime that while plagued by military weakness, was unable to discern and employ worthy officials. As Pak Jeong Min 朴貞珉 has pointed out, Cho's lines allude to the reality of the seventeenth-century Chosŏn in ways that are no longer accessible to modern interpreters.[603]

What is revolutionary, in Cho's case, is that his "Wang Qiang" elaborated on an argument according to which one can simply reject an imperial command based on one's "personal emotions":

---

[600] See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, esp. *juan* 94b, 3803.
[601] Wai-yee Li, *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), 18.
[602] Cho Chan-han, *Hyŏnju jip*, *kwŏn* 10, in HMCG:79, 309a.
[603] Pak Jeong Min, "Chosŏn junggi sŏin'gye muninŭi chŏngch'ijŏng pulman'gwa munhakchŏng taeŭng," 220.

巖廊妙策，雖出得算之良。	The wonderful strategies for the sake of the court had been well conceived after thorough calculation;
兒女私情，亦有可憐之怨。	Nevertheless, the personal emotions of sons and daughters are yearning voices that deserve pity.
伏望重編舊籍，再降新綸。[604]	Humbly prostrating myself, I hope that I can be re-enlisted on the former register [of palace ladies], and that the court re-issue a new decision [with regard to the diplomacy with Xiongnu].

Modern readers may find the textual surface of these lines intriguing because they seem to be advocating a woman's right to reject the command of a patriarch-qua-ruler. This is, of course, not what the text is about. Cho's writings belong to an established tradition of East Asian literature, "the yearning of palace [ladies]" (宮怨, Korean: *kung wŏn*; Chinese: *gongyuan*).[605] With the *kung wŏn/gongyuan* genre, a male, as is often the case, metaphorizes the relationship between monarch and minister as that between the throne-qua-husband and his consort ladies.

Cho's piece stands out because it explores counterfactuality in a way that differs subtly but significantly from the work of his predecessors. As discussed in Chapter Three, during the fourteenth century, rhetoricians epitomized by Yang Weizhen turned imitative writing of official documents into a tool that aided the search for universal justice. As Na Sech'an's case exemplifies, rhetoricians in both post-Mongol Korea and China experimented with what would have happened if justice or the heavenly principle prevailed over the human world, and what historical protagonists would have said and done in their own specific situations. With his rhetorical ventures, Cho, however, was not placing his hopes on a counterfactual world where justice speaks through monarchs and political actors. Rather, Cho broached an alternative question: What if an individual insisted upon her own concerns, despite all the injustices that she had suffered? How would she present her concerns in the highly formulaic genre of official documents? In other words, if Yang Weizhen and Na Sech'an sought to rectify historical injustices in their counterfactual settings for which they composed official documents, Cho's goal was somewhat different. For Cho, actual history had denied the possibility by which "Wang Qiang" could have declined the imperial request and presented her own feelings, and it is such possibilities that are worthy of excavating, broaching, and defending through the rhetorical ventures embedded in the counterfactual setting.

In sum, by featuring the four imitative writings that Cho had composed, Shin Ch'ŏnik was by no means presenting his teacher as a systematic thinker. Instead, deliberately setting aside other pieces typical of Korean examination preparation, Shin drew readers' attention to how Cho had explored the potentials of rhetorical exercises to broach different possibilities of speaking in the political realm.

Closing Remarks

In Chapter Two, I suggested that the rhetorical tradition developed in the Korean Peninsula since the tenth century may have contributed to the making of the "Chinese" curriculum under the Mongol Empire. In Chapter Three, I stated that while local elites in Jiangzhe, China were

[604] Cho Chan-han, *Hyŏnju jip*, *kwŏn* 10, in HMCG:79, 309a.

[605] See for instance Zheng Huada 鄭華達, *Tangdai gongyuan shi yanjiu* 唐代宮怨詩研究 (Taipei: Taipei wenjin, 2000).

turning the examination responses into a platform for claiming their political rights, their Koryŏ counterparts were able to do the same—indeed, one of them, Yi Gok 李穀 (1298–1351) and his disciples, would play a critical role in formalizing the rhetorical curriculum in Korea. Given that both China and Chosŏn Korea had implemented a similar rhetorical curriculum, a question emerges: How can we trace the development of an educational system and its cultural and intellectual influences across different—but closely related—regimes and regions?

With Xu Yunlu and Cho Ch'anhan as my foci, I have raised in this chapter the same questions applied to two different historical worlds: How did rhetorical training—embedded in but not confined to the examination systems—facilitate the development of counterfactual imaginations? How did counterfactual imagination in turn allow the educated individuals to elaborate on their own political ideas? This inquiry has in turn enabled me to underscore the key thesis that I have laid out in the very beginning. In brief, a similar rhetorical curriculum, derived from shared Mongol legacies and developed in the context of close interactions in post-Mongol times, facilitated the development of counterfactual imagination and political thought in two disparate regions of the former Mongol empire. I have shown that though Xu's and Cho's writings resemble each other on the textual surface, the making of their rhetorical ventures was embedded in radically different social, economic, and political circumstances. Xu struggled to make a living in a prosperous region under a large empire; Cho, in contrast, strived to advise the throne of a vassal state of that large empire. Xu had no access to the Ming imperial court, but Cho was expected to accompany his king during times of crisis—when he failed to do so, impeachment immediately followed.

In particular, I have emphasized that the anthologization and publication of Xu's and Cho's writings, while were embedded in the different social and political situations of the seventeenth-century Yangzi Delta versus the Korean Peninsula, in turn determined what has survived to this day. Qian Qianyi, who organized the printing of Xu's collection, repeatedly emphasized that Xu composed his counterfactual imitative writings as early as 1621. The printed and published book, in turn, served as an object commemorating the very possibility through which the Ming could have survived. What we do not know, however, are other writings of Xu's that Qian (and editors under him) did not incorporate into the collection. In Cho's case, while it is impossible to tie most of his imitative writings to specific moments of his life, the editor Shin Ch'ŏnik deliberately featured four pieces by Cho, setting aside at least six other imitative writings.

In lieu of a conclusion, it will be helpful to draw Xu's and Cho's ideas and imaginations into dialogue. Both Xu and Cho devoted themselves to the critical moments when an individual could have expressed him or herself. In actual history, Xu Cheng was silenced by the threat of the death penalty, and Wang Qiang was not able to present her "personal emotions." But what if Xu Cheng and Wang Qiang had acted otherwise? What kind of documents would they have presented? The counterfactual dimension of Xu Yunlu and Cho Ch'anhan's imaginations differed radically from the flourishing genre of alternate history: in the latter case, what makes the story interesting is the whole narrative departing from a critical moment of history, but for Xu and Cho, it is the critical moments themselves that drew most of their attention.

Neither Xu nor Cho elaborated a theory of political rights, though their writings do imply that freedom of speech mattered. Just as in the case of their predecessors discussed in Chapter Three, Chen Li, Yi Gok, and Yang Weizhen, these rhetoricians were concerned with a question that was more fundamental from their perspectives: What is it possible for an individual to say, to do, and to aspire to be in the context of a large bureaucratic regime with a rich history? In Xu Yunlu's case, the question involved how to broach a political proposal against political pressure

and legal sanction on the one hand, but also in the face of widespread moral convictions and historical lessons that stereotyped the proposal as "less than a joke." Xu was not so much defending an individual's right to speak vis-à-vis political/legal pressures as reclaiming the possibility of broaching the very kind of proposals that the dominant moral/historical discourses regarded as ridiculous. In Cho Ch'anhan's case, the question concerns how individuals may bring "personal emotions" into the political realm—or, to be more precise, it involved to the extent to which the formulaic genre of bureaucratic communication allowed one to present her or his feelings, concerns, and complaints. Cho was not so much defending a woman's right to speak vis-à-vis her monarch as questioning in the end what the genre of memorial and the language of four-six parallelism allowed one to do. If Xu was ruminating over what history meant for political decision-making, Cho problematized what the political realm meant for the involved individuals. In brief, both Xu and Cho are important, because they problematized the limits on the imagination in their respective cultures, challenged such limitations, and made new possibilities possible for their communities.

Conclusion

Li Liu 李劉 (1175–1245), an accomplished author of bureaucratic genres in four-six parallel prose, once visited Zhen Dexiu 真德秀 (1178–1235), the scholar-official who was also a teacher of bureaucratic rhetoric (Chapter One). With an ambition to pass the special examination of eloquence (*hongci ke* 宏詞科), Li asked for suggestions and guidance. Zhen, having already invited Li to his study, pointed to his pillow and made it the subject of a prompt: "[Write the edict approving that] it is appropriate for Ms. Zhu [that is, the bamboo pillow] of Qichun County to be promoted to Lady of Wei State." 蘄春縣君祝氏可封衛國夫人.[606]

As we have seen in Chapter One, Zhen had his own pedagogical method in teaching document writing, in which students were asked not only to draft court documents but also compose other documents based on situations around them (Chapter One). Zhen envisioned a case in which a fictional court was to endow a rank of nobility on the lady Zhu 祝 (the pillow). Zhen made up this lady by making a pun on the character of bamboo (*zhu* 竹), the material used for pillows in that day and a word with close pronunciation to that of the surname Zhu 祝.[607] As the bamboo of his pillow came from Qichun County, Zhen devised the scenario in which this so-called Ms. Zhu in question was a native of Qichun County. This pun also plays on the fact that, during the Song, elites referred to a bamboo pillow as their "Bamboo Wife" (or Lady Bamboo, *zhu furen* 竹夫人). Li Liu, as the anecdote reports, immediately deployed the brush and finished the "edict."[608] Using a whole range of classical allusions, he crafted a document that was in perfect accordance with the regulations that defined a real edict endowing titles upon women; employing a variety of tropes describing female virtues, he managed to convey that Zhen's pillow was truly delicate.

About four centuries later in Korea, Cho Chanhan 趙纘韓 (1572–1631) wrote in response to a very similar prompt: "Edict Endowing the Title of Lady Bamboo" 封竹夫人制. His Lady Bamboo, rather than being a native of Qichun China, was "a descendant from Wich'ŏn [of the Korean Peninsula], thus endowed with the ethos of Kojuk [or Guzhu in pinyin]" 以渭川裔有孤竹風.[609] The word "Kojuk" here exemplifies Cho's marvelous wordplay. Literarily, it means "lonely bamboo," an image that connotes integrity and independence. As a proper name, it refers to a state in antiquity, home to the virtuous Boyi 伯夷 (11th century BC) and Shuqi 叔齊 (11th century BC), who refused to serve the Zhou King. More importantly, key texts from China claimed that the state of Kojuk/Guzhu, located near the Liaodong Peninsula, once ruled over and brought civilization to the Korean Peninsula.[610] Thus, with this edict, Cho elaborated on his understanding of the ideal relationship between emperor and minister, husband and wife, human and object, and the Central Civilization ("China") and its counterpart in Korea. As we have seen in Chapter Six, this piece comes to us as one of the key imitative writings that Cho's disciple Shin Ch'ŏnik 愼天翊 (1592–1661) had singled out when compiling his master collected works.

---

606 Luo Dajing 羅大經, *Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 64-65.

607 In this way, Zhen personified the bamboo pillow, following a long tradition of playing with official documents during the Six Dynasties. See Yin Shoufu, "Crowning Roosters, Enfeoffing Mules: Animal, Humor, and Imperial Bureaucracy in Medieval China," manuscript.

608 Luo Dajing, *Helin yulu*, 65.

609 Cho Chan-han 趙纘韓, *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集 (printed, 1655), in *Han'guk munjip ch'onggan*, v.79, 308c.

610 Wei Zheng 魏徵 et al., *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 67.1581.

It should be clear at this point, I hope, that behind the two anecdotes about the edicts written by Zhen and Cho lies a series of interconnected historical transitions. Throughout the previous chapters, I have outlined the transformation of the rhetorical curriculum out of which individuals like Zhen/Li and Cho embarked upon the aforementioned playful writings. As we have seen, the curriculum that Zhen taught ended with the Mongol conquest of the Southern Song in 1279, but by 1314, a new form of rhetorical training began to take shape, forming an important part of the reestablished examination curriculum. This curriculum, further developed in post-Mongol East Eurasia, in turn trained a large number of individuals including Cho, and gave rise to rich and provocative political ideas about the individual and the state, and about eloquence and statecraft. And these ideas, just like "bamboo wife," went on to circulate via emerging global connections, thereby metamorphizing into new forms.[611]

Alongside this transformation, the two episodes also reflect important continuities between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, continuities that are often overlooked, downplayed, or even marginalized under the grand narratives of progress and modernity. From the perspective of literary history, there was a continuity in the use of four-six parallel prose (especially when composing bureaucratic genres like edicts), which continued to flourish after the thirteenth century, despite and alongside the development of the ancient prose movement and "vernacular" genres. From the perspective of cultural/intellectual history, there was a continuity in using official documents (especially those of four-six parallelism) for recreative literary and philosophical thinking. After all, Zhen and Cho's experiences with the "bamboo wife" remind us that, via the rhetorical exercises of writing official documents, individuals not only explored "grand matters of warfare and state" (*junguo dashi* 軍國大事), but also re-problematized their everyday life.

Of course, it is also important to stress that any single-volume treatment of so vast a subject must omit some matters and reduce others to schematic proportions. Indeed, the two stories of Lady Bamboo only begin to touch upon many fascinating avenues of exploration that I cannot adequately address here. They include the parallels and differences between development in different regions in China and Korea, the exchange of texts across political and linguistic boundaries, the recognition of women in imperial/royal bureaucracy, and the changing conceptualization of the relationship between human and non-human subjects, to name but a few. In the rest of this conclusion, I would like to recapitulate the narrative and argument that I have advanced, in a way that underscores both the merits and limits of my approach.

Recapitulating the Narrative in Time and Space

Through six chapters, I have offered a narrative of four stages of development, covering the period from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century. The first stage, which starts from around 1100 and culminated in the decades of 1279 to 1314, is a period when rhetorical training was in crisis, resulting from a series of social, political, and intellectual transformations (Chapter One). Socially, as the educated population expanded, many elites realized they would have little

[611] Probably starting from Cho's time, it is worth mentioning, the idea of the pillow as wife flourished across maritime East Eurasia, which would eventually give rise to the English phrase of "Dutch wife," designating a particular kind of bamboo pillow. See "My Dutch Wife," *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 3 September 1923 (NL1688), available online, accessed on April 8, 2021.
https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19230903-1.2.3?ST=1&AT=search&k=dutch%20wife%20pillow&QT=dutch,wife,pillow&oref=article.

chance to become imperial officials and turned instead to consolidating their local dominance and promoting local identity. It was during this time that the Mongols started to rule over the "Chinese" population. As most of these Steppe conquerors did not read any Sinographs at all, the value of bureaucratic writing in literary Sinitic could no longer be taken for granted. Meanwhile, with the success of the ancient prose movement and the development of Daoxue Neo-Confucianism, much of the educated population was less engaged in studies devoted to bureaucratic rhetoric. This is not to deny that a small number of scholars and officials were making efforts to rehabilitate rhetorical training in different forms.

The second stage, from the 1310s to the 1380s, witnessed the sudden and rapid development of rhetorical learning in the Lower Yangzi Delta and in other regions including Koryŏ Korea. Mongol rule played a critical role in at least two ways. On the one hand, during debates over the content of the civil service examination, which was to be reinstituted, it was Mongol rulers who insisted upon the indispensability of bureaucratic writing in the examination curriculum (Chapter Two). This insistence, as I have shown, had deep cultural roots in the Inner Asian tradition of employing secretaries. On the other hand, the Mongols, relying on their system of patronage to recruit officials, had in effect excluded most scholars of *hanren* ("Chinese") and *nanren* ("Southerners") backgrounds. While this remained so even after the reestablishment of the examination, these "Chinese" and "Southerner" elites in turn devoted themselves to a variety of cultural activities, including collecting official documents of the Han, Tang, and Song as artifacts and sites of historical memory. Under the synergism of the Mongol-established curriculum and the cultural vitality under Mongol rule, rhetorical learning rose to unprecedented prominence (Chapter Three).

The third stage, which stretched from the 1380s to the 1570s, was a period when rhetorical curriculum was standardized under different post-Mongol regimes in different parts of East Eurasia. Focusing on Ming China and Chosŏn Korea, I show that both inherited the curriculum that the Mongol court had promulgated, and restructured their examination systems in different ways. In the Ming, the provincial and metropolitan examinations focused primarily on memorial writing in the response to recent state affairs, while the writing of decrees and edicts was left to the trainees at the elite Hanlin Academy. The Chosŏn reformed the curriculum in its own way by further emphasizing the imitative drafting of Han decrees and Tang edicts (Chapter Six). Thus, two different regimes of rhetorical training gradually took shape in two different post-Mongol polities. As far as the Ming was concerned, the population of licentiates (*shengyuan* 生員) grew rapidly, and exceeded half a million by the early seventeenth century; simultaneously, the state circulated teaching officials and examiners across the provinces, with the hope to impose some sort of uniformity within the realm. The expansion of the number of examination candidates and the geographical diffusion of rhetorical training gave rise to a large arena where individuals could engage in creative thinking within the state infrastructure, a phenomenon I call everyday thought (Chapter Four).

During the fourth stage—from the 1570s to the mid-seventeenth century—intellectual activities based on the standardized rhetorical curriculum flourished in the contexts of new circumstances: environmental change, the continuous development of the market economy, the flourishing of commercial printing, the destruction resulting from pirates and Japanese invaders, the threat posed by the rising Manchu empire, and emerging global networks (Chapter Six). I end the dissertation by emphasizing that the rhetorical curriculum remained vibrant after the Manchu conquest, and that there was no linear decline over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I broach both continuity and discontinuity of the curriculum through the Ming-Qing transition. On the one hand, the early Qing court adopted the prompts that its Ming

predecessors had developed, requiring examinees to congratulate the throne based on recent state affairs. On the other hand, the early Qing court also started to censor a variety of collections and manuals of imitative drafting, because many Ming authors had effectively utilized this form of writing to inspire anti-Manchu campaigns. Further studies are needed, accordingly, to scrutinize the changing political and intellectual culture within the Manchu-centered multi-ethnic empire, which culminated in the curricular reform in 1757.

In my dissertation, the Lower Yangzi Delta is a key region of focus, recurring in multiple chapters. However, I situate case studies of this region in the broader contexts of (post-)Mongol politics and transregional connection, and juxtapose it with parallel developments in other locales: thirteenth-century Dongping (in modern-day Shandong, Chapter One), sixteenth-century Jinzhou 金州 (in modern-day Shaanxi, Chapter Four), and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Hansŏng 漢城 (in modern-day South Korea, Chapter Six).

This trans-dynastic and trans-local approach allows me to address two questions. First, how did the period of Mongol rule matter in Chinese and the broader East Eurasian history? My argument, simply put, is that Mongol and Inner Asian traditions played a critical role in reshaping the educational curriculum, which not only outlived the Mongol Empire but also catalyzed a variety of intellectual movements. This statement, however, requires careful qualification. As repeatedly emphasized in Chapter Two, I do not think the Mongol or "Inner Asian" approach to employing secretaries is by definition antagonistic to its "Chinese" counterpart. The differences between these two traditions are mediated by historically contingent processes through which the Inner Asian and "Chinese" spheres interacted with each other. Moreover, the examination curriculum that the Mongol court promulgated constituted only a part of the complicated ecology of social and cultural transformation. If it had exerted phenomenal impact upon local societies, it was because it provided the opportunity for local individuals to advance the claims that they had already been ruminating.

Second, was the development in the Lower Yangzi Delta unique or not? At the risk of over-simplification, I argue that this well-studied area is not exceptional in witnessing the development of rhetorical education during the periods in question. During the mid- and late thirteenth century, Dongping was a key site in North China that rivaled prefectures in the Lower Yangzi Delta in hosting a number of teachers of bureaucratic rhetoric. Starting from the fourteenth century, the Lower Yangzi Delta and the Korean Peninsula were comparable in many ways. In both regions, wood-block printing flourished, thanks to which many printed books come down to us. Because many elites published rhetorical exercises for different purposes, it is possible to trace the divergence of intellectual and rhetorical cultures in the two regions in detail (Chapter Six). Although fewer materials survive for many other regions, the example of Jinzhou, Shaanxi is telling: though elites there did not produce as many printed collections of their writings, they were able to compose highly sophisticated documents as a result of their examination training. The circulation of imperial officials qua Instructors of government schools constituted an important agent for diffusing knowledge, information, and skills (Chapter Four).

It is worth stressing that I have not been able to address all questions of importance. For instance, this is not a comparative history of the Ming and the Chosŏn examination systems. Nor is it a local or regional history that can do justice to the dynamism of rhetorical and intellectual culture in the Korean Peninsula or the province of Shaanxi. On these topics, more research is needed to build upon the observations that local historians and historians of examinations have already advanced.

Implications for the Study of Political Thought

So far, I have summarized my argument in chronological order. Though this dissertation is not a study of political philosophy *per se*, I hope my observations can shed some light on current debates in the field of comparative political theory. Thus, here I re-state my discrete historical observations in schematic form and from the perspective of theoretical argumentations.

I start by identifying a problematic that forms a shared condition for a variety of cultures during the periods of my focus. This transculturally shared problematic concerns what an individual can say, do, and aspire to be in a sphere premised upon the use of official documents and highly formulaic writings that presuppose a hierarchy of authority. During the period that I have covered, individuals of different parts of Eurasia elaborated on this problematic in their own terms. In the late Ming, for instance, it turned into a question of what one could and should do with *pai'ou* 排偶 (the parallel prose [of memorials]), and when one had to *chenxie* 陳謝 (express gratitude [to the throne]). In the context of the Spanish empire under Charles I (1500–1558), to give another example, it took the form of the genres of *arbistrio* and *memorial*, and the question of how one may propose *remedios* (remedies) that may contribute to the *conservación* (conservation) of the monarchy's glory (Chapter Five).

In examining this problematic, I orient my discussion away from a much-debated question: Are concepts such as "rights" or "liberty" unique to the European tradition, or did they also develop in different forms in non-European political cultures? My strategy is to ask the question of why "liberty" or "rights" are considered valuable, thus narrowing my discussion to a particular thread.[612] Accordingly, these master concepts are valuable because they confirm the possibility by which individuals can say and do things in particular contexts. Here, I use "possibility" as a purely etic term, not intended as a translation of any emic terms of literary Sinitic, Latin, or other languages. "Possibility" as an etic term has particular advantages for transcultural studies of the period of my focus, in part because (to my knowledge) it is not a key political concept for any particular region: neither in early modern western Europe, nor in Byzantium, nor in East Eurasia. Thus, thinking in terms of "possibility" allows us to rethink these political cultures without prioritizing the experiences of any one of them.

Starting from this conceptual and methodological framework, I trace how individuals of different backgrounds and statuses approached the shared problematic of the possibility of speaking within the institutional sphere. I think their insights may contribute to political theoretical discussions today from at least two perspectives.

First, these individuals themselves were exploring creative approaches to solve the kind of political problems that existed in different societies. In Chen Li's case, the ruling authority had denied men of his social and ethnic (or even "racial") status the opportunity to participate in imperial decision-making, and the challenge was how to claim the right to engage in politics (Chapter Three). In Liu Yu's case, an environmental disaster had proven that the current structure of the bureaucracy was deeply flawed, and the question was how to reform it (Chapter Four). In Xu Yunlu's case, historical memory and knowledge had already become a burden for current decision-making; thus, he sought to explore a therapeutic approach to the past (Chapter Six). For Cho Ch'anhan, the reality of foreign invasion and domestic factional politics resulted in his demotion, denying him access to actual opportunities to speak to the throne. Nevertheless, by

[612] I am particularly indebted to Ci Jiwei's seminar on "Liberal Democracy" in 2009. See his, "Political Agency in Liberal Democracy," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 14.2 (2006): 144–162.

adopting a female persona, he recreated the counterfactual history in which a palace woman could have refused to sacrifice herself for the sake of the empire (Chapter Six).

Second, these individuals themselves in effect challenged an assumption central to post-Enlightenment philosophy, namely, the ontological dualism that believes in the fundamental cleavage between the sphere of document-using and that of intellectual life. This dualism expresses itself through different terminologies foundational academic discourses today. If Weber's bureaucracy was conceived as soulless, Habermas later provided its converse, elucidating the "public sphere," a realm of information and communication that flourished in Europe's salons and literary networks and was exclusively defined by its full detachment from state infrastructures and channels. Conceived as such, the seed of human political imagination could only germinate once planted outside the dark recesses of bureaucratic stricture. This dualism has eventually shaped the division of labor within history. Official documents are familiar to historians of bureaucratic and political cultures, who use them to dissect the mechanism of power; rarely do scholars of intellectual, literary, and philosophical cultures focus on these formulaic documents as sites for excavating imagination, literary creativity, or philosophical breakthrough.

Against this backdrop, I have argued that it is both possible and desirable go beyond this dualism. It is possible because individuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have already provided compelling arguments to deconstruct this dualism. For "Chinese" examiners, expressions of gratitude to the throne could simultaneously become the place where admonition dwelled. For Ricci and his European readers, the formal document to be submitted to the throne could itself be the *discorsi* (discourse), by which one advanced one's insight based on *uber jeden insodernheit* (sic., the very particular [situation], see Chapter Five). It is desirable because once we go beyond the dualism that draws a sharp distinction between the sphere of document-using and the sphere of free/creative thinking, we can discover a whole world of everyday thought from different local and global contexts. All in all, this dissertation stems from, forms a part of, and seeks to lay out some preparations for a much larger project—one that seeks to rewrite the history of political thought from the everyday world of official documents and their users.

Reference Matter

Abbreviations

CSSL	*Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄, digital access via Hanchi: http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/. When citing CSSL and MSL (below), I give the date in the order of year/month/day (e.g. 1619/7/3, meaning third day of the seventeenth month of the "Chinese" calendar, which corresponds to year 1619) plus the page number.
HMCG	*Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 韓國文集叢刊, digital access via https://db.itkc.or.kr/.
JBGJ	*Zhongguo jiben guji ku* 中國基本古籍庫.
MSL	*Ming shilu* 明實錄, digital access via Hanchi: http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/.
QLJW	*Quan Liao Jin wen* 全遼金文. Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2002.
QSW	*Quan Song wen* 全宋文. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu banbanshe, 2006.
QYW	*Quan Yuan wen* 全元文. Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1999.
SKCM	*Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書. Qinan: Qilu shushe, 1996.
SKJH	*Siku jinhui shu congkan* 四庫禁毀書叢刊. Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2005.
SKJHBB	*Siku jinhui congkan bubian* 四庫禁毀叢刊補編. Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2005.
SKQS	*Airusheng Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 愛如生文淵閣四庫全書.
TYG XS	*Tianyi ge cang Mingdai keju lu xuankan xiangshi lu* 天一閣藏明代科舉錄選刊 鄉試錄, 10 volumes. Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2016. Note: this 10-volume edition contains many mistakes; I use it mainly for distant reading and for providing a reference page number. For the reprints of the original, see the photographic reprint: *Tianyi ge cang Mingdai keju lu xuankan xiangshi lu* 天一閣藏明代科舉錄選刊 鄉試錄, 277 facsimiles. Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2010.
YDZ	*Yuan dianzhang* 元典章, edited by Chen Gaohua 陳高華. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011.
XSKQS	*Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002.

Pre-1900

Bai, Juyi 白居易. *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao* 白居易集箋校. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003.

Ban, Gu 班固. *Han shu* 漢書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962.

Buzeng Anyang xianzhi 補增安陽縣志. Printed, 1738. In JBGJ.

Chen, Li 陳櫟. *Dingyu ji* 定宇集. In SKQS.

Chen, Renxi 陳仁錫 ed. *Huang Ming biaocheng wenxuan* 皇明表程文選. Printed, 1633. Held in Jilin University Library. See also SKJHBB, *zibu* 51.

Chen, Shou 陳壽. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959.

Chen, Zilong 陳子龍 et al., eds. *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編. In SKJH, *jibu* 22.

Cho, Chanhan 趙纘韓. *Hyŏnju jip* 玄洲集. In CMCG:79

Da Ming huidian 大明會典 (Zhengde edition). Printed, prefaced 1509. Reprint: Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1989.

Da Ming huidian 大明會典 (Wanli edition). Printed, prefaced 1587 preface. Reprint: Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2000.
de Bary, Wm. Theodore, ed. *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest times to 1600*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
de Rachewiltz, Igor, ed. *Index to the Secret History of Mongols*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1972.
_____. *The Secret History of the Mongols, volume 3 (Supplement)*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
Fan, Ye 范曄. *Hou Han shu* 後漢書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965.
Gallagher, Louis J. *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583–1610*. New York: Random House, 1953.
González de Mendoza, Juan. *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China*. Rome, 1585.
Gu, Yanwu 顧炎武. *Ri zhi lu* 日知錄. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012.
Hu, Zanzong 胡纘宗. *Yuanxue bian* 願學編. In JBGJ.
Huang, Chunyao 黃淳耀. *Bao'an yigao* 豹菴遺稿. In JBGJ.
I, Minbo 李敏輔. *P'ungsŏ jip* 豊墅集. In HMCG:232.
Jiajing Shenqiu xianzhih 嘉靖沈丘縣志. Printed, 1530. In *Tianyige cang Mingdai fangzhi xuankan xubian*, volume 78. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 1990.
Jiajing Weishi xianzhi 嘉靖尉氏縣志. Printed, 1548. In *Tianyige cang Mingdai fangzhi xuankan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji shudian, 1982.
Juvainī, 'Aṭā Malik. *Taḥrīr-i nuwīn-i Tārīkh-i jahāngushāy-i 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī*. Tihrān: Amīr Kabīr, 1983.
_____. *The History of the World Conqueror*, translated by J. A. Boyle. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958.
Kangxi Xiaoshan xianzhi 康熙蕭山縣志. Printed, 1678. In JBGJ.
Keju lu 科舉錄. Note: here I only list the ones to which previous scholars have not gained access: Hongzhi 5 (1492) Zhejiang, Hongzhi 17 (1504) Zhejiang, Jiajing 1 (1522) Zhejiang, Jiajing 16 (1537) Shuntian, Longqing 1 (1567) Jiangxi, Wanli 10 (1582) Jiangxi, Tianqi 4 (1624) Guangxi, Wanli 28 (1600) Shuntian, Wanli 28 (1600) Fujian.
Kennedy, George A. *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Leiden: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
Khāṣṣ-hājib, Yūsuf. *Kutadgu Bilig*. İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1947.
Kwŏn, P'il 權韠. *Sŏkchu jip* 石洲集. In CMCG:75.
Kwagŏ kŭpkwa mun 科擧及科文. Manuscript, nineteenth century. Held in Kyujanggak Library (古 351.3-G994).
Li, Tao 李燾. *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992.
Li, Zhi 李贄. *Fen shu* 焚書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
Lin, Xiyuan 林希元. *Lin Ciya wenji* 林次崖文集. In SKCM:75.
Liu Xu 劉昫 et al. *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
Liu, Jin 劉瑾 ed. *Xinbian zhao gao zhangbiao shishi* 詔誥章表事實. Printed, 1344. Held in National Archive of Japan.
Liu, Zhen 劉貞 ed. *Leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* 類編歷舉三場文選. Printed, 1340s. Held in Seikado Museum and Library.

_____. *Leibian liju sanchang wenxuan* 類編歷舉三場文選. Printed, 1340s. Held in National Library of China, accessed through microfilm.
Lu, Chongzhi 陸翀之 and Wang Xijue 王錫爵, eds. *Huang Ming guanke jingshi hongci xuji* 皇明館課經世宏辭續集. Printed in 1593. Held in Harvard University Library.
Luo, Dajing 羅大經. *Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
Ma, Shiqi 馬世奇. *Danning ju wenji* 澹寧居文集. Printed, ca. 1644. Held in Nanjing Library.
Maoshi zhengyi 毛詩正義. Printed, 1815.
Michel, Francisque, ed., *Relations des voyages de Guillaume de Rubruk, Bernard le Sage et S. Wulf*. Paris: Chez Bourgogne et Martinet, 1839.
Ming gurun i suduri. Manuscript, ca.1665. Held in Palace Museum, Beijing.
Nylan, Michael, ed. *The Analects of Confucius: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2014.
Navarrete, Domingo Fernández. *Tratados Historicos, Politicos, Ethicos, y Religiosos de la Monarchia de China*. Madrid: 1676.
_____. "Petición del dominico Domingo Fernández Navarrete de prórroga de limosna de vino y aceite." In Archivo General de Indias (Reference Code: ES.41091.AGI/25//FILIPINAS,82,N.62).
Na, Sech'an 羅世纘. *Songjae yugo* 松齋遺稿. In CMCG:28.
No, In. *Kŭmgye ilgi* 錦溪日記. Kwangju: Naju mokhyangt'o munhwa yŏn'guhoe, 1999.
Pan, Angxiao 潘昂霄. *Jin shi li* 金石例. In SKQS.
Pines, Yuri. "Disputers of Abdication: Zhanguo Egalitarianism and the Sovereign's Power." *T'oung Pao* Second Series, 91.4/5 (2005): 243–300
Purchas, Samuel, ed. *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1905-07.
Qunshu leiyao shilin guangji 群書類要事林廣記. Printed, 1492. Held in Yonezawa Library.
Ricci, Matteo. *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci, S. I.: I commentari della Cina*. Macerata: Premiato stab. tip. F. Giorgetti, 1911.
Sima, Qian 司馬遷. *Shi ji* 史記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982.
Semedo, Álvaro. *Imperio de la China, i cultura evangelica en èl, por los religios de la Compañia de Iesus*. Madrid: Impresso por Iuan Sanchez, 1642.
_____. *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*. London: Printed by E. Tyler for John Crook, 1655.
Shen, Defu 沈德符. *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989.
Sima, Guang 司馬光. *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009.
Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
Song, Lian 宋濂 et al. *Yuan shi* 元史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976.
Songjo p'yojŏn ch'ongnyu 宋朝表牋總類. Printed, 1403. Held in Kyujanggak Library (複製가람貴 952.02-So58v.7).
Trigault, Nicolas. *De christiana expeditione apud Sinas*. Lugduni: Sumptibus Horatii Cardon, 1615.
_____. *Histoire de l'expedition chrestienne au royaume de la Chine entreprise par les PP. De la compagnie de Jesus*. Lyon: Horace Cardon 1616.
_____. *Historia von Einführung der christlichen Religion in das große Königreich China durch die Societet Jesu*. Augsburg: Antoni Hierat von Cöllen 1617.

_____. *Istoria de la China i cristiana empresa hecha en ella: por la Compañia de Iesvs*. Sevilla: Gabriel Ramos Veiarano 1621.
_____. *Entrata nella China dè padri della Compagnia del Gesù*. Napoli: Lazzaro Scoriggio, 1622.
Toqto'a 脫脫 et al. *Song shi* 宋史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977.
Toqto'a 脫脫 et al. *Jin shi* 金史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
Uông Cơ Kính Nghiệp 汪基敬業. *Lịch khoa danh biểu* 歷科名表. 1836. Digital collections of the Vietnamese Nôm Preservation Foundation, R.1933.
_____. *Lịch khoa danh biểu* 歷科名表. 1852. Digital collections of the Vietnamese Nôm Preservation Foundation, R.148.
Wanli Shaoxing fu zhi 萬曆紹興府志. In JBGJ.
Wang, Fuzhi 王夫之. *E meng* 噩夢. In XSKQS:945.
Wang, Shizhen 王世貞 ed. Er san chang jingji kao 二三場經濟考. Printed, 1628-1644. Held in Hubei Provincial Library.
Wang, Tingxiang 王廷相. *Wang Tingxiang ji* 王廷相集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989.
Wang, Wei 王禕. *Wang Zhongwen gong ji* 王忠文公集. Printed, 1522. Held in Shanghai Library.
Wang, Xijue 王錫爵 ed. *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* 增定國朝館課經世宏辭. Printed, ca. 1590. Held in Shanghai Library.
_____. *Zengding guochao guanke jingshi hongci* 增定國朝館課經世宏辭. Printed, 1591. Held in Shanghai Library.
Wang, Yingling 王應麟. *Yu hai cixue zhinan* 玉海 辭學指南. Printed, prefaced 1340, 1342, and 1351. Held in Fu Ssu-Nien Library, Seikado Museum and Library. For the very copy held in National Library of China, see *Zhonghua zaizao shanben* 中華再造善本. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2005.
Wang, Zhiji 王之績. *Tie li wen qi* 鐵立文起. In JBGJ.
Wei, Xiaohu 魏小虎, ed. *Siku tiyao quanshu zongmu huiding* 四庫提要全書總目彙訂. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012.
Xiao, Tong 蕭統, ed. *Wen xuan* 文選. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977.
Xiao, Zixian 蕭子顯 et al. *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972.
Xie, Zhaozhe 謝肇淛. *Wu za zu* 五雜俎. In JBGJ.
Xu, Mi 徐泌. *Ming hua lu* 明畫錄. Taibei: Mingwen shuju, 1991.
Xu, Yunlu 徐允錄. *Simian zhai ji* 思勉齋集. Printed, 1658. Held in Shanghai Library. Also in JBGJ.
Xu, Zhaowen 徐昭文. *Zizhi tongjian gangmu kaozheng* 資治通鑑綱目考證. Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2016.
Yang, Weizhen 楊維楨. *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺. Printed, prefaced 1502. Held in Fu Su-nien Library.
_____. *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺. Printed, 1540. Photographic reprint in SKCM.
_____. *Shiyi shiyi* 史義拾遺. Printed, 1835. Held in Fu Su-nien Library.
Ye, Fen 葉賁, ed. *Sheng Song mingxian siliu congzhu* 聖宋名賢四六叢珠. Manuscript, Ming. Held in Shanghai Library.
Youyi shu xu wengui 游藝塾續文規. Printed, 1603. In XSKQS 1718.
Yuan Huang 袁黃 ed. *Qunshu beikao; Xu er sanchang qunshu beikao* 群書備考 續二三場群書備考. Printed, ca 1610s. Held in Princeton University Library.

_____. *Zengding er sanchang qunshu beikao* 增訂二三場群書備考. In SKJHBB, *zibu* 42.
Yun Haengim 尹行恁. *Sŏkchae go* 碩齋稿. Manuscript, late 19th century. Held in Kyujanggak Library (古 3428-270-v.1-11). Also in HMCG:287.
Yule, Henry. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*. London: John Murray, 1903.
Zeng, Rulu 曾汝魯. *Cheshu lou zuanzhu siliu fengyuan* 車書樓纂註四六逢源. Printed, end of Ming. In SKJHBB, 43.
Zhang, Tingyu 張廷玉 et al. *Ming shi* 明史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.
Zhang, Wei 張維. *Longyou jinshi lu* 隴右金石錄. In *Shike shiliao xinbian* vol. 21. Taibei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1977.
Zhang, Xuecheng 章學誠. *Wen shi tong yi jiaozhu* 文史通義校注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
Zhen, Dingyuan 眞鼎元, ed. *Xishan Zhen Wenzhong gong nianpu* 西山眞文忠公年譜. Printed, 1764. Held in East Asian Library, UC Berkeley.
Zhongguo keju lu huibian 中國科舉錄彙編. Beijing, Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2010.
Zhong, Xing 鍾 惺 ed. *Han wen gui* 漢文規. Printed, end of Ming. In SKJHBB, *jibu* 43.
Zhu, Bian 朱弁. *Quwei jiuwen* 曲洧舊聞. In SKQS.
Zhu, Xi 朱熹 ed. *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982.

Post-1900

Allsen, Thomas T. "Guard and Government in the Reign of The Grand Qan Möngke, 1251-59." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46.2 (1986): 495–521.
Andrade, Tonio and Xing Hang eds., *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550–1700*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016.
Angelov, Dimiter. *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Angle, Stephen C. and Justin Tiwald. *Neo-Confucianism: A Philosophical Introduction*. London: Polity, 2017.
Ashmore, Robert. "The Mastering Voice: Text and Aurality in the Ninth-century Mediascape." In *Memory in Medieval China: Text, Ritual, and Community*, edited by Wendy Swartz and Robert F. Campany, 243–266. Leiden: Brill, 2018.
Atwell, William S. "From Education to Politics: The Fu she." In *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, edited by Wm Theodore de Bary, 333–358. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.
Atwood, Christopher. "Banner, Otog, Thousand: Appanage Communities as the Basic Unit of Traditional Mongolian Society." *Mongolian Studies* 34 (2015): 1–76.
Bao, Weimin 包偉民. "Jingyingmen difanghua le me?" 精英們地方化了么. *Tang yanjiu* 11 (2005): 653–671.
Barthold, Vasily. *Turkestan: Down to the Mongol Invasion*. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
_____. *Собрание сочинений*. Москва: Издательство Восточной литературы, 1963.
Bayard, Françoise. *Le Monde des Financiers au XVIIe Siècle*. Paris: Flammarion, 1988.
Bian, Dongbo 卞東波. *Haiwai jigu lu* 域外稽古錄. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2019.
Bielenstein, Hans. *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
Birge, Bettine. *Marriage and the Law in the Age of Khubilai Khan: Cases from the Yuan dianzhang*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017.

_____. "How the Mongols Mattered: A Perspective from Law." In *How Mongolia Matters: War, Law, and Society*, 87–104. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
Biran, Michal. *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State In Central Asia*. London: Routledge, 2013.
Bol, Peter. "Seeking Common Ground: Han Literati Under Jurchen Rule." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987): 461–538.
_____. *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
_____. "Chao Ping-wen (1159-1232): Foundation for Literati Learning." In *China under Jurchen Rule*, edited by Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen H. West, 115–144. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
_____. "Neo-Confucianism and Local Society, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century: A Case Study." In *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, edited by Richard von Glahn and Paul Jakov Smith, 241–283. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003.
_____. *Neo-Confucianism in History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.
Bossler, Beverly J. *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, & the State in Sung China (960-1279)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998.
_____. *Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of Female Fidelity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University East Asian Center, 2013.
Bouhafa, Feriel. "Natural Justice under the Scope of Rhetoric: The Written and the Unwritten laws in Ibn Rushd's Political and Legal Philosophy." PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2016.
Brook, Timothy. *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1993.
_____. *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
_____. *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2010.
Brook Timothy et al. *Sacred Mandates: Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.
Brown, Miranda. "Returning the Gaze: An Experiment in Reviving Gu Yanwu (1613–1682)." *Fragments* 1 (2011): 41–77.
_____. *The Chinese State in Ming Society*. London: Routledge, 2005.
Burke, Peter and Joseph McDermott. "The Proliferation of Reference Books, 1450–1850." In *The Book Worlds of East Asia and Europe, 1450–1850: Connections and Comparisons*, edited by Joseph P. McDermott and Peter Burke, 237–282. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015.
Butterworth, Charles E. "Rhetoric and Islamic Political Philosophy." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3.2 (1971): 187–198.
Caferro, William. *Petrarch's War: Florence and the Black Death in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
Cai, Liang. *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014.
Cao, Jiaxin 曹家欣. "Cong *Cixue zhinan* kan Songdai boxue hongci ke de kaoshi" 從詞學指南看宋代博學宏詞科的考試. *Xueshu tansuo* 9 (2014): 114–118.

Cao, Shuji 曹樹基. *Zhongguo renkou shi Ming shiqi* 中國人口史 明時期. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2000.
Cha, Joohang. "The Civilizing Project in Medieval Korea: Neo-Classicism, Nativism, and Figurations of Power." PhD diss., Harvard University, 2014.
Chaffee, John W. *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
Chan, Hok-lam 陳學霖. *Mingdai renwu yu chuanshuo* 明代人物與傳說. Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue chu banshe, 1997.
Chan, Wing-tsit. *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology Compiled by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-Ch'ien*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
Chang, Fangzhou 常方舟. *Shiluo de wenzhang xue chuantong* 失落的文章學傳統. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2020.
Chang, Hao. "On the Ching-shih Ideal in Neo-Confucianism." *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3.1 (1974): 36–61.
Chen, Baoliang 陳寶良. *Mingdai xiucai de shenghuo shijie* 明代秀才的生活世界. Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2020.
Chen, Changwen 陳長文. "Mingdai keju qushi zhong de shiwu ce yanjiu" 明代科舉取士中的時務策研究. MPhil diss., Henan daxue, 2001.
Chen, Wangdao 陳望道. *Xiuci xue fafan* 修辭學發凡. Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1982.
Chen, Wen 陳文. *Yuenan keju zhidu yanjiu* 越南科舉制度研究. Beijing : Shang wu yin shu guan, 2015.
Chen, Gaohua 陳高華. "Yuanchao keju wenshu kao" 元朝科舉文書考. *Jinan shixue* 1 (2002): 153–172.
Chen, Jo-shui 陳弱水. *Tangdai wenshi yu Zhongguo sixiang de zhuanxing* 唐代文士與中國思想的轉型. Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2016.
Chen, Lai 陳來. *Song Ming lixue* 宋明理學. Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991.
Chen, Song. "The State, the Gentry, and Local Institutions: The Song Dynasty and Long-term Trends from the Tang to the Qing." *Journal of Chinese History* 1.1 (2017): 141–182.
Chen, Yinke 陳寅恪. *Sui Tang zhidu yuanyuan luelun gao* 隋唐制度淵源略論稿. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963.
_____. *Jinming guan conggao er bian* 金明館叢稿二編. Beijing: Sanlian, 2015.
Chittick, Andrew. *The Jiankang Empire in Chinese and World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
Ch'oe, Sŭng-hŭi 崔承熙. *Chosŏn ch'ogi chŏngch'isa yŏn'gu* 朝鮮初期政治史研究. Sŏul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 2002.
Ch'oe, Yong-ho. *The Civil Examinations and the Social Structure in the Early Yi Dynasty Korea: 1392–1600*. Seoul: The Korean Research Center, 1987.
Chu, Min-kin. *The Politics of Higher Education: The Imperial University in Northern Song China*. Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong Press, 2020.
Ci, Jiwei. "Political Agency in Liberal Democracy." *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 14.2 (2006): 144–162.
Clauson, Gerard. "The Turkish Elements in 14th Century Mongolian." *Central Asiatic Journal* 5:4 (1960): 301–316.

_____. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-13th Century Turkish*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.
Cleaves, Francis Woodman. "The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1362 in Memory of Prince Hindu." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12.1/2 (1949): 1–133.
Clunas, Craig. *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.
Cummins, J. S. *A Question of Rites: Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China*. Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1993.
Dardess, John. *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
_____. *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and its Repression, 1620-1627*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.
_____. "Did the Mongols Matter? Territory, Power, and the Intelligentsia in China from the Northern Song to the Early Ming." In *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, edited by Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, 111–134. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003.
Darnton, Robert. *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986.
Dessert, Daniel. *Argent, Pouvoir et Société au Grand Siècle*. Paris: Fayard, 1984.
De Weerdt, Hilde. *Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127–1279)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007.
_____. *Information, Territory, and Elite Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015.
_____. "Considering Citizenship in Imperial Chinese History." *Citizenship Studies* 23 (2019): 256–276.
Doran, Rebecca. "Perspective and Appreciation in Xie Lingyun's 'Imitations of the Crown Prince of Wei's Gatherings in Ye'." *Early Medieval China* 17 (2011): 51–76.
Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997.
Duncan, John B. *The Origins of the Choson Dynasty*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.
Дыбо, Анна Владимировна. *Лингвистические контакты ранних тюрков: лексический фонд пратюркский период*. Москва : Восточная литература, 2007.
Du, Yongtao. "Locality, Literati, and the Imagined Spatial Order: A Case of Huizhou, 1200-1550." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 42 (2012): 407–444.
Dubet, Anne and Gaetano Sabatini. "Arbitristas. Acción política y propuesta económica." In *La Monarquía de Felipe III*, edited by José Martínez Millán and María Antonieta Visceglia, 867–870. Madrid, Fundación Mapfre, 2008.
Ebrey, Patricia. *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
_____. *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
El Amine, Loubna. "Beyond East and West: Reorienting Political Theory through the Prism of Modernity." *Perspectives on Politics* 14.1 (2016): 102–120.
Egan, Ronand C. *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
Eisenberg, Andrew. "Warfare and Political Stability in Medieval North Asian Regimes." *T'oung Pao* 83.4/5 (1997): 300–328.

Elliott, John. *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
Elliott, Mark. *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Elman, Benjamin A. *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
Endicott-West, Elizabeth. "The Yuan Government and Society." In *The Cambridge History of China,* Volume 6, edited by Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett, 587–615. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
Fan, Xiangda 范祥達. "Yuan chu de Dongping xuefeng yu yingxiang" 元初的東平學風與影響. *Xingda lishi xuebao* 19 (2007): 45–80.
Fei, Si-yen. *Negotiating Urban Space: Urbanization and Late Ming Nanjing*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010.
Findley, Carter V. *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
Foucault, Michel. *Dits et Ecrits*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.
Franke, Herbert. "Wang Yun (1227-1304): A Transmitter of Chinese Values." In *Yuan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion Under the Mongols*, edited by Hok-lam Chan and Wm. Theodore de Bary, 153–196. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
Fu, Jia 付佳. "Xinbian zhao gao biaozhang jiyao banben kao" 新編詔誥表章機要版本考. *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 4 (2014): 55–57.
Fu, Xuancong 傅璇琮. *Tangdai keju yu wenxue* 唐代科舉與文學. Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1986.
Fukutani, Akira 福谷彬. *Nansō dōgaku no tenkai* 南宋道学の展開. Kyōto : Kyōto daigaku gakujutsu shuppankai, 2019.
Funada, Yoshiyuki. "The Image of the Semu People: Mongols, Chinese, Southerners, and Various Other Peoples under the Mongol Empire." *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 7 (2014): 199–221.
Furumatsu, Takashi 古松崇志. "Kingoku (Joshin) no kōbō to Yūrasha no tōhō jōsei" 金国（女真）の興亡とユーラシア東方情勢. In *Kin Joshin no rekishi to Yūrashia Tōhō*, edited by Furumatsu Takashi et al., 14–31. Tōkyō: Bensei Shuppan, 2019.
Gakusho, Nakajima 中島樂章. "Gendai no bunsho gyōsei ni'okeru pa-su-pa ji shiyō kitei nitsu'ite" 元代の文書行政におけるパスパ字使用規定について. *Tōhō gakuhō* 84 (2009): 91–138.
Gallagher, Catherine. "The Rise of Fictionality." *The Novel* volume 1, edited by Franco Moretti, 336–363. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
_____. *Telling It Like It Wasn't: The Counterfactual Imagination in History and Fiction*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018.
Geiss, James. "The Chia-ching reign, 1522-1566." In *Cambridge History of China,* edited by Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, 443–450. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
Gerritsen, Anne. *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
Giele, Enno. *Imperial Decision-making and Communication in Early China: a study of Cai Yong's Duduan*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006.
Golden, Peter. *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992.

Goodrich, L. Carrington and Chaoying Fang, eds. *Dictionary of Ming Biography: 1368–1644*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.
Green, Monica H. "Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death." *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014): 9–26.
Green, Nile, ed. *The Persianate World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019.
Guan, Qin 管琴. *Cike yu Songdai wenxue* 詞科與宋代文學. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018.
Guojia gongwuyuan luyong kaoshi yingshi zhidao 國家公務員錄用考試應試指導. Beijing: Qiye guanli chubanshe, 1995.
Guo, Peigui 郭培貴. *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Mingdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 明代卷. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017.
_____. "Mingdai juren shuliang ji jinshi pingjun zhongshi nianling kaoshu," 明代舉人數量及進士平均中式年齡考述. Paper presented at Quanqiu hua xia Mingshi yanjiu xin shiye, Taipei, 2008.
Hankins, James. *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2019.
Hartwell, Robert. "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 365–442.
Ha, Chi-yŏng. *18-segi Chin-Han Komunnon ŭi Chŏn'gae wa Sirhyŏn Yangsang* 18 세기 진한 고문론 의 전개 와 실현 양상. Sŏul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2019.
Han, Chenghua 韓承樺. "Pingjie liang'an youguan jingshi wenbian de yanjiu gaikuang" 評介兩岸經世文編的研究概況. *Shi yuan* 23 (2011): 205–238.
He, Bian. "Too Sick to Serve: The Politics of Illness in the Qing Civil Bureaucracy." *Late Imperial China* 33.2 (2012): 40–75.
_____. "Of Wounded Bodies and the Old Manchu Archive: Documenting Personnel Management in the Early Manchu State." *Saksaha* 16 (2019): 1–29.
He, Xi. *Lineage and Community in China, 1100–1500: Genealogical Innovation in Jiangxi*. London: Routledge, 2020.
He, Zhongli 何忠禮. *Nan Song keju zhidu shi* 南宋科舉制度史. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2009.
Held, David and Pietro Maffettone, eds. *Global Political Theory*. London: Polity, 2016.
Hirose, Norio 廣瀬憲雄. *Kodai Nihon to tōbu Yūrashia no kokusai kankei* 古代日本と東部ユーラシアの国際関係. Tōkyō: Bensei Shuppan, 2018.
Ho, Ping-ti. *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian Series, 1959.
Höpfl, Harro. *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c.1540–1630*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Holcombe, Charles. "The Xianbei in Chinese History." *Early Medieval China* 19 (2013): 1–38.
Hou, Meizhen 侯美珍. "Mingdai xianghuishi zhao gao biao gongwen kaoshi xilun" 明代鄉會試詔誥表公文考試析論. *Guowen xuebao* 62 (2017): 125–158.
_____. "Yuandai keju sanchang kaoshi pianzhong zhi shitan" 元代科舉三場考試偏重之探論. *Guowen xuebao* 6 (2018): 171–202.
_____. "Guo Mingru Xinbian zhao gao biaozhang jiyao tanxi" 郭明如《新編詔誥章表機要》探析. *Guowen xuebao* 67 (2020): 113–146.

Hou, Xudong 侯旭東. *Shenme shi richang tongzhi shi* 什麼是日常統治史. Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2020.

Hsiao, Chi'-ch'ing. *The Military Establishment of Yuan Dynasty*. Cambridge: Clauson, 1978.

_____/Xiao Qiqing 蕭啓慶. *Jiuzhou sihai fengya tong: Yuandai duozu shirenquan de xingcheng yu fazhan* 九州四海風雅同：元代多族士人圈的形成與發展. Taibei: Lianjing, 2012.

Hu, Hong 胡鴻. *Neng Xia ze da yu jian mu Hua feng* 能夏則大與漸慕華. Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2017.

Hucker, Charles O. "Governmental Organization of the Ming Dynasty." Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 21 (1958): 1–66.

Huang, Kewu 黃克武. "Jingshi wenbian yu Zhongguo jindai jingshi sixiang yanjiu" 經世文編與中國近代經世思想研究. *Jindai Zhongguo shi yanjiu tongxun* 2 (1982): 83–96.

Huang, Kuanchong 黃寬重. *Zhengce duice: Songdai zhengzhi shi tansuo* 政策 對策 宋代政治史探索. Taibei: Lianjing, 2012.

Huang, Ray. "The Grand Canal during the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1978.

Huang, Rensheng 黃仁生. *Yang Weizhen yu Yuan mo Ming chu wenxue sichao* 楊維禎與元末明初文學思潮. Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 2005.

Huang, Zhengjian 黃正健 ed. *Zhongguo gu wenshuxue yanjiu chubian* 中國古文書學研究初編. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019.

Huo, Sitong 霍四通. *Zhongguo xiandai xiuci xue de jianli* 中國現代修辭學的建立. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2012.

Hymes, Robert. *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

_____. "Sung Society and Social Change." In *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5 Part 2*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, 526–644. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Hymes, Robert and Conrad Schirokauer, eds. *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Iguro, Shinobu 井黑忍. "Shanxi Yicheng Qiaozemiao Jin Yuan shuili bei kao." 山西翼城喬澤廟金元水利碑考 *Shanxi daxue xuebao* 34.2 (2011): 92–97.

Iiyama, Tomoyasu 飯山知保. *Kin-Gen jidai no Kahoku shakai to kakyo seido : mō hitotsu no "shijinsō"* 金元時代の華北社会と科挙制度：もう一つの「士人層」. Tōkyō: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2011.

_____. "Genealogical Steles in North China during the Jin and Yuan Dynasties." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 13.2 (2016): 151–196.

Irinchin 亦鄰真. "Yuandai yingyi gongdu wenti" 元代硬譯公牘文體. *Yuanshi luncong* 1 (1982): 164–178.

Jagchid Sechen 札奇斯欽. "Shuo Yuanshi zhong de bizhechi bing jianlun Yuan de zhongshuling" 說元史中的必闍赤並兼論元的中書令. *Bianzheng yanjiusuo nianbao* 2 (1971): 19–113.

Jami, Catherine et al., eds. *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633)*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Jenco, Leigh. *Changing Referents: Learning Across Space and Time in China and the West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Jiang, Minghe 姜名赫. "Yuan ru Chen li chushi jiqi xueshu sixiang yanjiu" 元儒陳櫟處世及其學術思想研究. MA diss., Neimenggu daxue, 2019.
Jin, Qicong 金啓孮. *Nvzhen wen cidian* 女真文詞典. Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1984.
Jin, Yingkun 金滢坤. "Shilin xuanhua Tangdai boxue hongci ke yanjiu" 士林選華 唐代博學宏詞科研究. *Lishi yanjiu* 1 (2018): 52–67.
Jouhaud, Christian. "Les libelles en France au xviie siècle: action et publication." *Cahiers d'Histoire* 90 (2003): 33–45.
Kao, Karl SY. "Bao and baoying: narrative causality and external motivations in Chinese fiction." *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (1989): 115–138.
Kara, Gyorgy. *Books of the Mongolian Nomads*. Bloomington: Sinor Research Institute of Inner Asian Studies, 2005.
Kawachi, Yoshihiro 河内良弘. *Mindai Joshin shi no kenkyū* 明代女眞史の研究. Kyōto: Dōhōsha, 1992.
Kim, Ho-dong 金浩東. "Menggu diguo yu Da Yuan" 蒙古帝國與大元. *Qinghua shixue* 2 (2013): 3–32.
Kim, Tang-t'aek 金塘澤. *Wŏn kansŏp ha ŭi Koryŏ chŏngch'isa* 元干涉下의高麗政治史. Sŏul: Ilchogak, 1998.
Kerkvliet, Ben. "Everyday Politics in Peasant Societies (and Ours)." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36.1 (2009): 227–43.
Kim, Hyŏnyŏng. *Komunsŏ rŭl t'onghae pon Chosŏn sidae sahoesa* 고문서를 통해 본 조선시대 사회사. Sŏul: Sinsŏwŏn, 2003.
Knappett, Carl. "Animacy, Agency, and Personhood." In *Thinking Through Material culture: an Interdisciplinary Perspective* , 11–34. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
Koh, Khee Heong. *A Northern Alternative: Xue Xuan (1389-1464) and the Hedong School*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011.
Kojima, Tsuyoshi 小島毅. *Sōgaku no keisei to tenkai* 宋学の形成と展開. Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1999.
Kornicki, Peter Francis. *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese texts in East Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
Kou, Lu. "Courtly Exchange and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy in Early Medieval China." PhD diss., Harvard University, 2018.
Kubozoe, Yoshifumi 窪添慶文. *Gi Shin Nanbokuchō kanryōsei kenkyū* 魏晋南北朝官僚制研究. Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2003.
Kuhn, Philip A. *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.
Kwŏn, T'aehwan 權泰煥 and Shin Yongha 愼鏞廈. "Chosŏn wangjo sidae in'gu ch'ujŏng e kwanhan ilsiron" 朝鮮王朝時代 人口推定에 關한 一試論. *Tonga munhwa* 14 (1978): 289–330.
Lach, Donald F. *Asia in the Making of Europe*. The University of Chicago Press, 1965.
Lam, Ling Hon. *The Spatiality of Emotion in Early Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
Lam, Yuan-chu 劉元珠. "The Civil-Recruitment Chapter in the Yuan History." *Monumenta Serica* 56 (2008): 293–372.

Langlois Jr., John D. "Political Thought in Chin-hua under Mongol Rule." In *China Under Mongol Rule*, edited by John D. Langlois Jr., 137–185. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
Larsen, Kirk W. "Comforting Fictions: The Tribute System, the Westphalian Order, and SinoKorean Relations." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13.2 (2013): 233–257.
Lee, Sukhee. *Negotiated Power: The State, Elites, and Local Governance in Twelfth- to Fourteenth- Century China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.
Lessing, Ferdinand. *Mongolian-English Dictionary*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.
Lewicki, Marian. *La Langue Mongole des Transcriptions Chinoises du XIVe siècle : le Houa-yi yi-yu de 1389*. Wrocław: Nakładem Wrocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego, 1949.
Li, Biyan 李碧妍. *Weiji yu chonggou* 危機與重構. Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015.
Li, Bochong 李伯重. *Duo shijiao kan Jiangnan jingji shi* 多視角看江南經濟史. Beijing: Sanlian, 2003.
Li, Shiyu 李世愉 and Hu Ping 胡平. *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Qingdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 清代卷. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017.
Li, Wai-yee. *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014.
Li, Zhuyin 李竺穎. "Mingdai xiang hui shi erchang biaowen yanjiu" 明代鄉會試二場表文研究. MPhil diss., Guoli chenggong daxue, 2018.
Lieberman, Victor. *Strange Parallels volume 1, Integration on the Mainland: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c.800-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Lin, Xiaoguang 林曉光. "Zhongshi shuxie de guanwenshuti gongtong pingtai" 中世書寫的官文書體共同平臺. *Xin guoxue* 2 (2015): 47–79.
Liu, Ai-lian. "Yang Weizhen (1296–1370) and the Social Art of Painting Inscriptions." PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2011.
Liu, Lydia. *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004.
Liu, William Guanglin. *The Chinese Market Economy, 1000–1500*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2015.
Lotze, Johannes S. "Translation of Empire: Mongol Legacy, Language Policy, and the Early Ming World Order, 1368-1453." PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2016.
Lu, Yang 陸揚. *Qingliu wenhua yu Tang diguo* 清流文化與唐帝國. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2016.
Luo, Xiaoyu 羅筱玉. "Ye tan Sanfen shilue yu sanguo zhi pinghua de kanke niandai ji banshi yitong" 也談三分事略與三國志平話的刊刻年代與版事異同. *Wenxian* 3 (2016): 106–123.
Luo, Yinan. "A Study of the Changes in the 'Tang-Song Transition Model'." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 35 (2005): 99–127.
Luo, Xin 羅新. *Heizhan shang de Bei Wei huangdi* 黑氈上的北魏皇帝. Beijing: Haitun chubanshe, 2014.
Mair, Victor H. "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.3 (1994): 707–751.
Mazanec, Thomas J. "Networks of Exchange Poetry in Late Medieval China: Notes toward a Dynamic History of Tang Literature." *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 5.2 (2018): 322–359.
Meynard, Thierry. *The Jesuit Reading of Confucius*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

McCausland, Shane. *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011.
McNair, Amy. *The Upright Brush: Yan Zhenqing's Calligraphy and Song Literati Politics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.
Mitchell, Peter. "A Further Note on the *Huang chao jing shi wen bian*." *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 2.3 (1970): 40–46.
Miya, Noriko 宮紀子. *Mongoru jidai no "chi" no tōzai* モンゴル時代の「知」の東西. Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2018.
Montagne, Véronique. "Savoir(s) et rhétorique(s) à la Renaissance." *Noesis* 15 (2010): 45–68.
Morgan, David. "The Mongols in Iran: A Reappraisal." *Iran* 42 (2004): 131–136.
Morihira, Masahiko 森平雅彦,. *Mongoru hakenka no korai* モンゴル覇権下の高麗. Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2013.
Mostaert, Antoine. *Le matériel Mongol du Houa i i iu 華夷譯語 de Houng-ou (1389)*. Paris: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1977.
Moyn, Samuel and Andrew Satori. "Approaches to Global Intellectual History." In *Global Intellectual History*, edited by Samuel Moyn and Andrew Satori, 3–32. New York: Columbia University, 2013.
Mungello, D. E. *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
Nakasuna, Akinori 中砂明徳. *Chūgoku kinsei no Fukkenjin : shitaifu to shuppanjin* 中国近世の福建人 : 士大夫と出版人. Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2012.
_____. "Makao Mekishiko kara mita ka'i hentai" マカオ・メキシコから見た華夷変態. *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Kiyō* 52 (2013): 95–194.
Nii, Yōko 新居洋子. *Iezusukaishi to fuhen no teikoku: zaika senkyōshi ni yoru bunmei no hon'yaku* イエズス会士と普遍の帝国: 在華宣教師による文明の翻訳. Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2017.
Nivison, David S. *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsüeh-Ch'eng, 1738-1801*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966.
No, Kyŏng-hŭi. *17-segi Chŏnban'gi Han-Chung Munhak Kyoryu* 17 세기 전반기 한중 문학 교류. Kyŏnggi-do: T'aehaksa, 2015.
Nylan, Michael. "Yang Xiong's Final Fayan Chapter: Rhetoric to What End and for Whom?." In *Facing the Monarch: Modes of Advice in the Early Chinese Court*, edited by Garret P. S. Olberding, 237–272. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013.
Okada, Hidehiro 岡田英弘. *Mongoru Teikoku kara Dai Shin Teikoku e* モンゴル帝国から大清帝国へ. Tōkyō : Fujiwara Shoten, 2010.
Ong, Chang Woei. *Men of Letters within the Passes: Guanzhong Literati in Chinese History, 907–1911*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.
Owen, Stephen. *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Asia Center, 2006.
Pak, Hyŏnsun. "Munjibŭl t'onghae pon chosŏnshidaeŭi ilgiwa ilgissŭgi" 문집을 통해 본 조선시대의 일기와 일기쓰기. *Chosŏn shidae sa hakpo* 12 (2016): 73–118.
Pak, Jeong Min 朴貞珉. "Hyŏnju Cho Ch'anhan ŭi Sinroo Sangryangmun yŏn'gu" 玄洲 趙纘韓의 蜃樓上樑文 연구. *Tongbanghan munhak* 57 (2013): 221–252.

_____. “Chosŏn junggi sŏin’gye muninŭi chŏngch'ijŏng pulman’gwa munhakchŏng taeŭng” 조선중기 서인계 문인의 정치적 불만과 문학적 대응. *Tongbanghan munhak* 63 (2015): 217–246.
Pak, Yong-un 朴龍雲. *Koryŏ sidae ŭmsŏje wa kwagŏje yŏn’gu* 高麗時代蔭敍制와 科擧制研究. Sŏul: Ilchisa, 1990.
_____. “Koryŏ hugi p’il-to-chŏk e taehan kŏmt’o” 高麗後期必闍赤에 대한 검토. In *Han’guk sahak nonch’ong: Yi Ki-baek sŏnsaeng kohŭi kinyŏm* 韓國史學論叢 李基白先生古稀紀念, 868–872. Sŏul: Ilchogak, 1994.
Palais, James B. *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyongwon and the Late Choson Dynasty*.Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014.
Pearce, Scott. “Northern Wei.” In *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 2, edited by Albert E. Dien and Keith N. Knapp, 155–183. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
Petech, Luciano. *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*. Leiden: Brill, 1972.
Peng, Yunhe 彭雲鶴. *Ming Qing caoyun shi* 明清漕運史. Beijing: Shoudu shifan chubanshe, 1995.
Peterson, Charles A. “Court and Province in Mid- and Late T’ang.” In *Cambridge History of China, vol. 3: Sui and T’ang China, Part 1*, edited by Denis Twitchett, 464–560. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
Pickett, James Robert. “The Persianate Sphere during the Age of Empires: Islamic Scholars and Networks of Exchange in Central Asia, 1747-1917.” PhD diss., Princeton University, 2015.
Prieto, Andrés I. “The Perils of Accommodation: Jesuit Missionary Strategies in the Early Modern World.” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4:3 (2017): 395–414.
Oh, Young Kyun. *Engraving Virtue: The Printing History of a Premodern Korean Moral Primer*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
Paige, Nicholas D. *Before Fiction: The Ancien Regime of the Novel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
Qiu, Yihao 邱軼皓. *Mengu diguo shiye xia de Yuanshi yu dongxi wenhua jiaoliu* 蒙古帝國視野下的元史與東西文化交流. Fudan: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2019.
Ong, Chang Woei. *Men of Letters within the Passes: Guanzhong Literati in Chinese History, 907-1911*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.
Ratchnevsky, Paul. “Sigi-Qutuqu, ein mongolische Gefolgsmann im 12.-13. Jahrhundert.” *Central Asiatic Journal* 10.2 (1965): 87–120.
Rauschenbach, Sina and Christian Windler. “Introduction.” In *The Castilian 'Arbitristas' and the Cultural and Intellectual History of Early Modern Europe*, 9–18. Leipzig: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016.
Rowe, William. *Saving the World: Chen Hongmou and Elite Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Ricciardolo, Gaetano. “Il Libro Primo dei commentari del ricci e gli scritti europei del XVI secolo sulla Cina. La loro natura e la loro relazione.” *Mondo Cinese* 26.1 (1998): 25–37.
Robinson, David. *Empire’s Twilight: Northeast Asia under the Mongols*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009.
_____. *In the Shadow of the Mongol Empire: Ming China and Eurasia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
_____. *Ming China and Its Allies: Imperial Rule in Eurasia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
Rossabi, Morris, ed. *How Mongolia Matters: War, Law, and Society*. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Rusk, Bruce. *Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012.
Rykin, Pavel. "The Mongol Text of the Tyr Trilingual Inscription (1413): Some New Readings and Interpretations." *International Journal of Eurasian Linguistics* 1 (2019): 125–161.
Saarela, Mårten Söderblom. *The Early Modern Travels of Manchu: A Script and Its Study in East Asia and Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.
Sachsenmaier, Dominic. *Global Entanglements of a Man Who Never Traveled: A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian and His Conflicted Worlds*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
Sakamoto, Tsutomu 坂本勉. "Mongoru teikoku ni okeru bitikci" モンゴル帝国における必闍赤=bitikci. *Shigaku* 42.4 (1970): 81–111.
_____. "Gendai no shōken'in no setsu ritsu" 元代集賢院の設立. *Shirin* (2000): 115–143.
Sakurai Satomi 櫻井智美, "Gendai kōnan shijin nittote no 'Chūgoku'" 元代江南士人にとっての中国. *Tōyō shi kenkyū* 78 (2019): 71–105.
Seigel, Jerrold E. *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
Schaub, Mark. "Rhetorical Studies in America: The Place of Averroës and the Medieval Arab Commentators." *Journal of Comparative Poetics* 16 (1996): 233–254
Schneewind, Sarah. *Community Schools and the State in Ming China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
Schneider, Julia. "The Jin Revisited: New Assessment of Jurchen Emperors." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 41 (2001): 343–404.
Schorr, Adam Wilder. "The Trap of Words: Political Power, Cultural Authority, and Language Debates in Ming Dynasty China." PhD diss., University of California, 1984.
Schwartz, Benjamin. *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.
Seoh, M. S. "A Brief Documentary Survey of Japanese Pirate Activities in Korea in the 13th-15th Centuries." *Journal of Korean Studies* 1.1 (1969): 23–39.
Shang, Wei. "Writing and Speech: Rethinking the Issue of Vernaculars in Early Modern China." In *Rethinking East Asian Languages, Vernaculars, and Literacies, 1000-1919*, 254–301. Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2014.
Shen, Wanli 申萬里. *Yuandai keju xintan* 元代科舉新探. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2019.
Shen, Yi 沈怡 et al. *Huanghe nianbiao* 黃河年表. Nanjing: Junshi weiyuanhui, 1935.
Shields, Anna. "Defining the 'Finest': A Northern Song View of Tang Dynasty Literary Culture in the *Wen cui*." *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 4:2 (2017): 306–335.
Sin, Ch'ŏn-sik 申千湜. *Chosŏn chŏn'gi kyoyuk kaehyŏk kwa kwagŏ unyŏng* 朝鮮前期教育改革과科擧運營. Sŏul : Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 1999.
_____. *Chonyangjae Yi Kye-jŏn ŭi saengae wa haengnok* 存養齋李季甸의生涯와行錄. Sŏul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 2001.
Sinor, Denis. "Introduction: the concept of Inner Asia." In *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia Introduction*, edited by Denis Sinor, 1–18. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
_____. "Bitik, Bitikči." In Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, edited by P. Bearman et al. Consulted online on 27 February 2020 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1459.

Shiratori, Kurakichi. "Sinologische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Türk-Völker. II. Uber die Sprache der Hiungnu und der Tunghu-Stämme." *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences* 17.2 (1902): 1–33.
Shoemaker, Karl. "The Devil at Law in the Middle Ages." *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 4 (2011): 567–586.
Skaff, Jonathan. *Sui-Tang China and its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
Skinner, Quentin. *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought*. Two Volumes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
_____. *From Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in Rhetoric and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
_____. *Forensic Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
Soffel, Christian and Hoyt Cleveland Tillman. *Cultural Authority and Political Culture in China: Exploring Issues with the Zhongyong and the Daotong during the Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012.
Sohn, Pow-key. "Early Korean Printing." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 79.2 (1959): 96–103.
Son, Suyoung. *Writing for Print: Publishing and the Making of Textual Authority in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018.
Specht, Henrik. "Ethopoeia or Impersonation: A Neglected Species of Medieval Characterization." *The Chaucer Review* 21.1 (1986): 1–15.
Stephens, Rhiannon and Axel Fleisch, ed. *Doing Conceptual History in Africa*. New York, Berghahn, 2016.
Sun, Banghua 孫邦華. "Ming Qing shiqi zaihua xiren shiye zhong de kejuzhidu tezheng yu zuoyong" 明清時期在華西人視野中的科舉制度與作用. *Fujian luntan* 9 (2006): 74–79.
Sun, Kang-i Chang and Stephen Owen, ed. *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
Squire, John Collings. *If It Had Happened Otherwise*. London: Longmans, 1931.
Standaert, Nicolas. "The Transmission of Renaissance culture in Seventeenth-Century China." *Renaissance Studies* 13.3 (2003): 367–391.
_____. *Chinese Voices in the Rites Controversy: Travelling Books, Community Networks, Intercultural Arguments*. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2012.
Steininger, Brian. *Chinese Literary Forms in Heian Japan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017.
Sugiyama, Masaaki 杉山正明. *Kubirai no chōsen : Mongoru ni yoru sekaishi no daitenkai* クビライの挑戦：モンゴルによる世界史の大転回. Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2010.
Szonyi, Michael. *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.
Tackett, Nicolas. *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014.
_____. "A Tang-Song Turning Point." In *A Companion to Chinese History*, edited by Michael Szonyi, 118-128. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017.
_____. *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
Takabashi, Kōkichi 高橋幸吉. "Gen Kōmon to Kan mon bunjin." 元好問と韓門文人 *Keiō gijuku daigaku hiyoshi kiyō: Chūgoku kenkyū sōsho* 6 (2013): 49–77.
Tan, Xiu 談修 et al. *Donglin shuyuan zhi* 東林書院志. Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2011.

Teraji, Jun 寺地遵. *Nansō shoki seijishi kenkyū* 南宋初期政治史研究. Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 1988.
Tian, Yuqing 田餘慶. *Tuoba shitan* 拓跋史探. Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2003.
Tillman, Hoyt Cleveland. "A New Direction in Confucian Scholarship: Approaches to Examining the Differences between Neo-Confucianism and Tao-hsüeh." *Philosophy East and West* 42.3 (1992): 455–474.
_____. "The Rise of the Tao-hsüeh Confucian Fellowship in Southern Sung." In *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 5 Part 2, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, 727–790. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
Toshikazu, Araki 荒木敏一. *Sōdai kakyo seido kenkyū* 宋代科挙制度研究. Kyōto: Tōyōshi Kenkyūkai, 1969.
Trần, Trọng Kim. *Việt Nam Sử Lược*. Hô Chí Minh: Nhà xuất bản văn hoá thông tin, 1999.
Tsui, Lik Hang. "Writing Letters in Song China (960-1279): A Study of its Political, Social, and Cultural Uses." PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2013.
_____. "Bureaucratic Influence on Letters in Middle Period China: Observations from Manuscript Letters and Literati Discourse." In *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, edited by Antje Richter, 363–397 (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
Tung, Yung-chang. "Confronting the Job Shortage: The Commercialization of Personnel Information in Song China." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 48 (2019): 57–98.
Uematsu, Tadashi 植松正. *Gendai kōnan seiji shakaishi kenkyū* 元代江南政治社会史研究. Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1997.
van Els, Paul and Elisa Sabattini. "Introduction: Political Rhetoric in Early China." *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident*, 34 (2012): 5–14.
Vedal, Nathan. "From Tradition to Community: The Rise of Contemporary Knowledge in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 79.1 (2020): 77–101.
Vickers, Brian. "The Recovery of Rhetoric: Petrarch, Erasmus, Perelman." *History of the Human Sciences* 3 (1990): 415–441.
Wada, Masahiro 和田正広. *Min Shin kanryōsei no kenkyū* 明清官僚制の研究. Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2002.
Wakeman Jr., Frederic. "Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China." *Daedalus* 27.3 (1998): 167–189.
_____. "The *Huang chao jing shi wen bian*." *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 1.10 (1969): 8–22.
Wagner, Edward W. "Social Stratification in Seventeenth Century Korea: Some Observations from a 1663 Seoul Census Register." *Occasional Papers on Korea* 1 (1974): 36–54.
Walde, Christine. "Ethopoeia." In Brill's New Pauly, Antiquity Volumes, accessed on 05 April 2021, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/ethopoeia-e12221700.
Wang, Deyi 王德毅 et al. *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 元人傳記資料索引. Accessed digitally via Hanchi: http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/.
Wang, Fansen 王汎森. *Quanli de maoxiguan zuoyong* 權力的毛細管作用. Taipei: Lianjing, 2019.
Wang, Feifei. "Negotiating between Mongol Institutions and 'Han Traditions': Buddhist Administration in Southeastern China under the Yuan." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 45 (2015): 339–369.
Wang, Guowei 王國維. *Wang Guowei quanji* 王國維全集. Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009.
Wang, Jinping. *In the Wake of the Mongols: The Making of a New Social Order in North China, 1200-1600*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018.

Wang, Mingsun 王明蓀. *Liao Jin Yuan shixue yu sixiang lungao* 遼金元史學與思想論稿. Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2001.
Wang, Minxin 王民信. *Wang Minxin Gaoli shi yanjiu lunwenji* 王民信高麗史研究論文集. Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2010.
Wang, Sixiang. "Co-constructing Empire in Early Chosŏn Korea: Knowledge Production and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1392–1592." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2015.
Wang, Yao 王瑤. *Zhonggu wenxue shilun* 中古文學史論. Taibei: Chang'an chubanshe, 1982.
Wang, Yuanchong. *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616–1911*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018.
Wang, Zi (Chelsea). "Dilemmas of Empire: Movement, Communication, and Information Management in Ming China, 1368-1644." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2017.
West, Stephen H. "Chilly Seas and East-Flowing Rivers: Yüan Hao-wen's Poems of Death and Disorder, 1233-35." In *China under Jurchen Rule*, edited by Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen H. West, 281–304. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
Wen, Haiqing 溫海清. *Huajing zhongzhou: Jin Yuan zhi ji Huabei xingzheng jianzhi kao* 畫鏡中州 金元之際華北行政建置考. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012.
Wen, Xin. "The Road to Literary Culture: Revisiting the Jurchen Language Examination System." *T'oung Pao* 101.1-3 (2015): 130–167.
Wenzlhuemer, Roland. "Counterfactual Thinking as a Scientific Method." *Historical Social Research* 34:2 (2009): 27–54.
Woodside, Alexander. *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1971.
_____. "The Divorce between the Political Center and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China." In *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900*, edited by Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside, 458–493. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
Wright, Eloise. "Re-Writing Dali: the Construction of an Imperial Locality in the Borderlands, 1253-1679." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2019.
Wu, Jianlin 吳建林. "Fanyi yu mingshi: Yan Fu yu xiuci" 翻譯名與實 嚴復與修辭. *Bianyi luncong* 4.1 (2011): 39–72.
Wu, Yuhuan 武玉環. *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Liao Jin Yuan juan* 中國科舉制度通史 遼金元卷. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015.
Wu, Zongguo 吳宗國. *Tangdai keju zhidu yanjiu* 唐代科舉制度研究. Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1992.
Xi, Lei 喜蕾. *Yuandai Gaoli gongnuzhidu yanjiu* 元代高麗貢女制度研究. Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2003.
Xie, Siwei 謝思煒. "Ni zhi kao" 擬制考. *Wenxue yichan* 1 (2009): 42–50.
Xie, Yang 解揚. "Wan Ming jingshi leishu bianzuan de shiyong zhuiqiu" 晚明經世類書編纂的實用追求. *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo xuekan* 8 (2013): 445–471
Yamaguchi, Hisakazu 山口久和. *Shō Gakusei no chishikiron: kōshōgaku hihan o chūshin to shite* 章學誠の知識論：考證学批判を中心として. Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1998.
_____. "Shō Gakusei *Bun shi tō gi* no genko kan" 章学誠『文史通義』の言語観. *Kenkyū ronshū* 97 (2013): 125–143.

Yamamoto, Mituo 山本光朗. "Yaritu Sozai to chūshoshō ni tu'ite" 耶律楚材と中書省について. *Hokkaido kyoiku daigaku kiyō* 66.2 (2016): 29–44.
Yan, Fu 嚴復. *Yuan fu* 原富. Shanghai: Nanyang gongxue, 1902.
_____. *Yan Fu quanji* 嚴復全集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986.
Yang, Jingru 楊鏡如. *Suzhou fuxue zhi* 蘇州府學志. Suzhou: Suzhou daxue chubanshe, 2013.
Yang, Nianqun 楊念群. *Bai nian Qingshi yanjiushi: Sixiang wenhua juan* 百年清史研究史 思想文化卷. Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2020.
Yao, Dali 姚大力. *Meng Yuan zhidu yu zhengzhi wenhua* 蒙元制度與政治文化. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011.
Ye, Ye 葉曄. *Mingdai zhongyang wenguan zhidu yu wenxue* 明代中央文官制度與文學. Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2011.
Yi, Ping 易平. "Chu Shaosun bu Shi xin kao" 褚少孫補史新考. *Taida lishi xuebao* 25 (2000): 151–180.
Yi, Sŏng-mu 李成茂. *Chosŏn ch'ogi yangban yŏn'gu* 朝鮮初期兩班研究. Kyŏnggi-do: Han'guk Haksul Chŏngbo, 2001.
Yi, Taejin 李泰鎭. *Chosŏn yugyo sahoe saron* 朝鮮儒教社會史論. Sŏul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 1989.
Yin, Shoufu 殷守甫. "Yimeng shuxie yu shi shiji de shehui wenhua bianqian" 異夢書寫與十世紀中國的社會文化變遷. *Zaoqi zhongguoshi yanjiu* (2020) (in print).
Yin, Shoufu. "Negotiating with Female Commanders in Medieval China: War, Gender, and Imperial Rhetoric in Medieval China and Beyond," manuscript under review.
_____. "Two Logics of Reciprocity: Appointment Edicts and Political Thought of Tang China," manuscript.
Yokkaichi, Yasuhiro 四日市康博. "Jarγuči to bičigeči ni kansuru hitotsu kōsatsu" ジャルグチとビチクチに関する一考察. *Shi kan* 147 (2002): 33–52.
Yogi, Junichi 要木純一. "Yō Itei ron" 楊維楨論. *Shimane daigaku hōbun gakubu kiyō: bungakuka hen* 7 (1992): 37–64.
Yoshikawa, Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎. *Gen Min shi gaisetsu* 元明詩概說. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1963.
Yu, Ying-shih 余英時. *Song Ming lixue yu zhengzhi wenhua* 宋明理學與政治文化. Taipei: Yunchen, 2004.
_____. *Lun Dai Zhen yu Zhang Xuecheng* 論戴震與章學誠.Taipei, Sanmin, 2016.
Zhang, Guogang 張國剛. *Zhi shu Zhou Qin Han Tang de jingshi zhi dao* 治術 周秦漢唐的經世之道. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2020.
Zhang, Huicong. "Imitation and Innovation: A Critical Study of Yang Weizhen (1296-1370) and His Yuefu Poetry." PhD diss. Harvard University, 2009.
Zhang, Jia 張佳. *Xin tianxia zhi hua Ming chu lisu gaige yanjiu* 新天下之化 明初禮俗改革研究. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2014.
Zhang, Ling. *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048-1128*.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
Zhang, Xiqing 張希清. *Zhongguo keju zhidu tongshi Songdai juan* 中國科舉制度通史 宋代卷. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015.
Zhang, Yunshuang. "Porous Privacy: The Literati Studio and Spatiality in Song China." PhD diss., UCLA, 2017.
Zheng, Huada 鄭華達. *Tangdai gongyuan shi yanjiu* 唐代宮怨詩研究. Taipei: Taipei wenjin, 2000.

Zhong, Han 鍾焓. *Chongshi neiya shi* 重釋內亞史. Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2017.

Zhu, Pingci 祝平次. "Ping Yu Yingshi xiansheng de *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie Songdai shidafu zhengzhi wenhua de yanjiu*" 評余英時先生的《朱熹的歷史世界：宋代士大夫政治文化的研究》. *Chengda zhongwen xuebao* 19 (2007): 249–298

Zhu, Gang 朱剛. *Guwen yundong yu shidafu wenxue* 唐宋古文運動與士大夫文學. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2013.

Zhu, Shangshu 祝尚書. *Bei Song guwen yundong fazhan shi* 北宋古文運動發展史. Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1995.

_____. *Songdai keju yu wenxue* 宋代科舉與文學. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008.

Zhu, Mei 朱玫. "Shisan shisi shiji Zhong Han hukou wenshu dengzai shixiang de duibi yanjiu" 十三十四世紀中韓戶口文書登載事項的對比研究. In *Zhongguo gu wenshuxue yanjiu chubian*, 249–262. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019.

Zhuang, Sheng. *Teikoku o tsukutta gengo seisaku : Daichin Gurun shoki no gengo seikatsu to bunka* 帝国を創った言語政策 : ダイチン・グルン初期の言語生活と文化. Kyōto: Kyōto daigaku, 2016.

Zuo, Ya. "'Ru' versus 'Li': The Divergence between the Generalist and the Specialist in the Northern Song (960−1127)." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 44 (2014): 83–137.