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Waiting for the Unicorn:  
Perception of Time and History in Early Chinese Writings

by

Piotr Pawel Gibas

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

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Chinese Language

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Paula Varsano, Chair  
Professor Jeffrey K. Riegel  
Professor Robert Ashmore  
Professor Patricia Berger

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by Piotr Pawel Gibas

## Abstract

### Waiting for the Unicorn: Perception of Time and History in Early Chinese Writings

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Piotr Pawel Gibas

Doctor of Philosophy in Chinese Language

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Professor Paula Varsano, Chair

In this dissertation I examine temporality as conceived in early Chinese historiography, through a systematic examination of four key works: the *Mozi* 《墨子》, the *Zuozhuan* 《左傳》, the *Rishu* 《日書》, and the *Chu Silk Manuscript* 《楚帛書》, all of them written during 4<sup>th</sup> through 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE. Each presents from a different perspective ideas about the mechanism of time and history. While only the *Zuozhuan* is commonly categorized as historical narrative, all four of these texts depend on records of the past to convey their worldview. In particular, I examine the ritual, performative, and supernatural elements that play a central role in these writings, as they are key to acquiring a deeper understanding of the prevailing concepts of time that shape thinking about history, and the narratives constructed to convey that history.

The dissertation, inspired by the “untimely” (*bu shi* 不時) coming of the unicorn at the end of the *Zuozhuan*, traces the complex temporal issues surrounding the expected emergence of the *ming jun* 明君, conventionally translated as “illuminated ruler”. By teasing out the workings of prediction and prognostication that ground a shifting present in the imagined realms of a stable past and dependable future, I hope to uncover, not only how political and ethical questions contribute to the conceptualization of time, but also how time determines the nature and mechanism of history itself, as seen by the early writers.

My work in this area owes much to David Schaberg and Li Wai-yee, whose studies on the readability of written history and the decoding of the messages transmitted in the text through patterns and signs show that the pursuit of the past is not for the purpose of mere recording, but is instead a conscious effort to find answers applicable to the present. I argue that history writing aspired to the control and manipulation of historical time; by creating a narrative of the past and consolidating its multiple links to the future, the early Chinese writers of history—like (and in concert with) the diviners they wrote about—were able to explain it and, thus, to conquer it. Seen in this light, “knowing history” implies understanding and mastering the mechanisms that drive it; and, looking into the past is tantamount to “knowing” the future.

By studying philosophical and occult texts, such as *Mozi* and *Rishu*, I trace ideas of time that shape the historical narrative of *Zuozhuan*: where the ideas about the working of the universe come from, how they inspire history writing, and how they inform our reading and

understanding of it. These features of time and history are part of a larger worldview and not confined to strictly historiographical writings. I explore the mechanistic nature of the time-agent in the *Mozi* treatise on ghosts “Ming gui” 《明鬼》 and the Mohist religious doctrine. I demonstrate how the supernatural powers are believed to determine the course of history, and how this belief shapes the way history is recorded; a person, by collaborating with the supernatural, can assure a desired turn of events, and in this sense ghosts and spirits personify time. For example, I argue that Mohist thought reflects the mechanistic worldview of the contemporary daybooks, such as the *Chu Silk Manuscript* and *Rishu*, and uses preexisting beliefs and practices to build its own religious system. It is in the *Rishu* especially that the system of timeliness and the power of prognostication are clearly exposed.

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## DEDICATION

*To M. P.*

*He will know...*

EPIGRAPH

梅堯臣 (1002-1060)

“At a Party Given by Fan Zhongyan the Guests Spoke of Eating ‘River-Hog’ or the Blowfish”

春洲生荻芽  
春岸飛揚花  
河豚當是時  
貴不數魚蝦

*Springtime sandbars bear sprouts of reed,  
Springtime shores fly willow blossoms.  
At this very time the blowfish  
Is more valuable than all other fish and shrimp*

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First of all, I would like to thank my beloved teacher, Dr. Jerzy Sie-Grabowski from Warsaw University, who taught me Chinese.

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Special thanks to my dear teacher, colleague, and friend, Dr. Małgorzata Religa from Warsaw University, who stirred in me the passion for classical Chinese literature, who shared with me her knowledge and love for the *Zuozhuan*, and who has always been there for me with support and advice. *Dziękuję, Małgosiu!*

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## INTRODUCTION

This study, “Waiting for the Unicorn: Perception of Time and History in Early Chinese Writings,” foregrounds the concepts of time and timeliness in early Chinese historiography as represented in the *Chunqiu* and the *ZZ*. In my work, I argue that early Chinese historical writings are founded on the concept of “timeliness”, that is, on the understanding of time as being endowed with moral qualities. As I demonstrate, “timely” (*shi* 時) actions and events carry a positive moral charge; they are felicitous, right, safe, and harmonious with the general progress and scheme of history. Whatever is untimely (*bu shi* 不時), on the other hand, is wrong, dangerous, and unpropitious, and it inevitably leads to the failure of the historical figure involved in it. Central to this moral understanding of time is the concept of *ming* 明—“sagely illumination”, or the ability to discern between good and bad, right and wrong, deserving and undeserving, that is, between what is timely and untimely. Historiography, then, represents history as a means of rewarding the timely and punishing the untimely.

Preoccupation with the past is one of the most noticeable features of Chinese literature and culture of all ages. In the earliest inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze vessels, followed by myths, poetry, and historiographical works, the early Chinese thinkers were assiduous in their attempts to explain the past and to define the meaning and functions of history. This ceaseless quest eventually found its culmination in the production of historical narrative, which, as I will show, served not so much as a means of presenting the past, as one of “finding” and “recovering” the past for the sake of the “here and now”, and of thereby ensuring a safe and auspicious future. I argue that historiography is a form of omenology, where historical precedence is recorded, and then interpreted and evaluated according to the criterion of timeliness for the purpose of predicting the future; in effect, history writing is tantamount to omen reading.

The three chapters of my dissertation trace (1) the conceptual underpinnings of the idea of timeliness in *Mozi* 《墨子》; (2) the ways in which it is performed in prognostications and interpretations of time throughout the *Zuozhuan* (*ZZ*) 《左傳》; (3) and, finally, the archaic, merely mechanistic origins of timeliness as reflected in the concept of the everyday in daybooks, represented by *Rishu* (*RS*) 日書 and the Chu Silk Manuscript (*CSM*) 楚帛書.

In Chapter I, I propose a new reading of the *Mozi* chapter, “Ming gui” “明鬼”, supported by the excavated manuscript *Guishen zhi ming, rongshi you chengshi* 《鬼神之明，融師有成氏》 from the *Chu Bamboo Strips* in the Shanghai Museum Collection (*SBZ*). I demonstrate that “Ming gui”, while conventionally considered to be a treatise on Mohist ideas about ghosts (and so usually glossed or translated as a verb-object phrase, “understanding ghosts”), actually foregrounds the concept of *ming* 明—“sagely illumination”—the foundational principle of Chinese historiography that allows to discern the timeliness of a historical figure, action, or event. The “Ming gui” chapter, as well as the rest of *Mozi*, is not commonly categorized as historical narrative, but as a philosophical treatise explaining the relationship between humans and the supernatural; however, as I demonstrate, it does depend on historical records to convey its worldview, and moreover, it fully reveals the principles on which historical narratives such as those that constitute the *ZZ* are based.

I discuss “Ming gui” in the first chapter of this thesis because it illustrates in some detail the range of connotations of the word *ming* 明 at its most resonant, and exposes its particular relevance to our understanding of both time and the supernatural, as these things were conceived

during the period in question. As becomes evident in Master Mo's discussion on ghosts, *ming* 明 is the ability to discern right from wrong, and consequently to mete out punishments and rewards. The term that makes up the title of the chapter, then, *ming gui* 明鬼, refers to a particular group of ghosts that possess this quality and who are in charge of the execution of justice. *Ming* 明 is a divine quality—the “illumination” originates from Heaven; the meting out of punishments and rewards is coordinated with Heaven and endorsed by it. Moreover, as the treatise shows, the implementation of *ming* 明 is always deferred—there is a promise that justice will be served, and it is served after a precisely predicted period of time. In effect, Master Mo supports his view by means of historical evidence, and he persuades by presenting—and proving—specific predictions.

As I demonstrate, this interpretation of *ming* 明 is not restricted to Mohist doctrine alone, but instead is a crystallization of the ideas about the law of justice and the supernatural that were commonly accepted as part of the contemporary worldview at large. In Chapter II, which constitutes the core of this dissertation, I analyze the King Wen Story recounted in the *ZZ* to argue that history writing was considered the practical application of the faculty of *ming* 明. The concept of “sagely illumination,” as both narrated and practiced in historiography, is closely tied to the principle of “timeliness”—*shi* 時; it implies the ability to distinguish between the right and the wrong time (“seasonable/unseasonable” or “timely/untimely”, that is, *shi* 時/*bu shi* 不時). Based on my understanding of these two central terms (*ming* 明 and *shi* 時), I offer an interpretation of early Chinese historiography, not so much as a record of events as a means of meting out punishments and rewards (*ming* 明) based on the moral system of timeliness (*shi* 時). I show that the *ZZ*, rather than just narrating the past, reveals and reproduces the very mechanism of time that underlies and shapes the narrated events. In this way, early Chinese historiographical writing offers its readers a lesson about sagely illumination—about the correct discernment of situations, characters, and events. Being illuminated, in short, means understanding how time works and acting in accordance with it. It is tantamount to discerning right from wrong and it proves that justice never fails.

I propose that this is why the *ZZ* narrative shapes time into a system: it confirms the efficacy of sagely illumination (a trait shared by its author). In other words, the narrative shows that time itself endorses the law of punishments and rewards—they are sure to be meted out correctly, in their due time. It shows, too, how the writing of history operates in a system where punishment and reward are awarded in accordance with what is timely or untimely. Thus, the ability to know the correct time acquires a moral value—a timely action is right; and an untimely action is wrong. The *ZZ* explains the fates of the protagonists by applying this moral code.

The divine justice so clearly manifest in *Mozi*'s “sagely illumination,” is thus paired in the *ZZ* with the moral and divine quality of “timeliness”. I will argue, too, that the supernatural, as pragmatic as was its presentation in *Mozi*, is consistently historicized in the *ZZ*, even as historical accounts are endowed with supernatural elements. Without the Mohist exposition of *ming* 明, its important meaning and function in the *ZZ* could easily be overlooked or misunderstood.

Lastly, I backtrack my analysis of “timeliness” to the point when it was first conceptualized; as I demonstrate, mantic literature from 300 BCE sheds a light on the background and origin of the concepts developed later in historiography. In Chapter III I discuss daybooks, as represented by two examples: (1) *Rishu* 日書 (*RS*) from the Shuihudi 睡虎地 collection, and (2) the Chu Silk Manuscript (CSM) 楚帛書 from Zidanku 子弹库. Daybooks contain the earliest expressions of the ideas of timeliness and untimeliness, as they emerge in

simple prognostications about which day is good or bad, propitious or unpropitious. They are repositories of ideas about time in their most primeval form; at the same time, they are practical manuals for predicting and assuring an auspicious future. Moreover, in the CSM, the religious nature of time is fully exposed (time periods are identified with particular deities). The daybooks' primary purpose is prognostication, and as such they provide evidence of how the historical record was used for this purpose. Just as the daybooks, thus seen in retrospect, offer a view of the origins of the moral quality of time found in the ZZ, the ZZ further illuminates these particular traits of the daybooks.

The three parts of this dissertation come in this particular order to allow the two principal concepts (*ming* 明 and *shi* 時) be fully exposed. The principles of history writing on which the ZZ is based would never be clear without first defining *ming* 明, which I do in Chapter I; likewise, the way “time” is conceptualized and the moralistic potential of prognosticating in daybooks becomes visible only after the analysis of the mechanism and function of historiography.

Ultimately, the following work demonstrates the fundamental importance of time, and its morally-endowed properties of timeliness and untimeliness, for understanding how early Chinese historical narrative was written and conceptualized. To this end, it focuses on one of the major works in Chinese historiographical tradition—the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (ZZ)—a collection of narratives presenting the history of the Warring States and covering the period of time known as the Springs and Autumns (722-485 B.C.).

According to the Chinese tradition, historiography was born of a traumatic experience: Confucius finds a unicorn and is so deeply disturbed by its plight that he feels compelled to compose the *Chunqiu* (CQ) annals. The Sage realizes that the untimely coming of the mythical animal and its unfortunate fate portend disaster, and he believes that the solution to the situation can only be found by carefully reviewing the past.<sup>1</sup> In this legend, it is noteworthy for our purposes that Confucius is not portrayed as recording or writing history, but simply as scanning and interpreting it.

With this legend in mind, I interpret the function of Chinese historiography not merely as an attempt to preserve and pass down the knowledge of what happened in the past, but as an act driven by (1) the trauma of having lost the Golden Age—mythical Antiquity—when the world was in perfect order; (2) the sense that the mishandling of the unicorn signifies a missed opportunity to revive the Golden Age in the present moment (3) the hope for the eventual reestablishment of the Golden Age in the future—the constant anticipation of the unicorn's return – symbol of the returning Golden Age.

Confucius tells us his vision of the past; according to his vision, the past is the prediction/omen of the future. In my study of the ZZ, I pay special attention to the meaning and function of predictions. In *The Dialectic of Duration*, Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) presents a theory of the psychology of temporal phenomena; he proposes that in order to understand the nature of memory, it is first necessary to ask: “why does the patient tell the dream?”<sup>2</sup> Bachelard's answers provide revealing insights into the mind of a person who decides to recount the past; he agrees with the famous psychotherapist and specialist in traumatic memory, Pierre Janet (1859-1947), that “deferred action” is “the true starting-point” of memory.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss this motif in detail in Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Dialectic of Duration*, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000, 65.

<sup>3</sup> Bachelard, *op. cit.*, 61.

Chinese tradition, the inopportune coming of the unicorn does not recover the Golden Age, but instead defers its recovery. Confucius's emotional response to this event takes shape in history writing—his remembrance and recounting of things past.

According to Bachelard, “memory uses the temporal enjambment of deferred action: we remember the action much better by linking it to what follows it rather than to what precedes it.”<sup>4</sup> This assessment describes very accurately the dynamics in the historical narrative in the *ZZ*: through the continuous use of predictions, the narrator informs the reader of the upcoming events; the reader, then, while reading about the past, is actually focusing on what is going to follow. In this way, the narrator engages the reader much more effectively into the process of “reading”—proper *ming* 明 understanding—the past. As I demonstrate, early Chinese thinkers perceived of the past as a database for knowing the future, which consequently resulted in the production of a historiography where the past is narrated as a prognosticated future.

This way of looking at the *ZZ* changes our understanding of it; it no longer appears merely as a historical narrative recounting the past for didactic purposes, but instead as a manual for predicting the future. At the same time, this new perspective opens the question of how time is deployed, organized, and characterized in early Chinese historiography. Bachelard points out that “all social thought is pulled towards the future; all forms of the past must, if they are to give us truly social thoughts, be translated into the language of the human future.”<sup>5</sup> The frequency of the deferment of action in the *ZZ* highlights the central role played by predictions and prognostications. It is thus that readers learn that there is a *proper* time for everything, and that the narrating of the past must be structured by the understanding of timeliness.

The narratives comprising the *ZZ* are recounted by an anonymous Narrator. He does not talk about his own past or things that he personally experienced. He not only does not participate in the events he describes, but he is altogether not “present” in the past he narrates. His position is that of a person who knows all that happened in the past and is looking over it “here and now”, just like a man who wakes up from a dream and who is no longer *in it*, but outside, in the waking reality. Thus, the point in time he occupies can be defined as “present” in reference to the “past” he is presenting.

The Narrator knows the history. He looks at it in retrospect and finds causes and moral justification for the events. He is omniscient, but not omnipotent; for, he is restricted by the linearity of narrative and the causality embedded therein. The Narrator is also limited by the facts: by what happened in the past and when it happened. He does not make up events, but deals with those that occurred. This prized objectivity, however, is compromised by his position that nothing happens without a reason. It is in his highlighting of causal relationships that the Narrator controls the shape of the narrative, and of history itself, directing it in a certain way and stressing some aspects of the events more than others. It is in this way that he exercises his power to evaluate them, to pass moral judgments as he sees fit, thus getting involved with them and losing his impartiality. This praise/blame mechanism is precisely what characterizes traditional readings of this work, justifying the attribution of this work to Confucius—according to the tradition, the Sage composed the *CQ* in order to elevate the worthy and to expose the wicked.

The *ZZ* narrative does not read as one “story” with a clear-cut beginning and end. Instead, it consists of several stories that are linked together by virtue of the fact that they occurred during

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<sup>4</sup> Bachelard, *op. cit.*, 61.

<sup>5</sup> Bachelard, *op. cit.*, 61.

the Spring and Autumn period. Otherwise, they are quite independent of each other. These stories are further broken apart and scattered into distinct narratives, chronologically arranged. This structure makes the work of understanding the period resemble the act of assembling a puzzle, the different pieces of which need to be found, gathered up, and stitched together. Once this is done, it becomes clear that each independent story has its outcome; and that this outcome is almost always predicted. The unsurprising ending might be signaled from the very beginning through a series of predictions and omens. Alternatively, the narrative will be proleptic, beginning with the outcome and then presenting in retrospect the origins of the events and the reasons that caused them. Furthermore, every “outcome” takes the form of either a reward or a punishment, revealing the moral aspect of the events that led up to it. From the Narrator’s point of view, “history” is a chain of such rewards and punishments, all of which could be predicted and, consequently, either avoided or pursued.

The Narrator is absent from the narrative. He achieves the “prospective” effect (recounting the past as prognosticated future) by planting his avatars in the text—people who predict things, the Prognosticators or Advisers. These characters are supposed to be “real”, “historical” figures, such as actual officers at court. They sometimes play active roles in the events, and it is only in moments of their clairvoyance that we hear the voice of the Narrator. When they speak to Actors, advising, reprimanding or warning them, and when they reliably foretell the future, we can be sure we are actually hearing the voice of the Narrator, who wants us to draw certain moral conclusions from the actions taking place in the narrative. The Prognosticators find themselves inside the events – in the “past”, observing and commenting on the things that happen. Their view is directed into the future; whenever they reach back into the past, it is in order to predict future events or to evaluate the present situation; this is exactly what the Narrator does, but in a different dimension; the Prognosticators are *within* the events, therefore they are acting introspectively ahead of time, the outcomes of the events being still, supposedly, unknown. Their predictions are never “blind”—they are restricted by the requirement of consistency and have to meet the required end; therefore, they are always right. The prognostications constitute an internal proof in the text that the Narrator’s is evaluation of things is correct.

The main focus of all ZZ stories is the individual characters—the Actors. The narrative is always centered on them, and each outcome is either their success or doom. The function of the narrative is to show why the Actors are rewarded or punished, and to teach readers how to follow the path to success. Each ZZ character is an example to follow or to avoid. Thus, it is the task of the Narrator to explain and justify why certain historical personages become prominent or are doomed. In some cases, a positive character meets an unfair end, or a person with a questionable reputation remains successful, yet the Narrator always finds suitable justifications for such disturbing events.

While the actors may come from a wide variety of stations (ministers, officers, princes and rulers of feudal states), the ZZ focuses primarily on the emergence of the Illuminated Rulers/Kings (*ming jun* 明君/王)<sup>6</sup>. Their biographies are especially tailored to conform to and justify their lofty politico-moral positions. Like other actors, they live fully inside the recounted events; but they are singled out from the beginning and portrayed in a favorable way to make their final success seem as a natural and logical consequence. The other actors in their stories

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<sup>6</sup> 明君 and 明王 are terms used interchangeably.

serve to make the making of the Sage clear; and the Prognosticators predict things all along to justify the preservation of some and the elimination of others.

The criteria according to which the Narrator evaluates the historical actors are: their possession of the faculty of “sagely illumination”—*ming* 明; their application of that faculty in their ability to act with “timeliness”—*shi* 時; and their “reliability” or “truthfulness” as manifest in those actions—*xin* 信. In order to become a Sage, the character needs to meet all three requirements. And, interestingly, the Narrator does, too.

The Narrator is, after all, the one who understands the causes and effects—he is *ming* 明; he knows the mechanism of timeliness—*shi* 時, and he can scan the characters’ truthfulness—*xin* 信, all this time being himself truthful in his account of the past. The Prognosticators are the avatars of the Narrator inside the text; they likewise possess all the three qualities, which enable them to evaluate the situations and foresee the events. They are distinct from the *ming jun* 明君, however, in that this latter is an Actor who comes at the right time and who can discern the right and wrong; he can influence events as they are unfolding. He represents the ideal model endorsed by the Narrator via his avatars - the Prognosticators.

The Narrator in the ZZ did not experience the events he is describing, but his avatars are inside of them. More importantly, the main characters embody and represent the same concepts he endorses and experiences. The Narrator, the Prognosticators, the Actors, and the Reader following them, are all traveling in time. They are looking for the lost Golden Age, waiting for the unicorn to come.

## CHAPTER I

### MOZI 《墨子》 AND EXPLAINING THE GHOSTS

The “Ming gui” “明鬼” chapter, classified as Book VIII in *Mozi jiangū* 《墨子閒詁》<sup>7</sup>, is the only one in the entire collection devoted entirely to ghosts and spirits; only the ‘lower’ essay of the original triad survives<sup>8</sup>. In existing translations, the character *ming* 明 is understood as the verb in a verb-object structure, and therefore the title is conventionally rendered as “Explaining” or “Understanding Ghosts”.<sup>9</sup> However, in this section, I will suggest that the title is more accurately understood as “Discerning Spirits.” Far from a merely grammatical quibble, I will argue that this reading is key to our accurate comprehension of the term *ming* 明 and, consequently, Mohist ideas about the nature and workings of the supernatural. As I will demonstrate, these ideas are based on the principle that, in order to be able to mete out punishments and rewards, ghosts need to be “clear-sighted”—明, and thus capable of discerning right from wrong. Read in this light, the “Ming gui” chapter does not, then, discuss ghosts in general, as previous readings seem to assume; instead it focuses on a specific group of ghosts endowed with a set of particular qualities and functions. *Mozi*’s insistence on these qualities suggests a moral, politically pragmatic stance rather than an ontological one. I will point out that, in the doctrine laid out in the treatise, much less emphasis is put on the dogmatic belief in the physical existence of ghosts and in their actual execution of rewards and punishments, and much more on defining and understanding the quality of “discernment”—the concept of *ming* 明 itself. The fact that ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behavior can be recognized and evaluated, and that each brings about its respective results, needs to be made evident to the society at large, and rulers in particular. Indeed, the *Mozi*’s act of explaining (also *ming*—明) alone contributes to making 明 efficacious. Thus, I conclude that there are different senses to the chapter title “明鬼” in *Mozi* that can be overlapping, and that the importance of the belief in actual supernatural agents in Mohist doctrine gives way to a more agnostic view of ‘ghosts’ as a function of moral balance and retribution.

In order to demonstrate the validity of this reading, I analyze the grammar, style, and structure of the received *Mozi* chapter in connection with a recently excavated text—the 《鬼神之明，融師有成氏》 from the *Chu Bamboo Strips* in the Shanghai Museum Collection<sup>10</sup> (*SBZ*)—identified as a missing text belonging to the Mohist canon and closely related to the *Mozi* “Ming gui” in particular. The excavated manuscript not only illuminates the significance of

<sup>7</sup> All references to *Mozi* are from Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Mozi jiangū* 墨子閒詁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Book VIII 卷八 lists the names of three “Ming gui” “明鬼” chapters: 上, 中, and 下, with only the last one being extant.

<sup>9</sup> Burton Watson translates “Explaining Ghosts”, see *Mozi; Basic Writings* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2003), 97-113.; Yi-Pao Mei skips the problem altogether and renders it “On Ghosts”, see *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse*, Probsthain’s Oriental Series (London: A. Probsthain, 1929), 160.; Sun Yirang, following the *Hanshu* commentators, interprets 明 as “making it evident/proving that ghosts really exist” “明，謂明鬼神之實有也”；see Sun, 221. Jeffrey K. Riegel in his unpublished translation proposes the reading “Understand the Ghosts!” Rendering the verb in the imperative mood is an interesting interpretation, taking into consideration the contents of the chapter, where the authors advocate the importance of the belief in ghosts and attempt to make their adversaries realize how essential it is for good government.

<sup>10</sup> Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai bowuguan zang zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, vol. 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006).

*ming* 明 in the received text, but it also shows that the discussion of the role of ghosts, so central to the *Mozi*, is an ongoing debate, thus further exposing the agnostic nature of Mohist ideas about the supernatural.

#### Structure of the “Ming gui” Chapter

The overall argument of *Mozi* “Ming gui” chapter develops in three stages:

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Argument through evidence
- (3) Solution and Conclusion

Parts (1) and (2) are coherent in terms of argument and style: Master Mo proves that ghosts exist and that they mete out rewards and punishments. Part (3) marks a major conceptual and thematic departure from that point; Master Mo no longer insists on the physical existence of ghosts-agents, and instead defends the social benefits of acting as if supernatural powers really existed. It is here that the ability to “discern”—明 is presented as the force determining the efficacy of the government.

### (1) Introductory Section

The structure of the initial part of the chapter—the introduction (1)—can be read as a compact version of that of the whole treatise. First, it presents the problem. The speaker—Master Mo— sums up the plight of the world by listing all kinds of crimes and disorders; then, he asks himself about the reasons for this situation and concludes that the world is in chaos, because people do not believe that ghosts and spirits exist, and that they can reward the worthy and punish the wicked; finally, he provides a solution, which is to make people realize these facts and believe in ghosts and spirits. The latter is presented in the form of a rhetorical question, which helps emphasize the point and strengthen the argument, making it appear as a matter of fact: “*Now, if we cause all the people in the world to believe that the ghosts and spirits have the ability to reward the worthy and punish the violent, how could there be any chaos in the world?*”—“今若使天下之人，偕若信鬼神之能賞賢而罰暴也，則夫天下豈亂哉！”<sup>11</sup>

In the second part of the introduction Master Mo reveals the obstacles, pointing at people who do not believe in ghosts’ existence and who spread their ideology in the world causing disorder. Therefore, he declares that the most important task of the rulers in the world is to root out false ideology by determining the existence of ghosts and spirits. Master Mo then introduces the voice of a hypothetical skeptical interlocutor, by quoting a typical assertion denying the existence of ghosts, thus opening the debate in a way that will continue throughout the treatise according to the same pattern: the skeptics’ questioning statements—A, followed by Master Mo’s answers—B.

### Grammar and Style

The introduction sets up the linguistic and stylistic pattern for discussing ghosts in the treatise. It presents the term *guishen* 鬼神 as a denomination for beings who are not humans; it

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<sup>11</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 222.

functions as a binome, only sometimes interchanged with *gui* alone<sup>12</sup>. This is a characteristic lexical feature of *Mozi*, suggesting that no distinction is made between *gui* 鬼 and *shen* 神; the text is not concerned with the typology, but the functions of the supernatural.

All of the information concerning the ghosts, such as their actions, functions, attributes, and other characteristics, are invariably expressed by means of the construction with the possessive particle *zhi* 之; thus, instead of saying ‘*whether ghosts exist or not*’, we find: “[*the fact of*] *the ghosts’ existing or not*” – “鬼神之有與無之別”; and instead of ‘*the ghosts are able to reward the worthy and punish the violent*’, we find: “[*the fact of*] *the ghosts being able to reward the worthy and punish the violent*” – “鬼神之能賞賢而罰暴”<sup>13</sup> As I am going to show below, this important detail helps understand what kind of ghosts and which aspects of their nature the text is talking about. For instance, in the following part, Master Mo discusses instances of ghosts seen by people: “*Those, who have seen the appearance of ghosts and heard the sound made by ghosts.*” – “有嘗見鬼神之物，聞鬼神之聲”<sup>14</sup> By applying the possessive *zhi* construction, the text emphasizes the material aspect of the ghosts, their visual image, and other features perceptible by human senses; it is not just any kind of evidence of the spiritual presence that the speaker attempts to look for, but its concrete, physical form.

At this point, the introductory part of the argument is over, and Master Mo proposes the method of examination, which marks a transition to the next stage: proving that ghosts really exist.

## (2) Argument through Evidence: Proving the Existence of Ghosts

The second part of the treatise is not only longer, but also much more complex than the first, even though it focuses on a single problem: the task of proving that ghosts exist. In order to facilitate the discussion, I divide the text into the following sections:

### [A] Argument for the existence of ghosts:

#### [P-1] First proof of the existence of ghosts - instances of ghosts seen by people

[P-1.1] Case of Earl of Du in Zhou

[P-1.2] Case of Duke Mu of Qin

[P-1.3] Case of Zhuang Ziyi from Yan

[P-1.4] Case of Shi Shegu from Song

[P-1.5] Case of Magistrates Guo and Jiao from Qi

#### [P-2] Second proof of the existence of ghosts – sacrificial practices of the sage kings of antiquity:

[P-2.1] Example of King Wu

#### [P-3] Third proof of the existence of ghosts – evidence found in written documents

[P-3.1] “Wenwang” from the *Odes* as an example from Zhou documents

[P-3.2] An unidentified example from Shang documents

[P-3.3] “Declaration of Yu” as an example from Xia documents

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. in 今執無鬼者曰：「鬼神者，固無有」, the character 神 is omitted in the first part of the sentence, but used in the second, in the same context; Sun, *op. cit.*, 223.

<sup>13</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 222.

<sup>14</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 224.

[B] Argument for establishing the belief in ghosts' ability to punish and reward as the foundation of the government

[C] Proving that by means of *ming* 明 ghosts without fail mete out punishments and rewards:

[C-1] Example of King Jie of Xia

[C-2] Example of King Zhou of Yin

[C-3] Quotation from Qin Ai

Master Mo presents three kinds of evidence—[P-1], [P-2], [P-3], each being prompted by skeptical opponents challenging him with questions—AB pattern. Each stage of this “empirical” proof is intended to be more convincing and irrefutable than the preceding one, gradually mounting up to the point where the adversaries run out of challenges for Master Mo.

The first method—[P-1] is an empirical one. Master Mo proposes to find witnesses who actually had seen a ghost, and asks them for their testimony. The skeptical interlocutor, however, expresses doubts as to whether those who claim to have seen ghosts have really seen them. Therefore, Master Mo responds by listing five instances—[P-1.1]-[P-1.5] in the past when ghosts were seen by multitudes. All five episodes have the same form; following the first one—[P-1.1], they all begin with the same opening phrase: “*It is not only this written account that says so, but there was [another case] in the past, when (...)*”—“非惟若書之說為然也，昔者...”<sup>15</sup>

After each story<sup>16</sup>, Master Mo concludes by saying that none of the people present failed to see what happened, that the news of the event was spread so that everybody heard it, and that a record of it was entered in the annals to serve as a warning to posterity. Finally, an exclamatory rhetorical question reconfirms the main argument: “*If we look at it from the perspective of the account in this text, how can the existence of ghosts and spirits be doubted?*”—“以若書之說觀之，鬼神之有，豈可疑哉？”<sup>17</sup>

All the stories are presented as historical events that can be found in official records and documents. This makes them appear to be more credible, verifiable and difficult to refute; they are not merely Master Mo’s or someone else’s personal claims and experiences.

It is very important to observe that these five short episodes, which are presented to the skeptics as evidence of the existence of ghosts, at the same time introduce another argument about the ghosts’ being able to punish crime and reward virtue. While the examples do prove the physical presence of supernatural beings, they also serve as a moral lesson and a warning. Each episode<sup>18</sup> concludes with a statement that whoever commits injustice will suffer misfortune, because: “*The ghosts’ meting out punishment will be as swift as in this [given] case!*”—“鬼神之誅，若此其僭邈也！”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the stories are illustrations of the actions of this specific type of ghost—the discerning type—and, by extension, of their function. The ghosts presented in these examples do not ‘just exist’; they are not only physically present, but they make their presence known for a reason. The plots in episodes [P-1.1] and [P-1.3] are very similar, with only the names of the people and places changed. They are clearly variations on the same theme, presented here to show that events such as this one are not singular, accidental or random, but that they happen

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<sup>15</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 228.

<sup>16</sup> Except episode [P-1.2], where this part is omitted and the conclusion is reduced to the very last final sentence

<sup>17</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 230.

<sup>18</sup> Except episode [P-1.2], which is a positive example of Duke Mu of Zheng being rewarded for his virtue

<sup>19</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 230.

predictably, according to a rule: “Everybody who puts to death an innocent person will obtain misfortune, and the ghosts’ meting out of punishment will be as swift as it was in this case”—“凡殺不辜者，其得不祥，鬼神之誅，若此其僭遯也！”<sup>20</sup>

This assertion, pronounced in the text by “lords and fathers who want to instruct their ministers and sons”<sup>21</sup>, sounds like a principle of law and demonstrates that the ghosts’ response to certain types of human behavior is automatic and infallible. It imitates the style of a legal codex, and so is endowed with a particularly forceful rhetorical power; the “law” guarantees that people who commit the same crime will meet the same end. Master Mo sums up this section with an important warning: “Even in a deep valley and in a dense forest, in dark and abandoned places where nobody lives, one must always act with caution, because the ghosts and spirits will see it”—“雖有深谿博林，幽澗毋人之所，施行不可以不董，見有鬼神視之”<sup>22</sup>

This firm and totalizing statement takes for granted that ghosts exist and goes further to insist that they are omnipresent. Moreover, they not only *are* everywhere, but they *see* everything and act appropriately. Master Mo is not merely saying that ghosts are many and therefore one has a chance to come across them anywhere; it is rather the case that no matter where one goes, one will not manage to escape from their surveillance.

The skeptic next questions the value of the multitude’s testimony, saying that a *junzi* 君子 will not trust and rely on commoners. In response to this charge, Master Mo calls upon an example from the Three Dynasties from antiquity and the legendary sage rulers Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu—[P-2]. He rhetorically asks:

若以眾之耳目之請，以為不足信也，不以斷疑，不識若昔者三代聖王堯舜禹湯文武者，足以為法乎？<sup>23</sup>

If the testimony of the eyes and ears of the multitude is not credible enough and cannot be used to remove doubts, then can I not assume that the sage rulers of the Three Dynasties of antiquity, Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu, can serve as a sufficient model?

Here, the basis of argumentation is of a completely different character than the previous one. In this quote, the value of the source of information is raised to a much higher level in terms of status and significance. Furthermore, the evidence he presents this time is no longer empirical. Master Mo clearly emphasizes the distinction between the two kinds of figures, who represent two different ‘histories’ that he uses as proofs and sources of evidence. The examples that he brings up hark back to the beginnings of history and evoke the names of the legendary sage kings (*sheng wang* 聖王)—the mythical, almost god-like figures who created civilization and whose actions were always perfect and exemplary. Their authority is unchallengeable.

In the first stage of this argument, Master Mo refers to King Wu—[P-2.1]; he talks about the king’s attack on Yin and quotes him ordering sacrifices and explaining in what order the ritual should be performed. King Wu does not directly mention the ghosts, nor does he say why and to whom exactly the sacrifice will be offered; in fact, the focus of King Wu’s words is not on

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<sup>20</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 230.

<sup>21</sup> “為君者以教其臣，為父者以警其子”

<sup>22</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 234.

<sup>23</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 235.

the sacrifice itself, but on who may partake of it and how. Again, the example seems of questionable application in the context of the debate about the existence of ghosts. Instead, Master Mo emphasizes the very fact that the sacrifice was ordered, and concludes that King Wu must have believed in ghosts. He finishes with a rhetorical question: “*If ghosts and spirits do not exist, why would he apportion sacrifices for them?*” — “若鬼神無有，則武王何祭分哉？”<sup>24</sup>

As we can see, Master Mo interprets the actions of King Wu in order to draw desired conclusions and prove his point. The remaining examples are just as speculative as the first one and describe the rituals performed at the ancestral temple and the altar of the earth by other ancient kings of Xia, Shang and Zhou. By referring to these other figures, Master Mo stresses the fact that the former event was not a singular one and specific to King Wu alone, but that all of the ancient rulers were consistent in their ritual activities, which, again, reflected their faith in the existence of ghosts.

At this point, Master Mo proceeds to the third kind of evidence—[P-3]. Before turning to specific examples, he continues the theme of the previous passage and informs us that there are many documents to prove the ritual activities of the ancient rulers, but he does not refer directly to any particular figure or event. Instead, he describes the rituals and sacrifices that normally accompanied the establishment of a new state and capital. As before, the listener is supposed to deduce from this description that since the sages worshipped the ghosts, they must exist; however, the main emphasis seems to be on the way the sages conducted their governments. The narrator spends a lot of time talking about the utmost care with which the ancient rulers performed rituals and the reverence with which they treated ghosts. Master Mo concludes with the words: “*Therefore, as is shown here, when the sage kings ruled the world, they certainly placed ghosts and spirits first, and people second*” “故古聖王治天下也，故必先鬼神而後人者此也”<sup>25</sup>

The section argues less for the acknowledgement of the existence of ghosts, than for the recognition of their role and importance; it is also a prescription for a good government. The ancient rulers made sure the sacrifices were perfect, but more importantly they understood the need to situate ghosts in their proper position in the social hierarchy. They upheld the belief in ghosts as the official state ideology. Ghosts exist for a reason and their status must always be regarded as higher than that of humans. These are the facts that lay at the foundation of the state and the society. Good government is impossible without this recognition.

In this final part of his argument, Master Mo concludes his proof that for the ancient kings the principle of the importance of ghosts and spirits in ruling the people was crucial. He explains that, in order to assure that later generations will not abandon this principle, they had it written down in books and documents. The argumentation strategy in the narrative is one of unassailable logic: the kings mandated that this principle be written on bamboo and silk so that the posterity could find and read it; because those could easily perish, they also engraved it on more durable materials, such as metal and stone. To further ensure that the principle would not get lost, they produced many copies of these documents. This leads the narrator to the conclusion that the sages not only believed in ghosts, but they knew how important they were:

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<sup>24</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 235.

<sup>25</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 237.

故先王之書，聖人一尺之帛，一篇之書，語數鬼神之有也，重有重之。此其故何？則聖王務之<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, in the documents of the ancient kings and in the words of the sages, in each scroll of silk and bundle of bamboo tablets, there are innumerable mentions of the existence of ghosts and spirits repeated over and over again. Why is that? Because the sage rulers were making sure that they [the ghosts] were being properly served

In the end, Master Mo wraps up by disparaging his adversaries; he concludes that those who deny the existence of ghosts in fact turn their backs on the teachings of the sages of antiquity, and therefore cannot be considered true gentlemen – *junzi*.

As we can see from this summary, the nature and, ultimately, the aim of this stage of his argument are completely different than those of the previous one. It is not supposed to convince the skeptics of the existence of ghosts by the power of sheer facts and the testimony of concrete people who had seen them; instead, it is based on the respect for the highest authority, aiming at the emotions and reputation of the opponents. Those who do not believe in ghosts have no respect for the fathers of the civilization, which disqualifies them as cultivated human beings. In a sense, then, by questioning their social standing, the speaker is trying to stun the skeptics and trample on their ambition and self-esteem; the latter certainly do not wish to suffer such a failure and will comply with the authority.

The strategy is successful, because we can notice a change of tone in the next question asked by the skeptics: “Which are the documents of the ancient kings, where in each scroll of silk and bundle of bamboo tablets there are innumerable mentions of the existence of ghosts and spirits, repeated over and over again?” – “先王之書，慎無一尺之帛，一篇之書，語數鬼神之有，重有重之，亦何書之有哉？”<sup>27</sup> This question still contains a certain dose of skepticism in it, but it does seem to show that the adversary is now at least partially convinced by Master Mo’s arguments. He does not question the authority of the sages the speaker invoked, as he did in response to the testimony of the multitude. Rather, it is implied that if he could see the documents, he would believe that the ancient rulers worshipped ghosts, and that they had important reasons for doing so. The question is much less confrontational and sounds more as if asking for advice and instruction. In the structure of the narrative, it also serves as a device to allow Master Mo to present the rest of his evidence and take the argumentation to the next stage. It marks a transition from presenting and claiming the thesis to documenting and proving it.

In response, in contrast with the preceding introductory paragraph where Master Mo refers only generally to the activities of the sage kings, he analyses and interprets concrete passages from existing books and documents—[P-3.1]-[P-3.3]. He presents the material chronologically, one example for each dynasty, in order to point out that there was a continuity and consistency of the faith in ghosts throughout the whole of antiquity, starting from the Zhou

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<sup>26</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 238.

<sup>27</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 238. The text here is not clear. Sun suggests that the characters “慎無” should be replaced with “聖人” from a parallel statement of Master Mo’s a few lines before; thus, the skeptics repeat Master Mo’s statement and challenge it. Wang Huanbiao suggests that 慎 is a mistake for 惟.

and going all the way back to the Xia, which represents the most remote past and the beginning of history and civilization.

This idea is reflected in the structure of the narrative. After the first example documenting the belief in ghosts during the Zhou dynasty—[P-3.1], the two following are introduced with the sentence: “*However, if there were ghosts only in the documents of Zhou and Shang, and none in the books of Shang and Xia, then it would not be sufficient to be considered a norm*”—“且周書商書獨鬼，而商書夏書不鬼，則未足以為法也”<sup>28</sup> Breaking the material in such a fashion, marking the gradual progression of the argument, helps emphasize that all three pieces are complementary and indispensable in proving the point and makes it even more evident. Master Mo wants to show that the belief in ghosts is not a recent invention, but that there are traces of it starting at the very origins of history. Thus, it existed always, and only as such does the argument make sense. The continuity of time shows that ghosts were always present, together with the rest of the universe. The ancient societies recognized that fact, and therefore they were perfect. To deny and reject the existence of ghosts is to act against the course of nature, time and history; it disrupts order, brings calamities, and causes chaos. In the previous paragraph, Master Mo called upon the authority of the ancient rulers; here, he confronts the skeptics with the power of nature and history. That is the ‘norm’—*fa* 法—that Master Mo is referring to and wants to expose to his opponents, the perpetual and universal order and the law provided by nature.

As mentioned above, the evidence Master Mo presents in this section consists of three concrete quotations from ‘actual’ documents proving the existence of ghosts in the dynasties of Zhou, Shang and Xia – [P-3.1], [P-3.2], [P-3.3]. The first one—[P-3.1]—is a fragment of an ode mentioning King Wen residing in Heaven, from which Master Mo concludes that ghosts must exist since the text describes the activities of the king after his death<sup>29</sup>; the second—[P-3.2]—is an unknown text talking about ghosts helping Yu the Great to put the world in order, and it represents the Shang dynasty; the last one—[P-3.3]—is a passage from the *Shangshu*<sup>30</sup>, and it narrates an episode from the battle at Gan that supposedly took place in the Xia era. The last two “documents” are, of course, not authentic writings from the Shang and Xia era, but contemporary Zhou narratives about events that happened in the mythical past. More interestingly, however, two of these quotations do not directly refer to or even mention the ghosts, whose existence they are supposed to prove. The ode can at most serve as evidence of the belief in afterlife and the *di* 帝, or Lord on High, whom it mentions, but not exactly in ghosts. The last example is even more vague, if not completely unrelated. The passage itself talks about the king of the Xia carrying out the punishment of Heaven upon the ruler of the Hu. In his commentary, Master Mo relates this to the rewards bestowed in ancestral temples and punishments at the altars of earth, referring back to the second example in the previous section – [P-2.2]. Thus, stretching the concept of the mandate of Heaven and the meaning of ritual practices, Master Mo draws a conclusion that ghosts punish the wicked and reward the worthy, which by default proves that they exist.

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<sup>28</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 239.

<sup>29</sup> The text is extant and can be found in *Shijing* 詩經, Greater Xia Odes 大雅, “Wenwang,” “文王”, Mao 235. See: James Legge, “The Ch’un Ts’ew with the Tso Chuen,” In *The Chinese Classics* vol. V. (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1994).

<sup>30</sup> The text refers to *Shangshu* 尚書 (Ruan Yuan 阮元, *Shisanjing zhu shu* (SSJZS) 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 155.) Chapter “Yu shi” “禹誓”; in fact, the chapter does not have this fragment, but it can be found in “Ganshi” “甘誓”, with some differences.

What is interesting here is not whether or not the evidence is reliable and convincing, but the way in which it is presented: Master Mo offers his choice, exegesis and reading of the sources. Obviously, it is a quite different kind of evidence than what we saw before. In the first section—[P-1], Master Mo also quotes what pretend to be passages from state annals, but those were clearly made up for the purpose of this narrative; they all have the same formulaic style and structure, and they are meant to warn and admonish the audience. The accounts about the experience of the multitude resemble popular tales, ghost stories and records of strange events. In the second section —[P-2], Master Mo recalls some commonly known myths about the ancient rulers. Both types, despite their differences that were discussed above, could be very generally classified as ‘hearsay’. Here, on the other hand, the speaker uses selected fragments of historical documents, something that could be called ‘hard evidence’ or ‘primary sources’, and interprets them for his benefit in order to prove his case.

### Function of Ghosts

After presenting all his evidence, Master Mo briefly summarizes and reconfirms his point that there are numerous mentions of ghosts and spirits in ancient documents. According to him, this fact proves that ancient rulers were deeply concerned about them, which consequently leads Master Mo to a more general conclusion that ghosts evidently exist. However, as I pointed out above, when presenting the first catalogue of evidence—[P-1], the speaker’s aim is to prove not merely the existence of ghosts, but more importantly their ability to punish and reward. In sections [B] and [C], the speaker discusses the functions of ghosts and explains their role in putting the world in order:

是故子墨子曰：「嘗若鬼神之能賞賢如罰暴也，蓋本施之國家，施之萬民，實所以治國家利萬民之道也」<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, Master Mo says: “If the ability of the ghosts and spirits to reward the virtuous and punish the violent becomes implemented as a foundation of the state and applied to [ruling] the people, it will certainly be the right way of governing the state and benefiting the people.”

Master Mo proceeds to repeat all the evils and crimes that he listed in the introduction, when he was describing the disorders in the world, and explains that people will refrain from committing them if they know that “there are the ghosts who can see them”—“有鬼神見之”；only then, he claims, “crimes will cease and the world will be in order”—“由此止；是以天下治”。<sup>32</sup> This paragraph recalls the problems introduced in part (1) of the treatise and resumes the argument for the function of ghosts initiated in part (2), section [A]. Master Mo mentions the function of ghosts only in passing in his commentary to the last example proving their existence [P-3.3], even though there is no suggestion whatsoever about the function of ghosts in the quoted document itself:

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<sup>31</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 243.

<sup>32</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 243-4.

故古聖王必以鬼神為賞賢而罰暴，是故賞必於祖而僇必於社<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the sage kings of antiquity must certainly have believed that ghosts and spirits rewarded the virtuous and punished the violent, therefore rewards had to be bestowed in ancestral temples and punishments had to be meted out at the altars of the earth.

This fragment shows a completely different context—in comparison with [P-1]— in which the idea about the ghosts’ function is expressed. Here, it does not derive directly from the piece of evidence presented by Master Mo, but is forced upon it as an interpretation. Unlike in [P-1], this example does not show the ghosts and spirits directly punishing and rewarding, and it is the narrator-commentator who understands and explains the ritual activities of the humans as acting on behalf of the ghosts and fulfilling their intention.

The first catalog of evidence—[P-1]—ends with a closing warning that the ghosts are able to see everything and reach everywhere, even in deep valleys, dense forests and distant places. What follows in section [C] of the treatise is the same motif, but with some interesting developments:

故鬼神之明，不可為幽閒廣澤山林深谷，鬼神之明必知之·  
鬼神之罰，不可為富貴眾強，勇力強武，堅甲利兵，鬼神之  
罰必勝之<sup>34</sup>

Because of the ‘ming’ of ghosts and spirits, it is impossible to hide even in dark and abandoned places, in vast marshes, mountain forests or deep valleys; the ‘ming’ of ghosts and spirits will penetrate it. The punishment of ghosts and spirits cannot be warded off by wealth and nobleness, power of multitude, bravery, military strength, resistant armor or sharp weapons, because the ghosts’ punishment will prevail over them.

As in [P-1] and [P-3.3], the text talks about the ghosts meting out punishments: 鬼神之誅 / 鬼神之罰; however, while in the previous instances the audience is advised to watch out, because the ghosts will see their transgressions wherever they go: “見有鬼神視之”, here it is the ‘ming’ 明 of the ghosts that will, or *by means of which* the ghosts will know them wherever they go and seek them out: “鬼神之明必知之”. This is not a mere stylistic and grammatical variation, but an entirely different statement. As opposed to the ghosts’ simply seeing or watching people, here we have a condition, a special quality or characteristic of the ghosts that enables them to perceive things. The text does not explain what ‘ming’ is, but the grammatical construction of the phrase makes it clear the ghosts need to possess it in the first place in order to be able to fulfill their tasks; once they got it, they are infallible, and there is no way to escape from them.

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<sup>33</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 242.

<sup>34</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 244.

This idea is developed in the remaining part of the narrative, where Master Mo presents evidence to support it—[C-1]-[C-3]. The two examples that follow—[C-1] and [C-2]—have similar characteristics as those used before to prove the existence of ghosts—[P-1]; they are empirical in nature and describe actual instances of historical figures who were punished for their transgressions. Here, however, the emphasis is on the fact that they were people of great power, wealth and influence, but who nevertheless did not manage to escape their doom. Thus, the two passages prove the point that the ghosts are impartial and that they never fail.

As in the case of the accounts on King Xuan of Zhou—[P-1]—and Duke Jian of Yan—[P-3]—in the first catalogue of evidence, the two episodes presented here have exactly the same plot and structure, and likewise can be considered two stories on a related theme. They begin with an introduction of the protagonists, Kings Jie of Xia and Zhou of Yin consequently, describing in identical terms their position and power, and listing out their crimes. Thereupon, Heaven appoints a man who destroys them in battle: “*Because of these things, Heaven ordered Tang to inflict a ‘ming’ punishment upon him [Jie]*”—“故於此乎天乃使湯至明罰焉” [C-1]<sup>35</sup> The narrator, then, proceeds to describe in detail how the human agent carries out Heaven’s punishment. Master Mo does not mention any agency of ghosts; however, he concludes both stories with the same words:

然不能以此圉鬼神之誅·此吾所謂鬼神之罰，不可為富貴眾強、勇力強武、堅甲利兵者，此也<sup>36</sup>

Thus, despite holding all these [position and power], he [Jie] was not able to ward off the execution of ghosts and spirits. From this I know that the punishment of ghosts and spirits that I talked about cannot be prevented by wealth and noble standing, strength of multitudes, bravery, military power, strong armor nor sharp weapons.

The main point of this argument is that it is impossible to prevent the ghosts from meting out their punishments. As we can see, however, in each example it is a human who punishes the criminals on behalf of Heaven - Master Mo attributes these deeds to ghosts and spirits only in the concluding part of his statement. Both narratives visibly break in the middle: after the account on the destruction of the tyrants is complete and the story is over, and then the names of the protagonists and their attributes are recalled again, they end with the formula quoted above. We can also observe that the two episodes vary only on the story level (different protagonists and time periods), but are completely uniform in the added parts. This discrepancy between the two parts of the narratives is very evident and suggests that the authors of the treatise used two suitable stories and reworked them for their purpose by adding a relevant commentary and conclusion; in other words, the conclusion about the ghosts executing their punishment is an interpretation imposed upon the already existing stories about the mechanism of dynastic successions in antiquity. The shift from Heaven ordering the punishment—and a human carrying it out—in the ‘story’ part of the narrative to the ghosts in the ‘commentary’ part indicates that the existence of actual ghost-agents is of a secondary importance. The term “ghosts” in the aforementioned episodes refers to the divine power—Heaven 天—to which the punitive

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<sup>35</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 244.

<sup>36</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 246.

intervention is attributed, and the main point under discussion is that the punishment for wrongdoing is inevitable. The presence of ghosts is not necessary, because a human can carry it out as well; even the very existence of ghosts is irrelevant, because it is Heaven that supervises the peoples' behavior and that initiates the intervention. However, Master Mo uses these two examples as a warning: people do need to be aware that there exists an imminent punishment or reward for their actions. This mechanism is described as 明—meting out punishments and rewards according to correct discernment. In other words, people must beware the existence of 明; their deeds will be seen and evaluated. The conceptual center of gravity, then, is not on ghosts, but on 明, or the fact that the punishment will happen one way or another. Master Mo closes the discussion with a quotation from an obscure master Qin Ai, which is meant to support the concluding remark: “*When ghosts and spirits grant their rewards, there is no matter small enough to be not rewarded, and when they punish, there is no one great enough to avoid punishment.*”—“鬼神之所賞，無小必賞之；鬼神之所罰，無大必罰之”<sup>37</sup> This is the final confirmation of the infallibility of the ghosts.

Before analyzing the remaining portion of the treatise, some conclusions about part (2) are necessary. First of all, it is thematically and methodologically coherent; its purpose is to prove through argument that ghosts exist, that they reward virtue and punish transgressions, and that they never fail in carrying out their duty. The recognition of these facts is the fundament of a good government. It must be emphasized that these ideas are presented in the treatise as unquestionable and indisputable; the argumentation is firm and focused, and the narrator never falters. However, as I pointed out through examples, this firm argument for the existence of ghosts seems to be merely ostensible; the ghosts would not be able to fulfill their duty without ‘discernment’—明, which appears to be the bottom-line of the argument. It is the existence and the social awareness of the latter that Master Mo is really concerned about.

### (3) Conclusion: Do Ghosts Exist?

In the last part of the “Ming gui” chapter—(3), we observe a radical change. At first, the text seems to be a continuation of the discussion in the preceding section. It begins with another question of the skeptics, but this time it is completely irrelevant to the previous argument and instead opens an entirely new and unrelated topic. The opponents are concerned that believing in ghosts will destroy filial piety; they accuse without providing any reasoning, examples or context. Master Mo’s reply does not seem at all relevant; he first provides a very general classification of ghosts, and then proceeds to discuss the anomaly of the sons predeceasing their fathers. He concludes that although it happens in nature, this is not the natural course of things. Without developing this point any further, Master Mo defends the sacrifice to ghosts and spirits, explaining that serving them is as serving one’s own parents; it also is an important social event helping to bring together the community of people, therefore sacrifice is not a waste even if ghosts do not exist: “*Even if ghosts and spirits do not exist, [through sacrificial ceremonies people] can still enjoy being assembled as a community and establish kin ties between villages of the district.*”—“雖使鬼神請亡，此猶可以合驩聚眾，取親於鄉里”<sup>38</sup> In a sense, then, the argument harks back to the problem brought by the skeptics, because it interprets sacrifice as fulfilling—and not damaging—filial duty. Thus, ghost worship fits into the norm of

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<sup>37</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 248.

<sup>38</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 250.

the family relationships. It is not idolatry or withdrawing children from their parents, but quite the opposite, it helps solidify the family. Worshipping ghosts and parents is one and the same thing, and it cannot be a source of anomalies.

The most striking departure from the previous argument in the treatise is the fact that Master Mo actually allows a possibility that ghosts and spirits do not exist. By proving that the meaning of offering sacrifices to ghosts is first of all serving one's own parents and developing stronger ties between the people, so it is beneficial regardless whether there actually are ghosts or not, Master Mo not only relativizes their importance and functions, but puts in doubt their very existence. The ghosts here are more of a concept than a real thing; what matters is the act of worshipping them, not their physical presence and the possibility of actual agency. The speaker suggests that it is good enough to act as if ghosts existed, which is radically different from claiming that they will see and punish without fail and in every case if someone does something wrong.

This is even more visible in the following part of the narrative, where the whole argument is re-presented in a slightly more coherent and logical fashion; it is not a continuation, but a re-take on the preceding theme. The skeptics ask another question, this time directly questioning the sense of sacrifices. Master Mo again connects worship with filial piety and human relations: “*I seek the blessing of the ghosts and spirits above, and the unification with the people on an occasion below, becoming kin with the whole village*”—“上以交鬼之福，下以合驩聚眾，取親乎鄉里”<sup>39</sup> The social function of the ritual is emphasized here very strongly; the point becomes even more evident in this statement: “*If the ghosts and spirits exist, then in this way (by offering sacrifices) I am able to feed my parents and siblings; is it, then, not the most beneficial thing in the world?*”—“若神有，則是得吾父母弟兄而食之也·則此豈非天下利事也哉”<sup>40</sup> Worshipping ghosts brings people and families together; therefore, it is good to perform the ceremonies even if ghosts themselves do not exist. Master Mo presents here a more pragmatic argumentation and an alternative aspect of the doctrine. Actual ghosts, their activities and functions are no longer in focus, and the main theme of the narrative is the usefulness of worship and ritual. The attitude of the speaker is no longer so determined and uncompromising, and the ideas not as dogmatic; he clearly upholds the belief that the ghosts exist, but he allows the discussion from the point of view of those who believe they do not. He wants to convince them that participating in the ritual is still useful, even if they persist in rejecting the ghosts.

Although following the same convention, the text is thematically and rhetorically very different from the preceding treatise. Unlike before, in order to prove his point Master Mo does not provide evidence from historical documents, but uses logic and reason. There are also linguistic diversions, such as using the phrase “鬼神請有/鬼神請亡”<sup>41</sup>, unseen in the preceding part of the chapter, to express the existence or non-existence of ghosts.

The chapter closes neatly with a firm statement that the rulers and masters of the world must believe that ghosts and spirits exist and must base their government on this doctrine; thus, the argument refers back to the beginning of the treatise. However, both thematically and in terms of the composition and structure, the chapter is by no means a monolith. It consists of many sometimes quite disconnected texts and fragments, and the doctrines and ideas presented

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<sup>39</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 250.

<sup>40</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 250.

<sup>41</sup> Replacing “鬼神之有/無”

fit together only loosely. The division between the first two parts—(1) and (2) —, which forms a longer, more or less consistent treatise, and the disconnected final part—(3)— is very clear. What connects these texts is their common general theme. Thus, the “Ming gui” chapter gathers most of the essential information and ideas concerning and referring to ghosts in *Mozi*, and its purpose is to present it as a complete and consistent doctrine.

However strong and uncompromising the tone of the speaker may seem, the basic terms used in the text remain unexplained. We are told that ghosts exist and what their functions are, but we do not know their origin, identity or *modus operandi*. In other words, we have no precise information about the way in which they are supposed to exist and function. What can we really say about ghosts and spirits based on the received “Ming gui” chapter in *Mozi*?

### What are “ghosts”?

As I pointed out at the beginning, interpreting the title of the chapter as “Explaining Ghosts” may be misleading. The reader naturally expects that the text will indeed be an attempt to ‘explain’ ghosts; in a sense it does so, but mainly by dealing with the basic problem of their existence and function, rather than by describing or classifying them. The text found under this title is by no means a ‘demonography’, in which we learn about different types of ghosts, their names, characteristics, origin, and nature. Instead, the main purpose of it is proving that ghosts exist and that it is necessary to recognize that fact. Scrutinizing the examples presented by Master Mo, we can get a glance, however vague and fragmentary, of what he understood to belong to the category of “ghosts.”

In the first catalogue of evidence presented in part (2)—[P-1]—we can distinguish:

- (1) Vengeful ghosts of the people who were unjustly put to death; we do not know what happens to them after they avenge their death—[P-1.1], [P-1.3]
- (2) A being referred to as a spirit—神, who descends from Heaven in the capacity of an agent of the Lord on High (di 帝) to bestow a reward on a virtuous ruler; he identifies himself as Goumang, and he seems to be one of the celestial officers—[P-1.2]
- (3) An apparition of a shaman or priest—zhu 祿/祝— the source of whose agency we do not know, and whom we might not normally consider a “ghost,” but his purpose is to punish a minister who has neglected the rites—[P-1.4]
- (4) An unknown force that animates the sacrificial lamb to expose the guilty, declared to be a 神 by the local shaman—[P-1.5]

The second catalogue—[P-2]—does not mention any ghosts, but it talks about sacrifices and other state cults, which can encompass all kinds of gods and ancestors. In the last catalogue—[P-3], Master Mo classifies as “ghosts” the Lord on High—di 帝—and King Wen—[P-3.1], ghosts of the mountains and streams—山川鬼神, who were helping Yu the Great—[P-3.2], and Heaven—天, who sends the Xia king to carry out punishment on the Hu—[P-3.3].

From this we can see how versatile the speaker is in his take on ghosts and their activity. Basically, we can assume that “ghosts” could include all kinds of weird occurrences, as well as cults, ritual and religious practices related to them - anything that has something to do with the supernatural. However, Master Mo rather clearly argues that these phenomena and activities are an integral part of nature, therefore the term “supernatural” may be inappropriate in this context;

we could instead regard them as beings—and events related or caused by them—who are not humans, but who nevertheless belong to and exist side by side in the same universe.

The terms and vocabulary used in *Mozi* in reference to ghosts and spirits are not defined. As discussed before, the text uses the denomination *gui-shen* 鬼神, without making any distinction between these two characters. This is not to say that there is no difference between 鬼 and 神, but rather the text's focus is on the question of their existence and most general function, not particular characteristics. Thus, they can be addressed as one group of beings who are not humans and who punish transgressions and reward virtue.

In the last part of the chapter—(3), which seems both stylistically and thematically rather detached from the rest, Master Mo argues for the usefulness of sacrifice. This part of the text begins with these words:

子墨子曰：「古之今之為鬼，非他也，有天鬼，亦有山水鬼神者，亦有人死而為鬼者。」今有子先其父死，弟先其兄死者矣，意雖使然，然而天下之陳物曰：「先生者先死。」若是，則先死者非父則母，非兄而姒也。今絜為酒醴粢盛，以敬慎祭祀，若使鬼神請有，是得其父母姒兄而飲食之也，豈非厚利哉？<sup>42</sup>

Master Mo said: “As for the ghosts and spirits in the past and nowadays, there were no other but heavenly ghosts, ghosts of mountains and rivers, and people who died and became ghosts.” Now it happens that a son dies before his father, a younger brother dies before his elder brother; even so, the way the world speaks of things, the one who is born first dies first. In this way, the one who dies first, if it is not the father then it will be the mother, if it is not the elder brother then it will be the elder sister. Then, we prepare pure wine and rich grain to make respectful offerings. If ghosts and spirits really exist, then it is providing food and drink for one's parents and siblings—is this not highly beneficial?

The main theme of the paragraph that follows is the usefulness of sacrifice, not the classification of ghosts and spirits; it follows from the skeptics' question as to whether belief in ghosts and the sacrifices devoted to them take away from the observance of duties within the family—the living relatives. Master Mo makes it clear that serving the dead—ghosts—is the same as serving the living. However, it is the only paragraph in *Mozi* that indirectly gives us a clue about the existing ideas about the ghosts' identity and nature. The classification of ghosts presented here is a very general one, and it harks back to the popular lore. In other words, *Mozi* does not offer its own unique theory about what or who ghosts are, where they come from, and what they are like. The text does not present new, original lore. Instead, it refers to preexisting beliefs and practices, reconfirming and reinterpreting them. The 鬼神 are not a separate group introduced by *Mozi*, but seem to stand for the same ghosts and spirits that we find in other writings; it is just that here they are endowed with certain functions that fit them into the specific system of *Mozi* thought and argumentation.

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<sup>42</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 249.

What we can gather about 鬼神 from this short passage is a rough classification into three groups of ghosts:

- a. “Heavenly ghosts”
- b. “Ghosts of mountains and rivers”
- c. “Spirits of people who died”

The text does not elaborate on it, but we can infer that this classification corresponds with spirits sent by Heaven – divine beings, deities, gods; local spirits in charge of certain places; and, ancestors and angry ghosts of people who were wronged and have unfinished business in the mundane world. Among the examples brought up by Master Mo in part (2) of the chapter to prove that ghosts exist, two are vengeful spirits of people who were killed unjustly (Du Bo—[P-1.1] and Zhuang Ziyi—[P-1.3]), two are sent by Heaven (a spirit with a human face and bird’s body rewarding Duke Mu of Qin—[P-1.2]) and a shaman punishing minister Guangu of Song—[P-1.4] and one local god (Earth God of Qi settling a dispute between ministers Wangli Guo and Zhongli Jiao—[P-1.5]). The classification does not provide us with the information about how many ghosts there are, if the number of non-ancestral ghosts is constant, what happens to ghosts of dead people after they punish those who wronged them, or what happens to those who died being punished by angry ghosts.<sup>43</sup> Other things that we learn from the chapter are the following:

1. Ghosts and spirits need/require sacrifice, ritual and worship;
2. They punish evil and reward good; ghosts seem to be Heaven’s agents, whose solely function is to go and pay to the people whatever they deserve on Heaven’s behalf;
3. Ghosts and spirits are everywhere and see everything; there is no way to run away from them and escape punishment.

Such is the only function of ghosts and spirits *Mozi* talks about—their *raison d’être*. They do not seem, however, to be omnipresent and omniscient, which is an attribute of Heaven alone: it is everywhere at the same moment and has superior knowledge and power.

From other fragments in the text we can see that they have the power to kill men. *Mozi* does not present examples of ghosts acting with no reason. On the contrary, all of their actions are justified and are a response to peoples’ behavior. This does not mean, however, that ghosts cause all that happens to men; for instance, in “Gong Meng” Master Mo’s illness is discussed as a natural course of events, not a punishment.

Master Mo argues that the fact of the existence of ghosts is of utmost importance to the prosperity of the people and the state. Therefore, the text explains the principle that the ghosts exist in order to watch over the humans and to execute the will of Heaven. If the people want prosperity, they must recognize this fact. The rulers first of all have to take care of the ghosts, and only then they can expect that human affairs in their states will be in order. The only way to avoid calamity is by worshipping the ghosts and following the way of Heaven. The ghosts do not possess the power to create things or determine the course of events in the human world, but they do discipline the people, thus having an active and positive impact on their behavior.

As we can see, the chapter characterizes the ghosts only indirectly or by default, and the doctrine presented in it is not coherent and uniform. What seems to be the most crucial attribute of the ghosts remains undefined—their 明, mentioned both in the title “明鬼”, as well as throughout the treatise—鬼神之明—as an aspect of their nature and, de facto, their *modus operandi*.

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<sup>43</sup> We can guess the answers to those questions by referring them to other sources, E.g. those who were punished probably become ‘hungry ghosts’, etc.

## The Meaning of “Ming” 明

The concept of 明 is the key to the Mohist understanding of ghosts. It is possible to tentatively deduce its meaning from the context of the received text of the *Mozi*; however, it is the newly excavated material recognized as belonging to the Mohist tradition that is most helpful in shedding some new light on the doctrine and on the reading of the received canon.

The 《鬼神之明，融師有成氏》 in the *Chu Bamboo Strips* in Shanghai Museum Collection<sup>44</sup> (SBZ) consists of 5 strips and 197 graphs. The initial part of the text is missing, and the remaining material consists of two unrelated fragments separated by a graphic mark. Originally, the passage had no title; the current one was added by the scholars who worked on the edition of the text and is based on the opening and closing phrase: “鬼神又（有）所明又（有）所不明”，interpreted as a reference to the “明鬼” chapter in *Mozi*.

### Text and Translation

1. 今夫鬼神又（有）所明又（有）所不明，則以其賞善罰暴也。
2. 昔者堯舜禹湯，仁義聖智，天下。之。
3. 此以貴為天子，富又（有）天下，長年有舉，後世遂之。
4. 則鬼神之賞，此明矣。
5. 及桀受幽厲，焚聖人殺訐者，賊百姓，亂邦家。
6. 此以桀折於鬲山而受首於岐社，身不沒為天下笑。
7. 則鬼[神之罰，此]明以。
8. 及伍子胥者，天下之聖人也，鴟夷而死。
9. 榮夷公者，天下之亂人也，長年而沒。
10. 汝以此詰之，則善者或不賞，而暴[者或不罰]，故吾因加(嘉)？
11. 鬼神不明，則必有故。
12. 其力能至焉而弗為乎？吾弗知也。
13. 意其力故不能至焉乎？吾或弗知也。
14. 此兩者枳（只），故[曰鬼神有所明有所不明。此之謂乎？

1. Nowadays, the ghosts are sometimes “ming”, and sometimes not “ming”, and thus they reward the good and punish the evil accordingly.
2. In the past, Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang practiced ren, yi, sheng and zhi (they were benevolent, righteous, sage and wise), and they were ... by the world.
3. Therefore, they were honored with the position of Son of Heaven, and rich with the possession of the world, their fame lasted for many years, and the succeeding generations followed them.
4. Thus, [in it] the ghosts' reward is “ming” — evident/exemplary/discerning.
5. On the other hand, Jie, Shou, You and Li assassinated the Sages, killed the critics, robbed the people and brought disorder among the states.
6. Therefore, Jie was ripped apart in Lishan and Shou exposed in Qishe, his body preserved for the world to laugh.

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<sup>44</sup> Ma Chengyuan, *op. cit.*

7. Thus, [in it] the ghosts' punishment is "ming"—evident/exemplary/discerning.
8. Then, there was Wu Zixu, who was a Sage, but he was killed in a leather bag.
9. And there was Rong Yigong, who was a villain, but he lived long and did not perish.
10. You can see from this that there is unrewarded good and unpunished evil. How should one explain its reason?
11. If ghosts and spirits are not "ming", there must be a reason for it.
12. Are they able to do it but do not do it? I do not know.
13. Or is it that they are not able to do it? I do not know it, either.
14. The reason for this discrepancy is that ghosts are sometimes "ming", and sometimes they are not "ming".

The text has a form of dialog, but since the beginning of it is missing, the speakers are not identifiable. Because of the subject of the debate and other traits that will be discussed below, scholars assume that the passage is related to *Mozi*.<sup>45</sup>

There are two correspondences, which allow identifying the excavated 《鬼神之明》 as part of *Mozi*<sup>46</sup>: first, the recurring phrase “賞善罰暴” in both texts<sup>47</sup>; second, we find references in the text to the three generations of Sage Kings, Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang (2), who, due to their virtue, were rewarded by Heaven; and the three generations of tyrants, Jie, Shou, You, Li (5), who were punished for their crimes. These references parallel those in *Mozi*, where the very same figures are frequently used as positive and negative examples.<sup>48</sup> There are other correspondences with the received text. The phrase “此以貴為天子，富又（有）天下，長年有舉，後世遂之” (3) is almost identical with “帝善其順帝善其順法則也，故舉殷以賞之，使貴為天子，富有天下，名譽至今不息” in *Mozi*, “Ming gui”.<sup>49</sup> Another semantic trait that suggests the text's connection with *Mozi* is the characteristic compound 鬼神 used as a denotation for ghosts, a term immediately recognizable as Mohist, because it is not frequently used in other writings. Both texts use the same grammatical structure to describe the qualities of the ghosts: 鬼神之賞/罰—(4), (7).<sup>50</sup>

The examples above show parallels in phrasing and syntax and prove that the excavated material is linguistically and stylistically related to the received material compiled under the title *Mozi*. At the same time, they also reflect the conceptual and rhetorical relationship between the two texts. The paragraph discusses the nature of ghosts, with an emphasis on their ability to reward and punish. The same theme in almost identical terms is pursued in *Mozi*<sup>51</sup>. The crucial

<sup>45</sup> Cao Jinyan, the editor and translator of the text in *SBZ*, believes that the dialog is between Mozi and his disciple, and that the text is a missing part of *Mozi*; in: journal Cao Jinyan 曹錦炎, “Shanghai Bowuguan zang Chu zhushu *Mozi* yiwen” “上海博物館藏楚竹書《墨子》佚文”, *Wenwu* 文物 (2006/07): 49; Li Rui and Liao Mingchun, albeit much more skeptical about the text's provenance, still generally agree that it can be associated with the Mohist canon; in: Li Rui 李銳, “Du Shangbo wu zhajiji” “讀上博五札記,” *Confucius* (2000); Liao Mingchun 廖名春, “Du Shangbo wu, guishen zhi ming pian zhaji” “讀《上博五，鬼神之明》篇札記,” *Confucius* (2000).

<sup>46</sup> In *Mozi*, we encounter it in two versions: “賞善罰暴” / “賞賢罰暴”; in the excavated text just the former one: (1), (10).

<sup>47</sup> As pointed out by Cao Jinyan

<sup>48</sup> In “尚賢中” we read: “然則富貴為賢以得其賞者誰也？曰若昔者三代聖王堯舜禹湯文武者是也。(…) 然則富貴為暴以得其罰者誰也？曰若昔者三代暴王桀紂幽厲者是也” ; Sun, *op. cit.*, 60.

<sup>49</sup> In his detailed analysis of the text, Liao Mingchun points out that the expression “長年有舉” corresponds with “名譽至今不息” .

<sup>50</sup> Compare with *Mozi*, “Ming gui”.

<sup>51</sup> See 《明鬼》，《天志》，《公孟》

point of the debate is the problem of the ghosts' 明; the same feature is present in *Mozi*, where the very title of the chapter on ghosts, “明鬼”, introduces it.

The dialog convention of the text is also similar to the Mohist canon, where skeptics ask questions and the speaker defends his point by bringing up examples from the past. It is then legitimate to assume that the fragment refers to the Mohist debate on ghosts.<sup>52</sup> The Mohist canon is a rather loose compilation of often-random texts and fragments, sometimes only vaguely related to or contradictory with the ‘mainstream’ ideology represented in it. Some fragments related to ghosts are to be found in other chapters, not necessarily “Ming gui”, the main “ghost” essay in the book. Such is the case with the episode on Mo Di’s illness, which discusses the 明 of the ghosts, but which nevertheless is included in “Gong Meng”. On the other hand, the unrelated last fragment of “Ming gui” could either belong to another chapter, such as “節葬”, or considered redundant and altogether omitted in the canon. According to the same logic, 《鬼神之明》 could either be loosely attached to “Ming gui”, which, however, would be very challenging, considering the contradictory character of the ideas presented in it, or it could belong to another bulk of Mohist writings, perhaps apocryphal, existing outside or aside the canon. Judging by the contents, it seems legitimate to assume that the text was produced by people belonging to a sect or a school of thought representing a further development and modification of Mohist ideas.

The excavated passage clearly refers to the argument in *Mozi* “Ming gui” chapter about ghosts punishing the vicious and rewarding the worthy:

嘗若鬼神之能賞賢如罰暴也，蓋本施之國家，施之萬民，實所以治國家利萬民之道也<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Cao Jinyan argues that the text does not fit into any particular *Mozi* chapter, and instead he assumes that it is a part of one of the missing essays in the “Ming gui” triad. He reaches this conclusion, because the argument presented in the dialog is too detached from the one in the received ‘lower’ “Ming gui” essay ( “明鬼下” ), therefore it cannot be included as a part of it. Still, the text’s main theme is the nature of ghosts and spirits, so it is conceivable to imagine that the ‘upper’ or ‘middle’ essay in the ghost triad could be focused on a different aspect of it. Although there is no reference to it in Cao’s article, his reasoning might be based on the “three factions theory”, according to which the three series of essays in each triad represent the views of three sects into which the Mohists split after Mo Di’s death, or on A. C. Graham’s “successive revision” theory, claiming that the three factions have distinctive doctrinal tendencies, which Graham characterizes as “Purist,” “Compromising,” and “Reactionary.”; A. C. Graham. *Disputers of the Dao* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), 36. Both theories, according to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, should be rejected; Edward N. Zalta, ed., *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Metaphysics Research Lab, CSLI, Stanford University*, 2009, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>. Cao Jinyan in his article talks about the division of the Mohist school into three sects during the Warring States period, and it is indeed tempting to consider the stunningly different take on ghosts presented in the excavated fragment as the expression of the ideas held by one of them. However, this does not indicate that the discovered text, most likely a fragment of a longer debate, could or should be included into the *Mozi* at all. The ideology presented in it stands in such a stark contrast with the mainstream argument that it could not possibly match it even in the context of a different tradition or approach. The received triads of other chapters can serve as proof that despite obvious differences, the main argument remains the same. Moreover, as Li Rui points out, the notion that some evil remains unpunished and some good unrewarded is already present in other received *Mozi* chapters, E.g. “Gong Meng” and “Lu wen”, but the statement that the ghosts are sometimes *ming* and sometimes not is too big a departure from *Mozi* at large, and indeed rather revolutionary, therefore not reconcilable.

<sup>53</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, 243.

If, then, the principle of ghosts and spirits being able to reward the worthy and punish the wicked is made the foundation on which the state is based and applied to [ruling] the people, it will truly be the right way to put the state in order and to benefit its people.

However, whereas in *Mozi* it is emphasized on several occasions that the punishments and rewards are meted out invariably and without fail, the ideas presented in 《鬼神之明》 do not express the same certitude. Here, the skeptics confront the speaker with a dilemma: why is it that some virtuous people perish unrewarded, while villains get away with their evil? On the one hand, there are the examples of the ancient rulers Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang, who enjoyed Heaven's support and possessed the riches of the world, and of the tyrants Jie, Shou, You and Li, who met a violent end—we find the same examples in *Mozi* being used to support the main argument—(2), (5); on the other hand, as the skeptics point out, there are Wu Zixu, who perished despite being a Sage, and Rong Yigong, who enjoyed longevity, even though he was a villain—(8), (9).

In response to this charge, the speaker fails to come up with a definite and firm explanation, which is uncanny, even by the standards of the last paragraph in “Ming gui”, where Master Mo does allow a possibility that ghosts do not exist, but holds strong to the point he is making about the necessity and usefulness of sacrifices. Instead, the speaker observes that the ghosts are sometimes 明, and sometimes not 明, and therefore some peoples' actions remain neglected. He supposes there is a reason why it is the case, but he admits he does not know whether this is because the ghosts are able to discern things and act upon it, but refrain from doing so, or because they are altogether not able to do it; whichever the case, the overall result is the same: sometimes they see things, and sometimes they do not—(11)-(14).

We learn, then, from the text that ghosts are not always consequent in their actions and that sometimes they fail to execute what people rightly deserve. The exact reasons why it is so remain unclear, but the speaker allows two options: the ghosts might choose to be 明 or not; alternatively, some of them are or are not 明 by nature. The first possibility suggests that ghosts act at their whim, for unknown reasons; the second implies that there are two kinds of ghosts, those who are 明, and those who are not. Examples from the text—(4)-(7)—allow us to analyze what 明 means: “則鬼神之賞/罰，此明矣”—“Thus, [in it] the ghosts' reward/punishment is evident (“ming”).” This also could be translated as: “Thus, the ghosts' reward/punishment is [an example of] ‘ming’.”

The ghosts fulfill their duty of rewarding good and punishing evil when, or if, they are 明; it is also correct to say that they are 明, or *it is* 明 that happens, when they act accordingly. The term, then, should be understood as the ability of ghosts to distinguish between right and wrong, which results in taking a relevant action: reward or punishment. Ghosts, who are 明, are conscious ghosts.

*Mozi* seems to present the ghosts as impartial and infallible agents who execute rewards and punishments on the people. This argument stands in a clear contrast with the 《鬼神之明》 passage, which points out instances when good is not rewarded and evil not punished. As a matter of fact, the text sheds a new light on the ideas about ghosts in *Mozi*. In the *Mozi* “Ming gui” chapter, we encounter the expression “鬼神之明”, which can be translated as “the ‘ming’ of ghosts and spirits”. Accordingly, the speaker does not claim that there is no way to escape from the ghosts' punishment; what he does say, though, is that there is no escape from the ghosts' 明.

*Mozi* does not explain the meaning of 明, but simply applies it. The ghosts fulfill their duty *because* and *by means* of it. The excavated material helps understand the term 明 in reference to ghosts, thus allowing us to re-interpret the statement: it is when the ghost are 明—conscious and discerning, or those of them who are 明—who can distinguish between right and wrong—that the punishment cannot be escaped and the reward will certainly be bestowed. It is the 明 that never fails, not the ghosts.

## CHAPTER II

### CONCEPTS OF “SAGELY ILLUMINATION”—*MING* 明 AND “TIMELINESS”—*SHI* 時 IN THE *ZUOZHUAN* 左傳: HISTORIOGRAPHY AS OMEN READING

#### Introduction

In the 14th year of Duke Ai 哀公 (481 BCE), an extraordinary and highly significant event took place in the state of Lu 魯. During the annual winter hunt, the charioteers captured a *lin* 麟—a unicorn. According to the sources, the rare animal was injured, then transported to the capital, and eventually killed. Confucius, who had a chance to examine the finding, was deeply shaken by it. He deemed the unicorn’s appearance “untimely”—*bu shi* 不時—and lamented its fate. Later traditions claim that it was this event that prompted the Sage to compile the Chunqiu annals<sup>54</sup>; there are others who believe the contrary: it was at this point that he stopped making the records.<sup>55</sup> Regardless of which is the truth, it is certain that this unique occurrence became the turning point in the Chinese perception and writing of history. The finding of the unicorn could not be left without an explanation. What happened in the past that caused it to come? What was going to happen thereafter?

In her discussion of the *Zuozhuan* account of the event, Wai-yee Li points out that “the capture of the *lin* is about the failure of recognition.”<sup>56</sup> The people who catch the animal misidentify and, consequently, mishandle it. It takes a sage such as Confucius to correct their mistake and call the thing by its correct name. This can be deduced, in part, from the terse language of the passage: “Zhongni examined it and said, ‘It is a *lin*’.” The hunters were not sure about what they had caught; the finding was not just a rare specimen, but something altogether unknown to them. They deemed it “anomalous”—*yi* 異—, and “inauspicious”—*bu xiang* 不祥—and thus potentially dangerous. What the Sage performs over the injured *lin* is an act of identification, and only after he demystifies it and calls it by its proper name do they accept it as the kill of the hunt.<sup>57</sup>

However, the role of the Sage here is not limited to the mere classifying of the finding in terms of species and type. The verb *guan* 觀—“to inspect”—used in the text suggests his personal involvement with the object of examination—getting an idea of what it is, recognizing, and understanding it; Confucius does not only examine the animal’s physicality, but he sees its nature and understands what its coming implies.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The point of view of the Jin 晉 scholar and ZZ interpreter Du Yu 杜預 (222-284) and his followers; Legge, J., “The Ch’un Ts’ew with the Tso Chuen,” in *The Chinese Classics* vol. V (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1994), 834.

<sup>55</sup> The *Gongyang* 公羊 tradition

<sup>56</sup> Li, Wai-yee, “Afterthoughts. The Capture of the *Lin* and the Birth of Historiography,” in *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 416.

<sup>57</sup> Apparently, there existed registers of animals that were eligible for hunting and the capture of which was reported in the ancestral temple after the hunt; hunting expeditions were ritual events and the outcome of them was ominous; killing of a “wrong” animal could be inauspicious and bring undesirable consequences; here, it seems that the hunters deemed the unicorn such an animal.

<sup>58</sup> The text says: “Zhongni examined it and said: ‘It is a *lin*’” “仲尼觀之曰麟也”; 觀 *guan* means “to look intently and with an aim/purpose” (Wang Li: 有目的地看; *Wang Li guhanyu zidian* 王力古汉语字典, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000)), and thus “to inspect/examine/scrutinize” (*Shuowen*: 諦視也); one of the basic dictionary definitions

The Spring and Autumn Annals—*Chunqiu* 春秋 (*CQ*)—and the Zuo Tradition—*Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*ZZ*)—are the two earliest Chinese historiographical works. According to the tradition, *CQ*—a chronicle of events that took place in Lu between 722-481 BCE—was composed by Confucius, whereas the *ZZ* was believed to have been written as a commentary on *CQ* by Confucius’ disciple Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, a state *shi* 史 – “historiographer” in Lu.<sup>59</sup> The *ZZ* is conventionally considered the first Chinese written history.<sup>60</sup> Unlike *CQ*, which is a register of unelaborated events, the *ZZ* is a collection of narratives purporting to explain exactly what happened; that is, as the positivist historian Leopold von Ranke famously put, “wie es eigentlich gewesen” – “how it actually was”.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, in many instances it refers directly to particular entries in the *CQ* and explains why the record was made, thus exposing the ritualistic nature of the work.

The references to *CQ* in the *ZZ* show that the former was not a mere chronicle of events, but rather a register of carefully selected material. Based on the content’s analysis, Li Zongtong argues that *CQ* is a strictly ritual text.<sup>62</sup> As he points out, all the undertakings and events mentioned in it were announced to the ancestors during the divination and sacrificial ceremonies. Li concludes that the records were originally made exclusively for the use in the temple, and that they acquired their more universal and didactic function only later; therefore, not all the events were recorded, but only those that were relevant from the ritual point of view, *i.e.* that were required to be announced to the ancestors. According to A. M. Karapetiantz, the *CQ* records were made on bamboo tablets not as chronicle entries for posterity, but as reports to the ancestors; the act of inscribing the tablets was in itself part of the ritual. The tablets were

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for *guan* is “to have the understanding/knowledge/recognition of a matter” 對事物的認識”, hence the nominal form “an opinion” or “a point of view”—a personal “understanding” of a matter developed as a result of a close insight and investigation; *guan* here involves a judgment and it can be translated as “to regard something as”; according to Wang Li, “in the meaning of *guan* there lies a heavy emphasis on the subjective purposefulness of the agent” “觀的意義重在施事者的主觀目的性”; a passage in *ZZ* Zhuang XXIII criticizes the duke for breaking the rules of propriety: *What kind of lesson is your posterity going to derive from this?* “後嗣何觀” (*Hanyu dacidian* renders 借鑒); *guan* implies interpreting the object and learning from it; it suggests that the object of scrutiny purports something.

<sup>59</sup> Zuo Qiuming’s relationship to Confucius was first suggested by Du Yu in his work *Chunqiu Zuoshi jing zhuan ji jie xu* 春秋左氏經傳集解序; Yang, *op. cit.*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> According to *Zhongguo wenxue dacidian*, the *ZZ* is “the Nation’s earliest, detailed, vividly narrated chronological history, and, at the same time, a historical narrative with high literary quality” “我國古代最早而又詳細完備、敘事生動的編年史，同時也是文學成就很高的曆史散文著作”; Ma Liangchun and Li Fu, eds., *Zhongguo wenxue dacidian* (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 1413.

<sup>61</sup> Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), xiv-xv; Ranke’s principle became the guideline for modern historians striving to present the facts of history without their own views. In the context of early Chinese historiography, Ranke’s definition of historical narrative helps highlight the difference between *CQ* and the *ZZ*, where the former records the events, and the latter describes them; therefore, unlike *CQ*, the *ZZ* is a text that reflects the authors’ cognitive interest in the past and their historical consciousness. In other words, the text of *CQ* is insufficient as a description of the past; it is the *ZZ* that provides the historical background for the facts recorded in the Annals, and thus, for the first time in Chinese tradition, attempts to answer the question of what actually happened.

<sup>62</sup> Li divides the events recorded in *CQ* into 30 thematic groups and points out that all of them have a religious character and are related to the ritual, E.g. records of covenants, which involved a particular ceremony, as well as hunts, funerals, earth and construction works, and other. Li Zongtong 李宗侗, “Shiguan zhidu—fu lun dui chuantong zhi zunzhong” “史官制度 - 附論對傳統之尊重,” *Wenshi zhexue bao*: Taipei, 1965), 14.

presented as offerings on the altar, and the written language served as the medium for transmitting the information into the afterworld.<sup>63</sup>

In his study of the structure of *CQ*, Karapetiantz focuses on the system employed to date the entries. As he observes, the date of the event could be omitted or changed in the records because of ritual reasons, and events were dated with different degrees of accuracy (season, month, and/or day) depending on their ritual significance.<sup>64</sup> This fact reveals the importance of the ideas about time in the process of the creation of the text—it shows that the date does not have a merely informative and documentary function, but instead it constitutes a part of the event, or even—in cases of a complete omission of the entry—an event in its own right.<sup>65</sup> As Z. Słupski puts it, “time was that element which linked people with the higher order, with the order of Nature, with the order of Heaven”.<sup>66</sup>

The seasons were “assigned” by Heaven and expressed Heaven’s will; therefore, any activity undertaken by people on earth had to be coordinated with them. The ritual text of *CQ* can be considered a reflection and a sanction of that natural order; the text was composed following the course of time and, as such, they were also an element of time—its expression and representation.

In more than 200 direct references to *CQ*, the Zuo Tradition explains why certain events were recorded—formulae *shu* 書—or why they were not recorded—formulae *bu shu* 不書<sup>67</sup>. For a large part, these records are related to time: they were made in order to advise whether events were “timely”—formulae *shi* 時—or “untimely”—formulae *bu shi* 不時.<sup>68</sup> As the *ZZ* comments indicate, these formulas were morally charged—a “timely” action was right, and an “untimely”

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<sup>63</sup> Karapetiantz compares *CQ* to the inscriptions on oracle bones; he argues that the bones were offered on the altar along with ritual sacrifices with the purpose of transmitting information to the ancestors; Карпетьянц, А. М., «Чунь Цю» и древнекитайский «историографический» ритуал, *Этика и ритуал в традиционном Китае*, “*Chunqiu* and the Ancient Chinese ‘Historiographical’ Ritual”, *Ethics and Ritual in Traditional China* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), 86. See also Shirakawa on using writing as a tool for communicating with the spirits and on the apotropaic function of the text.

<sup>64</sup> Karapetiantz, *op. cit.*, 141.

<sup>65</sup> The structure of each *CQ* entry is very regular: the reign year is followed by the current season; after that, there is either a record of an event or the indication of the month; each season has three months and, theoretically, all three can be indicated in the text, but in practice, there is not a single instance of the season where events are recorded for all three months; moreover, there are 36 cases of seasons with no records of any events and no indications of the first month in the season. When the month is indicated, there may be a record of events that took place in that month; there can also be indications of the cyclical days, with or without the records of the corresponding events. Characteristically, there is no instance in which a new season is not announced; from this, James Legge concluded that the coming of the new season was important in itself and had to be recorded. In such cases, the record testifies that Nature is conforming to its proper course; the omission of the record of a change in season would indicate a deviance from that course and a cosmic cataclysm. Legge, *op. cit.*, 21.

<sup>66</sup> Słupski, Z., “The Literary Structure of the *Chunqiu* and the *Zuo zhuan*,” *Archiv Orientalni*, Praha, vol. 69 (2001): 56.

<sup>67</sup> Whenever referring to the “rules of recording”—*shufa* 書法—in the *CQ*, the *ZZ* uses the same set of technical terms and expressions; I consider them “formulae”, because they are fixed groups of words used only in particular context.

<sup>68</sup> As I demonstrate in one of my previous works, most of the references regarding timeliness concern construction works; E.g. there are 9 reports in *CQ* on walling cities—*cheng* 城; each of them is commented upon in the *ZZ*, according to which in six instances the works were timely, and in two untimely; only in one instance there is no reference to time. Gibas, P., “Летопись «Чуньцю» и ритуальное значение времени в период Чуньцю”, (“*Chunqiu* Annals and the Ritual Significance of Time in the Spring and autumn Period”) (*Информационные материалы*: Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow 2001).

one wrong.<sup>69</sup> Thus, according to the *ZZ*, one of the purposes of the *CQ* reports was to evaluate the events and, by extension, to praise or to blame the people responsible for them.

The life of the people and the administration of the state were subordinated to the laws of Nature. Heaven established seasons, which could not be transgressed, and any kind of activity had to be completed at the right time. The calendar and the state agendas were determined by reading the signs received from Heaven. This was accomplished under the personal supervision of the ruler, who was Heaven's representative on earth and the initiator of the changes in the vegetation.<sup>70</sup> Yang Bojun explains that the feudal lords announced the beginning of each month in the temple during sacrificial ceremonies, when a ritual record of it was also made.<sup>71</sup> No action in the state could be taken without the ceremonial announcement of the new season; therefore, it is correct to say that the *Annals* were made *because* of or *due* to time.

The untimeliness of an action was an event important enough to be written down and reported to the ancestors. Karapetiantz points out that all the seasonal sacrifices recorded in *CQ* are anomalous.<sup>72</sup> The *CQ* should be considered a ritual text not because it records ritual activities—a regular sacrifice ceremony was not an event that needed to be recorded. It was not the event itself that was important, but its ritual relevance, such as the relationship with time. The records were aimed at exposing those who obeyed or disobeyed the ritual—the order of timeliness. The formulae *shu* 書 and *bu shu* 不書 were ritual commands that the writers of the text had to follow. Time acquires a ritual significance and becomes a form of *sacrum*; a disturbance of its order could not go unnoticed in a ritual text such as *CQ*.

The officers of ritual—*shi* 史—in sinological literature, customarily denominated “historiographers”, who were the actual authors of both the *CQ* and the *ZZ*, paid a lot of attention not only to *how* things happened, but, more importantly, *why* and *when*, and they regarded these two aspects as tightly interconnected.

The accounts that comprise the Zuo Tradition were originally composed by multiple authors as separate texts of their own, independently from the *CQ*. Only later were they rearranged and put together into one “book”, which was further tailored in order to fit the *Annals* and serve as a commentary on them. This can be seen from the structure of the received text.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> One good example is the passage in Xiang XIII, where the timely walling of Fang is deemed to be in accordance with the rules of the ritual *li* 禮.

<sup>70</sup> The crucial role of the ruler in the ceremonies and practices involved in interpreting celestial signs and fixing the calendar can be seen in Xi V.

<sup>71</sup> Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990).

<sup>72</sup> The narrative in Huan V explains that if there is an error in the sequence of seasonal sacrifices, *i.e.* if the ceremony takes place out of the right season, it must be recorded in the *Annals* “過則書”; Yang *op. cit.*, 107; otherwise, sacrificial ceremonies were not recorded; Karapetiantz, *op. cit.*, 128.

<sup>73</sup> Zuo Qiuming's authorship and the assumption that the *ZZ* was written as a commentary to the *CQ* were first proposed by Sima Qian (Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959).) and later supported by Du Yu; Yang Bojun questions the historicity Zuo Qiuming and dismisses the traditional theory of one author altogether; he argues that the actual “author” was a person who collected and edited writings composed by different people at different times, hence the homogeneous style; Yang, *op. cit.*, 33-34. *Han shu* (HS) 漢書 has an account of Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE – AD 23), who discovered ancient versions of both *CQ* and *ZZ* in secret imperial archives, and arranged them together (Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1967. The New Text school in Han rejected the idea of the *ZZ* being a *CQ* commentary pointing at the discrepancies between the two texts. Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776-1829) believed that the *ZZ* was Liu Xiang's forgery based on the *Guoyu* 國語 tailored to fit *CQ*; this idea was supported by Otto Franke in his *Studien zur Geschichte des konfuzianischen Dogmas und der chinesischen Staatsreligion* (Hamburg: L. Friedrichsen, 1920), 60f.

Henri Maspero argues that the received ZZ text was made up of two different works: an actual commentary on the Annals, mainly concerned with ritual and ethics—such as the historiographical references *shu* and *bu shu* I discussed above—and a historical narrative that was written independently from CQ and related to another contemporary collection of historical narratives, also attributed to Zuo Qiuming—*Guoyu* 國語; similarly to the latter, the ZZ narrative is also focused on the state of Jin 晉 instead of Lu, which further supports Maspero’s thesis.<sup>74</sup>

The most notable difference between CQ and ZZ is that the former presents the events without description; this is because, unlike the ZZ, CQ was originally a ritual text. Li Ling classifies the historiographical works in the Warring States period (453-221 BCE) into two large groups: the “genealogies” or “historical records”—*pudie* 譜牒/*shiji* 史記—and “narratives”—*shiyu* 事語. In his view, the latter—among them the ZZ—originate from oral tradition. They narrate the past events in retrospect using literary language, but retain their colloquial style and story-telling structure. Li Ling argues that the authors made a conscious effort to make the narratives look colloquial, which resulted in creating “literary history books”—“為文學創造的史書”. They emerged independently from the chronicles, but may have been later “combined” with texts like CQ—belonging to the “historical records” category—in order to serve as commentaries on them.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, as we see the text nowadays, CQ presents the events as they occur—in a linear chronological sequence, and the “commentary”—the ZZ—explains them in retrospect, not merely narrating what exactly happened, but often providing the whole background of an event, reaching far into the past, as well as anticipating or suggesting what is going to happen in the future.

The CQ record of the capture of the *lin* is the first of 17 entries made in the Annals on Duke Ai’s 14<sup>th</sup> year (481 BCE). The records go on for only two more years, till the death of Confucius in summer of Ai 16<sup>th</sup> (479 BCE)—the last event recorded in CQ. Later commentators interpreted the fact that the Sage’s death brings the Annals to an abrupt end as an indication that Confucius is indeed the author of CQ—the records expire along with him. However, both official commentaries on the CQ—the *Gongyang* (GY) and the *Guliang* (GL) traditions—end abruptly with the capturing of the unicorn, thus emphasizing the importance of that particular event.

Except for its placement in the CQ, the capturing of the *lin* is just one of many recorded events, and it does not stand out among them in any way. However, considering the ritual character of the Annals—as a register of messages for the ancestors transmitted during sacrificial ceremonies in the temple—the entries are never random or accidental, and the mere fact that the event is included in it is significant; moreover, this is the singular mention of *lin* in the entire Annals. As I demonstrated in the discussion of the historiographical practice in CQ, the event

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<sup>74</sup> Henri Maspero, “La composition et la date du Tso-chuan.” *Mélanges chinois et bouddiques* I (1931-32): 137-215.

<sup>75</sup> Li Ling distinguishes four categories of historiographical materials: (1) genealogies—譜牒類; (2) annals—記年類; (3) archival documents—檔案類; and (4) stories—故事類; he argues that (1) and (2) are related and can be denominated as 史記—“historical records”; similarly, (3) and (4) fall into the 事語—“narratives”—category. Li Ling’s theory regarding the relationship between CQ and the ZZ is similar to Yang Bojun’s; he too believes that the ZZ is a collection of old stories written independently by many authors and tailored to fit the Annals; he agrees with Ban Gu that Confucius compiled CQ, and Zuo Qiuming edited the commentary based on it. Li Ling 李零, *Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu* 簡帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Shenghuo · Dushu · Xinzhi San Lian Shudian, 2004) 260-279.

may have been recorded because it was considered anomalous, in which case it certainly involved the issue of timeliness.

The *ZZ* account of this occasion is very brief compared to *GY* and *GL* traditions, as well as to regular *ZZ* entries—it tersely narrates what happened without providing any background information, interpretation, or commentary; it does, however, involve Confucius, which is an extraordinary circumstance. The Sage’s mere assertion that the captured and injured animal is a *lin* is presented as being, in itself, meaningful enough, as if it did not require further explanation. However, the lack of elaboration in the *ZZ* is not a sign of slight and neglect. “*Lin*”—Unicorn—is not just a word, but also a powerful symbol. The hunters did not simply mistake one animal for another, but instead, due to their ignorance, they abused, and, effectively, profaned and desecralized a unicorn—the mythical portent of the returning Golden Age. Thus, the message of the text is quite clear: when the myth finally comes true—when the fantastical and supernatural turns into a palpable, common day reality—it is misinterpreted, mishandled, abused, and altogether wasted. As a matter of fact, it almost goes unnoticed.

Without Confucius, we would not know of the *lin*’s appearance. What kind of “recognition” does a *lin* require and how does one tell it apart from a non-*lin*? How does Confucius recognize it and why is it necessary that he point it out? Is a *lin* not a *lin* if it remains unidentified? The unicorn would not be known without the Sage—it cannot reveal itself. On the other hand, Confucius would not be able to identify it if it were not a unicorn in the first place, thus being a thing self-evident and obvious; moreover, he would not recognize it if he himself were not a sage—a *lin* is a *lin*, and those who know it will always be able to recognize one. The same principle applies to the sage: Confucius discloses the identity of the unicorn, but at the same time the *lin* also confirms that of the Sage. In other words, the *lin* is not just a passive object of recognition, but also an effective agent. Thus, the *ZZ* passage reveals not only that a unicorn came, but also that Confucius identified it; moreover, it is the Sage who points out that it is important to ask: Why did it come?

The *ZZ* account does not contain more information, but its laconic language and the self-sufficient way in which the event is presented open doors to endless interpretation. According to *GY* and *GL*, the capture of the unicorn is the last entry in the *CQ*, after which the Annals are suddenly discontinued; both traditions provide longer accounts on the background of the event and, more importantly, put stress on Confucius’s eminent role therein. Here, the Sage is not only depicted as identifying the unknown animal, but also lamenting its fate and contemplating the meaning of its coming. The *GY* reports that, upon apprehending the *lin*, Confucius wept and proclaimed that its coming signified the end of his Way: “吾道窮矣”. The “Way”—*dao* 道—is better understood here as *raison d’être*: Confucius realized that he fulfilled his role as a Sage and that, at this point in time, he could do no more—no other unicorn was coming. The Han (AD 20-220) compilation *School Sayings of Confucius* 孔子家語 elaborates that the Master deemed the coming of the *lin* “untimely”—*bu shi* 不時—due to the absence of an “illuminating king”—*ming wang* 明王—a “true” ruler possessing the power of discernment.<sup>76</sup> In the *GY*, too, he exclaims: “For whom has it come?” “孰為來哉”. As the text previously explains: “*lin* is a benevolent animal” “麟仁獸也”, who comes only when there is a “true king” — 有王者則至—“a king who acts as a king.”

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<sup>76</sup> Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5, *op. cit.*, 834.

The coming of the Sage, just the same as the unicorn, is untimely. There is no ruler around who would be able to truly appreciate Confucius and acknowledge his teaching. The *lin* and its fate make Confucius understand his own position: he is aware of the fact that his time has not yet come, and that only in the future may he be recognized. At the same time, the Sage knows that his task has been fulfilled. His *dao* 道 has reached a critical point—it has been manifested to the world. Confucius realizes his misplacement in time, which makes him understand that this is the crucial moment for him, the very point in time that defines, constitutes, and confirms his *raison d'être*. Therefore, the timing is both unsuitable and suitable: the Master does not lament his Way being lost, for it has actually been found: in the future. The meaning of the Sage—his teaching, and, indeed, Confucius himself—would not be what it is without its temporal aspect, signified and symbolized by the untimely coming of the unicorn.

Wai-yee Li correctly observes that in the *ZZ* there is no “assertion of a necessary relationship between the capture of the *lin* and the creation of *CQ*”<sup>77</sup>. *GY* and *GL* traditions, however, do make this link, thus interpreting the episode as a turning point in the historiographical tradition. According to the former, Confucius “constructs the meaning of the *CQ* in anticipation of later sages. Doing the work of a superior man, he also delights in this.” “制春秋之義，以俟後聖，以君子之為，亦有樂乎此也”。The Sage finds pleasure and hope in his work, trusting that it will be appreciated in the future; thus, his activity is oriented towards the generations that will come later, but his focus is on here and now—to do what a sage needs to do.<sup>78</sup>

When the Sage steps in, it is too late. It is important who and when identifies the *lin*, and Confucius is the one who interprets the situation correctly: he recognizes the unicorn and the untimeliness of its coming. He finds the proper terms to describe what happens and is aware that even as he does so, the sacred moment of epiphany had already passed. There is a paradox: the unicorn comes, and there is a sage to recognize and welcome it, but instead things go astray; the *lin* is mistreated and killed; the Sage, on the other hand, recognizes the *lin* when it is too late to properly receive and save it. Thus, the potential of both the portent carried by the unicorn and the Sage’s role in recognizing it seem to have come to naught. However, the coming of the unicorn, albeit untimely and tragic, reveals Confucius as the Sage and legitimizes his Way. Future generations will know him through the mere fact of identifying the *lin*—just as he knew the unicorn. Our knowledge that the *lin* came is due to the sage; we realize Confucius is a sage, because he is the only one who is capable of recognizing the *lin*; thus, the two complement, reveal, and reaffirm each other.

*CQ* serves as a testimony—a tool by means of which Confucius sends the message into the future. According to the *GL* and *GY* traditions, Confucius is inspired by this event to assume the role of historiographer—he resolves to scan the past in order to find out and pass on the events that led to the untimely coming of the *lin*. They present Confucius as the author of *CQ*, motivated by the desire to illuminate and elevate the illustrious, and expose and condemn the unjust. In this way, these traditions identify Confucius with the *shi* 史—the historiographers, diviners, and officers of ritual who analyzed and recorded events, explained anomalies, and

<sup>77</sup> Li Wai-yee, *op. cit.*, 416.

<sup>78</sup> Later commentators read this as a sign that Confucius foresaw the coming of the Han. Du Yu follows this school of thought and believes that Zhongni “used the *Chunqiu* of Lu to establish the teachings of moral-political revival; he stopped writing with the line on the capture of the *lin* because, having been moved to write because of it, he thus used it as an ending.” 故因魯春秋而修中興之教，絕筆於獲麟之一句，所感而作，固所以為終也。Ruan Yuan 阮元, *Shisanjing zhu shu* (SSJZS) 十三经注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 6, 59.11a.

communicated with the ancestors, thereby transcending the limits of time and space. As Wai-yee Li concludes in her discussion of the Sage's encounter with the unicorn, "the ability to name the unknown, and the mastery of esoteric knowledge in general, constitute one of Confucius' images in Warring States texts"<sup>79</sup>.

In this chapter, I am going to demonstrate how these ideas about the conception and function of history writing—Confucius becoming the first writer of history in response to the appearance of the *lin*—are reflected in the narrative practice of the *ZZ*. In order to achieve this, I will examine the interplay that takes place in the text of the *ZZ* among the roles of the Narrator (who, as the story-teller, is the voice of the author(s) of the text); the Prognosticators, who are the mouthpieces of the Narrator within the story and who provide a "reverse perspective" by interpreting and commenting on the events by foretelling their outcomes; and the Actors, the "historical figures" whose life stories are being presented in narrative by both the Narrator and the Prognosticators. By analyzing how the text establishes a relationship between omen reading (omenology) and history writing, I will show that the perspectives of the omen reader—the Prognosticator looking towards the future, and that of the writer of history—the Narrator looking towards the past, overlap with one another and are intrinsically interwoven to form the narrative.

The purpose of this narrative is to foreground the sagely quality of *ming* 明. Both the Narrator and the Prognosticators possess this quality: they know the past and are able to foresee the future; most importantly, though, they understand "timeliness"—the meaning of the principles of *shi* 時 and *bu shi* 不時. They are "illuminated" and they "illuminate": the Prognosticators advise the Actors, and the Narrator presents history to the reader—just like Confucius, who explained the appearance *lin*. The Narrator and his avatars, the Prognosticators, pass their moral and political judgments on the Actors by indicating whether they are "illuminated" or not. An Actor who possesses the quality *ming* 明 is like a sage and "illuminates" others; he serves as a model to follow.

The three accounts (*GY*, *GL*, *ZZ*) of the capture of the *lin* all convey a strong sense of temporal displacement—things going amiss, a lost chance, events taking place in an unsuitable time and place. Confucius recognizes and identifies the *lin* as a powerful portent, and he sees the untimely coming of the mythical animal and its unfortunate fate as being emblematic of the present state of the society. In my reading of the tradition, the Sage turns toward the past in order to interpret the omen, and *CQ* is the oracle that results. Confucius compiles the *Annals* as his commentary on the event—he reads the omen and then, in response to it, writes history. He is, at the same time, both the reader of the future—the prognosticator who understands the portent—and the writer of the past—the narrator who explains it.

In comparison, the *ZZ* Narrator is situated in the future. He already knows the story. The Prognosticators are in the textual "here and now", and they tell the story ahead of time by predicting the outcomes of the events. The Actors are caught in between these two perspectives, for their history is narrated as a prognosticated future. Thus, I argue that the perspective of Confucius, who scans the past upon beholding the future—as illustrated in the unicorn accounts—combines those of the Narrator and the Prognosticators. Furthermore, the latter are the avatars of the former planted in the texts, making them, in effect, two different figures sharing one voice. I demonstrate that this "split perspective" results in the production of a narrative in which the future is written in the past, and the past is written in the future. Through this narrative, the past meets the future and merges into one timeless "here and now". This narrative

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<sup>79</sup> Li, Wai-yee, *op. cit.*, 416.

structure reveals the moral and political motives lying behind writing of history. The Narrator-historiographer assumes the position of a sage, who promotes certain historical figures as moral and political models to be followed. “History” is actually about the present and the future: there is a lesson to be learned from the past. The *ZZ* is a manual of socio-political know-how.

In order to demonstrate the working and significance of this narrative structure, I focus on instances where prediction and prognostication play a crucial role in portraying individual characters: when they are used to help to explain and justify why some of them become prominent and exemplary, while others are doomed. I will show that by emphasizing, illuminating, and interpreting certain facts in their biographies as predictions of their future doom or triumph, the authors of the text were positing them as living emblems, illustrating the nature and workings of both time and history. Prediction is the primary mode of moral evaluation.

The temporal structure of these episodes is not just an abstract organizational principle, but the very canvas on which the story is written; it carries with it a particular moral system—“timely” and “untimely” action correspond with morally charged concepts of “right” and “wrong”. In other words, a person can only be considered “virtuous” if his actions are executed at the right time. Therefore, and this is key, the ability to see if the time is right—the quality of “sagely illumination” *ming* 明—is the most important of all qualities. An “untimely” action, no matter how well intentioned, cannot be successful; a truly virtuous person understands that, and therefore waits for the suitable moment to act. In effect, then, “time” or “timeliness”—*shi* 時—emerges as the prime agent that determines the course of history. It imposes limits on the Actors, who need to adjust their actions accordingly. Consequently, *shi* 時 influences a person’s fate; but, from the all-important perspective of History, what matters is the moral choice and wisdom of the Actors as they try to “see” whether they should act or not. A *ming* 明 person understands the workings of time and knows that acting against it is both futile and immoral. The Actor’s fate depends entirely on the moral choices he makes; these have to be *ming* 明—be based on the recognition of the right timing. It is by being *ming* 明 or not that the Actor positions himself in history.

The study of individual biographies from this perspective reveals how the *ZZ* establishes the relationship between people and time. An untimely—*bu shi* 不時—and thus improper action disturbs the course of Nature, and leads to complications and anomalies. As I pointed out previously, humans are tied to Nature in that all their activities are regulated by the calendar, whose operation is ritualistic. It is because of this that all transgressions result in grave consequences. In other words, an inappropriate action will be avenged not necessarily by those who were directly affected by it, but by the larger force lying behind the main principle—Time. The narrative is not a warning, but it reflects this principle, and it does serve as moral guidance. According to the tradition, Confucius compiled the *Annals* in order to “condemn the wicked and praise the virtuous”; therefore, he exposed their bare acts, without commentary, in a written historical record. The commentators viewed *CQ* as history speaking for itself. In the *ZZ*, through the portraits of the Actors, the Narrator conveys the message that their “position in history”—the “history’s” judgment—is not accidental. This is especially visible in cases of injustice, when virtue seems to go unrewarded and wickedness unpunished. It is then that the Narrator’s questioning comes into play and when he discloses the moral law of rewards and punishments based on the understanding of—and obeisance to—timeliness.

In his storytelling, the Narrator is restricted to a degree by the chronological course of real events and by the “historical facts” or what “really happened”; however, it becomes clear

that his real job is not merely to report what occurred in the past, which he cannot change, but to explain its apparent paradoxes—situations when the law of punishments and rewards does not seem to have been working. To accomplish this, he applies three narrative devices: prognostication; paradox; and the supernatural.

Prognostication exposes the working of the Actors' fate; by planting Prognosticators in the plot, the Narrator breaks the boundaries and limitations of chronological time, and realizes the efficacy of *ming* 明. Justice will be served in the due time. Paradox draws the readers' attention to the existence of a moral problem or conflict; then, by showing how the paradox unfurls and is resolved over time, the narrative assures the reader that the law of justice never fails. The supernatural foregrounds the punitive aspect of "sagely illumination" and signals its divine origins. The wronged Actors assume the role of "illuminated ghosts", *ming gui* 明鬼, in order to execute the justice; in effect, their own *ming* 明 is revealed.

The Zuo Tradition does not explicitly pronounce the law by which punishments and rewards are based on timeliness; but it can be considered an illustration and even a "product" of it. The concept of *ming* 明—"sagely illumination"—is the key to implementing this law and, at the same time, exposing it. In *ming* 明 inheres the ability to mete out punishments and rewards in a just manner, and its standard derives from an accurate understanding of "timeliness" *shi* 時. Illumination is, at the same time, both the servant of justice and the means by which justice is served. Its exercise implies discerning the distinction between right and wrong, and knowing the time when justice is to be executed. The Narrator metes out punishments and rewards by evaluating the Actors in retrospect and assigning them a place in history—he is able to correctly read the past; the Prognosticators do the same by always pronouncing the right judgment and predicting the fates of the Actors—they are able to see the future; the Actors practice their *ming* 明—or the lack thereof—in the narrative's "here and now" by making moral choices between right and wrong; the Hero is a *ming* 明 Actor, and a *ming jun* 明君—illuminated ruler—is the ruler who quite literally punishes the wicked, rewards the virtuous, and whose government depends on good advice.

In illustration of these ideas, I offer as an example the story of Duke Wen of Jin. I will argue that the ZZ Narrator—just like Confucius-the-historiographer of the *lin* episode—understands his task of studying and representing the past to be that of looking for manifestations of *ming* 明, and that the criterion that he applies to this search is timeliness—*shi* 時. I will demonstrate that these two concepts undergird the logic of the narrative.

The Narrator in the Duke Wen Story acts as a sage, who, using his own *ming* 明, evaluates the characters—Actors—of his narrative and explains their fates. As we recall, what distinguishes the sage is the ability to discern things; the role of the sage is to make people notice things—to illuminate, to explain, to rectify, and thus to demystify what appears secret, strange, supernatural, and potentially uncertain or dangerous. The sage not only reads the portents, but he *sees* them; that is, he notices them when they occur. The Prognosticators—the Narrator's avatars—see the portents and pronounce them; in the process, they reveal whether or not the Actors have *ming* 明. Duke Wen emerges as the Hero in the story; he emerges as the *ming jun* 明君—he who knows when and how to act.<sup>80</sup> In the narrative, he is compared to the sage kings of antiquity—*sheng wang* 聖王—who were perfect rulers and men of virtue, who were able to

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<sup>80</sup> I use the term "Hero" in reference to Duke Wen to indicate that he shares the same traits with other figures belonging to the "hero tradition" that I am going to discuss elsewhere.

transform and reform the state and the people, and who were humble, sincere, and impartial. His life story also shares similarities with other Chinese hero mythologies, such as that of Qu Yuan, who was characterized by his having wandered in exile and been seized by a moment of doubt and hesitation. Heroes in the Chinese tradition typically have a strong sense of historical moment and their own position in history. They understand the law of timeliness and are able to catch the moment, to analyze the current situation and to foresee the course of events. Thus, they are able to transcend the boundaries of the past, present, and future.<sup>81</sup>

The Narrator's storytelling is as much a performance as a recounting. It celebrates the greatness of the Hero, immortalizing him so that he is able to be present among the living even after his death. In addition, the Narrator successfully mythifies the account. He presents supernatural occurrences as historical events, and at the same time plants supernatural elements into the history. The aim is to prove, legitimize, endorse, and celebrate Duke Wen as a *ming jun* 明君, putting him in line with the sage kings of antiquity, the archetypal Heroes and revered ancestors.

The *ZZ* is a lesson about *ming* 明. In my study, I hope to reveal the extent to which the Zuo Tradition, deemed by scholars to constitute the first written history in China, rather than explaining the past “wie es eigentlich gewesen”, serves as a device for foretelling the future. The entries comprising the *CQ* annals consist of reports intended as missives to the ancestors. According to the tradition, Confucius endowed the records with moral value and publicized them as an example for future generations; he used the past for the purpose of predicting the future. The Narrator in the *ZZ*, by attempting to explain things in retrospect, is traveling in time in the same way as Confucius. In effect, the Narrator not only presents the past, but also gives the Reader the key to understanding the present moment and to knowing the future.

According to the myth, the arrival of the unicorn is the beacon of the returning Golden Age: there is a perfect ruler *ming jun* 明君, whose actions are always timely; justice is served, and there are no anomalies; past, present, and future become one.<sup>82</sup> The actual arrival of the *lin*, however—as recorded in the annals and passed down in the tradition—was untimely; the divine emissary was abused and the chance for the Golden Age went amiss. What does this event portend and how is it resolved?

## 1. The Story—What Exactly Happened?

### a. Life of Duke Wen of Jin (666-628 B.C.E.)

His name was Chong'er 重耳, and he was the son of Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公 and the first of his Rong wives, Hu Ji 狐姬. Chong'er had an elder brother, Shensheng 申生, who was born of the incestuous relationship between Duke Xian and his late father's concubine, Qi Jiang 齊姜. Shensheng was acknowledged as the heir apparent. Chong'er also had a younger brother, Yiwu 夷吾, who his father had with his second Rong wife. Thus, Chong'er was second in line to the Jin throne.

Later on, Duke Xian also married two daughters of the Li Rong tribe; one of them was called Li Ji 麗姬, and she had a son, Xiqi 奚齊. Li Ji became the duke's favorite, and she wanted

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<sup>81</sup> Other examples: Yu the Great, Duke of Zhou, Wu Zixu.

<sup>82</sup> Wai-ye Li discusses thoroughly the significance of the *lin* in the “Afterthoughts” to her *Readability of the Past*, *op. cit.*, 411-421.

to establish her own son as a successor to the throne; for this, she needed to oust the legitimate heir Shensheng and to eliminate his two brothers. She bribed two influential Jin officers to convince the duke to send Chong'er and Yiwu away from the capital; the former was put in charge of Pu 蒲 and the latter of Erqu 二屈, both cities on the border with the Di 狄 tribes. (Zhuang XXVIII – Min I)

She also managed to frame Shensheng for attempting to poison Duke Xian. As a result, he had to flee from the capital. Instead of trying to explain the matter to the duke or going into exile, Shensheng decided to commit suicide. This was an act of filial piety, because he declared that he sacrificed his life in order not to upset his elderly father by disclosing to him the truth about his beloved concubine. (Min I - Xi IV)

Li Ji proceeded to slander Chong'er and Yiwu by accusing them of collaborating with Shensheng. As a result, Duke Xian, convinced that his sons had been plotting together, sent the army against Pu. Chong'er, however, refused to fight against his father, and instead he fled to the Di. (Xi IV - Xi V)

After the death of Duke Xian, Li Ke 里克, Pi Zheng 丕鄭, and other followers of the three sons raised an insurrection; they killed the imposed heir apparent Xiqi—Li Ji's son—and attempted to install Chong'er as Duke Wen. However, by offering heavy bribes to Qin 秦 and gaining its support, Yiwu also managed to rise to power in Jin. Chong'er's followers tried to intrigue against him, but they failed, and in the end Yiwu was installed as Duke Hui 晉惠公. (Xi V - Xi IX)

Chong'er remained in exile for 19 years. In the meantime, his brother Yiwu became an exemplarily bad ruler in Jin. He wronged Qin, provoked a war with it, was defeated three times in a row, and was taken hostage by the Qin army during the catastrophic battle of Han. After many dramatic events, he was reestablished in Jin as his relations with Qin improved. (Xi IX - Xi XV)

After Duke Hui's death, his son Yu took over as Duke Huai 晉懷公; in order to prevent Chong'er from returning to power, the new duke passed new laws forbidding anyone to follow the latter; he also offered an amnesty period to all of Chong'er's followers should they decide to return. (Xi XV - Xi XXIII)

Chong'er spent 12 years of his exile among the Di and then passed through 7 states before finally returning to Jin. He left behind the wife that he had among the Di. He passed through Wei 衛, where he was not properly received. In Qi 齊, he took another wife and fell in love with her, so much so that he refused to move on and his followers needed to trick him into leaving. Further on, he passed through Cao 曹, Zheng 鄭, and Chu 楚, and in the last state he had an agreement with the rival viscount. Finally, he got to Qin, where he gained support, enabling him to regain power in Jin. (Xi XXIII)

Qin restored Chong'er in Jin as Duke Wen 晉文公, and with its help, he re-entered the state, defeated the Jin troops, and put to death Duke Huai. The Jin ministers, afraid of the new ruler's vengeance, tried to assassinate him, but the chief of the eunuchs switched his allegiance and warned the duke. Chong'er's Di wife arrived in Jin with their two sons.

Immediately after regaining power in Jin, Duke Wen began his reign by punishing all traitors and rewarding his loyal supporters and followers. He appointed only faithful and virtuous men as ministers. (Xi XXIII - Xi XXIV) His greatest accomplishment when in power was rescuing the exiled King and restoring him back in the Zhou 周 capital.

Duke Wen managed that single-handedly, without Qin's support, gaining merit and recognition. He obtained new territories for Jin, but not through force or conquest. (Xi XXIV - Xi XXV)

Duke Wen exercised power by appointing virtuous men, defending weaker states—he fought against Chu on behalf of Song 宋—and teaching and transforming the people by exposing them to his example. (Xi XXV - Xi XXVII)

He fought and won a battle with Chu, after which the King officially declared him the hegemon of the states—*ba* 霸. (Xi XXVII - Xi XXVIII)

Duke Wen died after ruling Jin for 9 years. During the funeral, there came out of his coffin a voice like that of an angry bull. (Xi XXXII)

He went down in history as a great hero, one of the five hegemons, *ba* 霸, and a virtuous and illuminated ruler—*ming jun* 明君—compared to the sage kings of antiquity.

## b. The Narrative and the Supra-Narrative—The Duke Wen Story

### 1. The Story from the Point of View of the Reader

The “Duke Wen Story” is the narrative presenting the affairs in Jin that led to the rise of Chong'er as Duke Wen of Jin. It consists of the accounts concerning the state of Jin that are scattered throughout the ZZ narrative over the period of time between Zhuang XXVIII and Xi XXXIII. The entire history of Jin that emerges from these accounts is in fact centered on one man—Chong'er. It can be divided into three parts:

- (1) The circumstances of Chong'er's expulsion from Jin and the reasons of the chaos that follows it;
- (2) Chong'er's exile: He is not in Jin, and the narrative does not mention him; affairs in Jin during his absence;
- (3) Chong'er's triumphant comeback, his installment as Duke Wen, and the aftermath; the narrative here falls into two complimentary and interconnected parts: (a) the chronological and compact account of his 19-year-long odyssey leading up to his return to Jin; and (b) his return to Jin, his government of the state and his attaining of the hegemony over the states.

Above are the chronological stages of the development of the plot. At the same time, the story also contains three sub-stories:

- (A) The story of Shensheng;
- (B) The history of Jin's war with Qin under the rule of Yiwu—Duke Huai;
- (C) The account of Chong'er's odyssey before returning to the throne in Jin

These three narratives constitute separate story lines, which, themselves, can be subdivided into individual chronological stages, just the same as the main narrative that contains them. The three stories follow their own plots, but nonetheless fit into the “large” story of Duke Wen.

The Story has three main characters—Actors—the three sons of Duke Xian of Jin:

1. Chong'er, who is the “Hero” of the story; the narrative is about his way to hegemony;
2. Shensheng, who is the martyr; he is the legitimate heir apparent in Jin, and it is through his sacrifice that the “Hero” may succeed to the throne; he not only steps out of his way, but also suffers an injustice for his sake;

3. Yiwu, who is the villain; he is an imposter that obstructs the way of the Hero<sup>83</sup>

## 2. The Temporal Structure of the Story

The Duke Wen Story unfolds on two levels—the narrative has two different modes of temporal progression, each corresponding to a different point of view:

1. The chronological level—the Narrative, where the events are unfolding progressively towards the future
2. The historical level—the Supra-Narrative, where the story is completed and perceived in retrospect as history

An anonymous Narrator, who already knows the story, tells it in retrospect, purportedly not changing any facts. He constructs the Narrative, where he presents the events in a linear and chronological way: Chong'er's birth, exile, return, success, and death. However, the Narrator is looking at the past from a perspective from which the story is already over and the outcomes have been revealed. From this perspective, Chong'er has already been established as a historical figure—Duke Wen—with the reputation of a Hero and a sage ruler. The Narrator's job is to present how and when this happened. What made Chong'er a great hero? How was he able to return after 19 years in exile and win hegemony over the states? Most importantly, from a politico-ethical standpoint, why was it legitimate for him to attain the position of duke in Jin, despite not being the rightful heir and even having killed Duke Huai, the legitimate successor of Duke Hui?

By way of elucidating such problems, the Narrator does not simply answer these questions; rather, he presents the events as an objective observer and never appears in the text “in person”. The voice telling the story is always anonymous, and it does not overtly interpret or comment on the events. Instead, that is the task of the Prognosticators speaking from inside the Narrative—usually ministers or officers at court—who comment upon current events, pass their judgments, and foretell the outcomes. By predicting the future, they extrapolate the current, apparently spontaneous events from their chronological unfolding into the patterned, ethically legible Supra-Narrative. Likewise, the sub-stories that ostensibly focus on “individual” Actors eventually come together to demonstrate how their fates are interrelated and how they constitute the main story presenting the great Hero. Thus, when narrating the stories of Shensheng and Yiwu, the Narrator is at the same time constructing a narrative on another level—the Duke Wen Story, which, from his perspective, pre-exists and overshadows the sub-stories as the Supra-Narrative.

The Supra-Narrative provides the final answers to the questions that arise from reading the Narrative. From the supra-narrative perspective, some situations in the Narrative seem paradoxical: (1) Shensheng—a virtuous man—suffers an injustice; (2) Yiwu remains ruler despite being an evil person; (3) Chong'er takes a long time to return and bring back the order, and despite being absent for nineteen years, he still manages to return and become a hegemon.

These paradoxes draw the attention of the Narrator and he sets out to explain them. For him, “what exactly happened” means: What caused the events to happen the way they did? Why things had to happen in a certain way? The supra-narrative is the perspective from which all the paradoxes are understandable.

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<sup>83</sup> Such hero-martyr-villain triads are quite typical for ZZ narratives. The figure of the martyr is a necessary component in each story.

## 2. The Actors—The Mechanism of Timeliness

### a. The Prognostications: Fate and Paradox

#### i. Sub-story (A) – Shensheng and Temporal Displacement

The first of the sub-stories (A) presents the apparently paradoxical fall of Shensheng, Chong'er's elder brother and Duke Xian's heir apparent in Jin. He is an exemplarily virtuous man, but despite that does not succeed to the throne. From the very outset, the Prognosticators constantly alert the reader that the heir apparent will not become a ruler. They also indicate that this turn of events is just and beyond his control. On the Narrative level, then, Shensheng's fate is not fair; in the Supra-Narrative, though, it is justified and inevitable: the Prognosticators reconcile the paradoxes of the unfolding Narrative with the unimpeachable justice asserted by the Supra-Narrative.

When Duke Xian established his rule in Jin, he formed two armies, in defiance of the King's orders.<sup>84</sup> He himself took command of the first army and used it to launch a military expedition against three smaller states, and he made his eldest son and heir, Shensheng, the commander of the second one. The expedition was a success, and Shensheng with his army extinguished one of the three states.<sup>85</sup> As a reward, the Duke sent him to preside over the capital city Quwo 曲沃.

These decisions are strongly criticized by the minister, Shi Wei 士韋. Curiously, though, rather than Duke Xian, who was the actual decision-maker, he points at Shensheng as the one who will bear the consequences: “*The eldest son will not be installed [on the throne]*”—“大子不得立矣” (Min I, 6) Shi Wei then predicts that Shensheng will be deposed: “*He was assigned the capital [Quwo], and given the rank of the chief minister [as the commander of the second army]. Having prematurely been assigned the highest [rank], how can he then be installed [as Duke]?*”—“分之都城，而位以卿，先為之極，又焉得立” (Min I, 6)<sup>86</sup> The minister explains that Duke Xian placed his son in charge of duties normally beyond the reach of one who is only, as yet, heir apparent. Because Shensheng had thus already occupied the highest positions in the state, his succession to the throne is blocked. By using the adverb “prematurely”—*xian* 先—Shi Wei does not mean that Shensheng was appointed too early in chronological time, but not in the right order. Duke Xian's decisions violated the rules of accession based on a proper sequence and hierarchy—the heir should wait for his time to take the control of the state.

In Min II (662 BCE), the prediction that Shensheng will not succeed to the throne is further spelled out. His father orders him to wage war against the hostile Gaoluo 皋落 tribe. One Li Ke 里克—a court minister—remonstrates with Duke Xian that making the heir apparent an army commander is a stark violation of ancient rules. The officer lists the duties of the eldest

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<sup>84</sup> When giving investiture to the ruler of Jin, the King allowed him to maintain one army only (Zhuang XVI, 5); Yang, *op. cit.*, 203.

<sup>85</sup> Shensheng extinguished Huo 霍; the two other states—Geng 耿 and Wei 魏—were extinguished by the army of Duke Xian. Yang, *op. cit.*, 258.

<sup>86</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 258.

son, or *taizi* 太子, and demonstrates that they are strictly ritual and representational<sup>87</sup>; making Shengsheng an army commander extends his power beyond what is appropriate, which undermines his position as an heir:

夫帥師，專行謀，誓軍旅，君與國政之所圖也，非太子之事也。師在制命而已，稟命則不威，專命則不孝，故君之嗣適不可以帥師。君失其官，帥師不威，將焉用之？(Min II, 7)<sup>88</sup>

Leading the army, controlling its movements and strategy, and issuing commands to the troops are the tasks of the ruler and his chief minister, and not the business of the eldest son. Commanding [the army] is a matter of issuing orders; if [the heir] should receive orders [from someone else], it will injure his authority; but if he issues orders by himself, he will be unfilial. This is why the ruler's successor and heir cannot be in command of the army. The ruler will lose [the loyalty of] his officials, and the commander of the army will have no authority – how could one employ [the eldest son] [this way] him?

Li Ke understands that Duke Xian's actions amount to disowning and dooming his eldest son. The ruler *is* the commander in chief, and as such his responsibilities cannot be transferred to another. The heir apparent is only *due to be* a ruler *after* the present one is gone. Thus, Shengsheng is being unfilial by assuming the powers of his father and, effectively, acting as if Duke Xian were dead. More importantly, though, he effectively acts as a ruler without actually being one; he technically becomes what he is only supposed to become *in the future*, ahead of his due time. This offence does not fall into the same category as a mere violation of one ancient rule, or even as committing a crime by symbolically deposing one's father and taking over his position; this is an offence against one's own self, enacted by impeding one's own future. The offence is, in essence, committed against the overarching value of timeliness. It is, after all, timeliness that determines who Shengsheng is, as well as the moral value of his actions.

Before Shengsheng departs for the expedition, Duke Xian equips him with an extraordinary parti-colored robe and a golden semi-circle hanging at his girdle; Hu Tu 狐突—the third Adviser, after Shi Wei and Li Ke, to prognosticate Shengsheng's fate—interprets these as clear signs that the duke actually wants to doom his son. He explains that the marquis intends to destroy his son by manipulating time:

時，事之徵也；衣，身之章也；佩，衷之旗也。故敬其事，則命以始；服其身則衣之純；用其衷，則佩之度。今命以卒時，闕其事也；衣之尪服，遠其躬也；佩以金玦；棄其衷也。服以遠之，以時闕之；尪涼，冬殺，金寒，玦離，胡可恃也？雖欲勉之，狄可盡乎(Min II, 7)<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Bearing the vessels of millet for the great sacrifices, and for those at the altars of the land and the grain; inspecting the provisions cooked for the ruler every morning and evening; and guarding the capital when the ruler goes abroad (Min II, 7); Yang, *op. cit.*, 268.

<sup>88</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 268-269.

<sup>89</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 270-271.

The season is the emblem of an activity; the dress is the “stamp” of a person; the girdle is the manifestation of the heart. If [the Duke] had accorded due regard to the affair, he would have ordered it at the beginning of the year<sup>90</sup>; dressing the prince, he would have picked for him a robe of one color; and if he were sincere, he would have picked a proper degree for the girdle. Now, the orders come late in the year, which means that [the Duke] wants to impede the affair; having him dressed in a parti-colored robe shows that he wishes to remove and distance his son’s person from himself; having picked a golden semi-circle for the girdle indicates that he discards kindly feelings. He distances [his son] by means of the robe [in which he dresses him]; and he impedes his actions by means of the season [that he picks for the campaign]; the season shuts the prince up from success; the parti-colored [garment] cools; the winter kills; the metal chills; and the symbol—semi-circle—lacks; what is there to be trusted to and relied upon? Even if the prince tries do his best, can the Di be utterly destroyed?

The minister is convinced that Duke Xian intentionally appoints Shensheng to command the army, sends him out on an expedition in the wrong season, and endows him with suspicious insignia, in order to doom him. In his interpretation, Hu Tu focuses on the symbolic and moral aspect of the situation; as he emphasizes, the time/season is what allows a certain kind of activity. Each season indicates what kinds of activities are timely, and therefore appropriate. There is also an underlying practical side: the season Duke Xian chose may be too cold for the expedition. The meaning of *shi* 時 is multivalent—it means “time” and “season”, but also “weather”. All of these categories are closely related with Nature, marking its course, and fall under one heading of “timeliness”. As another minister, Xian Danmu 先丹木, points out, the duke gave Shensheng orders that are impossible to follow: “[The duke] said: ‘Only after destroying the enemy completely may you return’; but can the enemy be completely destroyed?”—“曰：‘盡敵而反’；敵可盡乎？”(Min II, 7)<sup>91</sup> The expedition is unseasonable and the insignia Shensheng received are inappropriate. Xian Danmu anticipates that it will be impossible for the heir to successfully carry out such definitive orders. Even if Shensheng wins the battle, under no circumstances will he be unable to “completely” destroy the enemy; therefore, when he returns home, he will have effectively, if unwittingly, contravened the will of his father, giving his father reason to call him unfilial and consequently disown him. He cannot quit the expedition, nor can he successfully carry it out; therefore, as other ministers at court observe, the heir is put in a position where however he acts, he will end up either being unfilial or unfaithful<sup>92</sup>.

The Prognosticators reveal that Duke Xian dooms his son by displacing him in time. Hu Tu’s assessment that “the season is the icon of an activity” renders Shensheng “not valid”—he is “not allowed” in the season, and thus “unseasonable”. All his official appointments, as well as the battle to which he is about to lead the army, are untimely. As an heir apparent, as a man of virtue, and as a son, he is completely dislocated, finding himself at a wrong place and at a wrong time. Despite being a virtuous man and having done nothing wrong, Shensheng is prevented

<sup>90</sup> *Shi* 始 here indicates the first half of the Chinese year – spring/summer; Duke Xian is sending the expedition in winter (second half of the year—*zu* 卒), which is not the right season; Yang, *op. cit.*, 270.

<sup>91</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 271.

<sup>92</sup> The officer Yangshe 羊舌 says: “違命不孝，棄事不忠” “[If the heir] disobeys [his father’s] orders, he will be unfilial; if he abandons the affair, he will be unfaithful” ;(Min II, 7), Yang, *op. cit.*, 272.

from becoming the ruler of Jin. Thus, the prognostications confront the reader with a paradoxical situation—how do we explain this undeserved fate?

In the first prediction that Shensheng will not succeed to the throne, the officer Shi Wei makes it clear that the heir is merely an innocent scapegoat and directs the criticism at his father. The minister even offers a solution for Shensheng:

不如逃之，無使罪至。為吳大伯，不亦可乎？猶有令名，與其及也。且諺曰：『心苟無瑕，何恤乎無家？』天若祚天子，其無晉乎？(Min I, 6)<sup>93</sup>

He would do better to escape [to another state], and not let the charge of guilt catch up with him. Would it not be just right for him to be like Tai Bo of Wu?<sup>94</sup> He will still maintain a good name: —how much better than [to stay and] let calamity come on him! Moreover, as the proverb says, ‘If one’s heart has no flaw, what need he regret having no home?’ If Heaven [had meant] to confer dignity on the eldest prince, would there then have been no Jin for him?

Thus, Shensheng is not to be punished. A virtuous man who did no wrong, Shensheng has nothing to fear. However, he cannot escape being deposed: it is independent from Shensheng’s moral standing—whether he is good or bad, right or wrong—but instead it is entirely determined by timeliness. The moral censure, on the other hand, is not inevitable: Shensheng can save his good name and be free of the “charge of guilt”. Following orders will lead him into the temporal trap set up by his father, which will result in death, but he will not be the guilty one. Escaping the trap and saving his life, on the other hand, involves disobeying his father; consequently, he will be forced to bear the charge of guilt. He will be deposed either way, but he has the option of saving his life versus his name. Thus, the dilemma Shensheng is facing is of a moral nature, and he must decide which action is morally more desirable.

The ministers provide Shensheng with clear moral guidance.

Li Ke says: “*As a son, you should be anxious of being unfilial, rather than of not being installed; cultivate yourself instead of blaming others, and you will escape calamity.*” “子懼不孝，無懼弗得立，修己而不責人，則免於難” (Min II, 7)<sup>95</sup>

Yang She 羊舌 advises: “*Although you know his [your father’s] cold feelings, you must not choose evil [and disobey him]; better you should die for it.*” “雖知其寒，惡不可取，子其死之” (Min II, 7)<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Yang explains that the text is corrupt here and reads instead: “與其及也，不如逃之，無使罪至。為吳大伯，不亦可乎？猶有令名。”；及 refers to 罪; Yang, *op. cit.*, 259.

<sup>94</sup> In *Analects* VIII, 1, Confucius presents Tai Bo, the eldest son of King Dan of Zhou who renounced the throne thrice in favor of his youngest brother, as an example of moral virtue: 子曰：「泰伯，其可謂至德也已矣！三以天下讓，民無得而稱焉。」“*The Master said: ‘Of Tai Bo it may indeed be said that he attained to the very highest pitch of moral power. No less than three times he renounced the sovereignty of all things under Heaven, without the people getting a chance to praise him for it.’*” He fled and wandered around Wu and Yue, two states still considered “barbaric” in early Zhou times; Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* 论语译注, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, p. 78.

<sup>95</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 269.

<sup>96</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 272.

Lastly, in his final words of advice for Shensheng, Hu Tu admonishes the prince:

“今亂本成矣，立可必乎，孝而安民，子其圖之，與其危身以速罪也”  
(Min II, 7)<sup>97</sup>

The root of disorder has already been formed [in Jin], so can your succession to the throne be certain? Being filial and pacifying the people should be your plan and strategy; this will be better than putting your person in danger by accelerating the charge of guilt.

In Xi IV (656 BCE), we can see Shensheng's end. Li Ji slanders him of attempting to poison Duke Xian. The ministers urge the prince to explain the matter to the marquis, but he does not want to upset his father by disclosing to him the manipulations of his beloved concubine. He also refuses to flee to another state, because this would mean admitting to the crime and living in disgrace. In the end, Shensheng takes his own life; he dies as a martyr of virtue and filial piety.

As Shi Wei points out, Heaven is doing Shensheng a favor by providing an opportunity to prove his virtue and to find a more suitable place for himself. By putting Shensheng in line with Tai Bo—who was a paragon of moral virtue praised by Confucius in the *Analects*—Shi Wei expresses his admiration of the prince. The minister may deem the prince unfortunate and wronged, but certainly not guilty and doomed. There is a strong suggestion in Shi Wei's judgment that Shensheng belongs to a different time and place.

If Shensheng is Tai Bo, then control over his fate lies in making his own moral choice. He must understand that he is not the right person for the time and that the future does not belong to him. There is another Hero-ruler yet to come, and Shensheng needs to remove himself from his way, so that the rules of timeliness are observed and justice may be served. As Shi Wei points out, Shensheng would have been able to escape his punishment by death; however, he follows the advice of the Prognosticators, and understands that a sacrifice like that made by Tai Bo—which allows the “timely” ruler to come—is morally more desirable.

From the perspective of the Supra-Narrative Shensheng has to remove himself, because he needs to make room for Duke Wen; if Shensheng became ruler, Chong'er would never make it to the throne. The Narrator brings in the Supra-Narrative to justify the wrong Shensheng will suffer by presenting it as a sacrifice. The Narrator—through the Prognosticators—clearly puts the blame on Duke Xian, and indirectly on Li Ji, who actively proceed within the Narrative to oust the legitimate and innocent heir apparent. The general law of punishments and rewards seems to be neglected or abused here, since the injustice happens to a virtuous man; however, the logic and rationale that the Narrator fosters is timeliness, which is not within the capacity of the Actor to decide, but it is for him to know and to follow. In other words, Shensheng does not have the power to determine his time; instead, he is a misplaced virtuous man, and he cannot prevent his doom. Duke Xian, embodying the mechanism of timeliness, destroys him *by means* of time: he makes time work against Shensheng.

On the Narrative level—from the point of view of “what happened”—Shensheng is mistreated and wronged. But on the Supra-Narrative level, his ostensible “doom” emerges as a necessary sacrifice to the Hero—Duke Wen. Rather than becoming a refugee and a partisan, Shensheng follows the example of Tai Bo and volunteers his birthright. The desire to save his

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<sup>97</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 272.

own name and to spare the feelings of his father are not the only motifs of Shensheng's suicide; his ultimate goal is to support Chong'er. Thus, Shensheng understands the workings of time and, consequently, knows the future—the inevitability of his younger brother becoming Duke Wen. Therefore, he consciously and actively enables it.

On the Supra-Narrative level, though, Shensheng does get his reward—Shi Wei compares him to Tai Bo, thus elevating him to the position of the Sages. From this perspective, then, things do make sense, and they are just—the right things come in the right time; “timeliness” is in itself the validity of the thing. Duke Wen is due, Shensheng is not—such is the timely design. Shensheng embraces his fate and does not act against time.

## ii. Sub-story (B) – Yiwu and the Historical Doom

All the accounts of the events in Jin under Duke Hui 晉惠公 (Yiwu 夷吾) have the same narrative structure: they consist of the historical account itself—a report of what happened; and an additional part that could be classified as a “commentary” or a judgment—a record of an opinion articulated by a person witnessing the situation, which invariably is a prediction of Duke Hui's imminent doom. There is not a single entry in the whole narrative covering the affairs in Jin during that period that would not serve as a pretext for a judgment upon the duke's actions and a foretelling of their consequences. These predictive comments<sup>98</sup> serve as a narrative device, by means of which every event presented in the text is portrayed as a transgression committed by Duke Hui.

The narrative consists of episodes depicting 10 major events that lead to Yiwu's doom. 1. In response to the killings of the two consecutive successors of Duke Xian<sup>99</sup>, Qi 齊, as the hegemon of all the feudal states, leads a military expedition in order to put an end to the disorder in Jin. Yiwu, the younger brother of Chong'er, takes advantage of the chaos to usurp the throne, and offers bribes to Qin to win its support; Qin enters Jin and together with Qi installs Yiwu as Duke Hui (Xi IX); 2. Duke Hui starts off by executing Li Ke—Chong'er's follower, but also the very man who enabled Yiwu's own ascension to the throne; 3. Next, he proceeds to re-enter the body of his late brother, Shensheng, who was buried improperly, thus pretending to honor the latter and make up for the injustice done to him. In connection with this, the ghost of Shensheng appears to the minister Hu Tu and informs him of his plan to have the Lord on High—*di* 帝—doom Jin and give it over to Qin. This is supposed to be the punishment for Yiwu's transgressions. Hu Tu manages to talk Shensheng out of this idea; so, Shensheng decides to punish only Yiwu; 4. Pi Zheng, another loyal follower of Chong'er, travels to Qin and tries to scheme against Yiwu. The intrigue fails, and Pi Zheng is executed, along with seven other officers associated with him (Xi X); 5. In the following year, the king of Zhou legitimizes Yiwu as Duke Hui of Jin. Reportedly, the latter behaves disrespectfully when receiving the mandate (Xi XI); 6. Jin suffers from scarcity and asks Qin for grain. After some hesitation and debate, the earl of Qin decides to relieve Jin (Xi XIII); 7. Mount Shalu 沙鹿 collapses (Xi XIV); 8. In a year of scarcity in its own territory, Qin asks Jin for grain, but Duke Hui refuses to relieve his

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<sup>98</sup> I use “predictions” and “predictive comments” as general terms that include all kinds of projections of the future; they can be actual prognostications based on divination, but also warnings and calculations of the ministers based on their analysis of current politics or knowledge derived from books. As becomes evident in the narrative, all the warnings and advice given by the ministers come true and invariably prove Yiwu wrong; therefore, they should be read as foretellings of the future.

<sup>99</sup> Xiqi 奚齊 and Chuo 卓, both sons of the Rong concubines

neighbor and benefactor (Xi XIV); Duke Hui breaks all the promises he gave to the earl of Qin and to several officers in Jin. In addition, he commits adultery with the late Duke Xian's concubine, a woman related to the house of Qin; 9. Duke Hui's dishonesty and unfaithfulness of Duke Hui upset the earl of Qin, and he decides to invade Jin; 10. The Qin forces defeat Jin three times in a row and meet its army for the final battle on the plains of Han. Duke Hui ignores good advice, and against all reason and principle, forcefully confronts Qin. He appoints bad assistants and uses inadequate horses for his chariot. His minister and chief adviser, Qing Zheng 慶鄭, abandon him on the battlefield and, as a result, the duke is taken captive and carried away to Qin.

The officers of Jin express loyalty to their ruler; they follow him into captivity, submit to their fate, and are ready to die along with the duke, thus indicating to the earl of Qin that by putting to death Duke Hui he will be responsible for the death of all of them. The Qin earl's wife Mu Ji 穆姬, in defense of her brother—the ruler of Jin—threatens to commit suicide along with her children; therefore, the earl promises to do no harm to the marquis and decides to reestablish him in Jin. He has an agreement with Jin, according to which the marquise's son and heir be sent to Qin as a hostage. In the end, Duke Hui returns to his state, whereupon Qing Zheng is put to death. When Jin suffers from scarcity, Qin once again relieves it with grain. The earl of Qin abandons the idea of annexing Jin, but he nevertheless appropriates some of the latter's territories to the east of the river. (Xi XV) Duke Hui dies eight years later. His son Yu manages to escape from Qin and takes over the Jin throne as Duke Huai. (Xi XXIII)

As mentioned above, every event in Jin narrated in the text can be linked with a corresponding prognostication:

- (1) With the help of Qin army, Yiwu is installed as Duke Hui in Jin – The earl of Qin discusses with his ministers the situation in Jin; Gongsun Zhi 公孫枝 declares that Yiwu will not manage to settle the state. (Xi IX)
- (2) Yiwu puts to death Li Ke – The new duke does this, because he does not feel secure and, seeing it coming, attempts to prevent his own doom<sup>100</sup>. (Xi X)
- (3) The Shensheng episode – The ghost of Shensheng promises that he will punish Yiwu. He declares that the Duke Hui will be defeated in Han. (Xi X)
- (4) Execution of Pi Zheng and his associates – One of the men to be executed, Pi Bao 丕豹, escapes to Qin and predicts that Duke Hui will find no support in the state. He urges the earl of Qin to take action and expel Duke Hui. (Xi X)
- (5) The King sends Duke Wu of Shao 召武公 and the Historiographer of the Interior *neishi* Guo 內史過 to confer the mandate—*ming* 命—on the new marquis of Jin; the latter receives it “indifferently/carelessly”—儻. Upon return to the court, the *neishi*, in his

<sup>100</sup> This is not a prediction *per se*, but a reflection of Yiwu's own anticipation of the doom and an attempt at preventing it. The text says that he puts Li Ke to death “to redeem himself”—“以說”; Yang: “謂示討惡之義”—to pretend he was punishing Li Ke for the murders of his two step-brothers and enthroned Jin rulers; in other words, Li Ke was serving as his scapegoat, so that Yiwu would be cleared of the complicity. In the message Yiwu sends to Li Ke, he admits that he owes him his current position, but also confesses his fears, saying: “[...] *it would be difficult/disastrous to be your ruler*” “為子君者，不亦難乎？” Thus, the real motive of his action is insecurity—he sees in Li Ke's actions the reflection of his own; therefore, he knows what he himself would have done if he were in Li Ke's position. More importantly, though, Yiwu's deed discloses him as a hypocrite and a usurper. In his response to Yiwu's message, Li Ke makes it clear: “*If not for [others] having been removed, how would you have risen?*” “不有廢也，君何以興？” The episode is not exactly a projection of Yiwu's future, but it is certainly not presenting him favorably; rather, it is another example of a transgression that is being used against him. Thus, it fits into the overall scheme of the narrative aimed at disparaging Yiwu.

conversation with the King, predicts that the marquis's successor will not be his own son. (Xi XI)

- (6) Scarcity in Jin: the earl of Qin consults his ministers about the idea of sending relief grain to Duke Hui. Zisang 子桑 anticipates the Jin marquis's duplicity and predicts his future alienation and defeat. (Xi XIII)
- (7) The collapse of a mountain in Jin—The diviner *bu* Yan—卜偃—predicts that by the end of the year there will come a great calamity, which will nearly put an end to the state. (Xi XIV)
- (8) Scarcity in Qin: the earl asks Jin for relief, but Duke Hui refuses to return the old favor. Qing Zheng points out his error to the duke and warns him of losing the state, being abandoned by the supporters and rejected by the people. The minister also emphatically declares that the marquis will regret his decision. (Xi XIV)
- (9) Qin invasion Diviner Tufu 徒父筮 of Qin divines about the expedition predicting that Jin shall be defeated three times and that the marquis of Jin shall be captured. (Xi XV)
- (10) The battle of Han—The marquis ignores the divination concerning the appointment of his right spearman; he also ignores Qing Zheng's advice concerning the horses for his chariot. The latter predicts the horses' behavior and declares that the marquis will regret his actions. (Xi XV)

Thus, the narrative draws a portrait of Yiwu as one who only commits transgressions and ignores all warnings and good advice. Finally, the prognosticated doom does come: he provokes a war with Qin, is defeated in the battle of Han, and is taken captive. However, all this amounts to another paradox. After such an intense, consistent, and relentless criticism of his person in the text, it comes as a surprise that Yiwu is not finished, but instead all the people in his state unite and stand up for him, and in the end he is restored and able to continue as Duke Hui. Once again, the reader's sense of justice is disturbed; there is a certain opacity about Yiwu's "doom", which seems pallid and makes one suspect that it has not been quite completed yet.

The steady accumulation of negative prognostications indicates that this is not Yiwu's time to be the ruler. He appropriated someone else's time—he stole it—and he will be punished. Thus, the prognostications expose him as a usurper and draw the reader's attention to the legitimate ruler—Duke Wen.

Noticeably, the narrative covering the rule of Yiwu in Jin begins and ends with references to Chong'er. At the beginning, when Duke Xian dies, two Jin officers, Li Ke and Pi Zheng, raise an insurrection against Xiqi, the son of Li Ji and the appointed heir; they mobilize all the supporters of the late marquis's three "legitimate" sons against the intruders imposed by Li Ji's intrigues. Their aim is to enthrone Chong'er.

However, the text says that they want to "install Duke Wen". This phrasing, at this early moment, is portentous. The text refers to Chong'er as "Duke Wen", as if he had actually become the successor of Duke Xian and the legitimate ruler of Jin. The following account of the events, however, seems to prove otherwise. Yiwu ousts Chong'er before he is installed. After the murder of Xiqi 奚齊, who is never referred to as "duke", the party supporting the two Li sisters wants to raise Xiqi's half-brother Zhuozi 卓子, but Li Ke kills him as well. The chaos in the state provokes the intervention of Qin, and with their help and support, younger brother Yiwu ousts Chong'er and is installed in Jin as Duke Hui. Thus, Chong'er does not become "Duke Wen" when he returns to the state after Yiwu's/Duke Hui's death, and before then he is only known as "Chong'er".

The proleptic phrasing used in the narrative is a deliberate choice. The Narrator, who knows how the story is going to unfold, reveals to the reader the events that are going to take place in the future. Thus, the reader learns that Chong'er is not disappearing for good, his story is not over, and he shall return and take over the throne in Jin. Also, referring to Chong'er as "Duke Wen" determines the way the reader perceives Yiwu, undermining, in narrative terms, his position as Duke Hui. From now on, he will be regarded as a usurper and, more importantly, as a temporary ruler, a resident, who occupies the throne during the time of transition. The "real" ruler is waiting for his time, his story pending.

The fact that Yiwu is not the genuine ruler is established in the narrative immediately following his installment in Jin as Duke Hui. The earl of Qin consults his minister Gongsun Zhi 公孫枝 about the situation in Jin and whether Yiwu will manage to settle the state.<sup>101</sup> Gongsun Zhi replies:

臣聞之，「唯則定國」。詩曰「不識不知，順帝之則」，文王之謂也。又曰「不僭不賊，鮮不為則」，無好無惡，不忌不克之謂也。今其言多忌克，難哉 (Xi IX, 6)<sup>102</sup>

Your servant has heard that "the state can be settled only by following the model". As "The Odes" have it, 'Unconsciously and unknowingly, he adjusts himself to the model of the Lord on High', which is said of King Wen. Also: "There are few of those who do not usurp nor steal, and who do not serve as a model", which is said of him who has no likes nor dislikes, and who is not jealous nor ambitious. As for now, [Yiwu's] words are full of jealousy and superiority, so it is going to be rather hard [for him to settle the state].

The minister juxtaposes Yiwu with King Wen 文王, the sage ruler of Antiquity, and presents him as his counter-example—an anti-ruler. The convergence of names—King Wen/Duke Wen—is not a mere coincidence. It indicates that Chong'er possesses all the qualities attributed in the text to King Wen, therefore he deserves to later become a hegemon—*ba* 霸, and an illuminated ruler—*ming jun* 明君. The text establishes him as Duke Wen, even though his time has not come yet; Yiwu, on the other hand, is portrayed as his exact opposite and alter ego. Here and now, his words are false, and he is bound to be doomed.

Without mentioning him, Gongsun Zhi, then, playfully refers to Chong'er by comparing Yiwu to King Wen. The latter derives his capacity as a ruler from the Lord on High, *di* 帝; thus, his sagehood is of a divine origin. He is molding himself after Heaven without effort or consciousness; he does not aspire, he *is* a genuine king.

The effect of the narrative is to show that there is no way Yiwu could claim that, even if he manages to take the throne. Although he completes his turn, he never fulfills the requirements of a sage ruler, such as settling the state or gaining the recognition of the people. His mission is not divine, and the time does not belong to him—it belongs to Chong'er, who already *is* Duke

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<sup>101</sup> "夷吾其定乎" ; the interrogative particle *hu* 乎 implies doubt; this is important, because being able to "settle the state" and bring harmony to the people (the earl of Qin first asks if Yiwu has support in the state) are the two basic requirements of a sage ruler (明君).

<sup>102</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 331.

Wen, despite the fact that he has not yet been formally established. The time covered by the Narrative is not the duration of Duke Hui's rule in Jin, but that of Chong'er's absence.

Gongsun Zhi deems Yiwu "envious and ambitious"—忌克. The earl of Qin develops this thought and says in reply: "*He is jealous, therefore many will resent him; how can he ever achieve [what he desires]*"—"忌則多怨，又焉能克" (Xi IX, 6)<sup>103</sup>

King Wen, and thus Duke Wen/Chong'er—as implied through the parallel—acts spontaneously and is impartial. He has neither envy nor ambition, he does not need to do anything in order to be who he is, and his appointment is divine and timeless. Yiwu, on the other hand, being jealous of his elder brother, aspires to take his place; but even while he occupies the throne as Duke Hui, it is Duke Wen who is the legitimate ruler. Yiwu cannot achieve through force what is granted from Heaven.

Therefore, Yiwu's return to Jin after the battle of Han and the captivity in Qin is not an achievement; neither are the following eight years as Duke Hui, of which the ZZ provides no account. He does not redeem his name and position. He *is* restored—through the agency of someone else—just for the time being.

It was earl of Qin who decided to release Yiwu from captivity and reinstall him in Jin. He explains why he decided so—rather than extinguishing Jin—and with this assessment the ZZ narrative concerning Yiwu ends:

吾怨其君，而矜其民。且吾聞唐叔之封也，箕子曰：「其後必大。」晉其庸可冀乎？姑樹德焉，以待能者。(Xi XV, 8)<sup>104</sup>

I resent [Jin's] ruler, but I do sympathize with its people. Besides, I heard that when Tangshu<sup>105</sup> was enfeoffed, the viscount of Qi said: "His descendants will surely flourish". How, then, would I be able to annex Jin? For the moment I shall cultivate my virtue and wait for a capable man to arise [in Jin].

Clearly, the earl of Qin respects the predictions and has a strong notion of timeliness. He resists personal sentiments—betraying no likes or dislikes—and, even though it seems Jin is entirely under his control, he adjusts his actions to Heaven's design. He does not take advantage of his power, because he knows the future. He understands that there is a right moment for each action, and that acting against time would be futile. The earl remembers the prediction that Tangshu's descendants will flourish, and thus knows that it is only a matter of time before a capable ruler arises in Jin. He, in fact, knows who that ruler is, and this is another hint at Chong'er's imminent return.

As I pointed out above, it is noticeable that after Yiwu's restoration in Xi XV, there are no accounts in ZZ of affairs in Jin until Xi XXIII, when he dies a natural death. The fact that each narrated event is associated with a criticism, a condemnation, or a prediction of his doom, shows that they are reported only when they can be used against Yiwu, and, indeed, *in order to* discredit him. On the other hand, we are not told what is happening in Jin during the last eight years of his rule; evidently, it is irrelevant from the point of view of the Narrator, who shapes the account according to his larger plan. The absence of narrative is meaningful and it constitutes a part of

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<sup>103</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 331.

<sup>104</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 367.

<sup>105</sup> The progenitor of the Jin lineage

the portrait of Yiwu drawn by the Narrator; it is also important for a correct understanding of the nature and significance of his doom. Qin allows Yiwu to complete his turn as Duke Hui; however, his fate is no longer in his hands, and he does not have the power to change his status. He has no future and he has no present, either, already being consigned to oblivion. Hence, after his return to the throne, there are no further accounts and no predictions concerning him. No text is necessary. His story is over, and his doom is sealed. The future, the time, and the story belong to Duke Wen, who will come in due time.

Initially, as in the case of Shensheng, the narrative presents a paradox: evil seems to be prevailing over good and an exemplarily bad ruler successfully takes the place of and delays the coming of a good one. This narratological strategy is meant to explain and justify the belated coming of the Hero. The Narrator has to comply with the fact that Yiwu—a usurper who from the Supra-Narrative point of view obstructs the way of Duke Wen—successfully stays on the throne and completes his turn; however, by carefully selecting the events to be narrated, the Narrator is able to portray him in an unfavorable way and present as a counter example the main—temporarily “hidden”—protagonist of the narrative.

Shi Wei compares Shensheng to Tai Bo, thus clearly indicating that the heir is not being deposed, but instead, is yielding the throne to his younger brother, Chong'er. The parallel is at the same time an exaltation of Shensheng and a prediction of Chong'er's accession to the throne. It also juxtaposes Shensheng and Yiwu as two opposite examples, where the former clears the way for Duke Wen, and the latter obstructs it.

By putting him in line with Tai Bo, Shi Wei is aligning Shensheng with an archetype, thereby taking him out of the chronological flow of history—the Narrative—and, by extension, away from his own doom. He enters the Supra-Narrative and becomes a model, just as Chong'er, who—in comparison to King Wen—is Duke Wen even before he ascends the throne in the chronological narrative, thus escaping it. Shensheng is exalted—and saved—by “history”, while Yiwu is doomed by it. As I pointed out above, the latter does not meet his final punishment in the chronological narrative, but by his portrayal as a negative character, which is clearly visible from the Supra-Narrative perspective.

A question arises: If a certain kind of future is inevitable, then is Shensheng's choice really a choice? He knows his fate and he concedes to it, because he is aware that acting against it is futile, just like the Earl of Qin. He cannot change the future, nor by extension, his own fate; however, he does have a choice between right and wrong. Shensheng cannot become a ruler in Jin, because his “coming” is untimely, but he can determine his standing in history as a virtuous man by making the right choice between enabling the coming of Duke Wen and trying to prevent it.

Making the right choice is not merely efficacious or even moral; rather, it demonstrates the almost-sagely ability to see things clearly: the quality of *ming* 明. Unlike Shensheng, Yiwu is unaware of the workings of time and, consequently, of the future. Therefore, Shensheng may suffer a temporary injustice, but ultimately he wins—he is the moral victor. He heeds good advice, understands the working of time and the imminence of justice; therefore, in this fundamentally moral sense, he can read the future. Possessed of “sagely illumination”, Shensheng is proclaimed to be just like the sage Tai Bo. He is rewarded by history with the name of a virtuous man.

Yiwu, in contrast, occupies the throne of Jin and dies a natural death; he temporarily wins, but he loses his future, his moral standing as determined by the writers and readers of history. Yiwu does not heed advice, he ignores the prognostications, and he acts against time. As a result,

he is portrayed as the counter example of a sage. He lacks “sagely illumination”, and he is—quite literally—erased from history. Such is his final doom and punishment.

Thus, the Narrator uses prognostications to explain why Shensheng does not get the throne, as well as to present Yiwu as an illegitimate ruler. Ultimately, they enable and justify Chong’er’s return after his long absence, demonstrating that sooner or later justice is served.

The narrative that bears out the prognosticated fates of Shensheng and Yiwu endorses Chong’er *in absentia*; and, paradoxical situations that seem to suspend the law of justice only heighten the expectation of justice to come.

### b. Chong’er and the Rhetoric of Silence

Unlike the actions of Shensheng and Yiwu, those of Chong’er are never commented upon, and he is offered no advice. All the prognostications concerning him are *about* him, not *for* him, and they prepare the reader for his return as Duke Wen. The narrative seems designed to generate in the reader a sense of anticipation, even before Chong’er’s exile is shrouded in silence. Chong’er is slandered by their evil stepmother and wronged by his father. When he has to leave the capital and is eventually forced out of the state, he is completely absent from the narrative until his return nineteen years later. The story of Chong’er is hidden from the reader, but unfurls in silence simultaneously with the narrated current of events in Jin. His name is never mentioned, but the reader is regularly reminded that Chong’er’s story is not over and that he is going to come back.

The first part of Duke Wen’s story establishes him as a man of virtue. His expulsion from Jin is clearly unjust. By refusing to fight against Duke Xian, Chong’er presents himself as a filial son and a loyal subject; that is, he is in the right. He humbles himself and sacrifices for his father and ruler. It is questionable whether he has enough strength and support to successfully defend himself in Pu and withhold the attack of his father’s troops. According to the accounts, Shi Wei—a minister employed by Jin to fortify the city—refused to do it properly because he foresaw the conflict between Duke Xian and his sons (Xi V). Since Pu was not a secure fortress, it may be that Chong’er gave it up for pragmatic reasons, but the narrative insists that his decision to flee was a moral one:

及難，公使寺人披伐蒲。重耳曰：君父之命不校。乃徇曰：校者，吾讎也。踰垣而走。披斬其袂。遂出奔翟。(Xi V, 2)<sup>106</sup>

When trouble broke out, the Duke [Xian] dispatched eunuch Pi to invade Pu. Chong’er said: “The orders of the ruler and father cannot be opposed.” Thereupon, he issued an announcement [for his followers]: “Those who oppose the orders are my enemies.” As [Chong’er] was jumping over a wall, Pi cut off his sleeve. Consequently, [Chong’er] fled to the Di.

The fact that Pi managed to cut off his sleeve shows that Chong’er made a narrow escape indeed, but it also serves as a hint that his absence from Jin is not going to be permanent, promising that Chong’er has unfinished business with Pi. Indeed, when he finally returns to Jin nineteen years later, Pi comes to see him. Chong’er refuses and confronts him, saying: “*There is*

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<sup>106</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 305.

*still that sleeve*” —“夫袪猶在” (Xi XXIV, 1)<sup>107</sup>. However, Pi switches his allegiance and warns Chong'er of the plans to assassinate him, thus enabling the prince's successful comeback. It is thus that the little sleeve detail establishes continuity in the narrative across a 19-year-long gap.

The reader expects that the story will continue, but also that the unfair banishment of Chong'er will be revoked and the injustice done to him repaid. The Narrator first draws a moral portrait of the protagonist, and then finishes the account abruptly, adorning it with suggestive leftovers (the same method is applied especially in sub-story (C)); the use of such devices shows us that the narrative is not so much about the “here and now”, but that it is actually oriented towards the future—the reader has yet to see the unfurling of the ending he already knows.

In the meantime, though, the reader is suspended in a temporal limbo. For the ensuing nineteen years, the name of Chong'er is never mentioned in the narrative. Nevertheless, his presence is clearly perceived the entire time—as a matter of fact, it is his absence that makes it even more eminent. The reader, reading about his brother's transgressions, expects Chong'er to return at any moment. Thus, even though at this point the narrative talks about Shensheng and Yiwu, it still constitutes an integral part of Duke Wen Story—the narrative is in fact about Chong'er. Thus, sub-story (A) is a description of Shensheng's sacrifice on behalf of Chong'er. sub-story (B), on the other hand, is meant to discredit Yiwu, and thus to endorse Chong'er as Duke Wen. The reader is constantly reminded that Chong'er—Duke Wen—should be ruling in his stead. Chong'er's absence becomes evident and meaningful, performing a certain rhetorical function in the narrative.

Nineteen years is a period of time long enough for Chong'er to be completely forgotten and obliterated. However, the prognostications in the narrative do not allow Chong'er to be forgotten; they prepare the ground for his comeback as a Hero. The rhetoric of suppression and silence is a narrative device justifying the nineteen-year gap in Duke Wen Story.

The delaying factor is also a way of integrating the issue of timeliness into the very structure of the narrative: the Hero must not only come *at the right time*; he also *needs* time to come—it takes time to become a Hero. From a purely dramatic point of view, the suspense surrounding his coming is crucial. In terms of the values upheld by the narrative, Chong'er's coming must not be *momentary/instantaneous*; the tardiness is a necessary part of it. Without the delay, the story of Duke Wen would not be complete. The contrast with Yiwu would not become evident and Chong'er would not be missed; consequently, the reader would not recognize him as a Hero, and his return would lack its fulfilling quality. In effect, it is time itself that makes Chong'er a Hero; the delay gives the Reader a sense of longing and lack—an anxiety that generates the need for a fulfilling ending. It is because of the suspense that it is evident to the reader that Chong'er is Duke Wen before, after, and during—or despite—his absence. While Yiwu is compromising himself, the reader learns nothing about the deeds of Chong'er; nevertheless, it is the latter who is awaited as the one to come and save Jin.

By applying this rhetoric of silence, the Narrator passes his judgment through omission. When the chronological sequence of events does not allow him to focus on the main protagonist, who is temporarily suffering an injustice and ousted from the picture, the Narrator uses the silence created by his absence to discredit the players, who ostensibly prevail, and thus to endorse and reaffirm the absentee's moral standing. Thus, the Narrator further discloses the mechanism of timeliness. The Hero needs time to come, the promise needs time to be fulfilled,

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<sup>107</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 414.

and the prediction needs time to manifest. The injustice is temporal, and the law of rewards and punishments never fails.

The predictions extrapolate the reader into the realm of the Supra-Narrative: the story that is parallel, silenced, yet constantly overshadowing and ultimately superseding the one the reader is currently reading. On the surface, the Narrator is following the chronological order of events, presenting the affairs in Jin, and naturally focusing on the person of the current ruler. From the point of view of the linear Narrative, this is the “main” story—the chronicle of what “actually” happened. On this level, the Narrator appears as a historiographer recording and transmitting the events. In fact, though, he is all the time telling a story that lies beyond the “main” one, and that eventually takes over as “history”. From that other and “higher” perspective, all the paradoxes can be readily explained. The paradoxes are necessary on the Narrative level, because similar to the predictions, they make the reader aware of the supra-reality. Without the paradox, the latter could not be perceived and understood, and, in fact, it would not exist—the Narrator needs the supra-reality in order to explain the paradoxes, and, consequently, he constructs it. Thus, the narratives on both levels are interdependent.

### c. The Supernatural

By “supernatural” I understand occurrences and properties that could be better described as “marvelous”.<sup>108</sup> As I pointed out in Chapter I, contemporaries considered supernatural phenomena, such as ghosts, to constitute an integral part of Nature; at the same time, however, they were believed to be powered by forces beyond human control. In the ZZ narrative, they are presented as “historical”—events that “actually” took place. The narrative does not “create” reality; rather, it represents it.<sup>109</sup> In effect, the “marvelous” is accepted as natural; at the same time, however, these events are marked as extraordinary: they are Heaven's direct interventions into human affairs.

The Narrator in the ZZ applies the “supernatural” in order to show that the law of justice never fails. As I demonstrated previously, a person in possession of the quality of *ming* 明—“sagely illumination”—understands and conforms to the demands of timeliness. “Sagely illumination” is also what enables the Actors to mete out punishments and rewards in a just manner.

In the Duke Wen Story, the virtuous Actors, Shensheng and Chong'er, suffer injustice.

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<sup>108</sup> According to Todorov's distinction between different kinds of “supernatural” in literature, when the reader, encountering a “fantastic” event in the text, “decides that new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena, we enter the genre of the marvelous”; in such a case, the reader believes that “the event has indeed taken place, [and] it is an integral part of reality—but then the reality is controlled by laws unknown to us.” Otherwise, the reader may assume that the literary character “is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination—and laws of the world then remain what they are”; in such a case, we are in the genre of the “uncanny”. In each case, according to Todorov, the distinction depends on the reader's attitude towards the supernatural events. It is, of course, impossible to conjure the attitude of the ZZ's readers; however, the Narrator provides the reader with clear clues about how the narrative should be understood. Tzvetan Todorov *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975).

<sup>109</sup> Karl Kao points out that in Western literature the supernatural is “conceived mainly from the angle of creative perception (the author's projection of his vision) rather than from that of the reality represented”, whereas in the Chinese context “the opposite orientation is assumed: Six Dynasties *chih-kuai* particularly are considered as the ‘records’ of facts and observable natural phenomena (or hearsay).” Even though Kao's discussion concerns literature after the Han, his observation may be applied to early historiography, on which later fiction was modeled. Karl S. Y. Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

Shensheng is glorified as a martyr on the Supra-Narrative level, but he also gets his reward in the Narrative. He loses both the throne and life; his story, then, seems to be over—there is no "human" way for him to continue in the narrative. However, this ending is not satisfying, even though the paradox of unrewarded virtue is resolved in the Supra-Narrative. On the Narrative level, the law of justice still seems to be broken. In order to serve Shensheng justice, the Narrator resolves to the supernatural—the prince reappears in the narrative as a ghost and takes his revenge. The "supernatural" serves as a device to bring Shensheng back to life and to satisfy the reader's need for a just ending to the story. Chong'er, on the other hand, manages to return and claim justice within his lifetime, before his story is over. However, his comeback, too, is presented as supernatural. The Narrator clearly indicates that there are higher forces at work that enable his return.

In each case, the "supernatural" serves as a means of presenting the Actors as "illuminated"—*ming* 明. Shensheng and Chong'er claim justice not merely for themselves. They do not come to take revenge, because their primary purpose is serving justice to others. Indeed, both Shensheng and Chong'er return as punitive ghosts—*ming gui* 明鬼—ghosts endowed with "sagely illumination", and therefore able to discern right from wrong. As discussed in Chapter I, the function of this special category of ghosts is to mete out punishments and rewards.

The "supernatural" accentuates the divine origins of *ming* 明 and reveals the special relationship *ming* 明 Actors have with Heaven. It reconfirms the law of punishments and rewards. Yiwu's life is spared after the battle of Han, but politically and narratologically/historiographically he is "dead"—there are no accounts on his final years on the Jin throne. Shensheng returns after his death, "spiritually" resumes the authority over Jin, and arranges for Yiwu's doom; finally, Chong'er's silenced presence overshadows the narrative and he becomes a legend while still alive; his return resembles a resurrection—a ghost coming back to life—and a myth coming true.

### 1. The Return of Shensheng

One of Yiwu's first decisions after usurping the throne to become Duke Hui is to re-inter Shensheng's body transporting it from Quwo, where he committed suicide, back to the capital (Xi X, 3). Yiwu wants to be identified with his martyred brother; therefore, he appropriates Shensheng's sacrifice in order to legitimize his own claims to the throne. In the autumn of the same year, the ghost of Shensheng appears to the officer Hu Tu and declares: "*Yiwu comports himself with no regard for the rules of propriety; I have petitioned the Lord on High and obtained his consent to grant Jin to Qin; Qin will continue the sacrifices to me.*"—"夷吾無禮，余得請於帝矣，將以晉畀秦，秦將祀余" (Xi X, 3)<sup>110</sup> Shensheng deems Yiwu unworthy; despite being dead, he reclaims his position of heir apparent and puts himself in charge of Jin. In that position, it becomes his right and responsibility to settle the state, and he decides to cede it to Qin. This would mean the extinction of Jin, and so Hu Tu attempts to reason with the prince:

臣聞之：「神不歆非類，民不祀非族。」君祀無乃殄乎？且民何罪？失刑、乏祀，君其圖之！ (Xi X, 3)<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 334.

<sup>111</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 334.

I have heard: “The spirits do not absorb the fragrance of the offerings from those who are not their kin; people do not sacrifice to those who do not belong to their clan.” Would, then, the sacrifices to you not be terminated? Besides, what is the crime of the people [of Jin]? You will mete out a wrong punishment and deprive yourself of sacrifices; you should better reconsider that!

Hu Tu’s logic gets through. Shensheng promises to have another interview with the Lord on High and agrees to meet with Hu Tu again in seven days. At the appointed time and place, the ghost appears through a medium—*wu* 巫—with the following message: “*The Lord on High has allowed me to punish only the guilty one; he shall be defeated in Han.*” —“帝許我罰有罪矣，敝於韓” (Xi X, 3)<sup>112</sup> Shensheng’s reappearance in the narrative is yet another way of pointing at Chong’er as the legitimate ruler and to prevent the false hero from usurping the sacrifice not meant for him. The episode is clearly meant to discredit Yiwu and it is neatly woven into the network of predictions of his doom. Ostensibly, its only purpose is to disclose the new marquis’s hypocrisy. Shensheng sees through Yiwu’s schemes and rejects his act of piety. More importantly, though, Shensheng’s supernatural return suggests Heaven’s direct involvement in solving the affairs in Jin. Shensheng has an exclusive agreement with the Lord on High, and he uses it not merely in order to take his own revenge, but, more exactly, to punish Yiwu and to set the state on the right track—to finalize the coming of the “sage ruler” *ming jun* 明君. In effect, both Yiwu’s doom and Chong’er’s comeback are brought about by divine interference. The Narrator uses the “supernatural” to reassure the Reader about the infallibility of justice and to accentuate the “sagely illumination” of Shensheng and Chong’er.

The episode also serves as a double prediction. Apart from foretelling the time and place of Yiwu’s doom, it reassures the continuity of the state of Jin and, by extension, predicts the return of Chong’er. We hear the echo of this prediction in (Xi XIII, 4), when the Earl of Qin is debating whether or not he should send relief grain to Jin and decides: “*Its [Jin’s] ruler is indeed evil; but what is the guilt of its people?*” —“其君是惡，其民何罪？” (Xi XIII, 4)<sup>113</sup> We also find it in (Xi XV, 8), when the Earl of Qin justifies his decision to spare Jin by saying: “I resent its [Jin’s] ruler, but I do sympathize with its people.”<sup>114</sup> In both cases, Yiwu—the current Jin ruler—is alienated from his state. The correction in Shensheng’s judgment is significant—he resolves to punish Yiwu alone, just as did the Earl of Qin. Noticeably, this time Hu Tu does not contest the ghost’s decision: the minister does not try to protect Yiwu—his ruler—because he agrees that the marquis deserves to be deposed. In this case, the doom of the ruler does not imply the doom of the whole state. Hu Tu, representing the people of Jin, accepts the authority of Shensheng. The narrative begins with the words: “*In autumn, Hu Tu went to the lower capital [Quwo], where he encountered the eldest son [heir apparent/Shensheng].*” —“秋，狐突適下國，遇大子” (Xi X, 3)<sup>115</sup> The season is specified, following the *Chunqiu* rules of recording events, in order to formalize it; Shensheng is referred to as “heir apparent”—not a ghost, but a real person. Throughout the narrative, Hu Tu addresses him 君. Thus, the ghost episode confirms Yiwu’s illegitimacy—it presents him as a usurper whose fall should be to the benefit of the state; Jin’s fate shall be deposited in other, more worthy hands.

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<sup>112</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 335.

<sup>113</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 345.

<sup>114</sup> “吾怨其君，而矜其民”

<sup>115</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 334.

The ghost of Shensheng comes to punish Yiwu for his transgressions. The execution of the punishment is not instantaneous, but put away in time—Shensheng pronounces the exact time and place of the doom. Similarly, the Earl of Qin knows that in the due time the temporary ruler of Jin will bring disaster upon himself. Thus, Yiwu is given the time to prove himself wrong: just as Chong'er needs time to come as a hero, he, too, needs time to enact his doom. Yiwu has plenty of opportunities to mend his ways, but instead he continuously takes wrong decisions. It is clear that he brings this fate upon himself by acting blindly—ignoring all the predictions, and not heeding the advice offered to him.<sup>116</sup>

The narrative about Shensheng's comeback as a ghost is meant to make up to him for the undeserved doom and, at the same time, to satisfy—on the Narrative level—the Reader's sense of justice. It is presented as a “real”, “historical” event, taking place in the linear time. Shensheng, wronged while alive, has his last word as a ghost. His biography is endowed with the supernatural element in order to reinforce the logic of the narrative. But also, it shows that—as an “illuminated ghost” *ming gui* 明鬼—he is able to discern right from wrong and entitled to execute justice.

## 2. The Return of Chong'er and the Execution of Justice

The final execution of justice comes with the return of Chong'er. Characteristically, he returns not as a human being, but a ghost.

In Xi XXIII (637 BCE), Duke Hui of Jin (Yiwu) dies. His son Yu 太子圉—having just escaped from Qin, where he was kept hostage after the battle of Han—takes over as Duke Huai 晉懷公. The first command of the new ruler is that nobody must follow “the fugitive”—Chong'er: “*Duke Huai was installed, and he ordered that no one must follow the fugitive.*” —“懷公立，命無從亡人” (Xi XXIII, 4)<sup>117</sup>

After nineteen years, this is the first mention of Chong'er in the text, and he is nameless—he is referred to as “fugitive”. This word choice has an emphatic function: it reveals Yu's perception of Chong'er and defines his status. A “fugitive” —*wang ren* 亡人—is someone who has “departed”, who has left the boundaries of a certain domain, state or realm. By extension, it is someone who “is no more”, a dead person. This is a play on words—*wang* 亡 in Chinese means “dead”.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The prediction of this kind is a recurring narrative convention in the ZZ; by means of it, the agency of time becomes clearly visible. In the very first longer narrative (Yin I, 3), Duke Zhuang of Zheng 鄭莊公 refuses to destroy his brother Duan 段 and instructs the impatient adviser: “多行不義，必自斃，子姑待之” “*By frequently practicing unrighteousness, he will certainly bring doom upon himself; for now, just you wait and see.*” Eventually, it is Duke Zhuang in person who metes out the punishment on Duan; however, he is merely responding to the situations provoked by his brother. Similarly, Yiwu's doom comes as a result of his own action, the intervention of Shensheng being only an illustration to this mechanism. Duke Zhuang is blamed for failing to provide a good example for his brother and thus preventing him from wrongdoing. Shensheng sets a perfect example for his brother, but the latter abuses it—he pretends to serve justice to the martyr, but in fact all he seeks is his own ill-conceived benefit. No reconciliation between the brothers is possible or expected, unlike in the case of Zhuang and Duan.

<sup>117</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 402.

<sup>118</sup> The Grand Historiographer *tai shi* 大史 of Jin accused Zhao Dun of murder, because he “*fleeing the state, he did not cross the borders*” 亡不越竟; leaving the domain is necessary to be considered “exiled”. Wang Li renders “亡” simply “不在”.

Thus, through his phrasing, Yu disowns Chong'er and insists he no longer belongs in Jin. The people should not follow the one who left. In a way, he is saying: "Do not follow a specter!" The transition of power was clearly not smooth, and the rush in which Yu issues the command indicates that the opposition against him and the support for Chong'er were considerable. Chong'er's reappearance is sudden, improbable, and unreal, as if he were returning from the dead.

Duke Wen begins his rule by punishing all traitors and rewarding the faithful. He exercises power by appointing virtuous men, defending weaker states, and teaching and transforming the people by exposing them to the example of himself. He goes down in history as a great hero, one of the five hegemon *ba* 霸, a virtuous and illuminated ruler *ming jun* 明君, and is compared to the sage kings of antiquity. His story shows that justice is served in a timely manner.

Shensheng's supernatural return as a ghost is "historicized". It is presented in the narrative as a "real"—"historical"—event, as something that really happened. He is presented as alive, even though he is dead. In contrast, Chong'er returns as a "*wang ren* 亡人", and thus bears the characteristics of a dead person.

The episode of Shensheng's return fits perfectly into the logic of the Narrative. The Reader expects that the last word concerning Shensheng had not yet been said and that the injustice done to him ought to be revenged. The Narrative satisfies the Reader's expectation and presents the wronged person himself serving the right. In other words, the Reader knows that sooner or later Shensheng has to appear again in the Narrative, and the fact that he comes as a ghost does not diminish the effect of the event.

Likewise, the Reader is prepared for the comeback of Chong'er, and therefore knows immediately who the nameless "fugitive" is. As I argued before, Chong'er never really left the Narrative and the Narrator keeps the Reader constantly aware of him through predictions and comparisons; moreover, because the "supernatural" is presented as history, it is natural that, in reverse, historical events also contain "supernatural" elements.

### iii. Sub-Story (C)—Chong'er and the Formation of a Hero

Sub-stories (A) and (B) discussed above narrate the events in Jin during Chong'er's absence. They explain the fates of Shensheng and Yiwu and project them on the fate of Chong'er, thus constituting an integral part of the Duke Wen story. Sub-story (C) is an account of Chong'er's life in exile, and it completes the narrative of Chong'er becoming Duke Wen of Jin.

Sub-story (C) is a compact narrative directly preceding the accounts of the exiled prince's return to Jin. The text begins with a short review of the reasons of his exile, serving as a reminder to the reader about who Chong'er was. It recalls his filial behavior and indicates that his expulsion from Jin was unjust.<sup>119</sup>

The following is a narrative of Chong'er's odyssey, written in retrospect. It not only fills the nineteen-year-long information gap, but it also prepares the stage for the *gran finale*: Duke Wen's rule in Jin that brings the state, and indeed the entire Zhou domain, back into order. Each episode carries a portent that is played out later in the final part of Duke Jin's story; thus, the narrative shows that his comeback is predestined and desired. The story is equipped with supernatural elements to indicate that the event of Chong'er's return as Duke Wen was, in effect,

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<sup>119</sup> The expulsion is referred to in the text as 難—"misfortune".

brought about by divine powers. As such, the feeling of restored order not only resolves suspense, but it also reveals the outcome as having been inevitable. This notion of inevitability is what completes the restoration of order.

#### d. The Hero Myth and the Illuminated Ruler

In his study on heroic tradition in China, C. H. Wang introduces the concept of “cultural heroism” and points out that in China “the display of martial power (*wu* 武) is never as worthy as the exhibition of cultural eloquence (*wen* 文)”. As Wang observes, “Chinese ethics in general almost repudiates martial spirit from heroism”; furthermore, according to Wang, the contrast between *wen* and *wu* “sets up the rhetorical pattern” in the so-called *Weniad*—the great national “epic” of the Zhou people, glorifying the Zhou conquest of Shang in 1111 BCE.<sup>120</sup> However, as Wang emphasizes, “in the sanctification of King Wu of Chou's military action against the Shang, Confucianism judges the conquest incomplete until the weapon is put away and the rite performed appropriately.” In fact, Wang argues that “the figure is King Wu's father, King Wen, whose position in the sequence is so significant as a pivot that the epic, as it were, is the *Weniad*.” King Wen took over China in the twelfth century BCE purely by his virtue; therefore, Wang concludes, “in the *Weniad*, in which the cultivation of *wen*, or cultural elegance, is emphasized, the martial-heroic spirit is kept muted.”<sup>121</sup> In effect, according to Wang's definition, in Chinese tradition a “hero” is a king who is a sage and who uses culture and virtue for his governance over the people, instead of arms.

The Duke Wen story draws a clear parallel between King Wen of Zhou and Duke Wen of Jin. As I pointed out before, Gongsun Zhi of Qin articulates it in juxtaposition with Yiwu; also, King Wen and Duke Wen's bearing the same reign name, and that name being “wen” 文, speaks for itself. Chong'er, as a ZZ character, is modeled after King Wen—he is a “cultural” Hero. He repudiates arms: he first refuses to fight his father, and all the wars he wages as Duke Wen are punitive expeditions; and he establishes his rule in Jin and his hegemony over the entire Zhou domain by means of virtue and ritual. In the following section, I will first present the sub-story (C) as an “epic” depicting Chong'er's formation as a Hero; and next, I will discuss his government in Jin and the establishment of his hegemony over the feudal states to demonstrate how he is portrayed not as a *wu* 武, but a *ming* 明 and a *wen* 文 ruler.

The account of Chong'er's adventures during his absence—sub-story (C)— is a supplement for the satisfaction of the reader—it makes up for the time that was “lost” time on the Narrative level. The Narrator takes the reader on a trip into the past, where the lacunae in the Narrative are filled up. He presents Chong'er “in the meantime”—the prince's evolution while waiting for the right time to return. The Actor's relationship with time—in narrative terms— becomes very clear: Chong'er is *acting out* the time of his absence. The account of his wanderings through the states shows how Chong'er is making connections and gaining

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<sup>120</sup> Wang explains that the Zhou conquest is “the most glorious military campaign most widely and profoundly documented in Chinese history”; Wang points at the *Shijing* as part of the *Weniad*: “Even only in the verse of *Shih Ching*, the epical sequence contains a creation myth, and an account of exodus, wandering, combats, and periodic settlements of the people near to the barbarians [...]. Each poem in this group of *Shih Ching* poems is by itself a complete metrical and thematic achievement, sometimes in the form of panegyric but more often in that of an inclusive narrative.” C. H. Wang, “Towards Defining a Chinese Heroism,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 95, no. 1, (1975): 27.

<sup>121</sup> C. H. Wang, *op. cit.*

experience and support that he is going to use later as the hegemon. His absence from Jin—both physical and on the Narrative level—was necessary for him to become a Hero.

The portents that dot the narrative further enforce this point: they need time to come true. The account of Chong'er's adventures may be written in retrospect, but in fact it is a predicted future—it establishes the ground and foretells Duke Wen's actions *after* his return to Jin.

In sub-story (C), the Narrator provides the audience with what it already knows, and thus what it expects and wants to hear; just like the *Weniad*, which is a ritualistic reenactment of the Zhou foundation myth. The audience knows it, and the ritual provides the means of experiencing it; the ritual takes the participants back in time to the very origin of the myth. It is very likely that sub-story (C) is a reflection of the parallel oral tradition—a pre-existing myth of Duke Wen, Illuminated Ruler and Hero, and the related worship. Storytelling constituted part of the hero cult and ritual. So did history writing—the account of Chong'er's "odyssey" is a performance-through-narration. The story is the narrative of that ritual, the "literary" expression of it, and its being archetypal is nothing else but the reflection of its ritualistic origin. It shows that things *must* always happen in a certain way; as such, the events are predictable. The story is known in advance, and it serves as an endorsement for the Hero. Once told and written down, it cannot be changed, so it serves as a commemoration, but also shapes the ideas about other Heroes-to-come. They need to be the same, just as Chong'er shares the same traits with King Wen of Zhou.

The ritualistic nature of the narrative can be deduced from its structure. In the middle of his journey, Chong'er arrives at Qi, where the ruler presents him with a wife and 20 teams of horses. The prince abandons himself to pleasure and refuses to continue the journey. Only after being tricked by his followers is he able to resume his mission. Such transitional moments of hesitation, doubt, and weakness are a typical narrative function in hero accounts. They reveal the underlying tradition of religious practices.<sup>122</sup>

In Xi XXIII (637 BCE) the "sage ruler myth" comes true: Chong'er returns to Jin to bring back justice and order. The narrative of Duke Wen's years on the throne depicts his way to hegemony and presents him as a *ming jun* 明君—Illuminated Ruler. The Narrator emphasizes three characteristic aspects of Duke Wen's rule that put him in line with the sage kings—*sheng wang* 聖王—of Antiquity and prove his "sagely illumination"—*ming* 明: (1) rewarding the virtuous, appointing the capable, and punishing the evil; (2) knowing, relying on, and transforming the people; and (3) being truthful—*xin* 信. Duke Wen brings order gradually, by means of virtue, and through observing proper ceremonies. He transforms the Zhou realm and his achievements are long lasting. He overcomes the past, transforms the present, and establishes an orderly future.

The punitive meaning of Duke Wen's coming is indicated at the outset of the narrative, before him even taking any action. When Yu, trying to prevent Chong'er's return, orders Hu Tu to summon his two sons—Chong'er's partisans—back to Jin under the law of abolition, the minister refuses and says:

子之能任，父教之忠，古之制也。策名，委質，貳乃辟也。今臣之子，名在重耳，有年數矣。若又召之，教之貳也。父教子貳，何以事君？刑之不濫，君之明也，臣之願也。淫刑以逞，誰則無罪？臣聞命矣。(Xi XXIII, 4)<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Qu Yuan and *Lisao* seem to be the best examples in Chinese tradition; similar motifs may also be found in other traditions, such as Odysseus.

<sup>123</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 403.

It is an ancient rule that for the son to be able to serve, his father must impart faithfulness. He writes his name on a tablet and gives a pledge [to his lord], and declares that he shall be punished with death if he should waver in his allegiance to his lord. The [tablets with the] names of your servant's sons have been in Chong'er's possession for many years now. If I should summon them back, I would make them waver their allegiance. How can a father who teaches his son to waver his allegiance be your lordship's servant? Punishment without excess is the manifestation of the ruler's illumination and the wish of the minister. If you mete out the punishments in a corrupt and excessive way for the sake of your own gratification, then who will be without guilt? I have heard your commands.

The Minister was then put to death. Diviner *bu* Yan 卜偃, upon witnessing these events, predicts the doom of Yu; he indicates that this is because of the quality of Yu's *ming* 明:

周書有之：乃大明服。己則不明，而殺人以逞，不亦難乎？乃大民不見德，而唯戮是聞，其何後之有？(Xi XXIII, 4)<sup>124</sup>

As one of the Books of Zhou put it <sup>125</sup>, 'When the sagely illumination [of the ruler] is great, [the people] are obedient'; but when [the ruler] is himself not illuminated and puts people to death for his own gratification, is it not going to be hard [to achieve the obedience of the people]? When the people at large can see no merit, and executions are all they hear about, then how can [the ruler] have any posterity?

Both Hu Tu and Diviner Yan emphasize the importance of the punitive aspect of "sagely illumination" *ming* 明—the ability to justly mete out punishments and rewards—as an indispensable quality in a ruler. Yu—Yiwu's son and the new ruler in Jin—is unable to apply correct punishments, and thus has no *ming* 明. Yan's judgment is devastating: no *ming* 明 means no future. As a ruler, Yu will not be able to unite the people and consolidate the state; thus, he loses his legitimacy. It is Duke Wen and his "sagely illumination"—execution of justice—that both Hu Tu and Yan are anticipating and hoping for.

Thus, Chong'er's return has a salvaging quality—it is presented as a rescue of Jin from the hands of illegitimate and incompetent rulers. After nineteen years of exile, Duke Wen resumes the power in Jin and begins his rule from punishing the traitors and rewarding all of the faithful followers.<sup>126</sup> When appointing his ministers, Duke Wen chooses the virtuous and the capable,

<sup>124</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 403.

<sup>125</sup> *Shangshu* 尚書, V. ix. 9.

<sup>126</sup> “晉侯賞從亡者”; (Xi XXIV, 1) presents 4 accounts on Duke Wen's sense of justice: (1) He acknowledges his faithful follower Zifan 子犯 through a covenant, calling as witness the spirit of the [Yellow] River 河; (2) He punishes the traitors who plan to assassinate him, but he hears out and pardons eunuch Pi 披, even though the latter was twice appointed as his assassin; (3) He admits an old attendant Touxu 頭須; he first rejects him, because Touxu stayed in Jin rather than following him into exile, but he changes his mind when Touxu argues that those who stayed were nonetheless his followers; and (4) He does not forget about Jie Zhitui 介之推, who once cut off a portion of his own thigh to feed Chong'er while in exile, even though Jie does not seek recompense. The accounts show that when rewarding the faithful, Duke Wen is flexible and considerate; he looks into each case individually and is willing to admit and amend possible mistakes; also, he is careful not to overlook even the smallest favors; Yang, *op. cit.*, 412-419.

and he seeks and heeds good advice.<sup>127</sup> More importantly, though, his government has a strong transformative impact on the people. The text says:

晉侯始入而教其民，二年欲用之。子犯曰：「民未知義，未安其居。」於是乎出定襄王，入務利民，民懷生矣。將用之。子犯曰：「民未知信，未宣其用。」於是乎伐原以示之信。民易資者，不求豐焉，明徵其辭。公曰：「可矣乎？」子犯曰：「民未知禮，未生其共。」於是乎大蒐以示之禮，作執秩以正其官。民聽不惑，而後用之。出穀戍，釋宋圍，一戰而霸，文之教也。(Xi XXVII, 4)<sup>128</sup>

Upon entering the state, the marquis of Jin [Duke Wen] first educated the people, and after two years wanted to use them [in war]. Zifan said: “The people have not yet learned the principle of righteousness, so they have not yet been able to settle down and live peacefully.” [Duke Wen], then, left the state to settle the affairs for King Xiang, and when he returned, he attended to the needs of the people, until the people were satisfied and content. Then, he again wanted to use them, but Zifan said: “The people have not yet learned the principle of truthfulness, so they will not be able to understand why they are being used.” Therefore, [Duke Wen] attacked Yuan to show the people what truthfulness was. After this, the people, stopped seeking advantage when doing business, and their words were clear and transparent.<sup>129</sup> Then, the Duke asked: “Can they now [be used]?” Zifan replied: “The people have not yet learned the principle of ritual, so they are not yet able to generate respect.” Therefore, [Duke Wen] organized great hunting in order to demonstrate ritual to them, and he put the offices in ranks corresponding with their duty. Only when the people were able to receive the orders without mistake, then he used them. He drove out the Gu guards and relieved the siege of Song; he became a *ba*—hegemon—with only one battle, which was the effect of his *wen* training.

Duke Wen’s victory is not a military victory, but a moral one. As in the *Weniad*, the battle scene is elided from the narrative, and the emphasis is put on the power of *wen*. As a “cultural hero”, the Duke transforms the people by presenting to them his own example. In all his actions, he relies on the people and works for their benefit; he cannot succeed without them, and *vice versa*, they cannot thrive without his leadership; he “illuminates” them, and by doing this, he proves and exposes his “sagely illumination”.

The passage quoted above is a summary of Chong’er’s rule in Jin as Duke Wen; it illustrates the three stages of his ascend to hegemony—*ba* 霸—as an illuminating and transformative influence upon the people: through his rule, Duke Wen teaches them to *zhi yi* 知義, *zhi xin* 知信 and *zhi li* 知禮: to know righteousness, truthfulness, and ritual.

<sup>127</sup> In Xi XXVII (633 BCE), when preparing for the battle with Chu, Duke Wen appoints the commander in chief after consulting Zhao Shuai 趙衰; the minister, following the principles of Xia laid out in the *Shu*, recommends a man versed in *Odes* and *Documents*; (Xi XXVII, 4), Yang, *op. cit.*, 444-446.

<sup>128</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 447.

<sup>129</sup> Yang interprets the phrase in the mercantile context as “openly/transparently indicating the actual prices, or not being duplicitous/misleading about them” “明碼實價或不二價” ; Yang, *op. cit.*, 447.

Duke Wen restores King Xiang in the Zhou capital in Xi XXV (635 BCE). In Xi XXVIII (632 BCE), he fights the battle with Chu, which confirms his hegemony. Before the battle, even the king of Chu recognizes Duke Wen's sagehood and superiority, and he understands that acting against him is futile:

無從晉師！晉候在外，十九年矣，而果得晉國。險阻艱難，備嘗之矣；民之情<sup>130</sup>偽，盡知之矣。天假之年<sup>131</sup>，而除其害<sup>132</sup>，天之所置，其可廢乎？(Xi XXVIII, 3)<sup>133</sup>

Do not pursue the Jin army! The Marquis of Jin was away [from the state] for nineteen years, and in the end he has succeeded in getting possession of Jin. He experienced all kinds of dangers, obstacles, difficulties, and hardships; he knows thoroughly the truthfulness and falsehood of people. Heaven granted him many years and removed from his way those who wanted to kill him; can someone installed by Heaven be disposed of?

He also quotes from the Rules of War: “A man of virtue must not be opposed” — “有德不可敵” (Xi XXVIII, 3)<sup>134</sup> Thus, the Chu ruler characterizes Duke Wen as a man, who knows the people and for whom their feelings are transparent; he is appointed by Heaven, and he has a special connection with time. He has enough of it, and he is not too early or too late. Heaven endows Duke Wen with time, so he does not need to worry about it. Therefore, nothing can stand in his way. The prolonged period of absence becomes a sign of Duke Wen's special connection with Heaven and a proof of his sagehood.

Finally, the King of Zhou officially appoints Duke Wen as the “chief of the princes”—*hou bo* 候伯. His hegemony was confirmed through a covenant with all the feudal lords. According to the narrative, the Superior Man—*junzi* 君子<sup>135</sup>—deemed this covenant “truthful”: “君子謂是盟也信”，and concludes: “In this military campaign, Jin is able to attack by means of virtue,” — “晉於是設也，能以德攻” (Xi XXVIII, 3)<sup>136</sup> “Sincerity” or “truthfulness”—*xin* 信—is an indispensable condition for a covenant to be valid. Moreover, as illustrated in one of the covenant episodes, truthfulness is interdependent with “sagely illumination”. In (Xiang IX, 8), Zisi 子駟 and Zizhan 子展 of Zheng 鄭 want to break the covenant their state had with Jin, arguing that Zheng had been forced into it<sup>137</sup>:

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<sup>130</sup> Yang reads 情 as 實

<sup>131</sup> According to Yang, this refers to the nineteen years in exile—a long time that was granted by Heaven to Chong'er so that he was able to return.

<sup>132</sup> According to Yang, this is a reference to Duke Huai (Yu) and his follower Lü 呂 who were planning to assassinate Chong'er upon his return.

<sup>133</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 456.

<sup>134</sup> 《軍志》; Yang, *op. cit.*, 456.

<sup>135</sup> In the context of the ZZ, the “superior man”—君子—is conventionally agreed to be Confucius.

<sup>136</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 467.

<sup>137</sup> This is a different covenant, in which Duke Wen was not involved.

盟誓之言，豈敢背之？且要盟無質，神弗臨也。所臨唯信，信者，言之瑞也，善之主也，是故臨之。明神不蠲要盟，背之，可也。乃及楚平。公子罷戎入盟，同盟于中分。楚莊夫人卒，王未能定鄭而歸。(Xiang IX, 8)<sup>138</sup>

How would we dare to go back on our words spoken during the covenant? Besides, if the covenant lacks in substance, the spirits will not [descend and] be present at it; they attend [the covenant] only when there is truthfulness; as for the one who is truthful, his words are [as genuine] as jade, and goodness is his master; therefore, [the spirits] attend. The illuminated spirits cannot be forced to accept a covenant; thus, it can be broken.

The spirits are “illuminated”—*ming* 明, and therefore able to distinguish right from wrong; they are also able to see through peoples’ intentions and thoughts. In effect, they are able to detect the lack of sincerity and they do not endorse false actions. Even though a covenant had been made, it was invalid, because it lacked the substance of truthfulness.

In his judgment about the covenant that made Jin the hegemon among the states, the Superior Man is not so much acknowledging its validity, as he is recognizing the “sagely illumination” of Duke Wen. It is his participation in the covenant that validates it. Able to mete out punishments and rewards, as well as transform the people and screen their feelings, Duke Wen guarantees that the agreement is *xin* 信—truthful.

After the battle of Chengpu 城濮, where the Chu troops were defeated, Duke Wen and the army of Jin returned triumphantly to the capital. There, the Duke distributed lavish rewards and meted out punishments. The Superior Man commented:

文公其能刑矣，三罪<sup>139</sup>而民服。詩云「惠此中國，以四方」，不失賞、刑之謂也 (Xi XXVIII, 6)<sup>140</sup>

Duke Wen indeed does know how to mete out punishments, because he [executed] three criminals, and the people followed him. As the *Odes* say, “By applying virtue to the central state, one [applies it to] the four quarters”, which depicts not failing in applying correct rewards and punishments.

Thus, Duke Wen owes the hegemony to his “sagely illumination”, which, in turn, is the engine of his transformative power. By correctly executing justice, he educates the people and brings order to not only Jin, but also the rest of the Zhou realm.

Duke Wen fights for the right cause and does so by means of virtue. He is just and has a transformative influence upon the people. The King acknowledges his hegemony through a truthful covenant and correct ceremonies. He is righteous—*yi* 義 and truthful—*xin* 信, and he observes the ritual—*li* 禮. He is the object, the medium, and the actor of *ming* 明.

After presenting the three Actors in the Duke Wen story (Shensheng, Yiwu, and Chong’er/Duke Wen), I am going to discuss the role of their advisers, the Prognosticators. They

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<sup>138</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 971.

<sup>139</sup> Reference to three people guilty of treason during the battle

<sup>140</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 472.

are the ones in the narrative who directly build the moral portrait of the Actors—their *ming* 明 or the lack thereof—for the Reader.

### 3. The Prognosticators—Omen Reading

Like the Actors, the Prognosticators are also “historical figures”, but they are not playing an “active” role in the narrative—the story is not *about* them. Instead, they witness the events and they read them as omens portending the future. They are the avatars of the Narrator in the Narrative. The Prognosticators possess “sagely illumination”; that is, because they know the past, they are able to predict the future. They identify the *ming* 明 Actors, and they communicate with the “supernatural”, behaving as the go-betweens of the human and the divine. They expose the “illuminated” Actors-Heroes, and by doing that—as well as by foretelling the future—they reveal their own *ming* 明.

A good example to this rule is the figure of Shi Wei 士鷲, who is the first in the Duke Wen story who predicts trouble in Jin. In his analysis of Shensheng’s plight, he uses the Tai Bo parallel as an antidote: Shi Wei—a Prognosticator—“works” for the Narrator by helping to explain the injustice. He predicts not only Shensheng’s deposal—which he could have deduced from political calculation—but also the raise of Chong’er. In other words, Shi Wei adds meaning to Shensheng’s fall, making it look like a self-sacrifice and reads it as an omen. Bringing up Tai Bo, the Prognosticator demonstrates that he already knows the future to come, and by reading the archetype, he is able to determine future events. According to him, the *casus* of Shensheng is just the same as the historical precedence and it will bring the same results. Shi Wei’s prediction is based on his personal wisdom and ability to analyze the situation. There are no straightforwardly “supernatural” elements in it, such as resorting to oracles or to spiritual forces; instead, there is a strong sense of reality, and the intrinsic knowledge of “how things work”. However, the determinative tone of the prediction makes it resemble a prognostication<sup>141</sup>: “*The eldest son will not be installed [on the throne]*”—“太子不得立矣” (Min I, 6)<sup>142</sup> The minister is not issuing a warning or making a guess; he already knows what *actually will* happen in the future, and he is foretelling it. The rest of Shi Wei’s statement includes: the explanation, based on the reading of the signs; the calamity, due to the abuse of the rules of timeliness; the judgment - Shensheng is not guilty and able to save his good name; and the advice/solution - submit to Heaven’s will and follow the examples from the past.

Shi Wei is clearly reading an omen. It is noteworthy that this oracle is not delivered to a superior. The minister is not addressing anyone, but instead merely “thinking aloud” to himself. His only addressee is the Reader; in effect, Shi Wei replaces the Narrator, or, more exactly, serves as the Narrator’s mouthpiece-avatar. In this way, the Prognosticator gains the Supra-Narrative perspective and is able to narrate the events far into the future on the chronological level.

The structure and context of Shi Wei’s prognostication render the narrative a formulaic character, which suggests that it comes from some “higher”, perhaps even spiritual source or inspiration. It is not a coincidence that Shi Wei entrusts Shensheng’s fate to Heaven. It is by

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<sup>141</sup> By “prediction”, I understand foretelling of the future based on a guess or a feeling, whereas a “prognostication” is based on an actual act divination, *i.e.* reading and interpreting omens and signs; the latter is more formalized and carries a stronger persuasive power; it renders the narrative more determinative and, consequently, more convincing.

<sup>142</sup> Yang, *op. cit.*, 258.

observing the way of Heaven that Shi Wei is able to understand the mechanism of meting out justice based on timeliness, the causes and consequences of events, and, consequently, to foretell the future.<sup>143</sup> Thus, Shi Wei is performing an act of moral and situational divination over Shensheng and Jin's future. He derives his knowledge from Heaven and uses it to discern the right and the wrong. Shi Wei is *ming* 明. He reveals his own sagehood by reading the omens and recognizing the “sagely illumination” of the Actors.

## Conclusion

The ZZ Narrator's main focus is *ming jun* 明君—the Illuminated Ruler. His purpose is to answer the question of how is the Illuminated Ruler—and the time of his “coming”—to be known? Thus, the Narrator takes upon himself the task of “illuminating”—*ming* 明—the reader by revealing to him the way of knowing the future. He achieves this by explaining to the reader the workings of time. Timeliness—*shi* 時—is what defines and legitimizes him. The coming of the Illuminated Ruler can be known in advance, and he is the right one if he comes at the right time. The Narrator analyses what lead to Chong'er's becoming Duke Wen and shows how it was known all along from the very beginning. Chong'er was always Duke Wen, Hero-Illuminated Ruler, and his coming was only a matter of time. Therefore, the Narrator tells the “history”—Chong'er's past—as a prognosticated future, and all the events are presented as predictions of what follows next. The Narrator demonstrates that one can know the future from knowing the past: by studying and correctly understanding—*ming* 明—history. The future is written in the past, and the past is written in the future.

Confucius reveals his own sagehood by identifying the *lin* and understanding its untimely coming as a portent and a sign of the lack of a *ming wang* 明王. Through his historiographical performance, the ZZ Narrator, too, identifies the Illuminated Ruler; he evaluates the Actors, explains the present, and foresees the future. In effect, the Narrator proves his own *ming* 明. He sees and exposes the right and wrong, and, like a punitive “illuminated” ghost *ming gui* 明鬼, he metes out punishments and rewards. History writing perceived from this perspective gains a moral and political significance, and it sanctions the sagely role of the historiographer. Knowing and understanding history is tantamount to being a sage.

As I demonstrated in the Introduction, historiography originated as a religious practice. The written record of events had apotropaic functions and was meant for a future use. The office of *shi* 史 combined the duties of ritual masters, prognosticators—astrologers and diviners—and historiographers, hence the transmission of ideas. The historiographers were not just recording the events, but communicating with the spirits; they were preserving and studying the past in order to prognosticate about the future.

The ideas about time as Nature and the mechanism of timeliness as a moral sanction in the ZZ are an echo of a less sophisticated, mechanistic worldview developed in contemporary occult practices. In the following chapter, I am going to present the concepts of “time”, “timeliness”, and “anomaly” in their more original form, as expressed in early almanacs *Rishu* 日書 and *Chu Silk Manuscript* 楚帛書. By confronting these ideas with the historiographical practice of the CQ and the ZZ, I will demonstrate how the “canonical” historiographical works emerge as quasi-daybooks—manuals for understanding the mechanism of timeliness.

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<sup>143</sup> “天若祚天子，其無晉乎！”

## CHAPTER III

### FROM MANIPULATION TO MORAL PREROGATIVE—THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN DAYBOOKS

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the system of timeliness in *rishu* 日書—“daybooks”—in order to demonstrate the relationship between prognosticating and history writing. Daybooks preserve and reflect the ideas about time in their primeval form; at the same time, they are the earliest “product” of these ideas. As manuals were meant to help people plan their future according to hemerological prognostications, daybooks put into practice the belief that “time”—understood as the course of Nature—determines peoples’ fortunes and misfortunes. I demonstrate that the system of timeliness in historiography discussed in Chapter II derives from the naïve, mantic concept of time that can be observed in daybooks. It is the occult practices and cults that constitute the backbone of later concepts of morality and which spur the idea of the omenological and didactic function of history writing.

For my analysis, I am going to consider two documents—*Rishu* 日書 (*RS*) from the Shuihudi 睡虎地 collection (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cent. BCE), and the Chu Silk Manuscript (CSM) 楚帛書 from Zidanku 子彈庫 (*ca.* 300 BCE).<sup>144</sup> Even though both are contemporaneous daybooks that conform to the same hemerological principles and present the same worldview (namely, that time possesses certain predetermined qualities: it is either good or bad for certain actions), they focus on two different, albeit inter-related and complementary aspects of the nature and working of time. When juxtaposed, the two daybooks show that the same ideas and beliefs regarding time could be used to various ends, from purely secular and pragmatic, to spiritual and moralistic.

Both *RS* and the CSM are founded on the same basic belief that time can be either good or bad, and, consequently, that actions can be either timely or untimely. *RS* puts this idea to practice in its simplest form; the CSM is slightly older than *RS*, but the worldview it reveals is more elaborate.<sup>145</sup> On the one hand, then, *RS* fosters a worldview based on a very simplistic notion of time: its working is mechanistic and therefore prone to manipulation. As I will show, it is possible to “figure it out”. I am presenting this document in order to demonstrate that this rudimentary idea about the working of time is also detectable in early historiography. As I showed in Chapter II, it is successfully applied by Duke Xian of Jin in the attempt to depose Shensheng, and it is also reflected in the idea underlying prognostications and predictions, as seen in both *Mozi* and the *ZZ*, where it is always necessary to wait for the *right* time when justice will be served. Moreover, I am demonstrating how *RS*, as the earliest known document of its kind, resorts to the accounts of the supernatural in order to fix the flaws in its overly-simplistic, mechanistic worldview. Used as a device, the supernatural allows the prognosticators to predict otherwise unpredictable situations and, thereby, to eliminate anomalies. I am arguing that the historicization of the supernatural, which, as discussed in Chapter II, takes place in the *ZZ*, is an echo of the early occult practices reflected in *RS*.

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<sup>144</sup> I provide detailed description of these texts with references below.

<sup>145</sup> The exact dating of *RS* has not been precisely determined. We can consider *RS* and the CSM to be contemporaneous, coming from the same region, and belonging to the same tradition.

In the CSM, on the other hand, which is the oldest known daybook (*ca.* 300 BCE), time has a religious nature: days, months, and seasons are personified as ghosts and require worship, and a failure to observe proper timing results in punishment. In effect, compared to *RS*, the CSM starts from the same point, but it takes the agenda of timelines a step further. As in *RS*, the working of time is mechanistic, but in addition to that, disobeying time bears a moral charge in the CSM. When adopted by other areas, in particular by historiography, the concepts about time intrinsic to daybooks develop into a more sophisticated, moral system of timeliness—they initiate the conceptualization of time in terms of right and wrong.

As I demonstrated in Chapter II, “history” as a concept in early Chinese historiography is based on timeliness, and the knowledge of history helps understand the present and predict the future. In the *ZZ*, “time” becomes equivalent to “fate”—a person and his actions can either be timely/seasonable—*shi* 時—or not. The ideas about manipulating time and predicting the future first laid out in mantic literature give birth to history writing. Prognostications and delay in the execution of justice found in *Mozi* and the *ZZ* are reflections of the pre-existing and persisting hemerological considerations.

“Rishu” 日書—“daybooks”—is a generic term used in modern sinological literature to denote hemerological materials and magic formulae from the Warring States period. The term originates from a manuscript excavated in 1975 on a site at Shuihudi 睡虎地, in Yunmeng 雲夢, Hubei 湖北. Tomb No.11 on that site contained, among other artifacts, a total of 1,155 bamboo strips inscribed with text. Among these, the scholars were able to distinguish ten different groups of strips (a “group” designates material that constitutes a separate text)<sup>146</sup>, which they grouped into three general categories: historical records, legal documents, and mantic texts. The last of the three categories—mantic texts—were found in two of the ten groups and labeled as manuscripts A (甲) and B (乙). Based on the historical material recorded on the strips, it was possible to identify the person buried in Tomb No. 11 as a man named Xi 喜 and 217 BCE as the year in which the tomb was sealed.

Originally, the area in which the site is located formed part of the territory of Chu 楚, but in 279 BCE it was incorporated within Qin 秦. Because of personal name taboos observed in some of the documents other than mantic texts, it is possible to determine that they were written during the second half of the third century BCE. It is very likely that the mantic texts date from the same period. This discovery constitutes the first find of written material from Qin.<sup>147</sup>

Complete transcriptions and photographs of the two groups of strips carrying the mantic texts, along with full archaeological details of the site, are published in *Yunmeng Shuihudi Qin mu* 雲夢睡虎地秦墓, the official archaeological report on Shuihudi.<sup>148</sup> Rao Zongyi and Zeng Xiantong also discuss these strips in a special monograph with introductory essays.<sup>149</sup> In English, the *RS* are presented and discussed, but not completely translated, by Michael Loewe and Donald

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<sup>146</sup> Since the cords binding the strips together had disintegrated, it was hard to separate the documents; therefore, the strips were segregated into “groups” based on their contents, style, etc.

<sup>147</sup> Michael Loewe, “The Almanacs (*Jih-shu*) from Shui-hu-ti: a preliminary survey,” in *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 215-216.

<sup>148</sup> Bian xie zu 編寫組, *Yunmeng Shuihudi Qin mu* 雲夢睡虎地秦墓 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1981).

<sup>149</sup> Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤 and Zeng Xiantong 曾憲通, *Yunmeng Qin jian rishu yanjiu* 雲夢秦簡日書研究 (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1982).

Harper, both of whom I consult in this section.<sup>150</sup> I also refer to the edited and annotated Chinese translation of the manuscripts.<sup>151</sup>

Group A of the mantic texts consists of 166 strips, and both sides of the strips of this group carry inscriptions. Group B consists of 257 strips; only one side of these strips is inscribed, except for one strip that carries the inscription “Rishu” 日書, which scholars interpret as the title of the document. The expression is not seen in any other document dating from that period. The earliest extant Chinese bibliography providing the data for all pre-Han literature, Chapter 30 of the *Hanshu* 漢書, includes reference to material that is of comparable type, listed under six categories known collectively as “shushu” 數術—“divination and prognostication arts”<sup>152</sup>—but the term “rishu” does not appear in the chapter, either as a category or as a title of a work. There is no evidence indicating that the term existed and circulated in the Warring States period. Nonetheless, in current scholarship, “rishu” became a term used not only to reference the Shuihudi manuscript *Rishu*, but also to denote the entire genre of mantic texts of the same type as the “hemerological” and “occult manuscripts” excavated in Shuihudi.<sup>153</sup>

Apart from Shuihudi A and B, the texts classified as “rishu” excavated to date include Chu Silk Manuscript and six groups of manuscripts from other archaeological sites.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the “genre” is represented by such other contemporary texts as: *Da dai Liji* 大戴禮記 47 “Xia xiao zheng” “夏小正”; “Yue ling” “月令” of *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 and *Liji* 禮記; *Fan Shengzhi shu* 汜勝之書; *Si min yue ling* 四民月令; other excavated manuscripts with mantic contents. Loewe provides the complete list of this material, along with descriptions and bibliographical information.<sup>155</sup> All of these texts can be loosely classified as “almanacs”.

The function of a daybook or almanac is to advise whether a given day is auspicious or inauspicious for a certain kind of activity and for a particular kind of person. Whether the day is auspicious or inauspicious is determined by correlative and numerological calculations and presented in form of lists, charts, and tables. Thus, the prognostications in daybooks are based on a fixed system in which time figures as an agent. It is in itself “good” or “bad”, and it determines the course of events on a given day. Every undertaking is either timely or untimely, and the daybook advances the information regarding that.

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<sup>150</sup> Loewe, *op. cit.*, 214-236; Donald Harper, “Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, eds. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, pp. 813-885 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>151</sup> Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* 《睡虎地秦墓竹簡》(Beijing: Wenwu, 1990), 175-255.

<sup>152</sup> The categories include: *tianwen* 天文—“astrology”; *lipu* 曆譜—“calendars”; *wuxing* 五行—“five phases”; *shi gui* 著龜—“divination by turtle bones”; *zazhan* 雜占—“miscellaneous divinations”; and *xing fa* 形法—“physiognomy”; Loewe, *op. cit.*, 226-7.

<sup>153</sup> Donald Harper applies the terms “hemerological” and “occult” to define the mantic manuscripts from Shuihudi in “A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B. C.,” *HJAS*, 45 (1985): 459-498. Also, Donald Harper, “Warring States, Qin, and Han Manuscripts Related to Natural Philosophy and the Occult,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1997). Harper explains that “*ri* 日 is a word which in early usage denoted hemerological arts and divination”. He classifies the texts as belonging to the primary literature of natural philosophy and the occult.

<sup>154</sup> Li Ling provides the whole list and details; apart from Shuihudi, published manuscripts include: Chu Silk Manuscript, daybooks from Fangmatan 放馬灘 and Mozuzi 磨; Li Ling 李零, *Zhongguo fangshu kao* 中國方術考 (Beijing: Dongfang Chubanshe, 2001), 43-7; 197-216.

<sup>155</sup> Loewe, *op. cit.*, 227-230.

In recent studies on *RS*, several attempts have been made to analyze the underlying philosophy and worldview of the treatises. Poo and Shirakawa, especially, make an effort to place them in their contemporary socio-religious context.<sup>156</sup> Loewe considers the almanacs comprising *RS* to be one of the “methods and formulations designed to ensure that human decisions would be in accord with the universal sequence of astro-calendrical science.”<sup>157</sup> In effect, Loewe deems daybooks to be codices of natural law put together with a conscious purpose of indicating to people what is right and wrong.<sup>158</sup>

None of the studies on *RS*, including the most recent one by Kalinowski, address the problem of the meaning and function of time—the very concept on which daybooks are based and which propels the worldview inherent in them.<sup>159</sup> Loewe believes it is impossible to ascertain the criteria by means of which particular days in *RS* almanacs were determined auspicious or inauspicious. As he concludes, “the tabulated presentation of the necessary guidance amounted to a set of dogmatic and irrefutable statements, and in this way the almanacs constituted an established authority.”<sup>160</sup> This assessment significantly limits and discourages the discussion on the meaning of time in *RS*. According to Loewe, the almanacs command people what to do in an authoritative manner, without providing any rational or logical justification. As I demonstrate below, the proscriptions in the almanacs may appear dogmatic and irrefutable, but only in form, not in contents. Once the quality of a particular day is indicated, it cannot be questioned; however, an indication is not an injunction—people do not have to obey it. Unlike those assessed by Loewe, *RS* does not foster any moral obligation to follow the proscriptions.

When considered in this manner rather than as arbitrary injunctions, *RS* provides enough clues to make the discussion on the concept of time possible and fruitful. The form and contents of the almanacs reveal the nature and the *modus operandi* of time: time simply “happens”. It has its own course dictated from Heaven.

One of Loewe’s observations is particularly helpful for the analysis of the concept of time in *RS*, despite his own apparent skepticism regarding the possibility of such an endeavor. He suggests the existence of a relationship between daybooks and contemporary historical writings. As Loewe points out, the tabular form used to list the prescriptions in *RS* resembles that found in the *Shiji* 史記; moreover, he observes that other types of documents, such as historical writings, feature the same subjects as the almanacs: religious activities, human destinies, behavior, and projects. This is the list of matters for which advice was sought in both daybooks and documents

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<sup>156</sup> Shizuka Shirakawa 白川静, *Kanji no sekai* 漢字の世界 2 vols., Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1976.; Poo Mu-chou, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

<sup>157</sup> Loewe, *op. cit.*, 226.

<sup>158</sup> This certainly is the case with the CSM, but is less apparent, or even completely absent from *RS*—a manual that simply reveals auspicious and inauspicious time, but carries no moral agenda. The almanacs comprising *RS* are based on the most basic notion: timeliness can be applied mechanically, so that good fortune-auspicious future is assured. The temporal formulations in *RS* only potentially carry the moral prerogatives Loewe is referring to, but they are not yet articulated there. Only in the light of other documents, such as the CSM, and eventually also the historical writings, can this potential be deduced. The CSM is an older document, but its functions are more far-reaching, therefore it presents a more sophisticated concept of time. The question why some daybooks applied a more developed system than others can serve as a topic for a different discussion. I am mentioning it here only to illustrate how the mechanism of timeliness functions in its simplest form.

<sup>159</sup> Marc Kalinowski, “Les livres des jours (*rishu*) des Qin et des Han: la logique éditoriale du recueil A de Shuihudi (217 avant notre ère),” in *T’oung Pao*, vol. 94, no. 1/3, (2008): 1-49; in this study, Kalinowski discusses the ideas and considerations lying behind the creation of the manuscripts.

<sup>160</sup> Loewe, *op. cit.*, 226.

that, as Loewe puts it, “may or may not derive from mantic considerations”. According to him, these other documents “form the context in which the almanacs should be considered.”<sup>161</sup> As I argue in this chapter, it is the concept of time that connects both groups of texts.

I present the Shuihudi *RS* manuscripts A and B as an example of daybooks in which the nature of time—the way in which time operates—is fully exposed. I argue that understanding the mechanistic nature of time and organizing it into a system of timeliness makes the future—or time itself—predictable, and thus controllable. In other words, people are able to control time by understanding its nature; they can use the mechanism of timeliness in order to predict things—the daybook helps them determine whether an action is timely or not.

Thus, daybooks are tools for manipulating time-fate—they enable one to avoid bad fortune and ensure that the events turn the favorable way; also, they foster a worldview in which good and bad fortune—and, by extension, future—can be prognosticated.

There is another important aspect of the *RS* almanacs—the approach to the anomalous and unpredictable—that I want to discuss in this chapter, and that reveals not only ideas about time, but also the means by which at least some of the daybook prognostications are made. The analysis of this aspect of the document helps to address and partially answer Loewe’s question concerning the criteria according to which the prescriptions in *RS* were determined; moreover, it further proves the existence of the relationship between composing daybooks and history writing—it demonstrates that not only were both groups of documents based on the same concept of time, but they also shared the same ideas about prognosticating.

*RS* A, unlike any other daybook found to date, contains a list of unfavorable situations that happened in the past because they could not be predicted, and which are recorded in order to be used for future reference: treatise *jie* 詰 “Spellbinding”, classified by Donald Harper as “the earliest Chinese demonography”, and considered by him to be unrelated to the rest of the almanac.<sup>162</sup> I argue that the treatise constitutes an integral part of the daybook and likewise serves the purposes of prognostication.

Treatise *jie* 詰 can be best described as a catalogue of precedence—a record of unexpected and strange occurrences that took place in the past. All of them have been diagnosed and explained as situations caused by ghosts. I point out that anomalous, and therefore unpredictable situations that occur beyond the established and natural order of timeliness are invariably attributed to the supernatural. In daybooks’ worldview, anomalies are equated with untimeliness. The almanac concedes that there are situations which cannot be predicted, but at the same time it reassures the user: there is an explanation to everything, even to things that seem uncertain and strange. In order to explain the seemingly inexplicable, the almanac employs the supernatural; the marvelous is drawn into the system, and thus “naturalized”—once the ghosts are identified, they are harnessed, neutralized, and no longer harmful.

In conclusion to my examination of *RS*, I argue that the para-historical record of strange past events is meant as a lesson and reference for the future. Anomalies are narrated as quasi ghost stories—records of the strange—and thus historicized: by being explained and demystified, they enter the natural, timely, and orderly flow of history. The record of it is made for practical reasons—it is an act of conquering time-fate. The anomalous occurrences are placed in a particular point of time as precedence and thus captured. The knowledge and correct understanding of the past can be applied as a remedy for current or future situations.

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<sup>161</sup> Loewe, *op. cit.*, 226.

<sup>162</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 467.

The practice of recounting anomalies in the form of ghost stories marks the link between historiography and the supernatural. It shows how (historical) narrative is born out of the trauma of the unknown/non-understanding. As I argue, early Chinese historiography was a form of communication with the afterworld, which allowed transgressing the boundaries of time and space. *CQ* was a record of such communication with the ancestral spirits. The episode of capturing the unicorn and Confucius's act of identification harks back to this primeval notion of the anomalous – unknown - untimely as potentially dangerous, which is expressed in daybooks. The tendency to connect the anomalous with the supernatural must stem from religious origins of historiography. The conversion of trauma into a narrative is a way of overcoming it—the situation is no longer unmanageable. As I demonstrated before, in the *ZZ* supernatural references are used when the law of justice—timeliness—seems to be suspended or abused (e.g. the story of Shensheng). Confucius uses history—the record of the past in form of *CQ*—as a remedy to the traumatically untimely event he is facing. He is able to identify the *lin* because of the possession of the knowledge of the past; likewise, he is also able to tag its coming as “untimely”. The anomaly is what triggers the production of historical narrative. The *ZZ* comprises narratives of both the “historical” and the “supernatural” intertwined together; in effect, Shensheng's return as a ghost discussed in Chapter I is not merely a ghost story, but also a part of the historical narrative; likewise, the return of Chong'er is more than a recounting of what happened in terms of “historical” facts; both episodes are attempts to explain and justify the anomalous, just as the narratives comprising treatise *jie* 詰 in *RS*.

Lastly, I present the Chu Silk Manuscript as an example of a daybook that uses historical record for prognostication; it also introduces a moral code enforced by the supernatural: ghost-representatives of time periods, who mete out punishments and rewards. This mantic concept of history laid the foundations of historiography as a way of foretelling the future by means of the past.

## ***Rishu* Contents**

In the published transcriptions of the Shuihudi manuscripts, *RS* A (甲) appears as nos. 730-895, and *RS* B (乙) as 896-1155; the reverse sides of group A are numbered 895R-730R. In this chapter, I am referring to strips by these numbers.

Manuscript B is larger than A, but its contents are of exactly the same nature; the only serious departure from B in A is that A contains two documents not found in B—treatises *jie* 詰 and *mamou* 馬X—whose character is significantly different from the rest of the material. Since I discuss treatise *jie* 詰 in more detail, therefore in this section I focus on manuscript A. The hemerological contents of manuscripts A and B are alike; therefore, limiting the presentation to manuscript A alone is sufficient and can be considered representative for both manuscripts and for the “*rishu*” in general.

Manuscript A consists of 29 separate texts that can be divided into three groups based on their contents:

- (1) Almanacs arranged according to calendrical prognostication systems and star prognostications:

- Almanacs *chu* 除 and *Qin chu* 秦除, arranged in *jianchu* 建除—“establishment and removal”—system<sup>163</sup>. *Chu* 除 is arranged according to Chu 楚 state calendar, and *Qin chu* 秦除 according to the calendar from the state of Qin 秦. Both texts have the same structure: they contain a table of days arranged in the *jianchu* system, followed by a list of prognostications for each of twelve types of days.<sup>164</sup> The entries for each day are different in *chu* and *Qin chu*, but concern the same types of activities, which include sacrifice, child birth, receiving guests and visitors, harvest, travel, construction, exorcisms, marriage, military expeditions, meetings, hunting, escape from slavery or jail, purchases, encountering robbers and bandits, offices, buying slaves, and meting out punishments.
- *Jichen* 稷辰—an almanac arranged according to the *jichen* system; it consists of a table with the twelve months put in pairs and the days in each pair of months divided into 8 types<sup>165</sup>, followed by the descriptions and prognostications for each type of day. The entries have a more regular structure than in the case of *jianchu*, and they are more detailed: they begin with the indication of the type of day and end with a prognostications concerning weather, harvest, war conditions, child birth (physiognomy of the newborn, the possibility of death, and future occupation), marriage, tailoring clothes, sacrifice, banquets and fun, offices (including a possibility of losing it or being reappointed), fugitives (whether they be captured or not), sickness (whether one be cured or not), killing (not clear if merely animals or also humans), funerals, and information for people who are in jail (whether or when they will be released). The weather condition given at the end of each entry determines the harvest and occasionally also other situations (sickness, childbirth) for the rest of the year.
- Three treatises based on star prognostications: [1] *xuange* 玄戈—list of auspicious and inauspicious constellations for each month, with a very regular structure: first three inauspicious constellations, (usually) followed by two lethal ones, two extremely lucky, two “a little bit lucky,”<sup>166</sup> and the day on which Zhaoyao 招搖 and Xuange 玄戈 constellations appear; [2] *sui* 歲—a system based on groups of three months and an indication in which direction the Sui star will move in the given

<sup>163</sup> Michael Loewe identifies the term *jianchu* as a “name of a recognized and specific method of consulting oracles”. The origin and exact mechanism of the system are unclear. Loewe describes it according to Han sources as “a system of oracles, based on a belief that different qualities, powers, or virtues pertain to successive periods of time, which are enumerated in a major cycle of twelve days; each member of the cycle is classified or defined by means of a term that is one of the series of twelve characters, beginning *jian, chu*; [...] While the characters in the series just mentioned define the position of the year or day in the cycle of twelve, the qualities and virtues of each one may be further spelled out by means of a different, but partly corresponding series. Such series comprised twelve terms. The system depended on the existence of a complete almanac, which carried entries for every day of the year [...] The almanac indicated the type of year in question, the circumstances pertaining to its months, and the qualities of each day in the month.” Loewe, “The Almanacs (*Jih-shu*) from Shui-hu-ti: a preliminary survey,” in *Divination, mythology and monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 221-222.

Harper further explains that the system was used “for determining the portentous aspects of days during the twelve months and the portentous consequences of the movements of *sui xing* 歲星 (Jupiter).” Harper, *HJAS*, *op.cit.* 467.

<sup>164</sup> The texts are arranged a little differently: in the Chu text, it is necessary to first look up the required day on a chart; in the Qin text, all the days are listed for each month.

<sup>165</sup> The types are: *xiu* 秀, *zhengyang* 正陽, *weiyang* 危陽, *yao* 徼, *xia* 轄, *yin* 陰, *che* 徹, *jie* 結.

<sup>166</sup> *Daxiong* 大凶, *zhisi* 致死, *daji* 大吉, and *shaoji* 少吉 respectively.

season, which direction will be extremely lucky, in which it is good to escape, in which one encounters calamity, and which will lead one back home; [3] *xing* 星—a list of 28 constellations, and good and bad activities for each of them; the opening of each section is always the same, listing a number of activities that are auspicious or inauspicious, after which there follow other prognostications.

The almanacs in group (1) determine the auspiciousness of the days for different kinds of activities; one first needs to look up the day to see which activities on that day are recommended and which are not. Alternatively, in the case of the constellation almanacs, one looks up the constellation to see what days are listed as lucky or unlucky for particular kinds of activities.

(2) “Thematic” almanacs, organized around a particular subject and providing lists of lucky and unlucky days for specific activities, such as journeys, moving in and out of the house, construction works, purchases, agriculture, child birth, marriage, visiting offices, making clothes, sacrifices, avoiding thieves, as well as household and earth prohibitions. The types of activities are the same as those listed in “system” texts belonging to group (1); the users of the “thematic” almanacs must first look up the activity of their concern in order to find auspicious and inauspicious days.

(3) Three non-hemerological occult texts: *meng* 夢—“Dreams”; *jie* 詰—“Spellbinding”<sup>167</sup> [of the Ghosts]; *mamou* 馬X—“Sacrifice to the Horse Spirit”<sup>168</sup>.

Unlike the 26 texts comprising (1) and (2) that can be considered “almanacs” or “daybooks”—namely, treatises concerning the auspiciousness of the days and hours for people’s daily activities<sup>169</sup>—the three treatises in group (3) differ significantly in structure and contents. “Spellbinding” and “Sacrifice to the Horse Spirit” have no equivalent in *RS B*. These texts are less hemerological in nature, even though they still contain some references to day prognosticating and other correlations.

The first of the three texts—“Dreams” *meng* 夢—consists of two parts: [1] a short instruction on how to expel the spirits causing nightmares; this portion of the text is a spell and contains no hemerological elements, but it does resort to geomancy: the formula must be applied while facing a particular direction; part [2] is a longer geomantic text on dwellings—*zhai* 宅; this text comes without its own title and for that reason is attached to “Dreams”, even though it does not concern dreaming; geomancy is evidently the trait that connects both parts [1] and [2].

The second text—“Spellbinding” *jie* 詰—is a list of strange situations caused by ghosts and the methods of getting rid of them. Some of the ghosts are identified by name, others by their physical characteristics or habitual behavior. This text contains only echoes of hemerological lore: some mantic actions aimed against the ghosts are effective only on particular days.

The third text—“Sacrifice to the Horse Spirit” *mamou* 馬X—is an exemplary text providing the incantation, words of prayer, and proceedings to be applied during sacrificial ceremonies devoted to the Horse Spirit. There are three hemerological references in the text: [1] the sacrifice happens on a *bing* 丙 day, which is no doubt hemerologically significant, perhaps

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<sup>167</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 479.

<sup>168</sup> Translation and interpretation by: Roel Sterckx “An Ancient Chinese Horse Ritual,” *Early China* 21 (1996): 47-79.

<sup>169</sup> Harper uses the denomination “almanacs” as a broad term including not only hemerological texts, but also “incantations, demonology, and illness to dream divination and travel rituals – all considered important in dealing with the hazards encountered in daily life.” Harper, *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, *op. cit.*, 843.

due to correlative cosmology, being the first “fire” sign corresponding to the transition from spring to summer, the probable time for the performance of this ritual; [2] in the course of the ritual, the celebrant reconfirms that the timing is good: “*today is the good day*” 今日は良日, which shows that the time of the sacrifice was consciously chosen; the phrase seems to have the power of a spell—the act, itself, of repeating it makes the timing good; [3] a promise/self-obligation that the sacrifice will be performed annually, showing that the ritual was cyclical: “*every year, we shall not dare to neglect it*” 吾歲不敢忘. These references point at the significance of timeliness in the ritual.

The brief presentation above shows that the contents of *RS A* are thematically related. Below I am going to demonstrate that they also express, and are a product of, a consistent worldview.

### The Concept of Time in *Rishu*

A typical daybook prognostication provides a list of activities that one can or cannot do on a particular day:

“[外] 陽日, 利以建野外, 可以田獵, 以亡, 不得”<sup>170</sup>

“*On the waiyang day, it is auspicious to leave the city and go into the country; one can hunt; if one tries to run away, one will not be captured*”

“外害日, 不可以行作, 之四方野外, 必遇寇盜, 見兵”<sup>171</sup>

“*On the waihai day, one cannot go on business trips; in all four directions into the country, one is sure to encounter bandits or fall victim to armed assaults.*”

Alternatively, a particular activity is given, with the list of days on which it is will be auspicious or not:

“禾良日, 己亥, 癸亥, 五酉, 五丑”<sup>172</sup>

“*Good days for [harvesting] crops are: jihai, guihai, five you days and five chou days*”

“禾忌日, 稷龍寅, 秫丑, 稻亥, 麦子 (...)”<sup>173</sup>

“*Bad days for [harvesting] crops are: yin for millet, chou for sorghum, hai for rice, zi for wheat (...)*”

Not all prognostications are very detailed; some are rather general:

“破日, 毋可以有為也”<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Shuihudi *Qin chu* 秦除 Strip 8正貳. Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組, *Shuihudi qinmu zhujian* 睡虎地秦墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1990), 181.

<sup>171</sup> Shuihudi *Qin chu* 秦除 Strip 9正貳., 181.

<sup>172</sup> Shuihudi *Qin chu* 秦除 Strips 17正參, 184.

<sup>173</sup> Shuihudi *Qin chu* 秦除 Strips 18-9正參, 184.

<sup>174</sup> Shuihudi *Qin chu* 秦除 Strip 20正貳, 183.

*“On a po day, one cannot do anything”*

The prognostications also indicate different degrees of good or bad fortune:

“正月五月九月，北徙大吉，東北少吉，若以是月也東徙，穀”<sup>175</sup>

*“On the first, fifth and ninth month, moving to the North is very auspicious, to the North-East little auspicious; if during these months one should move to the East, one shall die (...)”*

Many prognostications are very deterministic, indicating that in case of A, B will inevitably occur:

“執日，不可以行，以亡，必執而入公而止”<sup>176</sup>

*“On a zhi day, one cannot travel; if someone attempts to run away, he will certainly be captured and delivered to the authorities”*

However certain, unconditional, or inevitable these prognostications may seem, they never assume the authority of ordinances or prohibitions. Their rhetorical value is not that of a categorical order, an injunction or a threat, but of an advice, a prescription, or, at most, a warning. Moreover, the prognostications do not provide any moral reasons or guidance for a particular action to be taken or not. The almanac is not focused on people and their actions, but instead on calendar and the “property” of time. Every period of time—season, month, day or hour—has particular qualities; it is either good or bad for certain activities, and it can be determined or prognosticated by using systems of astrological correlations. Humans have nothing to do with it—they cannot influence or change it, but they can foresee it and act accordingly.

The fact that time has unyielding properties and is beyond human control does not imply that the worldview presented in the *RS* is fatalistic. Quite the contrary, the almanacs allow people to “plan” their fate and avoid misfortune. The idea of the cosmos emerging from daybooks is purely mechanistic: certain things always happen on certain days due to the correlative configurations beyond human control; every such phenomenon is already fixed according to its correspondence with the nature of the days, but since it is a known fact, a person can follow the instructions prescribed in the daybook to maneuver her way around it. The example presented above, where B happens as a result of A, is not a prescription obliging people to comply; all the almanac is meant for is to make peoples’ lives easier and more predictable. If someone commits A on a particular day, B will not be a “punishment” for a “transgression”, but a result of one’s carelessness. In effect, *RS* does not present or promote any kind of moral agenda, but it does disclose the mechanism of timeliness—certain periods are either timely or untimely for particular kinds of actions; all one needs to do to be successful and lucky in one’s undertakings is to pick a correct day from the daybook. It is advisable to follow common sense to avoid doing certain things on certain days, but doing them against the prescription is not prohibited or morally wrong, and it does not involve punishment. An act contrary to the prescription would be futile and lead to natural, albeit inevitable consequences.

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<sup>175</sup> Shuihudi *Xuange* 玄戈 Strip 59正臺, 189.

<sup>176</sup> Shuihudi *Qin chu* 秦除 Strip 19正貳, 183.

As a matter of fact, *Rishu* not only does not command and prohibit certain activities, but it seems to be indicating that any kind of activity can be successful as long as it happens at the right time. Good illustrations for the mechanistic nature of time in *RS* are prognostications about activities that seem morally questionable:

“正陽, 是謂滋昌, 小事果成, 大是有慶, (...), 有爲也, 美惡自成”<sup>177</sup>

“*On zhengyang, a day called “Prosperous Growth”, both small and great things can be accomplished; (...) fair and foul alike come to completion of themselves”*”

“轄, (...), 利弋獵, 報仇, 攻軍, 圍城, 建始殺”<sup>178</sup>

“*On xia, (...); it is auspicious to hunt, take revenge, make military attacks, lay siege, begin killing”*”

“觜嶠百事凶, 可以徼人攻仇”<sup>179</sup>

“*Constellation zuigui, all affairs inauspicious; one can intercept people [on the road] and attack enemies”*”

In *jichen*, we often encounter advice for people in jail:

“轄, (...), 系亟出”<sup>180</sup>

“*On xia, (...), those in jail will be quickly released”*”

As we can see, *RS* serves everybody, impartially and inadvertently. Values and ethics are not an issue when prognosticating. Time is not an agent taking action for or against people, meting out punishments and rewards, but it does relentlessly determine the events by means of its sheer nature and property. The course of time is mechanistic and impersonal. People who know how to use the system of timeliness can be successful in any kind of undertaking.

Daybooks are written pronouncements of prognosticators *rizhe* 日者, who knew and understood the nature of time, and therefore were able to foretell the future.<sup>181</sup> In the *RS* worldview, time determines people’s lives profoundly, forcing them to follow the calendar and adjust their activities to its course; on the other hand, however, time’s regularity and predictability puts people in control and leaves a lot of room for manipulation. This vision of time is “fatalistic” only in the sense that a person cannot “make” a day good or lucky; it is possible, however, to plan the future by picking a lucky day and suitably matching activities to the proper day. The relationship between humans and the cosmos is not entirely mutual, but the mechanistic nature of time renders it predictable and thus conquerable. The *RS*, as a transcription of the course of time—and, thus, the universe—is a tool for manipulating “time-fate”: as I

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<sup>177</sup> Shuihudi *Jichen* 稷辰 Strip 34正, 184.

<sup>178</sup> Shuihudi *Jichen* 稷辰 Strip 40正, 185.

<sup>179</sup> Shuihudi *Xing* 星 87正臺, 192.

<sup>180</sup> Shuihudi *Jichen* 稷辰 Strip 41正, 185.

<sup>181</sup> Li Ling introduces the term *rizhe* 日者 as a denomination for the authors of the almanacs and describes daybooks as their “statements/parlances” “日者之說” ; almanacs were the expressions of the expertise of the *rizhe*, the products of their work, and, to a certain degree, the means by which the prognosticators circulated their ideas; Li Ling, *op. cit.*, 177-8.

pointed out in Chapter II, one's fate depends on the timeliness of one's action; an Actor can choose to act in a timely or untimely manner (—examples of Shensheng and Yiwu); one can also manipulate fate (—Duke Xian, who deliberately changes Shensheng's fate by means of timeliness); in this way, “time” and “fate” become interdependent. As daybooks promise, correct application of the mechanism of timeliness ensures success and good fortune.

The *rizhe*, through their daybooks, provided people with solutions in everyday life. They studied the working of the universe, and they revealed and explained the unknown and the mysterious. Li Ling draws a straight line connecting the *rizhe* with the “historiographers” *shi* 史; in his opinion, both groups of officers belong to the same tradition stemming from the court “calendar specialists”—*riguan* 日官 or *riyu* 日御. As Li Ling points out, the daybook prognosticators and the historiographers later on split ways: starting from the Warring States period, the parlance of the *rizhe* was circulating among common people and was no longer affiliated with the court. In other words, the almanacs acquired the status of popular and not official literature.<sup>182</sup> Nonetheless, the historiographers derived their ideas about the working of time from the same source as the authors of almanacs, and they write history applying the system of prediction based on timeliness. The *rizhe* do not compose almanacs for didactic purposes; they do not convert the concept of time into an ideology meant to control people by influencing their behavior, as is the case in contemporary historical works. The function of *RS*—and the *rizhe*'s knowledge of time—is practical.

### The Problem of Anomaly

The *rizhe* predict the future by figuring out the mechanism of timeliness. They also explain the unpredictable and mysterious by using the supernatural.

According to Donald Harper's definition, apart from purely hemerological literature, almanacs may also include treatises concerned with demonology, illness, dreams, sacrifice, and exorcisms.<sup>183</sup> A good example of an almanac that combines all of these features is *bing* 病—Illness—in *RS* A group (2). It is a strictly hemerological text, organizing entries around groups of two days with indications of what kind of spirit is haunting the person who falls sick on a particular day, what these spirits should be treated with (food and drink, which direction/part of the world the food should come from, which color should it have, and in what container), as well with indications of which following day will bring a change, and on which day the patient should get better and get up from bed. Evidently, according to *RS*, ghosts cause illness, as well as nightmares, and using correlative methods can cure both.

A similar philosophy is expressed in the treatise *jie* 詰 “Spellbinding”—a text classified by Donald Harper as the earliest to date Chinese demonography.<sup>184</sup>

As the title *jie* 詰 suggests, and as stated in the prologue<sup>185</sup> to the treatise, its purpose is to identify, describe, and provide exorcist solutions for expelling ghosts. All of the nearly 70 ghosts presented in the list have similar characteristics: they are unpleasant, whimsical, irrational, and they harm people causing them all kinds of trouble “for no particular reason”—*wu gu* “毋故”. This particular trait of the spirits' character is emphasized in almost every entry by a formulaic

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<sup>182</sup> Li Ling, *op. cit.*, 178.

<sup>183</sup> Donald Harper, *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, *op. cit.* 843

<sup>184</sup> Donald Harper, *HJAS*

<sup>185</sup> “詰·詰咎鬼”—“*spellbinding to inflict odium on demons*”; translation by Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.* 479-80

opening, which clearly demonstrates that the reasons why these ghosts disturb people are random, accidental, and undeserved:

“人毋故鬼攻之不已，是是刺鬼”<sup>186</sup>  
“When a person is constantly for no reason attacked by a ghost, it is the thorn ghost—*cigui*.”

Moreover, some of the ghosts enjoy harming people by nature:

“大神，其所不可過也，善害人”<sup>187</sup>  
“[As for the ghost] *Dashen*, one must not pass by the place where he dwells, because he enjoys causing harm to people.”

It is clear that the appearance of ghosts is not caused by people’s behavior. These ghosts do not act as arbiters of human morality who come as Heaven’s agents to punish or reward, but rather seem to be a pestilence, acting out of their own intention.

Humans are not at all helpless when confronted with such ghosts. All they need is the knowledge of the spirit’s identity and the right method to apply against it; then, it is possible to expel or even kill the ghost:

鬼恒從人籍籍女，与居，曰上帝子下游，欲去，自浴以犬矢，系以苇，則死矣<sup>188</sup>

If a ghost constantly follows one’s daughter, shares the bedroom with her, and tells her “I am the son of god who descended to wander in the human world,” in order to expel him, the daughter must wash her body in dog’s excrement and tie herself up with reeds, then the ghost will die.

This example shows that humans, as long as they know how, can have complete control over the ghost. The relationship between ghosts and humans is thus mutual and one of equal ability—humans can harm ghosts the same way ghosts can harm them—and it is achieved not by means of moral virtue, but with magic and exorcism.

Donald Harper begins his article on Chinese demonography of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE with a statement that “the ancient Chinese conception of the spirit world did not tend towards making a categorical division of the spirits into the good and the evil or the gods and the devils; the general sentiment was, however, that the ghosts of the dead (*kui* 鬼) and the sundry spirits (*shen* 神) who inhabited the terrestrial realm were a hazard to humankind; identifying these spirits, determining whether they were beneficial or harmful, and whether they were to be propitiated or exorcised, were fundamental elements of demonology in early Chinese religion.”<sup>189</sup> Harper reaches this conclusion by reading *jie* 詰 as a demonographical treatise *sensu stricto*—a catalogue of ghosts and demons, and a document describing the spiritual landscape of the period. I argue that the

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<sup>186</sup> Shuihudi *jie* 詰 Strip 27背臺, 212.

<sup>187</sup> Shuihudi *jie* 詰 Strip 27背貳, 213.

<sup>188</sup> Shuihudi *jie* 詰 Strip 38背參, 215.

<sup>189</sup> Harper, *op. cit.*, 459-460.

treatise fits into the larger project of the *RS*, that is, of conquering “time-fate”—thus, being able to predict the future—by determining and exposing the mechanism of timeliness.

The treatise sheds light upon the contemporary demonological lore, but this happens for the larger part indirectly, just as reading other almanacs gives us an idea about the beliefs and concerns of the time. The aim of the text is not to describe ghosts in general or all ghosts that exist in a particular area, and it does not exclude the possibility of the existence of other kinds of spirits. The text mentions both the *gui* 鬼 and the *shen* 神 spirits, but it provides no clear distinction between them; it does not mean that there was no such distinction, but it shows that this is not what the text is concerned with. This is because the ghosts are not the main focus of the treatise. Rather than describing the ghosts, the purpose of the text is to explain anomalous situations that occur in people’s lives, all of which are attributed to the ghosts. Thus, the document is not a catalogue of ghosts, but of strange and unexpected occurrences, each one caused by a ghost of a particular type. The formula “*wu gu er...*” “毋故而...” reveals the ghosts’ predisposition to act at their whim indirectly; it is not applied to describe what all ghosts are like (whimsical), but rather to induce that every time something strange happens *for no particular reason*, it is most probably caused by demons, *who act at their whim*. Thus, the text explains why sometimes, for no particular reason, people and animals fall sick, why someone feels restless, melancholic, depressed, annoyed, and what to do when, indeed, someone’s house is haunted by a ghost; these particular situations are *in each case* caused by ghosts. The text is thus a list of situations when *jie* 詰—the “spellbinding”—should be applied.

Considered from this perspective, the “ghost treatise” constitutes an integral part of the almanac as a whole. The “hemerological” part of the *RS*—groups (1) and (2), and treatises *Meng* and *Mamou* in group (3), all deal with events and activities possible to predict, mostly concerning everyday life. These almanacs help to plan the future based on the mechanism of timeliness. They provide the answers for two kinds of questions: “What will happen if I do X on a Y day?” and “I want to do X; which is the best day to do it?” The treatise *jie* 詰, on the other hand, constitutes the “ghost” part of the *RS*, and it deals with the unpredictable, unplanned, and unexpected.

There are anomalous events in life that cannot be foreseen and that happen for no apparent reason, and which are hence hard to explain. The almanacs attempt to provide solutions for such cases. The entries in treatise *jie* are not historical records—they do not refer to any events that happened at a particular place or time. The treatise can, however, be considered a catalogue of precedence—descriptions of ghosts and the ways of dealing with them based on knowledge derived from past experience. The entries have the form of short narratives of a very regular structure. Some of them might be records of strange accidents that actually happened to people in the past; the almanac collects these accounts and explains the causes of the accidents for the benefit of the people to whom they may happen again in the future.

The almanac demystifies the mysterious and reveals the unknown. All the strange occurrences are recorded and explained, thus reassuring the users that such cases have been taken into account and can be dealt with. In a sense, then, they also become predictable. By determining the property of days/time through prognostication, hemerological texts reveal the mechanism of timeliness—timely activities result in auspicious outcomes; untimely ones bring inauspicious results. According to the ghost treatise, on the other hand, anomalous situations are caused by forces that deliberately disturb the natural—and predictable—order of timeliness. By explaining the causes and providing solutions to the anomalies, the treatise “naturalizes” them—the anomalies become part of the natural course of events. The ghosts constitute a part of Nature,

representing the irrational and disruptive aspect of it; just as Nature, they can be observed and predicted, and as such, they are not entirely beyond human control.

The predictability of the unexpected anomalies depends on the existence of an explanation-solution—the record of it. The act of preserving the description and the remedy for an anomaly reveals an expectation that it may reoccur. It is not possible to determine the exact time of the reoccurrence, but having been recorded and identified, the anomaly will no longer come as a complete surprise. Thus, the record is not a prognostication, but a prediction of a possibility of a certain situation in the future.

Donald Harper discusses in detail the apotropaic functions of the treatise. As he points out, the term *jie* 詰 derives from compounds such as *jieze* 詰責 and *jiewen* 詰問, nomenclature originally used in reference to the investigation of criminal accusations; therefore, he renders the term as “accusation” or “to accuse.”<sup>190</sup> Harper observes that in Qin legal parlance *jie* 詰 “refers to the interrogation of the parties concerned in order to expose the lies in their statements and extract the true facts.”<sup>191</sup> The making of a written record is crucial: it serves as a testimony to spiritual obligations; accusations can be made based on an examination of the record. In conclusion, Harper defines *jie* 詰 as “to obligate oneself to the spirits by means of a written document” and thus to “subject to spiritual scrutiny.”<sup>192</sup> He argues that the designated use of written testimony was to serve as “incontrovertible evidence for testing the veracity of a witness in judicial proceedings” and was applied in practices “in which oaths and spells had the power to magically obligate men and demons.” Thus, according to Harper, “spellbinding” was an “art of exorcism.”<sup>193</sup>

The evidence collected in treatise *jie* is a record of the ghosts’ transgressions. The text provides the tool—in form of spells—by means of which evil ghosts can be punished for their unruly behavior. The ghosts harm people for no reason, thus provoking unpredicted—and thus untimely—anomalies. The key component of the spell is identification of the culprit. Harper points out that part of the talismanic tradition is revealing the secret identity of spirits and demons for the benefit of the people. Thus, *RS* provides its users with the knowledge by means of which they can prevent or repel anomalies. The text is a legal parlance and it is endowed with a punitive property—the text *itself* is a punishment; the spell is both oral and textual. It discloses the identity of the demons and binds them to their doom.

The apotropaic function clearly indicates that the para-ghost stories that comprise treatise *jie* are future-oriented. The knowledge of how to deal with current and future anomalies can be derived from the written testimony—records of past experiences, which serve as a database for the future. This feature puts the mantic texts in line with early historiography, especially annals such as *CQ*.

There is more evidence that proves the mantic provenance of historiography. Harper quotes Shirakawa Shizuka, who argues that in a number of Shang graphs a box-like graphic element, which many epigraphers have interpreted as signifying a mouth, actually represents a ritual vessel used to hold written statements presented to the spirits. According to Shirakawa, this is an evidence of “written rather than oral communication with the spirits.”<sup>194</sup> Although Harper convincingly disputes this assessment, he concedes that in case of two graphs—*shi* 史 and *gao*

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<sup>190</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 472.

<sup>191</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 472.

<sup>192</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 474.

<sup>193</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 478-9.

<sup>194</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 472; footnote 31.

告—the box element indeed represents a ritual vessel holding writ; as he concludes, “the graphs represent words for spirit communication which involve the ritual presentation of documents in vessels for divine inspection.”<sup>195</sup> As I discussed in Chapter II, *CQ* comprises records of the communications with spirits. During ceremonies in the ancestral temple, the officers of ritual—“historiographers” *shi* 史—announced (*gao* 告) the events that took place in the state to the ancestral spirits to call them to witness and to ensure the continuation of the state (spellbinding), and they made written records of these announcements. In their records, they indicated timeliness (*shi* 時) and untimeliness (*bu shi* 不時) of the events. As I pointed out, according to the *ZZ*, untimely events were recorded in the *CQ* as anomalous. These records later started to be regarded as a lesson and a warning. Historiography originated as a religious practice; writing was part of the ritual, and the written record of events had apotropaic functions and was meant for a future use.

As affirmed by Harper, in the Warring States period “natural experts” were also occultists.<sup>196</sup> The office of a *shi* 史 combined the duties of ritual masters, prognosticators (astrologers and diviners), and historiographers, hence the transmission of ideas from mantic texts to historiography: the historiographers were not just recording the events, but communicating with the spirits; they were preserving and studying the past in order to prognosticate about the future; they were at the same time prognosticators and the writers of history.

According to the tradition, Confucius compiled *CQ* to condemn transgressions and to praise virtue. In the practice of early historiography, punishments and rewards were meted out through the very act of recording the events—the *shi* 史, by means of writing, transmitted the information directly to the ancestral spirits; the records were kept in archives to serve as evidence and to be used in the future, both as a warning and a spell. This practice originated from spellbinding, seen in mantic treatises such as *jie*, where writing itself—through disclosing the identity of the culprits—is a way of punishing evil spirits and warding off anomalies.

The Chu Silk Manuscript discussed below is an example of a document in which mantic and ethical ideas begin to converge: the text endorses a rudimentary moral code based on observing the rules of timeliness, and it contains a para-historical narrative supporting that code.

### **The Chu Silk Manuscript—History and the Future**

The Chu Silk Manuscript from Arthur M. Sackler Gallery collection in Washington, D. C. was discovered in 1942 by tomb robbers in Zidanku 子彈庫, Changsha 長沙, Hunan 湖南; it is the only complete and published document found in that site, dating to about 300 BC.

Li Ling published the most comprehensive study on CSM, with the full transcription of the text.<sup>197</sup> In English, the document is discussed in detail and translated by Noel Barnard, and also by Li Ling and Constance A. Cook. In this chapter, I am following the recent English translation by Li Ling and Cook.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Harper, *HJAS*, *op. cit.*, 473, footnote 34.

<sup>196</sup> Harper uses the term “natural experts” as a denomination of all kinds of people involved in the study and practice of natural (para-) sciences, such as shamans, medicine men, diviners, astrologers, etc; Harper, *Cambridge History*, 818.

<sup>197</sup> Li Ling 李零, *Changsha Zidanku Chu boshu yanjiu* 長沙子彈庫楚帛書研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985).

<sup>198</sup> Appendix, Li Ling and Constance A. Cook trans., “Translation of the Chu Silk Manuscript,” in *Defining Chu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004).

The document consists of both pictures and writing. In form, it resembles contemporary divination boards *shi* 式—models of the cosmos used for hemerological prognostications. A typical divination board consists of a round part representing heaven rotating on a pivot on top of a square part standing for the earth; the board has a dial plate divided into the four directions, with eight degree points and a certain point called the Ninth Palace. Along these points and in the Palace there are arranged the nine celestial gods. The god residing in the Palace is called Great Unity—*Taiyi* 太一, and he is the main—“controlling”—god: he rules over the nine celestial gods. Some boards have an additional set of twelve degree points representing twelve divisions of time (hours, days, months, etc.) and the twelve matching gods; in such cases, the controlling god in the center is the Northern Dipper—*Beidou* 北斗.

The CSM is a graphic version of a divination board<sup>199</sup>, and its purpose is the same as of a daybook: indicating lucky and unlucky time. The document is a picture of a square board with images of twelve gods representing the months arranged along its rim. Each side of the board represents a different season; the image of each god-month in the season is accompanied by a list of good and bad activities in that month. In the four corners of the board there are pictures of trees, which represent the pillars holding up the heavens. The “controlling” god found in a typical divination board, in CSM is replaced with text located in the center of the document. The text consists of a longer (A) and a shorter (B) section, and the contents of each section concern the calendar: (B) is focused on the year, (A) on the seasons; the short texts around the rim of the board concern the months.

The text, being placed in the position of the “controlling” deity from a divination board, both symbolically and effectively takes over the functions of the Power controlling the Universe. On the rim of the CSM, there are representations of the time periods (months) as individual gods ruling them; the pictures are images of time—anthropomorphized visualizations of it. Each month is an active god ruling over a particular period of time and space; in effect, the gods *are* time—they stand for it, they represent it, and they characterize it by endowing it with individual characteristics. The images are accompanied with hemerological prescriptions—the rules to be followed in each month being under the command and jurisdiction of each individual god. Thus, each time period has a particular quality—individual traits—reflecting the personality and identity of each god. Acting against the nature of the time period in question offends the god representing it; the god, consequently, proceeds to punish the culprit; likewise, pleasing the god brings good fortune. Time has an identity; it is an active agent. One can foresee its course and avoid misfortune.

The longer central text narrates the history of time—it recounts the story of the creation of the calendar. The “Canon of Yao” 堯典 in the *Documents* 尚書 is the earliest extant text in Chinese tradition providing the myth of the division of time into seasons:

乃命羲、和，欽若昊天；歷象日月星辰，敬授人時。分命羲仲，宅嵎夷，曰暘谷。寅賓出日，平秩東作；日中、星鳥，以殷仲春。厥民析；鳥獸孳尾。申叔，命羲宅南交。平秩南訛；敬致。日永、星火，以正仲夏。厥民因；鳥獸希革。分命和仲，宅西（…）。申命和叔，宅朔方（…）。帝曰：

<sup>199</sup> Divination boards *shi* 式 are actual structures—models/imitations of the Universe; the CSM is a drawing on a sheet of silk representing such a structure; it is not a structure/maquette, but a graphic rendering of it.

「咨！汝義暨和，期三百有六旬有六日，以閏月定四時成歲。」允 釐百工，庶績咸熙<sup>200</sup>

He [Yao] then commanded Xi and He, in reverent accordance with the motions of the expansive heavens, to arrange by numbers and represent by instruments the revolutions of the sun, moon, and stars, with the lunar mansions, and then respectfully to communicate to the people the seasons adapted for labor.

He then separately directed Xi's younger brother to reside at Yuyi called the Orient Valley, where he might respectfully hail the rising sun, adjust and arrange the eastern (or vernal) undertakings, notice the equalization of the days, and whether the star culminating at night fall was the middle constellation of the bird, in order to hit the center of mid-spring; he might also observe whether the people began to disperse abroad, and whether birds and beasts were beginning to pair and copulate.

He further commanded Xi's third brother to reside at the southern border, to adjust and arrange the southern (of summer) transformations, respectfully to notice the extreme limit of the shadow, when the days attain their utmost length, and the star in the zenith is that denominated "Fire": in order to fix the exact period of mid-summer, when the people disperse themselves more widely, and birds and beasts begin to molt and cast their skins.

He then distinctly commanded He's younger brother to dwell in the west (...).

He further directed He's third brother to dwell at the northern region (...).

The Emperor said, "Listen! You, Xi and He; an entire year consists of three hundred sixty and six days; do you therefore employ and intercalary month to settle the four seasons and complete the tropical year. Regulate at the same time with exactness the hundred kinds of labor, and your abundant merits will be universally diffused."<sup>201</sup>

As we can see, Yao, acting as the ruling God—he is referred to as *di* 帝—dispatches his agents to all parts of the world to set up the seasonal sacrifices and, effectively, to "enact" the calendar. The divination boards *shi* 式 also represent this structure of time and put it into practice for divinatory reasons: by the same principle as depicted in mythology, the central god rules over the regional deities responsible for managing singular seasons. In CSM, understood as a model of the Universe thus conceived, it is History itself that becomes the ruling force. History—the record of the past precedence—is the power that endorses and gives the authority to the gods representing the individual time periods: the short texts accompanying each season follow the narrative of the central text. The text itself, which constitutes a written History—the visual form of it—is made for the sake of the future generations, to be used by them, and to be continued. The text transmits the story of the origins of time and perpetuates it; it connects the present people with the past, the knowledge of which is the key to predicting the future. The text takes its readers back to the origin and allows them to reach toward the future, thus erasing the temporal boundaries. Moreover, the historical narrative spells out the moral code underlying the system: it explains the system and it warns that disobedience to time results in catastrophe. In effect,

<sup>200</sup> James Legge, "The Shoo King," *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 3. (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1994), 18-22.

<sup>201</sup> W. H. Medhurst, trans., *Classical Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 50-54.

history instructs and serves as a warning. As it is put in the text:

“恭（恐）民未智（知），（？）（曆）以為則毋童（動），群民以  
〔／〕，三桓發（廢），四興（？），以〔／〕天尚（常）。群神五正，四  
興堯羊。（？）（建） 桓禡（屬）民，五正乃明，百（？）神是享，是胃  
（謂）德慝，群神乃德。帝曰：「（？），敬（？）之哉！」毋弗或敬。佳  
（惟）天乍（作）福，神則各（格）之；佳（惟）天乍（作）夭（妖），神  
則惠之。欽（？）敬佳（惟）備，天像（象）是惻（賊）。（？）佳（惟）  
天〔／〕，下民」之（？）（式），敬之毋戈（忒）！”<sup>202</sup>

One fears that the common people do not yet understand and take the (layout of) the calendar [...1] (to be) invariable and unadaptable. The people consider [...1] that the three constancies [the sun, the moon, and the stars?] will be destroyed, and the four risings [the four seasons?] will be ruined, thereby [... 1 (disrupting?)] the cosmic regularity. Only when the gods, the Five Governors [of the Five Phases], and the four risings are without problems and the reliable (calendrical) constancies guide the people will the Five Governors be illuminated and the Hundred Spirits be thus presented with sacrificial feasts. This is what is called *deni*, “Favor and Affection”, when the many spirits are favorable. The God said: “Extend your respect to them! Never be disrespectful. When heaven creates good fortune, the spirits will then bring it to you. When heaven creates demonic (influences), the gods will (likewise) provide you with them. Be attentive and respectful in (your) preparations and the heavenly pattern will thus be the guiding standard. In the end, the heavenly [... 1 (pattern?)] will be the model for the people below. Respect it without fail!<sup>203</sup>

The knowledge of the past—the identification of the origin—is what assures the continuation in the future; the short side texts, originating from the central “controlling” text, with the images of time periods as ghosts, are to be used as prognostications of the future.

The concept of punitive gods in *Mozi*, as well as in covenant texts recorded in the *ZZ*, seems, then, to be stemming from the same worldview as the one represented in daybooks. In *Mozi* and in covenant texts, there is a promise that punishments and rewards will be meted out in a timely manner: in each case, the predicted punishment is delayed in time—like in a daybook, it is promised or forewarned, but not executed immediately; as I pointed out on Chapter I, it is time itself that fulfills this promise. In other words, the ghosts in *Mozi* are akin to the deities – time agents from the CSM. They, too, represent time by meting out timely punishments.

<sup>202</sup> My own rendering of Li Ling’s transcription in Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao*, *op. cit.*, 191-2; (?) are unknown characters; [ / ] are characters missing from the text.

<sup>203</sup> Translation by Cook & Li; Ling and Cook, *op. cit.*, 173-4; as they explain, “obliterated or untranslatable text is marked in the translation with ellipses; the numbers following the ellipses indicate the number of missing graphs; words with unclear or debated meanings are marked with question marks; words not in the Chinese text (missing but obvious from the context) are bracketed, as are words or phrases added in English to clarify the meaning of the Chinese text; words or phrases added solely for the purpose of making the Chinese text read smoothly in English are placed in parentheses.” Li and Cook, *op. cit.*, 212, footnote 3.

The punitive function of time and the use of history as means of predicting the future were later adopted in the historical narrative, such as the *ZZ*. As the daybooks show, historiography was, from the beginning, perceived as omenology.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the *Mozi* chapter, “Ming gui”, Master Mo proceeds to prove that, through the exercise of their faculty of discernment, or *ming* 明, ghosts reliably and justly mete out punishments and rewards. Master Mo argues that just punishment will be visited on the culprits regardless of their social rank and wealth. He then goes on to justify his argument with the examples of King Jie of Xia and King Zhou of Yin. In both of these cases, Heaven destroys the tyrant by appointing a human to carry out what is described as its “*ming* 明 punishment”<sup>204</sup>:

“昔者夏王桀貴為天子，富有天下，上詬天侮鬼，下殃傲天下之萬民，〔 . . . 〕，故於此乎天乃使湯至明罰焉。”<sup>205</sup>

In ancient times, King Jie of Xia was honored as Son of Heaven and he was in possession of the whole world; but he cursed the Heaven above and he despised ghosts, and below he abused and slaughtered the people of the realm; therefore, Heaven sent Tang to inflict its “illuminated”—*ming* punishment.”

A “*ming* punishment”—明罰—is one that is (1) exemplary and “illuminating”: it illuminates the people by presenting them with an example of a wrong behavior and its consequences; and (2) is executed by means of the application of the faculty of “illumination”—the correct discernment of right and wrong—thereby guaranteeing that the punishment is just; and, finally, (3) is perfectly appropriate to the evil committed; *ming* indicates that the punishment is the punitive action of Heaven.

In light of the thesis proposed in the preceding pages, it is noteworthy that, even though Master Mo’s point is that ghosts unerringly punish the wicked and reward the worthy, regardless of their station in life, this passage never actually mentions the ghosts. Rather, it presents a human agent, Tang, meting out the punishment on behalf of Heaven. Here, then, it is a human who takes up the role of the “discerning ghost”—the *ming gui* 明鬼—that Master Mo presents earlier in the same chapter. In other words, a human acting as a proxy of Heaven is in effect a ghost.

In telling the tale thus, Master Mo interprets history: he attributes the downfall of the tyrants of antiquity, not to human actors, but to Heaven’s intervention in human affairs. When a just war takes place, it is by Heaven’s will that the victorious army succeeds in punishing transgressions, and is duly rewarded. However, as I have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding chapters, Heaven does not use the human agent instrumentally; rather, that actor is the one who perceives the will of Heaven and seizes the right moment to act. He changes his action to conform to the will of Heaven, which shows that he possesses the faculty of *ming* 明, and that, consequently, his action is a *ming* action—a punitive act inspired and supported by Heaven. He perceives the Heaven’s will, and by taking his action, he makes it clear: he manifests (*ming* 明) his own “sagely illumination” (*ming*).

Chong’er is such an agent, and his return to Jin is an example of just such an action. As I demonstrated in Chapter II, he returns as a punitive—discerning/illuminated—spirit *ming gui* 明

<sup>204</sup> In the first example, Heaven appoints Tang to punish Jie; in the second parallel example, King Wu punishes the tyrannical King Zhou.

<sup>205</sup> Sun, *op. cit.*, p. 244; Sun deems the omitted part of the sentence illegible.

鬼, and it is implied in the narrative that his return is divinely determined: it is Heaven that enables it. Chong'er seizes the right moment, and his success stands as proof of his own *ming* quality. We could call his triumph a *ming* success—analogueous to Master Mo's *ming* punishment. It asserts Chong'er as a model of virtue; it is achieved by virtue of his own *ming*; and, it reveals him as the one who deserves to reign in Jin (3). The punitive action Chong'er carries out in Jin is deferred—in this case by 19 years—just like the examples in *Mozi*, where the ghosts' actions are not instantaneous, but deferred. The culprits (e.g. Jie in *Mozi*; Yiwu in the *ZZ*) always have the time to reveal themselves as evil and thereby earn their punishment; likewise, the wronged (Duke Mu of Qin and the parallel examples in *Mozi*; Shensheng in the *ZZ*) and the virtuous (Tang and King Wu in *Mozi*; Chong'er in the *ZZ*) have the time to prove themselves worthy of their reward.

Thus, punishments and rewards are understood as coming from Heaven, and Heaven's agents are people who can discern its will; they will be rewarded accordingly. There are two groups of actors in the narrative: (1) those, who execute justice on Heaven's behalf and receive their reward after their death, when they themselves have become ghosts (in *Mozi*; Shensheng); and (2) those who demonstrate their "sagely illumination" and are rewarded while alive, becoming Heroes—"illuminated rulers" *ming jun* 明君 (such as Tang and Chong'er).

In all of these stories, the supernatural plays a central role, with variations befitting the known fate of the protagonists. Specifically, the stories featuring protagonists who belong to the first group rely on the supernatural to demonstrate that justice never fails; in contrast, narratives that feature protagonists belonging to the second group use the supernatural to justify the actions they undertook. The first group is comprised of narratives in which the divine turns mundane: a ghost story is presented as a historical account. The second group, in contrast, portrays the mundane become divine: humans are presented as ghosts – the *ming* agents of Heaven. The characters in both groups of stories are *ming*; they apply that divine faculty in order to mete out just punishments and rewards in accordance with Heaven's will.

As we have seen, in the *Mozi*, a punishment can be considered *ming* 明 when it is Heaven's execution of justice. By executing justice effectively, using his faculty of *ming*, a person reveals his own quality of *ming*. In the worldview of *Mozi* and the *ZZ*, people must possess that quality in order to perceive the Heaven's will and, consequently, to know what action to take. Daybooks, in contrast, simply advise which time is propitious for a certain kind of action; this information is available to anyone who knows how to consult them. Anybody can learn to do that, whether they have *ming* or not. In the *ZZ*, Duke Xian of Jin—Shensheng, Yiwu, and Chong'er's father—can be seen applying this mechanistic concept of time. By deliberately sending Shensheng on untimely assignments, he disqualifies his son as heir-apparent and blocks his way to the throne. Duke Xian understands how time works in daybooks' terms—it is either good or bad, and one needs to act accordingly to assure success.

Can we then say that Duke Xian is *ming*, because he understands the mechanism of timeliness? As implied in the *ZZ* narrative, his knowledge of time is superficial, his judgment shortsighted, and the success he achieves by his actions short-lived. Duke Xian *manipulates* time, but he has no *ming*—he does not see what future his act of manipulation will bring. Quite the contrary, in fact. He misreads the future, and things turn out completely opposite to what he has planned. Duke Xian believes he has conquered time, but instead, time conquers him. In the end, in the "narratological" *future*, it is Shensheng and Chong'er who will succeed; they really "conquer" time, in that their "sagely illumination" enables them to choose timely actions. Duke Xian loses because he acts in the absence of *ming*.

Master Mo demonstrates that time cannot be manipulated—punishment cannot be avoided—as long as *ming* 明 is involved. *Ming* cannot be misled. The ZZ instructs that the daybook-like application of timeliness is bound to fail, because it lacks the “sagely illumination” and so does not conform to Heaven’s will. In his final judgment on Duke Wen of Jin, Confucius is quoted comparing him with his predecessor, the hegemon, Duke Huan of Qi:

子曰：「晉文公譎而不正，齊桓公正而不譎。」

*The Master said: “Duke Wen of Jin was flexible and not upright; Duke Huan of Qi was upright and not flexible.”*<sup>206</sup>

Confucius’s evaluation of Duke Wen does not necessarily need to be read as criticism. In fact, it seems that the Sage means *jue* 譎—“cunning”, “crafty”, but also “resourceful” and “clever”—in a good way. The ability to be “flexible” and conform to the right moment is desirable. The ability to adapt one’s actions to the requirements of timeliness is the proof of one’s “sagely illumination”. Duke Wen of Jin knew the right moment to act, and thereby he manifested his knowledge of the Heaven’s will. In comparison, Duke Xian was only cunning. He wanted to manipulate time, but he failed to see its divine quality. Confucius’s assessment carries a dilemma: one cannot be “flexible” except by compromising propriety; and *vice versa*, one cannot act properly except by being “flexible”. Chong’er refused to confront his father in battle, and thus remained filial; however, he also refused to die, resourcefully escaping into exile. Shensheng, in contrast, upheld propriety completely, to the death. He certainly is a sagely figure, but he did not become a *ming jun* 明君. Confucius praises both Duke Wen of Jin and Duke Huan of Qi. Both had to compromise something, and it takes a Sage to see if the balance struck through this compromise is right.

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<sup>206</sup> *Analects*, XIV/16; Yang, *Lunyu yizhu*, *op. cit.*, p. 151

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