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The Attitudes of University Students towards a Feminine Style of Internet Language in Email: A Quantitative Study in the South of China

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Abstract

This study focuses on the feminine language style widely used on the Internet by the younger generation in China at the present time and investigates the attitudes of 211 university students with respect to three emails employing different levels of feminine Internet language: minimally feminine Internet language (MiL), moderately feminine Internet language (MoL) and highly feminine Internet language (HiL). The results show that the informants held positive attitudes towards HiL, especially in terms of solidarity, whereas MiL was evaluated comparatively highly in terms of status. The social variable of gender had no impact on the positive evaluation of HiL, which provides grounds for suggesting that the younger Chinese generation is likely to accept and adopt feminine style Internet language, regardless of their own gender.

Keywords: attitude, email, feminine, Internet language, gender, status, solidarity

Internet use has been growing rapidly and the demography of Internet users has been changing in depth and breadth over the past two decades. According to statistics reported by the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC, 2011), there were 485 million Internet users¹ in China by June 2011. The report also specified that 55.1% of the country's Internet users were male and 44.9% were female. Although the percentage of male Internet users had

¹ In Chinese, Internet users are called 网民 (*wǎngmín*, netizens). The term is derived from the concept of "citizens dwelling on the Internet". The CNNIC report took into account Chinese residents, aged 6 years or above, who had used the Internet in the previous six months.

decreased slightly and that of female users had grown very slightly compared with 2010, the level of male use was still 10.2% higher than that for female use. The fact that women tend to use the Internet less than men has been extensively evidenced by other studies (Kirkup, 1995; Scragg & Smith, 1998; Shashaani, 1997).

This disparity appears to go against the “democratic theory” that has been widely discussed in relation to Internet communication (Yates, 1997; see also Guiller & Durndell, 2007; Herring, 1993a; Nowak, 2003; Rice & Love, 1987; Siegel et al., 1986; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). Due to social anonymity on the Internet and the loss of a great deal of the non-verbal information that exists in face-to-face interactions, Internet communication is believed to be free from a variety of the cues of hierarchy, status and power, such as gender, race and class (Rice & Love, 1987; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). In other words, it has been hypothesised that the lack of visual cues related to the natural physical world should have a democratising effect on Internet communication and thus might result in “gender-free equality online” (Guiller & Durndell, 2007: 2242). Such a theory maintains that people are not able to identify the biological sex of other users on the Internet, where the physical body is absent, and that, consequently, their perceptions are not influenced by social judgement of the addressee’s gender. Conversely, a number of research findings suggest the opposite to this democratising context, one in which Internet communication has been said to be set (e.g. Herring, 1993a, 1994; Lea & Spears, 1992; Panyametheekul & Herring, 2007). People still manage to adapt communication on the Internet in order to facilitate categorising other users by sex, even in the absence of physical cues. On the other hand, some studies (e.g. Nowak, 2003; Rice & Love, 1987; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986) have found support for the existence of a utopian equality and democracy in cyberspace. For instance, Nowak (2003) found that her participants’ perceptions of the online addressees’ genders did not have an effect on the style of communication. The current study will further examine the democratic theory from the perspective of attitudes towards the feminine style of Internet language.

Based on the findings of the survey by the CNNIC, the age brackets 20–29 and 10–19 ranked as the largest and second-largest groups of Chinese Internet users (with 30.8% and 26% of all Internet users respectively), and students accounted for the single largest body of Internet users in China (as high as

29.9%). In fact, the majority (56.1%) of the Internet users surveyed by the CNNIC were educated to senior high school level or higher and 11.7% had been educated to degree level or above. For this reason, the current study chose to concentrate on a sample of undergraduate students in order to explore the attitudes of Internet users who are part of the vanguard of Chinese Internet development.

Although English is the most widely used language on the Internet (26.8%), the number of Chinese-language users has been increasing dramatically, jumping from around 14% in 2005 to 24.2% in 2011 (IWS, 2012). Unlike English-language users, who usually perceive the Internet as an “information highway”, Chinese Internet users are generally young people who tend to consider the Internet an “entertainment highway” and search the web for entertainment rather than for information (Koch et al., 2009). The feminine style of Chinese Internet language is one example of the creative use of the Chinese language in the context of accessing the Internet for entertainment purposes in China.

The current study will look into the development of the feminine style of Chinese Internet language on the basis of an attitudinal study. Language attitudes are thought to provide explanations of the underlying motivations for linguistic variation and change (Garrett et al., 2003: 12; Labov, 1984: 33). Therefore, an investigation of the attitudes of the predominant user group on the Internet in China, university students, towards the feminine style of Chinese Internet language should help explain why certain Internet language features are adopted. Specifically, the current study aims to position itself under the framework of the democratic theory in order to investigate: (1) the overall attitudes of university students towards the feminine style of Chinese Internet language, (2) evaluations of the feminine style in terms of solidarity and status, and (3) whether the factor of gender has an effect on the evaluation of the feminine style and the possible explanations for this. The paper will first introduce existing studies of language and gender on the Internet in order to outline the features of the feminine style of Chinese Internet language, which will guide us to the research design.

1. Introduction to studies on language and gender on the Internet

A number of studies exist on gender differences in access to and the use of computers and the Internet (e.g. Brosnan & Lee, 1998; Kirkup, 1995; Li & Kirkup, 2007), as well as research on gender differences in communication (Lakoff, 1975; Coates, 1993) and on attitudes towards languages, varieties of language and language variations (Eckert, 1989; Kramer, 1977; Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1972). However, very few studies have focused on gender differences in Internet communication (Allen, 1995; Sussman & Tyson, 2000) and there is a particular scarcity of research on attitudes towards Internet language.

Internet language – also termed “netspeak”, “cyberspeak”, “electronic language” or “computer-mediated communication” (CMC) – refers to a type of language consisting of “features that are unique to the Internet” (Crystal, 2001: 18). The use of the term “netspeak” or “cyberspeak” emphasises the interactive and conversational elements of this language, whereas “electronic language” and CMC are usually associated with the medium itself, i.e. computers and the Internet. Although the core characteristic of the Internet is interactivity, it is nonetheless a medium almost entirely dependent on reactions to written messages. The type of language under investigation here primarily involves reading and writing rather than listening and speaking (Chen, 2010: 5–6; Crystal, 2001; Liu, 2002: 12). Therefore, we adopted “Internet language” as an umbrella term in the current research.

Abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons are widely perceived as the three most significant features of English Internet language (Baron, 2011). Chinese Internet language is believed to have its own distinctive linguistic features at the lexical, syntactical and discursive levels (Gao, 2006). The current study will focus solely on the lexical level of Chinese Internet language.

Due to the logographic nature of the Chinese language,² the Chinese writing system has been gradually adapted for use on the Internet (Yang, 2007) and these adaptations exemplify its use for entertainment purposes. The five main adapted forms most commonly found on the Internet are: stylised Mandarin (e.g. 漂漂 piàopiào for 漂亮 piàoliàng, “beautiful”), stylised dialect-

² Chinese belongs to Sino-Tibetan language family and uses a writing system based on characters rather than an alphabet. Chinese language learners must learn both the pronunciation and tone for each character, rather than just the pronunciation of a word, as is the case in English.

accented Mandarin (e.g. 偶 ǒu for 我 wǒ, “I, me, my”), stylised English (e.g. 粉丝 fěnsī for “fans”), stylised initials (e.g. “bt” for 变态 biàntài, “abnormal”) and stylised numbers (e.g. 886 bāibāiliu for 拜拜啦 bāibāila, “Byebye lah [interjection]”). As seen from the examples, these adaptations of the language for use on the Internet are achieved through three types of creativity in the use of words: (1) abbreviation, such as “bt” for 变态 biàntài; (2) homonyms or near-homonyms,³ such as 偶 ǒu for 我 wǒ; and (3) interjections, such as 886 bāibāi[liu] for 拜拜啦 bāibāi[la]. One further creative use on the Internet is also a feature of English Internet language: (4) the use of emoticons, which has been commonly mentioned and researched in the studies of Chinese Internet language (e.g. Chen, 2011; Duanmu, 2011: 98–99; Lin, 2002: 26–27). Generally, these four features demonstrate the overall characteristics of Chinese Internet language at the lexical level. The section on research methodology (see section 2.2) will discuss the application of these four creative uses of Chinese words in emails to represent the feminine style of Chinese Internet language.

Gender differences in communication have been extensively studied (e.g. Coates, 1993; Graddol & Swann, 1989; Holmes, 1992). As long ago as 1975, Lakoff suggested that women’s language tends to be associated with the language of the powerless, whereas men are seen as speaking the language of the powerful. Other gender-related stereotypes are that male speech is usually linked with such characteristics as boastfulness, loudness, aggressiveness and dominance. In contrast, female speech tends to be perceived as emotional, gentle, expressive and verbose (Antill, 1987; Briton & Hall, 1995; Coates, 1993; Kramer, 1977; Lakoff, 1975). However, relatively few studies have investigated gender difference in Internet communication (Allen, 1995; McCormick & Leonard, 1996; Savicki, Lingenfelter, & Kelley, 1996; Sussman & Tyson, 2000; Topper, 1997).

Herring (1994) has revealed that, according to her ethnographic observations and surveys, women and men demonstrate distinctive styles in posting to the Internet, which is contrary to the suggestions of other scholars that the Internet neutralises distinctions of gender (Chmielewski, 1998; Martin, 1998; Otomo, 1998). The male style “is characterized by adversariality: put-

³ The term “homonyms” here refers both to words having exactly the same pronunciation but different meanings and to two words that are near-homonyms (*xiéyīnzi*) but with different tones and meaning (An, 2003; Chen, 2011: 22; Zhuang, 2010: 6–7).

downs, strong, often contentious assertions, lengthy and/or frequent postings, self-promotion, and sarcasm” (Herring, 1994). On the other hand, the female style “has two aspects which typically co-occur: supportiveness and attenuation” (ibid.). “Supportiveness” refers to expressions of appreciation, thanks and community-building, which make other participants feel accepted and welcome. “Attenuation” alludes to hedging and expressing doubt, apologising, asking questions and contributing ideas in the form of suggestions (ibid). Therefore, the four creative uses of Chinese Internet language to represent the feminine style should also demonstrate these two characteristics. This will be explored in section 2.2.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research instruments

This study employed a semi-structured questionnaire that included a variant form of the matched-guise test to explore students’ attitudes towards the feminine style of language used on the Internet. The matched-guise test is an indirect method of attitude measurement (Lambert et al., 1960). It has been widely used in attitude studies (Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003) in order to obtain in-depth information on perceptions of language variations (Buchstaller, 2006; Campbell-Kibler, 2005) or varieties of language (Bayard et al., 2001; Dailey, Giles & Jansma, 2005; Hiraga, 2005; Ladegaard, 2001; Lam, 2007; McKenzie, 2008; Zhang, 2010).

Generally, the matched-guise technique involves producing a series of recordings using the same speaker who can represent each language or language variety. Then the informants are asked to listen to each recording and rate each recording according to a semantic-differential scale: friendly/unfriendly, sociable/unsociable, highly educated/poorly educated, etc. (see also El-Dash & Busnardo, 2001; Lyczak, Fu & Ho, 1976; Nesdale & Rooney, 1996; Williams, 1974). However, the variant form of the matched-guise test that was adopted in the current research presented three emails, instead of recordings, to the informants and asked them to evaluate the “writer” of each email on a 5-point semantic-differential scale developed from previous studies on attitudes to language varieties in the Chinese community (Candler, 2001; He & Li, 2009; Lyczak, Fu & Ho, 1976; Zhang, 2010).

2.2 The design of the three emails

The emails were adapted from an authentic email written by a young female scholar (25-30 age group). The three emails varied only in terms of the frequency of the use of feminine features displayed in each one (see Table 1 below): Email One contained features of highly feminine language (HiL henceforth), Email Two (the original email) contained moderately feminine language (MoL henceforth) and Email Three used minimally feminine language (MiL henceforth). Since MoL was originally composed by a female writer, it was adapted to MiL by minimising all four features: (1) the abbreviation was written using the full characters, (2) all the homonyms and near-homonyms were switched to the original words, (3) all interjections but one were deleted, and (4) all emoticons but one were removed. Conversely, HiL was created by increasing the number of homonyms/near-homonyms, interjections and emoticons. The total ratios of these four features of Internet language to the total number of words are: 25% for HiL, 13.56% for MoL and 0.04% for MiL. Therefore, the frequency of these features in the three emails decreases significantly from one to the next. Table 1 also provides examples to show the use of four features of Chinese Internet language in the current study.

Table 1. Use and the frequency of Internet language features in the three emails

Four features of Chinese Internet language	Examples	Number of instances in HiL, MoL and MiL
Interjection	啊 a for “ah”	HiL: 7
		MoL: 3
		MiL: 1
Abbreviation	酱紫 jiàngzǐ, “sauce purple”, for 这样子 zhèyàngzǐ, “this way”	HiL: 1
		MoL: 1
		MiL: 0
Homonym/ homonym	Near- 小盆友 xiǎo pényǒu, “little basin-friend”, for 小朋友 xiǎo péngyǒu, “little friend”	HiL: 4
		MoL: 2
		MiL: 0
Emoticon	:-)	HiL: 4
		MoL: 2
		MiL: 1

I will now move on to discussing the design of the text, focusing on the choice of words used to represent the feminine style.

Interjections can serve a hedging function by mitigating the certainty of a statement in order to express the meaning tentatively, a manner frequently identified as a characteristic of female language (Kramer, 1977; Lakoff, 1975; Palomares, 2008). A number of interjections were consequently included in HiL, while fewer were used in MoL and only one in MiL.

Indeed, not every abbreviation, homonym/near-homonym or emoticon can be said to demonstrate the feminine style. As a result, the choice of the three types of words is based on the principle of representing the two identified features of feminine features, i.e. attenuation and supportiveness.

Regarding the abbreviation, 酱紫 jiàngzǐ, literally “sauce purple”, was used for 这样子 zhèyàngzǐ, meaning “this way”. In fact, this abbreviation is believed to have been adapted from Taiwan-accented Mandarin and is often used by young Chinese people (Chen, 2009; Gao, 2008). This abbreviation, among others commonly used by Chinese university students, is vivid and humorous (Gao, 2008), something helpful in adding friendliness and efficiency to the communication (Hu, 2010). It therefore demonstrates supportiveness by displaying friendliness to the addressee. Since it was difficult to find another abbreviation that would have fitted in the context of the email and the criteria of feminine features, the same abbreviation was kept in both MoL and HiL and no others were added.

All four homonyms/near-homonyms incorporated in HiL have completely different meanings from the original words (see below); this is thought to inject a note of humour into the communication (Zhou, 2013). This feature, the addresser displaying humour to the addressee, indicates supportiveness, a feature of the feminine style, since it attempts to include the addressee(s) in the communication. Therefore, it should be considered a characteristic of the feminine style of Chinese Internet language. These homonyms/near-homonyms are:

Original word	Meaning	Homonym/Near-homonym	Meaning
<i>xiǎo péngyǒu</i>	<i>Little friend</i>	<i>xiǎo pényǒu</i>	<i>Little basin-friend</i>
<i>wǒ</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>ǒu</i>	<i>An image (noun) Accidental (adj.)</i>

<i>liǎo</i>	Particle	<i>niǎo</i>	<i>Bird</i>
<i>de</i>	Possessive particle	<i>dī</i>	<i>A drop of water</i>

Due to the written nature of Internet interaction, the loss of many forms of non-verbal behaviour generally seen as typical of female speakers is inevitable (Briton & Hall, 1995; Kramer, 1977). However, emoticons can be used to convey a message in greater and more expressive detail. In particular, a positive emotion is more frequently used by women (Colley et al., 2004). For this reason, two emoticons expressing happiness (i.e. smiley faces) were included in HiL. A further two emoticons were also used: one appears in the first line of HiL ('_-|||') and is intended to convey the feeling of embarrassment due to the lateness of the reply to the addressee's email. It is consequently considered to display hedging and apology, which can be seen as forms of attenuation. The emoticon in the second line ('T_T') of HiL is actually a crying face, expressing sympathy for the addressee, which is intended to display supportiveness. The number of emoticons was reduced to two in MoL and only one (a smiley face) in MiL.

After the three emails were formulated, they were reviewed by two linguistics research students and then piloted with six university students (three female and three male) to confirm the use of Internet language displaying the feminine style. All eight participants believed HiL was most likely to have been written by a female, while four thought MoL sounded feminine and most were uncertain of the gender of the writer of MiL. In other words, the eight participants became less and less certain regarding the gender of the writer of HiL, MoL and MiL when the frequency of the feminine features decreased. The pilot study confirms that the Internet language features used in the three emails indeed incorporated supportiveness and attenuation and that they consequently truly reflected the feminine style of Chinese Internet language.

Furthermore, one question in the questionnaire created for the present study was designed specifically to investigate the extent to which the informants believed the emails were written by a woman. This was done in order to determine whether the feminine features were interpreted as such by the informants and whether an increased occurrence of such features would

make them more likely to consider that email was composed by a woman.⁴ As expected, the results show that HiL was rated highest, with a mean score of 3.87, followed by MoL, with 3.24. MiL came last with a mean score of 2.54.

In addition to the variant of the matched-guise test, the questionnaire contained two other sections: one for basic demographic information and one for information on Internet access and use. Eight multiple-choice or open-ended questions were included in order to assess the extent of the students' experience with computers and the Internet (Li & Kirkup, 2007). The questionnaire was initially constructed in English and then translated into Chinese. The translation was checked by two professional linguists who are bilingual in Chinese and English. The questionnaire was also piloted with a group of nine university students from one of the institutes where the actual research was later conducted.

2.3 Participants

The sample of the population chosen for this study consisted of Chinese students who were studying at two universities in the south of the People's Republic of China. All informants were asked about their personal background, including their name, major subject and year of study, in order to rule out any informants who were specialising in linguistics or a language-related subject. Of the 211 Chinese informants aged between 19 and 25 that participated in the study, 98 were male and 104 were female.⁵

The current study was conducted in Guangzhou, P. R. China, over a six-month period from July 2011 to December 2011. The entire research process was conducted in Chinese, the native language of all the informants and of the researchers. Following the completion of the data collection, the informants were debriefed regarding the purposes of the study and the research methods used.

⁴ After reading each email, the informants were asked, "To what extent would you think the above email was written by a woman?" They stated their evaluations of each email on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 5 indicating "very much".

⁵ Please note that 9 of the 211 questionnaires did not give information regarding their gender.

3. Research results and discussion

This section presents the results generated from the three parts of the questionnaire.

3.1 Overall, status and solidarity ratings

Table 2 presents the average ratings of the three emails. A paired sample t-test was used to assess the statistical significance of the difference between the mean ratings of any two emails. A line in bold type indicates the existence of significant differences: between the average ratings of HiL and MoL ($t=3.14$, $df=192$, $p=0.002$, <0.01) and between the average ratings of MoL and MiL ($t=3.36$, $df=198$, $p=0.001$, <0.01). HiL was rated highest, followed by MoL. MiL, which contained the fewest feminine language features, was rated lowest. This could suggest a positive attitude towards the feminine style used on the Internet since the students rated the email containing the highest number of feminine language features most positively.

Table 2. HiL, MoL and MiL average ratings

	Mean	Std. Deviation
HiL	3.64	.60 ($p<0.01$)
MoL	3.53	.53 ($p<0.01$)
MiL	3.38	.64

Since there were 211 informants, in evaluating three emails for 12 personality traits (such as “friendly”, “honest”, “sincere” etc.), the questionnaire produced 633 responses for each of the 12 traits. We therefore used Principal Components Analysis (PCA, or factor analysis; see Field, 2009: 638) to reduce the amount of data to a more manageable size in order to conduct a more specific analysis. The outcome of the PCA is shown in Table 3.⁶ Seven traits were loaded on to Component 1 (status): “elegant”, “well

⁶ The rotated component matrix is a way of easily identifying each variable with a single factor and thus each factor will tend to have either large or small loadings of any particular component. These loadings of a component decide which factor this variable should belong to (*Name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process*, 2010: 144). Following Stevens' (1992: 382) suggestion, the cut-off point for the loadings was set at 0.4 for the current study.

educated”, “honest”, “sincere”, “intelligent”, “humble” and “pleasant”.⁷ The five remaining traits, “modern”, “warm”, “creative”, “social” and “friendly”, were loaded on to Component 2 (solidarity).

Table 3. Rotated component matrix

	Component	
	1 (Status)	2 (Solidarity)
Elegant	.77	
Well educated	.81	
Honest	.72	
Sincere	.63	
Intelligent	.71	
Humble	.60	
Pleasant	.57	
Modern		.82
Warm		.62
Creative		.74
Social		.67
Friendly		.56

The status rating for each email was generated from the ratings for the seven traits in Component 1, which were identified by means of the PCA. As shown in Table 4, MiL was rated highest on the status dimension. MoL was ranked second and HiL was rated lowest. However, the paired-sample t-test revealed that the differences in the ratings did not reach statistical significance.⁸ Thus, while differences are certainly to be found in the evaluations of the three emails in terms of status, the ratings do not differ significantly from each other.

⁷ The trait “pleasant” is loaded on both Component 1 and 2 with values of 0.553 and 0.546 respectively. Given the preponderance of ratings obtained from the PCA, I chose to group this trait into Component 1.

⁸ MiL and MoL: $t=0.83$, $df=200$, $p=0.41$, >0.05 ; MoL and HiL: $t=1.95$, $df=195$, $p=0.053$, >0.05 .

Table 4. Status and solidarity ratings for HiL, MoL and MiL

Status	Mean	Solidarity	Mean
MiL	3.45	HiL	4.00 (p<0.01)
MoL	3.44	MoL	3.64 (p<0.01)
HiL	3.38	MiL	3.24

The solidarity ratings for each email were generated from the five traits in Component 2 identified by the PCA: “modern”, “warm”, “creative”, “social” and “friendly”. Using a paired-sample t-test, two significant differences were found in the rankings (represented in Table 4 above by a line in bold type): HiL was evaluated highly and to a significant level ($t=8.38$, $df=204$, $p=0.00$, <0.01); MoL was rated rather less highly, while MiL received the lowest ranking ($t=8.05$, $df=206$, $p=0.00$, <0.01). These results indicate that the informants tended to evaluate an email higher on the solidarity dimension when it displayed more feminine features. Therefore, we may safely conclude that there exists among Chinese students a positive attitude towards the feminine style of Internet language from the point of view of solidarity.

The effects of the informants’ socio-demographic characteristics on formation of attitudes were also investigated using statistical tests. The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) test was employed for this part of the analysis since it is commonly used to investigate the interactions between an independent variable (in this case, gender) and two or more dependent variables (the HiL, MoL, MiL overall, status and solidarity ratings; see Zhang, 2010). A MANOVA test helps to investigate whether the independent variable “differ[s] along a combination of dimensions which are formed by more than one dependent variable” (Field, 2009: 594).⁹

The MANOVA test results show that the effect of gender on the evaluations of the three emails did not reach statistical significance: $F(6, 174) = 1.45$, $p=0.21$, >0.05 . Therefore, the informants’ gender did not have a significant effect on the overall ratings of the three emails. Interestingly, this result indicates that the relatively positive attitude towards HiL is not

⁹ Although a separate ANOVA for each dependent variable tends to be employed when there is more than one dependent variable under investigation, multiple ANOVA tests are thought to increase the chance of making a Type I error (Field, 2009: 586).

conditioned by the factor of gender. Both male and female informants evaluated this email in the same way, which generalises the positive attitude to HiL to a certain degree.

3.2 Female writer

One further question was designed specifically to investigate the extent to which the informants thought the emails might have been written by a woman. After reading each email, they stated their evaluations on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “not at all” and 5 indicating “very much”. The average HiL, MoL and MiL ratings for this question are shown in Table 5.

Based on the paired-sample t-tests, the informants’ evaluations confirm that HiL most obviously demonstrated a feminine style as it was considered the email most likely to have been written by a woman ($t=9.05$, $df=210$, $P=0.00$, <0.01). MiL, with the fewest feminine features, was evaluated as the least likely to have been composed by a woman ($t=9.71$, $df=210$, $p=0.00$, <0.01).

Table 5. Descriptive results, according to informants’ gender, for HiL, MoL and MiL for the question, “To what extent do you think the above email was written by a woman?”

	Overall	Male	Female
Likelihood of female writer for HiL	<u>3.88 (p<.01)</u>	3.86	3.89
Likelihood of female writer for MoL	<u>3.28 (p<.01)</u>	3.09	3.46
Likelihood of female writer for MiL	2.58	2.55	2.61

The results of the follow-up one-way ANOVA tests show that the evaluation differences between male and female on HiL and MiL were so small that they did not reach statistical significance.¹⁰ In other words, both male and female informants agreed that HiL was the email most likely to have been composed by a woman and perceived this as being what a woman might “sound like”. On the other hand, MiL, which contained the fewest feminine language features, was deemed the most unlikely to have been written by a woman. This finding demonstrates the stereotypical view of the feminine style of Internet language. Interestingly, in comparison with the ratings obtained from the male informants, the female informants demonstrated greater certainty regarding the gender of the MoL writer, which contained a

¹⁰ HiL: $F(1, 200)=0.72$, $p=0.79$, >0.05 . MiL: $F(1, 200)=0.27$, $p=0.60$, >0.05 .

moderate amount of feminine Internet language features: $F(1, 200)=11.69$, $p=0.001$, <0.05 .

3.3 Preference for the feminine style

Another question was designed specifically to investigate preference for the feminine style of Internet language. After reading each email, the informants were asked: "To what extent would you like to write an email like the one you have just read?" They stated their preference for each email on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 5 indicating "very much". The overall HiL, MoL and MiL ratings for this question are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. HiL, MoL and MiL descriptive results, according to informants' gender, for the question, "To what extent would you like to write an email like the one you have just read?"

	Overall	Male	Female
Preference for HiL	2.13	1.90	2.33
Preference for MoL	2.73	2.47	3.00
Preference for MiL	3.03	3.10	2.96

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to investigate the statistical significance of the difference between the overall means of two sets of ratings: between the preferences for HiL and MoL ($t=-8.07$, $df=210$, $p=0.00$, <0.01), and between the preferences for MoL and MiL ($t=-3.02$, $df=209$, $p=0.00$, <0.01). Overall, MiL was evaluated most favourably, followed by MoL. HiL was the least preferred email. This finding seems to contradict the results of the verbal-guise test. In other words, the informants evaluated the feminine style of Internet language positively as readers but showed least preference for this style when they were asked if they would compose an email in such a way.

A one-way ANOVA test was carried out in order to examine whether the independent variable of gender had a significant effect on the informants' preference for the feminine style of Internet language. Table 6 also presents the differences in preference for HiL, MoL and MiL according to gender. In general, the female informants gave higher evaluations than the males for Internet language with more feminine features (i.e. HiL and MoL; see Table 6), whereas the male respondents stated a clear preference for MiL, which has the fewest feminine features of Internet language of the three emails. To a

certain extent, the female informants demonstrated a higher preference for the feminine style than the male informants.

Indeed, the follow-up one-way ANOVA test confirms that gender had a significant effect on the evaluations of HiL, $F(1, 200)=9.68, p=0.00, <0.01$, and of MoL, $F(1, 200)=12.23, p=0.00, <0.01$. However, the differences in preference for MiL did not reach statistical significance: $F(1, 199)=0.76, p=0.38, >0.05$. That is to say, when an email was composed in a highly feminine style of Internet language, the female informants demonstrated a greater preference for it than the male informants. When an email had very few feminine features, both male and female informants showed the same level of preference for it.

3.4 Possibility of using the feminine style

After reading each email, the informants were asked to evaluate this question: “If you were to write an email to a woman, to what extent would you write it like the one above?”, on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “not at all” and 5 indicating “very much”. The HiL, MoL and MiL overall ratings for this question are shown in Table 7. This question is different from the one in Section 3.3 since it places an emphasis on the potential addressee being female by adding the condition of “if you were to write an email to a woman”. This means we can investigate whether the informants would perceive the emails differently when they realise the reader will be a woman.

Table 7. Descriptive results, according to informants’ gender, for HiL, MoL and MiL for the question, “If you were to write an email to a woman, to what extent would you write it like the one above?”

	Overall	Male	Female
Likelihood of using HiL to write to a female friend	<u>2.43</u>	2.16	2.66
Likelihood of using MoL to write to a female friend	2.74	2.51	2.97
Likelihood of using MiL to write to a female friend	2.80	2.84	2.80

The paired-sample t-tests show that HiL was evaluated least favourably by the respondents ($t=-4.32, df=210, p=0.00, <0.01$). In a manner consistent with the results presented in Table 6, the female informants offered higher HiL and MoL evaluations, which contained the highest and second-highest levels of feminine Internet language features respectively, while the male informants

evaluated MiL higher, which demonstrated the least feminine style of all three emails.

According to a one-way ANOVA test, the effect of gender was significant in the evaluations of HiL: $F(1, 200)=10.07, p=0.00, <0.01$, as well as MoL: $F(1, 200)=9.60, p=0.00, <0.01$. In other words, the female informants gave higher ratings for HiL and MoL than the male informants did when asked about their preferred style for writing to a female friend. Although there was difference in the ratings for MiL in terms of gender, the one-way ANOVA test revealed that the differences did not attain statistical significance.¹¹ Therefore, it is likely that both the male and female informants shared the same attitudes towards the use of MiL when addressing a female friend. Namely, if they had to choose one of these three emails, both groups preferred MiL to HiL/MoL, even when the addressee is a woman. This result seems consistent with that presented in Section 3.3: the effect of gender was significant in the evaluations of HiL and MoL but no significance was found in MiL. However, a closer look at the gender differences in these results indicates that the male informants gave higher ratings to HiL (2.16 vs. 1.90) and MoL (2.54 vs. 2.47) and lower ratings to MiL (2.84 vs. 3.10) when they were told the recipient of the email was female (see Table 7) than when they were unaware the sex of the email's reader (see Table 6). A possible explanation for this is that the male informants might have considered a moderate use of the feminine style to express a certain degree of closeness to the female addressee, or at least that they might adopt writing features that are often identified with the addressee in order to establish effective communication.

4. Discussion

The research has established that HiL, MoL and MiL were ranked in descending order of preference in the overall and solidarity ratings. The finding that the social variable of gender had no impact on the positive evaluation of HiL provides grounds for suggesting that the young Chinese generation seems to accept the feminine style of Internet language, regardless of their own gender. As far as status is concerned, MiL was ranked first. One possible explanation

¹¹ MiL: $F(1, 200)=0.06, p=0.80, >0.05$.

for this is that the features demonstrated in HiL are usually linked with powerlessness. O'Barr and Atkins (1998: 385) have argued that women's speech features appear "to be more closely related to social position in the larger society" than those of men's speech and that this kind of style would therefore be better considered "a composite of features of powerless language".

In the current study, HiL contained the highest number of emoticons, homonyms and interjections, which function as features of the feminine style of Chinese Internet language, and is therefore linked with powerlessness. In contrast, MiL contained the fewest of these features associated with powerlessness. It is thus unsurprising that the informants evaluated MiL most positively in terms of status – a dimension where power is an important element. Interestingly, the informants showed a clear preference for MiL when the questions pertained to the informants' perceptions of the style used for email composition. As observed above, MiL contains the fewest feminine features and consequently it was evaluated most positively in terms of status. Therefore, MiL was the preferred style for composition, probably owing to the fact that it is unlikely to convey an image of powerlessness to the addressee(s).

Previous research has shown that women are more likely than men to use the standard forms of a language (Coates, 1993: 183; Gordon, 1997; Eckert, 1998: 66; Eisikovits, 1998: 51; Trudgill, 1972), which might explain the absence of a significant difference in the attitudes of the male and female informants towards employing MiL in email writing. Since MiL displayed the fewest features of the feminine style of Internet language, it was the closest to a standard form in comparison with MoL and HiL, which contained a greater number of feminine features. It is not surprising, then, to find that the female respondents also preferred to adopt a style that is close to standard usage. However, it should be noted that women's preference for adopting standard forms does not disprove the existence of a feminine language style. Given the fact that there are certain distinct features of feminine language, women might want to use the standard form in order to deliberately avoid the feminine style and consequently conceal their female identity.

The feminine style stereotype is demonstrated in the finding that the HiL email was considered the one most likely to have been written by a woman. In the absence of physical cues, the informants allocated a gender to the composer of this email by observing the high frequency of feminine features

demonstrated in HiL. This kind of gendered stereotype has been documented in a number of studies which show that women are seen as being more polite or conservative, or that they tend to use emotional and tentative language more than men (Colley, et al., 2004; Eckert, 1998: 66; Haas, 1979; Lakoff, 1975; Palomares, 2008). The use of feminine features in HiL would make it sound much more tentative and supportive, but also less assertive, than MoL and MiL. Consequently, it fell into the category of what women “sound like” in the perceptions of the participants. However, the fact that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the male and female informants indicates that Chinese women accept this stereotype to some degree.

In a comparison of the results for “preference for the feminine style” (section 3.3) with those for the “possibility of using the feminine style” (section 3.4), the male participants seemed to be comparatively more willing to adopt the feminine writing style when they were told the recipient was a woman. This result echoes Herring’s (1993b; cited in Yates, 1997) finding that men tend to adjust their writing style in order to achieve effective communication. From a different perspective, this finding also confirms that the choice of words in communicating in the virtual world is still consciously or subconsciously associated with the conventional social perceptions of gender.

In general, although the Internet offers the possibility of escaping the bounds of gender expectations and has the potential to provide a neutral space, freedom of expression and equalised participation (Chmielewski, 1998; Martin, 1998; Otomo, 1998; Sproll & Kiesler, 1986; Sussman & Tyson, 2000), the current study indicates that gender differentiation and power associations still play an important role in Internet communication. In line with the previous studies that also found gender variation in online communication (Guiller & Durndell, 2007; Herring, 1994; Herring & Paolillo, 2006), this finding does not support the assumptions of the democratic theory with regard to Internet language. In other words, the absence of the visual or non-verbal aspects of communication does not necessarily mean the absence of a basis for discrimination. Unfortunately, cyberspace is not a utopia where real-life inequality does not exist. However, it could also be considered fortunate that the Internet is able to preserve the complexity of reality and thus enable us to transfer as much as possible from the real world to the virtual communities, for better or for worse.

5. Conclusion

The current study may be one of the first to investigate the perceptions of the younger Chinese generation regarding the feminine style of Internet language in China. The fact that the informants of the current study were from universities in the south of China means that the results cannot be taken as absolutely representative of the attitudes of students of their academic level over the country as a whole. However, both universities are national comprehensive universities that recruit students from all over China so the sample of 211 students can be considered as reasonably representative of this group of citizens as a whole. The results suggest positive attitudes overall towards the feminine style of Chinese Internet language among the younger generation in China. However, feminine features on the Internet are perceived negatively in terms of status, which is consistent with the attitudes towards women's language in face-to-face communication. The finding of gender stereotyping appears not to support the cyber democracy theory. Gender inequality is still clearly evident on the Internet, ranging from access to the Internet to attitudes towards the feminine style of Chinese Internet language. Future research is recommended to explore attitudes towards this style of Internet language from a broader perspective, including investigating regional differences in China and the perspectives of participants from different socio-economic backgrounds.

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Bibliographical Notes on the Early-Ming Copy of the *Zhouyi zhuanyi daquan* at the Edinburgh University Library

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Abstract

The earliest printed item in the collection of the Edinburgh University Library is an incomplete early-Ming copy of the Zhouyi zhuanyi daquan, dated 1440. Although it was acquired in 1628, its precise bibliographical details and wider significance have thus far remained obscure to most library users, and at present the volume does not have its own catalogue entry. In these notes, I provide a brief description of the volume and its early-Ming context, and I argue for the continued importance of such lesser-known imprints for our understanding of late-imperial Chinese cultural history.

Keywords: Zhouyi zhuanyi daquan; examinations; Ming dynasty; Hu Guang; Yongle; printing; imprints; Jianyang; Yu Hui.

Introduction

The earliest printed item in the collection of the Edinburgh University Library, an incomplete copy of the *Zhouyi zhuanyi daquan* 周易傳義大全 [Complete Commentaries on the Changes of Zhou; hereafter ZYZYDQ], is an early-Ming Jianyang imprint dated 1440 (Hu, 1440a). The copy was acquired in 1628, but its precise bibliographical details, its political significance, and the context of its publication have remained obscure to most library users, and at present this volume does not have its own catalogue entry. The ZYZYDQ exists in a number of distinct extant editions, and the significance of one particular early-Ming imprint might therefore be considered marginal, particularly given this imprint's relative textual inferiority. I would argue, however, that regardless

of any textual limitations (explicitly not my concern here), the very existence of this edition, and the stated rationale for its publication, are in fact highly significant dimensions of the broader cultural history of this book. This essay, a set of bibliographical notes in the widest sense of the term, provides a brief overview of the contents of the volume, a description of its physical properties, and an attempt to place both its publication and reception within its Ming cultural and political context. The primary intention here is simply to document the existence of this copy of the 1440 imprint here at Edinburgh, but in doing so I also argue for the continued importance of such lesser-known imprints for our understanding of late-imperial Chinese cultural history.

The 1415 Edition of the *ZYDYDQ*

The *Zhouyi* 周易 [Changes of Zhou], also known as the *Yijing* 易經 [Classic of Changes], and better known in English as the *Book of Changes*, remains one of the most important works of the Confucian tradition. The sixty-four hexagrams that form the basis of the work are traditionally thought to have been revealed to Fuxi 伏羲, a mythological figure of early antiquity, whose work was continued by King Wen of Zhou 周文王, and subsequently edited by Confucius himself in the fifth century BCE. Although interpretations varied over the course of many centuries, it was generally held that the work contained certain truths about the architecture of the universe, which would be made manifest by the application of proper exegesis. The present version of the text, on which all the major commentaries are based, is believed to have been collated by the great Han scholar Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE), but as with many of the early works, the major commentaries became, over time, as important as the original text, and were themselves subsumed into the canon.

The *ZYDYDQ* of 1415 (Hu, 1415) asserts as authoritative the interpretations of two particular Song-dynasty commentators: the *Yichuan yizhuan* 伊川易傳 [Yi River Commentary on the Changes] by Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), and the *Zhouyi benyi* 周易本義 [Original Meanings of the Changes of Zhou] by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200).¹ In very broad terms, the Cheng commentary interprets the *Zhouyi* as a moral and philosophical treatise, while the Zhu commentary reads

¹ The *zhuan* 傳義 (lit. 'transmitted meanings') in the title of the *ZYDYDQ* refers to the titles of the Cheng and Zhu commentaries.

it as a manual of divination. The significance of the ZYZYDQ was the method by which these two very different commentaries were reconciled within a single work (Hon, 2008).

The ZYZYDQ was produced as part of the *Wujing sishu daquan* 五經四書大全 [Complete Commentaries on the Five Classics and Four Books], commissioned by the Yongle 永樂 Emperor (Zhu Di 朱棣; r. 1403-1424) in 1414, the twelfth year of his reign (Lin, 1991). It bears the names of forty-two compilers, principal among them being Hu Guang 胡廣 (1370-1418), Yang Rong 楊榮 (1371-1440) and Jin Youzi 金幼孜 (1368-1432), members of the newly-organised grand secretariat of seven senior Hanlin Academy 翰林院 scholars. All three of these men had received their *jinshi* 進士 degrees under the ill-fated Jianwen 建文 Emperor (Zhu Yunwen 朱允炆; r. 1399-1402), with Hu Guang, who served as editor-in-chief of the project, having been placed first in the year 1400 (Zhang, 1974: 4124-25; Goodrich & Fang, 1976: 627-29). In 1414, these three men had just returned from the second of the Yongle Emperor's northern campaigns, a four-month expedition to Mongolia during which the group had been responsible for the education of the young Zhu Zhanji 朱瞻基 (later the Xuande 宣德 Emperor; r. 1426-1435) (Jin, 1991). As Anne Gerritsen (2007: 124-27) has shown, the bond between a handful of highly-successful scholar-officials hailing from Ji'an 吉安 prefecture in Jiangxi province, a group that included both Hu Guang and Jin Youzi, was an important dimension of early fourteenth-century political history.

Imperial sponsorship of the *Wujing sishu daquan* was a key part of the Yongle Emperor's attempt to regulate the textual knowledge available in the early fifteenth century, an attempt that had manifested itself most evidently in the enormous *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 [Encyclopaedia of the Yongle Reign], compiled by Yao Guangxiao 姚廣孝 (1335-1418) et al. between 1403 and 1408. The initiation of such literary projects so soon after 1402 links them inextricably to issues surrounding the legitimacy or otherwise of the Yongle Emperor's succession. Anxious on the one hand to be seen as a patron and guardian of culture within the empire, the emperor probably also considered the early re-deployment of the educated scholar class on projects such as these to be critical to his sustained ability to rule (Elman, 1997: 70-5). Most importantly, perhaps, these compilations, and their application within the examination system, were designed as a means to define and control 'the official version of acceptable knowledge' (Elman, 2000: 122).

The ZYZYDQ was completed and presented to the throne in the ninth month of the thirteenth year of the Yongle reign (1415), a scarcely-believable nine months after its initiation the previous year (Huang, 1773-82: 13.16b-17a). Thereafter, as the standard text of the civil service examinations, it defined the way the classic was read for at least the next two centuries. The work was officially superseded in the Qing Dynasty by another imperially-authorized edition: *Zhouyi zhezhong* 周易折中 [Balanced Annotations on the Changes of Zhou], compiled by Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642-1718) et al. in 1715, and in which, significantly, the order of the Cheng and Zhu commentaries is reversed (Hon, 2011). But a spike in the proliferation of new commentaries after 1572 had caused the Ministry of Rites 禮部 to issue warnings to examiners against accepting readings of the classics that deviated from the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy (Chow, 2004: 163-66), suggesting that the ZYZYDQ was already losing its authority by the end of the Ming.

Under the microscope of later centuries, neither the *Wujing sishu daquan* in general nor the ZYZYDQ in particular fared well. Some late-Ming scholars considered Hu Guang's collaboration with the Yongle Emperor to be an improper rejection of the favour shown him during the Jianwen reign (Elman, 1997: 80). Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682), in typically grumpy mood, equated the damage caused by using badly-compiled editions of the classics to test examination candidates to that of the burning of books during the Qin period (Gu, 2012: 54-57). In a scathing assessment, later endorsed by the editors of the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 [Complete Library of the Four Treasuries; 1773-82], the pre-eminent early-Qing literary historian Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709) accused Hu Guang and the other editors of simply cobbling together the works of other scholars and removing their names (Zhu, 1773-82: 49.17a-19b). For Zhu, the whole enterprise 'made manifest the impurity of Hu Guang's heart and the careless negligence of his official colleagues' 可見胡廣心術之不純而同事諸臣亦苟且游戲甚矣 (ibid.: 19b).

The 1440 Edition of the ZYZYDQ

If the Palace edition of 1415 represents imperial authority, the 1440 edition of the ZYZYDQ, a copy of which is now in the Edinburgh University Library collection (Hu, 1440a), may be said to inhabit a very different world. This edition was published in Jianyang 建陽, northern Fujian (Minbei 閩北), at the Shuanggui shutang 雙桂書堂 [Twin Cassia Book Hall], a commercial publishing

house operated by the Yu 余 family, the most prominent name in publishing at that time (Chia, 2002). It is dated the fifth year (1440) of the Zhengtong 正統 reign period, the first reign of the young Zhu Qizhen 朱祁鎮 (r. 1436-1449 and 1457-1464), great-grandson of the Yongle Emperor. Despite the availability of movable type from the eleventh century onwards, xylography (woodblock printing) remained the dominant method of publishing in China, a situation that would continue throughout the Ming period (Chow, 2004: 59-71). By 1440, Jianyang had firmly established itself as one of the most important centres of woodblock publishing in the empire. The Twin Cassia Book Hall edition of 1440 seems to be extremely rare; it does not appear in the *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu* 中國古籍善本書目 [Catalogue of Chinese Rare Books] (1985-96: *Jingbu* 經部 64-65), and it predates any dated imprint listed in that catalogue published after the Palace edition of 1415. This includes a later Twin Cassia Book Hall edition dated 1496.

Commercial publishers such as the Twin Cassia Book Hall clearly derived enormous benefit from the examination system and the state's publishing endeavours. Officially-compiled and published works such as the *ZYZYDQ* tended to be prohibitively expensive; their re-publication commercially met the short-term demands of examination candidates, but also both fed off and into a broader scholarly interest in comparing editions, re-collating texts and writing new commentaries. As Lucille Chia (2002: 125) has observed, commercial printing on such a large scale tended to act as a leveller of textual authority, and imperially-authorized text risked being altered, either by accident or by design, almost as soon as it was released into the public domain.

Such concerns regarding the stability of texts occupied the minds of the literati élite over a number of centuries, with Song-dynasty critics such as Ye Mengde 葉夢德 (1077-1148) already complaining of a publishing industry disseminating faulty editions of works by using woodblocks riddled with errors (Cherniack, 1994: 49). In this regard, the reputation of Jianyang publishers was particularly poor. Since the Song, the area had been notorious for producing poor-quality editions, referred to rather disparagingly as 'Masha editions' 麻沙本, which were characterised by badly-printed text, a cramped page layout, poor-quality paper, and, most worryingly, a large number of textual errors (Chia, 2002: 116-26). The continuing market for such imprints over several centuries attests to the fact that book acquisition extended far beyond connoisseurs, but the lack of regard paid to Masha editions by literati has also

tended to result in a low survival rate relative to numbers produced. By the late Ming, collectors could afford to be discriminating, so, for example, while the catalogue of the great bibliophile Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664) lists 165 distinct versions or editions of the *Changes* (Qian, 2002: 323-25), it also reflects Qian's reputation for 'collecting only Song- and Yuan-dynasty editions, and not touching anything published by men of recent times' 所收必宋元板不取近人所刻 (Cao, 2002: 322).

Description of the Edinburgh University Library Copy

The Edinburgh University Library copy of the 1440 edition shows several of the characteristics typical of an early-Ming Jianyang imprint, including misaligned and occasionally indistinct characters, particularly where interlineal commentary meets the text proper. The bamboo pages of the volume are extremely thin and have become brittle over time; a number of damaged pages were evident when I first examined the volume in 2012, although these were repaired during extensive conservation work (including rebinding) undertaken in 2013. The brittleness of the paper has also caused splits along the centre strips (*banxin* 版心) of the leaves, making it difficult to read page numbers, a characteristic typical of Jianyang imprints (Chia, 2002: 26-27). The seventeenth-century technology manual *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物 [Exploitation of the Works of Heaven's Manufacture] describes bamboo paper as being a speciality of Fujian (Song, 1978: 325), and for Jianyang publishers, this type of low-quality paper would have helped to keep production costs down. The centre strips of this edition also display double 'fish-tail' (*yuwei* 魚尾) markers and broad 'elephant trunk' (*xiangbi* 象鼻) lines both above and below. Each half leaf contains eleven columns of nineteen main text (*zhengwen* 正文) characters, typical of an averaged-sized Ming-dynasty Jianyang imprint (Chia, 2002: 42-43).

Until 2013, the volume was bound upside down, having apparently been illegible to the Edinburgh University Library staff of the day, and its spine read: 'BIBLIOTHECÆ EDINENSIS. CHINESE'. An earlier, handwritten inscription appears on the final page (i.e. what was thought to have been the first page), with brief details of the acquisition recorded in Latin: 'Liber xxxxxx Edinburgenae ex dono Roberti Ramsay. 1628' (the second word is illegible to me). Robert Ramsay of Woodston (d. 1643), who later became minister of Ecclesgreig (St. Cyrus), graduated as Master of Arts in July 1628 (Morgan,

1933-34: 1.1; Scott, 1925: 481), and the book was probably donated to the Library to mark that occasion, a common practice among students at that time.² Sadly, how Ramsay might have acquired the volume, remains unknown.

A complete copy (in ten volumes) of the 1440 imprint is held at the Harvard-Yenching Library in Cambridge, MA, and a comparison of that copy (Hu, 1440b) and the Edinburgh copy (Hu, 1440a) yields the following observations:

The Edinburgh copy is missing its table of contents (*zongmu* 總目), beginning at what would have been page 3b of the editorial principles (*fanli* 凡例). This means that it is missing eleven pages or half leaves (1a-3b of the contents; 1a-3a of the notes) at the beginning of the volume. It then ends, abruptly, at page 21a of *juan* 2, which should run on to page 34b. *Juan* 3 to 24 are missing entirely. The Edinburgh copy, therefore, at 323 half leaves, is now less than one fifth of its original extent. The missing title and table of contents accounts for its sometimes being attributed to Cheng Yi, whose preface is indeed the first complete essay to appear; the description 'Essay by Ch'eng-tze on the Yi King' is written at the beginning of the volume in what appears to be a twentieth-century hand.

Although so much of the book is missing, the vital early preliminary essays by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi are all present in the Edinburgh copy, which consists of: General [Editorial] Principles 凡例 (incomplete); [Cheng Yi's] Preface to the Changes 易序; Preface to Master Cheng's Commentary 程子傳序; [Cheng Yi's] Meanings of Upper and Lower Divisions [of the Hexagrams] 上下篇義; Master Zhu's Diagrammatic Explanations 朱子圖說; [Zhu Xi's] Five Treatises 五贊; [Zhu Xi's] Divination Rituals 筮儀; [Cheng and Zhu's] Principal Teachings on the Changes 易說綱領 (to which is attached an essay by the Southern Song scholar Dong Kai 董楷 [js. 1256], which does not appear in the table of contents); *Juan* 1 卷之一; *Juan* 2 卷之二 (incomplete).

One interesting observation is that the order of the preliminary essays does not match that of the table of contents in the Harvard-Yenching copy, which has the two Cheng Yi prefaces reversed. That anomaly is repeated in the Harvard-Yenching copy itself, which additionally has the General Editorial Principles appearing later than its own table of contents suggests it should.

² For this information I am indebted to Joseph Marshall, Rare Books Librarian at the Edinburgh University Library.

Such irregularities were possible in part because page numbers are never given in the tables of contents of early Chinese books, and restart from page 1 at the beginning of each new section. This practice reflects the fact that individual sections would usually have been produced by different craftsmen working on short-term jobs, perhaps even at different workshops, with an individual block carver able to produce somewhere between 100 and 150 characters per day (Chia, 2002: 37; McDermott, 2006: 36-37). Nevertheless, it is precisely this type of error of production, and therefore of transmission, that earned Masha editions the scorn of contemporary critics.

Rationale and Significance of the 1440 Edition

The 1440 edition contains two publisher's colophons (*paiji* 牌記, on which see Zhang, 2000), enclosed within distinctive boxes (cartouches), only one of which survives in the Edinburgh copy. The first is a brief line that should appear on page 3b of the missing table of contents, reading (from the Harvard-Yenching copy): 'Newly printed in the *gengshen* year [1440] of the Zhengtong reign at the Twin Cassia Book Hall of the Yu Family' 正統庚申余氏雙桂書堂新刊. The second, which is retained in the Edinburgh copy on page 2b of the Preface to the *Changes*, is a fascinating note, also dated 1440, and signed by a man named Yu Hui 余惠, presumably the owner of the Twin Cassia Book Hall at that time. Yu touches on the relationship between the official and commercial sides of the industry, and his colophon, which almost makes commercial publishing sound like a philanthropic venture, is worth translating in full here:

Shulin [lit. 'Forest of Books'; the book district of Chonghua 崇化, Jianyang] has been producing books like Cheng's *Commentary* and Zhu's *Original Meanings* for many a year now. In our dynasty the various scholars' commentaries on the *Changes* were again sought and collated, and detailed explanations of them were made. These were called the *Complete Commentaries*, which were distributed to the academies. But Yu Hui, considering that scholars of the hills and groves would have difficulty examining these, has transcribed the original texts, and sponsored the appointment of craftsmen to carve the blocks. Now, therefore, each scholar of the hills and groves will be able to obtain and examine a copy for himself.

書林程朱易傳本義等書行之久矣我朝復旁搜諸家之說而詳釋焉斯謂大全
頒降學校惠慮山林之士艱於觀覽乃謄原本捐貲命工鋟梓庶山林士子皆得
鑑焉。

Yu Hui's explicit self-portrayal as a respectable facilitator of scholarly endeavour is a fascinating counter to the usual complaints about the Jianyang publishing industry, and it anticipates by over a century a similar claim made by one of Yu's descendants, and discussed by Lucille Chia (2002: 158-59). In a culture in which all educated men – not only those studying at the academies – had an obligation with regards to the proper criticism and transmission of the canonical texts, Yu reminds us of the significant role played by commercial publishers in widening access to such works. No doubt such self-promotion was primarily a marketing tool, but there is some validity to Yu's claim regarding access to books, which, as Joseph McDermott (2006: 43-81) has shown, remained expensive and scarce throughout the first century of Ming rule. From this perspective, one might (or at least Yu Hui might have us) view the 1440 edition of the *ZYZYDQ* as a small step towards the 'construction of new reading publics' that occurred during the sixteenth-century publishing boom (McLaren, 2005; Ko, 1994).

In recent years, the availability of an electronic version of the *Siku quanshu* has revolutionised scholarship in pre-nineteenth-century Chinese humanities, while at the same time scholars have rightly cautioned against an overreliance on that database on the grounds of textual inferiority (Egan, 2001). I would want to add that the privileging of *any* particular imprint over all others, even if that imprint *were* textually superior, has the potential to impoverish our understanding of the book in its wider cultural context, and I would strongly argue against the proposition that certain imprints are of 'no value for research' (Ji, 1988: 163) due to low production values. Whatever its limitations in terms of quality, the very existence of a commercially-published 1440 imprint of the *ZYZYDQ*, and the fascinating rationale for its publication as articulated by Yu Hui, are important components of a more nuanced 'sociology of texts', and a reminder of 'the human motives and interactions which texts involve at every stage of their production, transmission, and consumption' (McKenzie, 1986: 6-7). The incomplete copy of that imprint that somehow found its way to Edinburgh is also a small but significant fragment of early-Ming history, to which we are very fortunate to have access.

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Strange Stories about China's Rise

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Edward N. Luttwak's *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy* (Harvard University Press, December 2012) is a curious book. One would think that a book published by a senior associate at a powerful Washington think-tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, would see the US and the broader Western world as its audience. Although the book was commissioned in 2010 as a project for the Office of Net Assessment at the US Department of Defense, in the preface Luttwak assures us that his book is 'not an adversarial investigation of an enemy power', but is offered to his 'friends in China'. (ix)

Luttwak's advice is simple and straightforward. He argues that China's current strategy that pursues a simultaneous expansion of economic, military and diplomatic power is doomed to fail. Beijing's three-fold 'aggrandizement' of power is already causing problems on the world stage, provoking a diverse set of countries to push back economically, militarily and diplomatically.

Thus Luttwak's 'logic of strategy' directly contradicts China's official strategic goal of developing comprehensive national power. According to Luttwak, a country cannot have it all, and must choose between military, economic and diplomatic power. He points to Germany's early 20th century experience as a warning to China in the 21st century.

At the turn of the 20th century, a recently-united Germany was out-performing the United Kingdom in terms of most economic and social indicators. Britain, however, had a stronger navy. Germany's mistake, according to Luttwak, was to challenge British sea power. The result was not simply a quantitative arms race between the two countries, but the qualitative transformation of the international system: Germany's military challenge spurred Britain to build alliances with its former rivals, France and Russia, to encircle and contain Germany.

Luttwak concludes that Berlin's military aggrandizement did not strengthen Germany, but actually weakened it. If Berlin had renounced its naval expansion and concentrated on building economic power, it would have been the most influential nation in the world in the 20th century. Because it simultaneously pursued military, economic and diplomatic power, it was left in ashes twice in the 20th century.

Indeed, we can extend Luttwak's analysis to explain Germany's success in the 21st century: a newly-united Germany is the most influential country in Europe simply because it does not pursue military power. While President Hu Jintao declared that China needs to become a 'maritime power' at the 18th Party Conference in November 2012, Luttwak advises Beijing to do the opposite. It needs to adopt a Zen-style 'less is more' (p.66) grand strategy for its own good—and for the good of the world.

Actually, China employed such a Zen strategy between 2004 and 2009 when it successfully pursued its 'peaceful rise' foreign policy. The gist of peaceful rise is that China would concentrate on its own economic development in ways that would also benefit other countries, rather than pursue a military expansion that would challenge the international system. China, after all, is the main beneficiary of economic globalization.

Peaceful rise was quite effective. Beijing's 'smiling diplomacy' was so successful that some characterized it as a 'charm offensive'. Beijing was even more popular when contrasted with the decline in global public approval for the United States in the mid-2000s, which was a response to the Iraq War and the 'War on Terror'.

China's expanding economic and diplomatic power was thus an unintended consequence of the global unpopularity of the US under the George W. Bush administration, when anti-Americanism soared.

China's global popularity peaked in 2008: the world stood in awe at the Summer Olympic Games, which showcased China as the top gold medal winner and Beijing as the new centre of global prosperity and order. That the global financial crisis started in New York less than one month after the Beijing Olympics ended confirmed for many that China offered an alternative to the United States on the global stage.

This grand shift from West to East worked itself out in new foreign policy agendas in Asia and the US. In 2009, Tokyo's newly-elected Democratic Party of Japan government decided to rebalance its ties towards a growing China,

and away from what it saw as a declining US. In Washington, the newly-elected Obama administration likewise extended a hand of friendship to Beijing in hopes of building more positive and productive bilateral relations.

But rather than following the peaceful rise policy that stressed mutual respect, Beijing saw these expressions of friendship as signs of weakness. Now that China was strong, it was time to settle scores. In a mad rush to surpass the US and become the world's number one power, in 2009 Beijing shifted its policy to seek aggrandizement in all three dimensions of power: military, economic and diplomatic.

Since then, Beijing has revived long-dormant territorial disputes with South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines and India. In 2010, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi added insult to injury when he explained Beijing's new Sinocentric approach to his Southeast Asian counterparts: "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact." An editorial in Beijing's hypernationalist newspaper, the *Global Times*, fleshed this out when it warned 'small countries'—South Korea and the Philippines—to stop challenging China in the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea: "If these countries don't want to change their ways with China, they will need to prepare for the sounds of cannons."

Luttwak chronicles how Beijing's growing power is now being resisted "through the reactions of all the other powers large and small that have started to monitor, resist, deflect, or counter Chinese power." (p.5) Beijing's belligerent approach to disputes in the South China Sea has pushed the Philippines and Vietnam to build military ties with the US. Its aggressive challenge to Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands (which Chinese call the Diaoyu islands) has likewise made Japan strengthen its military ties with the US. This new suspicion of China was reflected in the polls: Shinzo Abe, a well-known China hawk, was elected Japan's new prime minister in December 2012. Even countries that depend upon China for their economic prosperity—Australia and Myanmar—now look to the US to balance China's growing power.

These various countries thus welcomed the Obama administration's 'pivot' from Iraq and Afghanistan back to Asia in 2011. While Beijing benefited from anti-Americanism in the mid-2000s, America's new popularity in Asia is an unintended consequence of China's aggrandizement of power.

Still, because China is a nuclear power Luttwak argues that conflict is unlikely to take a military form. Rather than a geopolitical struggle, he explains that resistance will be geo-economic. He notes that countries as diverse as Australia, Brazil and Argentina are now restricting what assets Chinese companies can buy. The main obstacle to the geo-economic reaction, Luttwak explains, actually is the US and its 'free trade' ideology.

Thus Luttwak argues that a coalition of states is in the process of forming to resist Chinese power. Unless Beijing dramatically changes its policy to restrict military aggrandizement, then Luttwak feels that China will go the way of Germany in the early 20th century, and become a nation weakened by its pursuit of comprehensive national power.

Rather than cheer China's imminent demise, Luttwak laments the fact that China's new leaders are unlikely to follow his advice to build a successful China.

Although this sounds like a coherent argument, in fact *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy* does not offer a detailed analysis of Chinese strategy. Luttwak's 22 short chapters read like a collection of op-eds: they are clever but superficial, more confident assertions of opinion than analysis that is supported by evidence. Indeed, Luttwak never actually explains what the 'logic of strategy' means.

But the book is interesting (and even entertaining) for other reasons. Luttwak's many outrageous statements remind us of the limits of professional Sinology and polite society.

While public health terms—especially (communist) contagion and containment—were central to Western understandings of the Cold War, Luttwak looks to neurological and behavioural metaphors to explain what he feels is China's post-Cold War affliction.

He coins the phrase "great-state autism" to explain Beijing's "pronounced insensitivity to foreign sensitivities". (12) This national disease is not unique to China; it afflicts all great powers. While small and medium powers are hyper-aware of their situation vis-à-vis other countries in world affairs, great powers generally do not have much time for foreign affairs because they are overwhelmed by the domestic crises that plague large and complex societies.

Although Russia and the United States also suffer from this diplomatic disease, Luttwak argues that China's great-state autism is even more "virulent". (p.12) The country's long history as an isolated power means that it has little experience in the skills of inter-state relations. The common assumption that

Chinese civilisation is superior to all others means that Beijing's diplomats are unable to see things from their counter-parts' perspective, Luttwak tells us.

A case in point: officials and public intellectuals in China are unable to understand why Vietnam and the Philippines would be threatened by Beijing's recent moves in the South China Sea. Rather than accept that their Southeast Asian counterparts are acting in their own self-interest, Beijing assumes that they must be part of a global anti-China conspiracy that is directed by Washington.

Beijing's new arrogance, according to Luttwak, also comes from its enduring belief that China has a long history of successful strategy, starting in the 5th century BC with Sunzi's *Art of War*, and continuing to this day. In one of his longer and more detailed chapters, "The Strategic Unwisdom of the Ancients", Luttwak uses history to challenge the Classics. He concludes that Chinese-style strategy has been very unsuccessful in practice: for over half of the last millennium, China has been conquered and ruled by neighbours who were neither so numerous nor so technologically advanced.

Moreover, he argues that China's classical strategic concepts continue to be a major source of trouble for Beijing due to the peculiarities of their historical production. These ideas were formulated during the Warring States period (475-221 BC) when various Han Chinese kingdoms struggled against each other in a complex geometry of shifting alliances. In the context of a continual "alternation of conflict and cooperation" (p.74), strategies of deception and surprise were paramount.

The problem, for Luttwak, is that Beijing now applies lessons learned from intracultural conflicts among Han Chinese to the modern world's intercultural conflicts. To put it another way, in classical times Han Chinese kingdoms could be pragmatic—swiftly shifting from conflict to alliance—because all sides shared similar norms and practices. But now most modern conflicts are inspired by deep national, ethnic and religious animosity that make it hard for nation-states to compromise in a pragmatic way.

China's self-confidence in its own wisdom, especially strategies based on deception and surprise, leads to another problem that plagues Beijing's diplomacy: trust, or the lack thereof. Even Beijing's successful policy of peaceful rise stems from Deng Xiaoping's rather cryptic 24 character formula that instructed China's leaders on how to address the fall-out from the June 4th massacre in 1989. For foreign policy, Deng felt that China should "not seek to

lead”, but rather should “bide its time, conceal its capabilities, and do some things”. While this strategy informed China’s popular peaceful rise policy, there has always been a sneaking suspicion about what “things” China would “do” once it no longer felt the need to “conceal its capabilities”.

Although Chinese writers insist that the “bide and hide” formulation promises win-win solutions to the world’s problems, it actually resonates with China’s classical idiom for revenge: “sleeping on brushwood and tasting gall” (*woxin changdan*). This phrase comes from an ancient story of humiliation and vengeance: after suffering a military defeat, King Goujian (r. 496–465 BC) quietly endured humiliation at the hands of his enemy, while working hard to increase the strength of his kingdom. But this was not simply a positive strategy of building up his kingdom’s power; Goujian also used deception, trickery, lying, and bribery to weaken his rival economically, socially, militarily and politically before defeating it in the end. The lesson of this story is clear: to exact vengeance you need to bide your time while secretly building up your country’s strength.

This is not merely a lesson from ancient history. The idiom that encapsulates the “bide and hide” strategy has been very popular in the past century, including inspiring an eponymous historical drama—*Woxin Changdan*, translated into English as *The Great Revival*—that was shown on China Central Television in 2007.

More to the point, the “sleeping on brushwood” strategy of slowly building up comprehensive national power, while secretly weakening rivals economically, militarily and politically, explains how in 2009 Beijing could quickly shift from its peaceful rise strategy to a more aggressive foreign policy. Now that Beijing is strong, according to this popular view, it is entitled to strike back to right historical wrongs, including reclaiming territories that neighbours “stole” while China was poor and weak.

Although Luttwak does not discuss the “sleeping on brushwood” example, he would certainly see it as indicative of the problems of using intracultural tactics for inter-cultural/international strategy: “What worked in the Warring States, which shared the same culture, would only cause endless war among today’s diverse states.” (p.82)

This intracultural stress on deception and surprise thus makes China’s great-state autism even more severe than that of other great powers. When military aggrandizement is added to China’s diplomatic autism, Luttwak

explains, a new strategic disease emerges: ASDS, acquired strategic deficiency syndrome.

In addition to a medical diagnosis of Beijing's strategic maladies, Luttwak shatters academic taboos. While many wear 'anti-American' as a badge of honour, it is nearly impossible to use the phrase 'anti-China' in polite conversation. Likewise, it is seen as unwise and politically problematic to suggest that China's growing power needs to be 'contained'. The concern in both cases is that such language is reminiscent of racist approaches to international politics that characterized the British empire and the McCarthy era in the US; thus many worry that this vocabulary justifies a hawkish China policy in the present.

Actually, a keyword search shows that 'anti-China' and 'containment' are primarily found in Chinese critiques of US foreign policy, which they argue is evidence of the West's enduring 'cold war mentality'. This language thus tells us more about Chinese views of the West than Western views of China.

Hence it is curious that a Defense Department advisor uses such baggage-laden terms to frame his analysis. Luttwak sees the beginnings of an anti-China coalition of states that would contain China. Although the State Department pursues a dual policy of engaging and constraining Beijing, and the Defense Department's new Air Sea Battle plan targets China as its "Main Enemy", Luttwak explains that Washington is not necessarily central to the anti-China coalition. Rather than a geopolitical stand-off between the number one and number two world powers, he says that a coalition is "coalescing against China in various pairings and combinations". (p.258) Although strategists in Beijing trace any opposition to China's rise to a conspiracy hatched in Washington, this multivalent response will actually "Gulliverize" China. (p.264)

China will be Gulliverized not through military means, but through geo-economic coordination: the coalition "would need no soldiers but only customs officials to apply immediate and powerful pressure on the Chinese government." (p.141) The containment policy is thus more passive than active.

There are numerous problems with Luttwak's analysis, the most important of which is his cavalier use of the concept of "containment". The US and its allies actually pursued a containment policy against the PRC in the early Cold War period that was even stricter than the one imposed on the Soviet Union.

All economic, educational, diplomatic and political contact was proscribed until the thaw in US-China relations in the 1970s.

In the present age of neoliberal globalization, the economies of the US, China and countries around the world are intimately intertwined. Hundreds of thousands of American and Chinese citizens live, study and work in each other's country (not to mention the children that result from such international affairs). Washington and Beijing depend upon each other's diplomatic cooperation on a wide range of global issues including North Korea, the environment and terrorism.

Hence it is hard to imagine how an anti-China containment policy could emerge from problems short of a major Asia Pacific war, the possibility of which Luttwak himself rules out. Simply put, what Luttwak calls containment, the rest of us would call "diplomacy".

To make an analogy, numerous countries worked together in the United Nations and other fora to oppose the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. But did anyone call this a strategy to "contain" America?

No, it was seen as a (failed) diplomatic initiative.

While we usually worry about how "containment" and "anti-China" might encourage hawks in the West, the most important concern actually is how Chinese strategists will understand *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy*.

Because Luttwak is an "insider" whose book was commissioned by the DoD, most Chinese strategists will conclude that Luttwak's policy advice to "contain" China is official US policy.

Actually, Luttwak felt he had to write this book because the US is not pursuing a containment policy. He is clearly annoyed with what he sees as the Treasury Department's pro-China policy, and laments the lack of influential voices in Washington that would protect American industry and technology. He even criticizes the Defense Department's Air-Sea Battle plan because its expense will distract Washington from the real arena of conflict: geo-economic containment.

While Luttwak hopes that Beijing will reverse its military aggrandizement so it can continue to prosper economically, the PRC's own right-wing nationalists (of which there are legion) will take the book as further evidence of a grand Western conspiracy to keep China down.

To put it another way, China's strategists formulated the concept "comprehensive national power" in the 1990s as a way of addressing the US's

combination of hard and soft power. They could reasonably ask Luttwak why the US can simultaneously pursue economic, military and diplomatic power, while China cannot. Luttwak never answers this question.

Luttwak aims to convince China's leaders and strategists that it is in their interests to be number two in the current international system. But this is a hard sell, especially since it goes against the growing nationalist sentiment in the PRC that is cultivated by official education and media campaigns.

For these and other reasons, I don't think that reading *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy* is worth the expense in money or time. For those who want to get an idea of where China is going, I suggest two books. The PRC is actually a working member of the international system, and is the main beneficiary of economic globalization. To understand how China has moved from being an outsider to an insider in the current world system, it is best to read Alastair Iain Johnston's *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, 2008). To get a sense of how a different group of Chinese elites is combining socialist and Confucian values to inspire a post-Western world order, Chan Koonchung's novel *The Fat Years* (Doubleday, 2011) is an entertaining distraction.

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Kenneth Edward Brashier (2011), *Ancestral Memory in Early China*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 474 pp. ISBN 978-0-674-05607-7, \$49.95, £36.95.

Being a Tang intellectual historian, the question occurred to me: Why review a book on early imperial ancestral rites? There are three main reasons for this: firstly, Brashier's book serves as a prequel to the late Howard Wechsler's seminal *Offerings of Jade and Silk* (New Haven 1985). Secondly, the ancestral religion of the Tang 唐 cannot be properly understood without a substantiated knowledge of the discursive groundwork laid through the early imperial era (in Brashier's chronology: from Qin 秦 through to Cao-Wei 曹魏, 221 BC–AD 265). Thirdly, the history of that institution, which was so crucial for the legitimacy of any ruling house until the end of imperial China, in the 400 years between the Han and Tang remains what Germans like to call 'a research desideratum'. It thus should be worthwhile for scholars of all periods of Chinese history to take notice of this contribution to the study of early imperial Chinese ritual.

This study is about what its author felicitously dubs "structured amnesia", but contrary to that, the reader does not easily forget the joys of reading it. The core of its five parts, subdivided into no less than 31 sections, is Part II, "A History of Remembering and Forgetting ..." (pp.102–183), though the fact that it merely covers a quarter of the book gives an idea of how far the author casts his net. The introduction, "The Han Tree of Knowledge", alone stretches over 45 pages. It is an analysis of the vocabulary with which early Chinese thinkers organised their intellectual map into what Sinological tradition labelled 'schools' (*jia* 家) and Brashier might have us call "tributaries" or "branches". He richly supports this with textual evidence, although the reader sometimes wishes the author had not finished his translations all so quickly. He subdivides the Chinese "Metaphors They Lived By" (Lackoff & Johnson, Chicago 1980) into rivers, trees, roads, and lineages, and then singles out the last as the predominant metaphor in Early China as opposed to the Graeco-Roman "argument is war" (p.19), arguing that Chinese thinkers believed their

views to have sprung from the same ‘trunk’ (zong 宗), some merely being closer to the source than others. What Brashier fails to mention, however, is that this, in the course of intellectual history in China (and ultimately in East Asia), led to an attitude well-known as *compartmentalism* – different schools being responsible for different domains of the spiritual world – and an aversion against forcing one’s convictions or “creed” upon others. In the final section (pp.35–45), Brashier proceeds to “re-evaluat[e] our ‘religious’ vocabulary”, criticising earlier attempts at pigeonholing the Chinese classicist (better known as “Confucian”) tradition as “religion” or “non-religion”. Instead, he identifies the behavioural norm of “filial piety” (xiao 孝) as opposed to faith as lying at the very heart of the Chinese ancestral cult, and contrasts the “exclusivist” (p. 40) partiality of Abrahamic religions with the inclusivist (again: like branches on the same tree) agnosticism of most classical Chinese thinkers. The argument is reminiscent of Robert F. Campany’s “On the Very Ideas of Religions” (*History of Religions* 42.4, 2003), which only underlines that comparative semantics à la “Understanding Cultures through Their Keywords” (Anna Wierzbicka. Oxford, 1997) can fruitfully be applied to China, and should do so more often. The juxtaposition of “argument is war” against “argument is tracing out lineage” in Early China seems slightly overdrawn and harking back to the cliché of East Asian societies placing harmony over individual interests, but that may be justified in view of the elucidation it yields about how Early Chinese thinkers organised their tree of knowledge.

In Part I, “An Imaginary Yardstick for Ritual Performance” (pp.46–101), Brashier turns away from the corpse-strewn territory of the religious towards the hardly less mined field of ritual theory. Based on the late Catherine Bell’s theory of ritual as performance, he attempts to re-read the ritual classics such as *Yili* 儀禮 and *Liji* 禮記 (discussing their differences on pp.48–9) not as reflections of actual practice, but performative texts that framed people’s mindsets regarding space, social relations, and collective memory. As he points out (p.57), “Some of these acts [...] were in fact more discussed than practiced.” This is no surprise, as the prescriptive rather than descriptive character of the texts in question has been pointed out earlier, as Brashier duly acknowledges (p.47). What is more surprising is that he sticks to performance theory as his main theoretical angle, when apparently performances played such a minor part compared with the scholarly discourse about them. The way these texts, or rather their three-dimensional

realisations, the ancestral temples, framed the minds of Early China in how it commemorated its ancestors, is one of two major concerns of the book; the other one is how these minds shaped the texts and why hardly any aspect of the ancestral cult remained uncontested. Brashier coins the term of “loose-leaf ring binders” to account for this, the contents of which could be easily reshuffled, new ones hooked into, and undeserved ones sorted out.

On p.61, Brashier elucidates the crucial distinction of *zu* 祖 and *zong* 宗 ancestors. The title *zu* (as in Gaozu 高祖) usually was conferred upon “he who had first acquired (or extended) the territory” (*kaiguo* 開國 or *shifeng zhu jun* 始封之君); *zong* was applied to the ‘expendable’ ancestors in the series of *Zhao* 昭 and *Mu* 穆. Section 8 (pp.74–101). This illustrates how far the reality of an ancestral temple, as revealed by the archaeological record, could deviate from the ideal. Here, Brashier draws a line between the ancestral remembrance “lettered” and “unlettered classes” (p.76), which might be considered controversial, and problematically bases his assumption about the latter on the written testimonies of the former.

In Part II, Brashier translates and interprets court debates on the intricate configuration of the ‘great ancestral temple’ (*taimiao* 太廟; I prefer ‘temple’ over ‘shrine,’ the latter may refer to the niches for single ancestors within the *taimiao*) from the reigns of the Second Emperor of Qin 秦二世 (209 BC, pp.104–107) to Emperor Ming 明帝 of the Wei (227–239, pp.178–181). Its main sources are the standard (a.k.a. “dynastic”) histories *Shiji* 史記, *Hanshu* 漢書, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, and *Sanguozhi* 三國志. I do not delve into the details of these debates here, as their topics are highly variegated. Suffice it to say that this is the best part of the book, as the author succeeds in integrating the material in a consistent and convincing narrative.

Part III analyses the “Spectrum of Interpretations on Afterlife Existence” (pp.184–228), from *do-ut-des* relationships and the belief in ancestors as sentient beings to the denial of ancestral existence (or at least their being conscious of the world of the living). Part IV tries to give an overview of emic theories of performance and the mental gestation of ancestors, moving from correlative cosmology of the body in terms of ‘breaths’ (*qi* 氣) and Five-Phases 五行, and its expression in emotions and music (pp.234–51), to the minds’ (of both commoners and rulers) framing the physical and spiritual world (pp.252–273), the latter recalling Michael Puett’s “self-divinization” (in *To Become a*

God. Cambridge, MA, 2002). The fifth and last part, “The Symbolic Language of Fading Memories” (pp.280–345), is the most challenging one when it comes to theory. It shows how the dead gradually moved from the bright realm of life into the darkness of the great muddle beyond, evoking ideas of Chinese transcendence as knowing no sharp divide between ‘Diesseits’ and ‘Jenseits,’ but concentric circles in which the uncivilized, raw periphery (darkness) is moving ever farther away from the refined, civilized centre (light).

The problem of this second half of the book is threefold. Firstly, it could have been condensed into one chapter on religious imagery in Early China. Secondly, it rests overly upon outdated Western scholarship on religion (there certainly is more recent and less phenomenological literature around than Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade). Finally, its three parts do not seem to be thoroughly related to the historical Part II: there the selection of sources was clear and consistent, whereas here it seems rather random. In addition, the rawness of at least parts of the book is highlighted by the frequent usage of lists instead of linear arguments (and the alternating employment of bullets vs. numbers) and the brevity of the conclusion (less than three pages!). These beauty spots notwithstanding, Brashier’s *Ancestral Memory* is an outstanding contribution to research into the roots of ancestral religion and a must-read for every scholar of religion interested in Early China in particular, or the ancient world in general.

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Chihyun Chang (2013), *Government, Imperialism and Nationalism in China: The Maritime Customs Service and its Chinese staff*. London: Routledge, 237 pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-53142-9, \$155, £90.

The Chinese Maritime Customs Service (CMCS) was one of the most important institutions in the history of modern China. Its historical role oscillated between being a means of imperialist control and a source of stable revenue underpinning the construction of the modern Chinese state. Rather unsurprisingly, therefore, the CMCS has aroused the interest of China

historians since at least the 1930s. Chang Chih-yun's carefully researched monograph adds to this tradition of scholarship.

After the introduction, which sketches previous research and suggests several interpretive frameworks but lacks a clear statement of the aims and method of the enquiry, the book proceeds chronologically. This enables Chang to follow the twists and turns which impacted on the relationship of the CMCS with successive Chinese governments. Part I, consisting of the first three chapters, delineates the rise of the CMCS in the early twentieth century. There is, of course, a lengthy discussion of the towering figure of Sir Robert Hart, who headed the institution for an impressive 45 years. It was in Hart's time that Customs revenues were pledged for the indemnities that China was forced to pay after the war with Japan in 1894/95 and the Boxer War of 1900/01. Chang makes it clear how Hart's relationship with the Chinese government rested on "[m]utual trust, complete autonomy and absolute subordination" (p.38) and this continued into the *Xinzheng* (New Policies) era between 1901 and 1911, when the Qing government took steps to bring the CMCS under closer supervision.

However, it was not under Hart but under his successor Francis Aglen that the power of the Inspector General (IG) of the CMCS reached its apex. Owing to the political and military instability after the Qing had been overthrown in 1911, Aglen became "China's Supreme Minister of Finance" (p.43), effectively pulling the financial strings of the young and financially strained Republic and steering his institution through years of civil war, trying to accommodate various political sides and military groupings. At the same time, Aglen did comparatively little to improve the status of the Chinese staff, although the Customs Service's own training college had started to produce qualified graduates since 1913, and by the 1920s had become the institution's main source of manpower.

In the second part (again comprised of three chapters), Chang traces the history of the CMCS under Nationalist (Guomindang) rule in the 1920s and 1930s. Like the Qing dynasty before it, the Nationalists downgraded the Inspectorate to a medium-ranked post by establishing a supervisory body (the Guanwushu) that was itself placed under the Ministry of Finance. At the same time, the Nationalists continued to rely on the expertise of the new IG, Frederick Maze and his staff. Internally, equality between Chinese and foreign employees became an ever more pressing issue, although distinctions

between the two were abolished and the hiring of foreigners was discontinued in the late 1920s. That the Customs College was designated as the “sole recruiting ground” for the CMCS acted as a further counterbalance to the IG’s authority.

Chapters 7-9, forming Part III, deal with the fate of the CMCS during the turbulent years of World War II between 1937 and 1945. Up until the attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, the CMCS headquarters remained in Shanghai, serving both the collaborationist government of Wang Jingwei in Nanjing and Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist government. After the outbreak of the Pacific War, the post of IG fell to the Japanese Kishimoto Hirokichi, who had distinguished himself during his long career in the Customs Service. Kishimoto not only protected the Chinese employees; it was also he who abolished the last inequalities among the Customs staff. From 1941 and then after the victory over Japan, the Service was gradually rebuilt from Chongqing and integrated the Customs stations in Manchuria and Taiwan, lost to Japan in 1931 and 1895 respectively. Foreigners returned to play a prominent role in the upper echelons and again a Briton was appointed IG, despite the availability of suitable Chinese candidates. The Customs Training Institute, split up during the war, moved from offering a curriculum in general education to becoming a vocational training institute.

The two remaining chapters (Part IV) trace the legacy beyond the watershed date of 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party took power in China. On the Chinese mainland, the Customs Service was subordinated to the CCP’s political control; for the former Chinese staff, their long-standing affiliation with foreigners became a liability, as it made them easy targets in the political campaigns launched by the Communists. There was less political pressure and a greater continuity from the pre-war institution in Guomindang-ruled Taiwan, although here too the Customs Service was brought more closely into the fold of the state.

Contrary to what the title suggests, Chang analyses the history of the CMCS on two levels. On the one hand, he looks at the top levels of the institution and their relations with the respective governments. Occasionally, political power changed hands with such rapidity that the CMCS leadership was at a loss which side to take. On the other, he examines the status of the Chinese staff; the chapters on the Customs College, in particular, seem to have been appended to the main narrative and are rather detached from it. Occasionally,

the details of the argument are a bit puzzling: what exactly was the relationship between the Sterling Allotment for foreign staff and the conflict between various categories of employees (pp.106-08)? And did the powerful chief of the GMD's security apparatus, Dai Li, want to incorporate parts of the CMCS into his institution—or did he, conversely, want the CMCS to undertake security work for him (pp.140-42)?

Overall, however, Chang presents a solidly argued study, drawing on in-depth archival research. He demonstrates convincingly how most Chinese governments exerted influence on the CMCS, albeit in different degrees. Despite being directed and partly staffed by foreigners, the Customs Service was always a Chinese institution. Chang's book is of great interest to students of China's foreign relations as well as of its administrative institutions.

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Marjorie Dryburgh and Sarah Dauncey (eds), *Writing Lives in China, 1600-2010: Histories of the Elusive Self*. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, ISBN 9781137368560, \$95, £55.

This volume is a collection of essays which began life as papers presented at a 2008 workshop in Sheffield, organised by the editors.

At first glance, the scope of the book's theme appears alarmingly broad. Spanning over four centuries of Chinese history and adopting an inclusive and wide-ranging definition of life-writing, to cover both biography and autobiography, all literary genres, fiction and non-fiction, diaries and blogs, this is clearly a bold endeavour. Questions the editors seek to address are stated in the introduction as: "conventional periodisations....and our assumptions of their implications for genre and content in life writing practice"; and "what life narrative was designed to do -- Whose lives are written, and why? Is the subject of the life narrative public or private, social or interior? How far are life stories understood as 'history telling' as well as personal narratives?" A key aim of the book is to see the gap between what is recorded in biographies and the reality as a "focus of enquiry" rather than as a

shortcoming. Even before noticing that one chapter is dedicated to writings in a non-Chinese language, facing such an apparently broad range of inquiry, the wary and cynical reader finds herself preparing to be underwhelmed.

However, the first chapter, co-authored by the editors, Marjorie Dryburgh and Sarah Dauncey, goes a long way to providing answers to these questions. The argument to focus not on the *classification* of the genre but rather on the *clarification* of its development is a persuasive one, and, one by one, my initial anxieties over the scope of the project are addressed, and dispelled, beautifully. After this illuminating first chapter, we are then led on a fascinatingly diverse journey through seven individual case studies, each of which provides both detailed and often intriguing insights on the particular life (or lives) in question, while also contributing to the broader questions raised about the nature of life-writing.

By examining the modes of self-representation in his dramas, Alison Hardie provides a lively argument for a re-evaluation of the late-Ming official and literatus Ruan Dacheng (1587-1646), and by so doing questions the veracity of the overwhelmingly negative caricatures of Ruan in sources such as the official histories. Hardie successfully demonstrates how literary works can serve the author as a fruitful repository for autobiographical detail. This essay immediately lends strong support to the editors' choice to include both fictional and non-fictional writings in a single study.

Harriet Zurndorfer highlights the treatment of women's life-writing by historiographers in the early twentieth century, in her study of Wang Zhaoyuan (1763-1851). Zurndorfer details how the narrative of Wang's life was subject to the predilections of the male historiographers, with the likes of the reformer Liang Qichao keen to devalue any achievements of women in imperial China, and how Wang was effectively written in, and out, of history accordingly. In her conclusion, Zurndorfer underscores the usefulness of the perhaps less fashionable traditional chronological biography (in Wang's case authored by Xu Weiyu), noting that such detailed biographies are truly rich repositories of information about their subjects.

Marjorie Dryburgh traces one man's journey from public official to collaborator with Japan, in her study of the diaries of Zheng Xiaoxu (1882-1938). Through her search for the elusive Zheng, and with reference to theorists such as Lejeune and Eakin, Dryburgh makes many stimulating comments on the broader function of the diary itself, noting in an elegant and

thought-provoking conclusion that “the diary persona is not a product of self-expression but a defensive carapace that stands between the fugitive self and the gaze of the reader.”

Nicola Spakowski’s chosen focus is autobiographical writing by women veterans of the Communist revolution. Her subtle analysis and close readings of three of these texts demonstrate how the very use of detail in these writings can convey varying degrees of compliance in what are, superficially, part of a one-dimensional Party narrative. Specifically, she identifies two distinguishable voices evident throughout these works: “we find the authoritative voice of the Party in explicit evaluation whereas women’s ‘subjective’ voices are represented in detailed description.”

Moving to more contemporary lives, Chloë Starr considers the well-known author Zhang Xianliang (b. 1936) through the lens of his diaries and autobiographical writings. Starr explicitly rejects any attempt to separate ‘fiction’ from non-fiction’ in considering these works as biography. In a chronological survey of his work Starr traces a development from naive idealist to broken cynic, and argues for the adoption of a Marxian framework to fully understand this body of narrative, arguing memorably that: “Zhang’s own experiences have to be narrated in the political terminology of Mao Zedong (even if recreated ironically) because of the umbilical cord linking self-perception with the words and presence of Mao.”

Sarah Dauncey’s focus is the life-writing of people with physical disabilities, contextualising these writings within the broader discourse about disability in China today. Dauncey focuses mainly on Zhang Haidi (b. 1955), but also considers the lesser known Yin Xiaoxing (b.1970) and Chen Yan (b. 1973). In a truly thought-provoking study, Dauncey concludes that, since the post-CR proliferation of this sub-genre, most of the body of published writings about, or by, disabled people, still perpetuates “a discourse on the primacy of the community at large over the individual and the utilisation of personal stories for public ends.” Intriguingly though, Dauncey argues, in this age of blogs and social media, the situation is changing and there is finally space for these writers to express themselves as individuals.

Finally, with Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy we turn to the twentieth century autobiographical writings of Tibetans, published in the PRC. To set the scene, Henrion-Dourcy notes the major contrast between the quantity, and content, of life-writing published since 1950 by Tibetans living in China and those in

exile. It is the former, much smaller, body of writings that are the focus here. These writings, Henrion-Dourcy concludes, need to address different readerships and balance different expectations: “the PCC who requested, edited and published the texts, the protagonists of the events described...and the future generations of Tibetans who will judge the deeds of the author”. The close and nuanced readings of these life-writings, commissioned in the main for overtly political agendas, illuminate the authorial strategies and degrees of compliance within them.

There is no conclusion *per se* to this volume, as the conclusions are revealed in Chapter 1 – a very minor criticism would be that this chapter, which does such a fine job of pulling together all the strands from the various articles, might be more effective at the end. But maybe I have been too influenced in my approach to reading by the King’s advice in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. If I had a list, my only other wish would be to have an indication in the preface or introduction about the subject-matter of the other papers at the workshop which didn’t make it into the volume. A keynote by Wu Pei-yi is mentioned, but no indication of content provided.

In sum, however, the end result of this project is a collection of seven separate, fascinating case-studies, with many interesting insights drawn together in the Dryburgh and Dauncey chapter about how these each, in their different ways, contribute to our understanding of life-writing as a genre. Without a project such as this, in an age where library and book-based browsing research is increasingly replaced by digital, more targeted searches, I imagine most readers with interest in any one of the ‘lives’ narrated here would be unlikely to find themselves reading about more than, say, one or two of the others. In our current academic environment, where both academics and publishers can fall prey to REF-fuelled obsessions over output-types, the relative status of the conference volume as an entity is sometimes called into question. I would suggest that the rich diversity, and yet surprising intellectual coherence of this volume provides an excellent example of why this sort of endeavour is precisely what Chinese Studies needs.

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Mackenzie, Colin with contributions by Lu Ling-En (2011), *Masterworks of Chinese Art: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 103 pp.; ISBN: 978-0-615-48882-0, \$29.95.

Johnston, John and Chan Lai Pik with an essay by Lin Shwu Shin (2011), *5,000 years of Chinese Jade: featuring selections from the National Museum of History, Taiwan and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 130 pp.; ISBN: 978-0-615-47180-8, \$29.95.

Liu Yang, with contributions by Edmund Capon, , Albert E. Dien, , Jeffrey Riegel, Eugene Wang, Zhongyi Yuan (2013), *China's Terracotta Warriors: the First Emperor's Legacy*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 302 pp., ISBN: 978-0-9800484-9-0

These three volumes all take very different approaches in presenting masterworks of traditional Chinese art.

Masterworks of Chinese Art: the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is aimed at the general visitor coming to the Nelson-Atkins Museum and seeking a memento of their visit. The introduction gives a broad-brush overview of Chinese art history and then twenty seven objects from the Museum's collection are presented in full-colour, with full-page photographs accompanied by what the cover describes as a series of 'short essays'.

This is not a book aimed at the Chinese art specialist. The introduction, while well written, is aimed at readers with no background in Chinese art. The essays accompanying each object are also very short. At around 300-350 words each it is a stretch to call each one an 'essay': extended label might be more accurate. As the museum has around 8,000 objects in its Chinese collection the specialist might also have wished for a much larger number to be included in a catalogue, rather than just 27. Taking all of that into account, the works that are depicted are nevertheless of the highest quality. Overall the selection lives up to the billing of "masterwork" with pieces ranging in date from the Bronze Age to the Qing dynasty in jade, ceramic, metalwork, lacquer, sculpture and on paper.

The outstanding aspect of this book is the photography. Anyone who has worked on a project like this knows just how hard it is to obtain outstanding

images of such diverse objects. The photographers working on this project are to be commended on their excellent work. It is also obvious that no expense was spared in the production of this volume. This is especially noticeable in the presentation of three particularly challenging objects: the sarcophagus of filial piety dating to the Northern Wei dynasty, the illustration to the second prose poem on the Red Cliff attributed to Qiao Zhongchang, dated to the Northern Song dynasty, and the Yuan dynasty monumental mural of the Assembly of Tejabraba. The sarcophagus and mural are both presented using a fold-out page to allow extended images of the whole length of these large objects to be shown. In the case of the hand scroll this is taken to another level with four additional fold-out pages allowing the reader to view the whole length of the scroll in detail.

The only criticism of the photography would be that some of the objects would have benefited from additional detailed images. A particularly obvious example of this is entry no. 6, an Eastern Han tomb model of a tower. The description tells us that “the second floor has small windows and a balcony, on which sits a figure of the landlord”, but the photograph used is taken from an angle whereby the landlord is hidden from our view by a watchtower in front. A detail showing this interesting feature would have been a very welcome addition.

5,000 years of Chinese Jade is an exhibition catalogue of quite a different type. Created to accompany a 2011 exhibition at the San Antonio Museum of Art, this work is much more academic in its approach. After three short introductory essays, the 89 pieces in the exhibition are all presented, each with a half page photograph and detailed entry with extensive use of footnotes and references to other relevant publications. The three essays begin with an introduction to the importance and changing uses of jade. This is followed by an essay of the development of *bi* discs in the late Bronze Age, focusing on the size and placement of the discs within burials. The third essay discusses the jades from the Jia and Yi tombs in Liulige, Huxian, Henan Province providing some context for several of the pieces loaned for the exhibition.

The loan from the National Museum of History in Taiwan forms a significant part of this exhibition. Other pieces included were loaned by the Smithsonian Institution, the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum in

Springfield Massachusetts and a private US collector. A small number of pieces from SAMA's own collection are also included. Many of the pieces included in the exhibition are well known and have been previously published in other books and catalogues. In the case of these objects, the value in this catalogue comes in the form of the footnotes to each piece which often include references to recent archaeological excavations and their publication, drawing the reader's attention to parallels now found within a excavated context.

The selection of pieces has been designed to provide an overview of the development of the use of jade in China from the Neolithic until the Qing dynasty. It does this very successfully, including one or two examples of the most characteristic forms, from early bi discs and jade weapons to the elaborate carvings and vases of the later dynasties.

The only major criticism of the volume would be that the very detailed physical descriptions at the beginning of each catalogue entry reduce the amount of space left for interpretation and additional contextual information. With a full-colour photograph accompanying each entry some of these descriptions could have been shortened to give more room for discussion of the significance of the piece. Also, only a very few objects are shown from more than one angle. A few of the pieces would have benefited from additional photography (for example entries 71 and 72: both entries tell us about the carving on the reverse but this is not shown).

One final minor issue is that some entries (for example 35 and 36) refer the reader back to Chan Lai Pik's essay on bi discs for discussion of the evolution of the dragon head motif. Chan's essay does not really discuss this at all: its focus is on the size and distribution of bi discs.

While the fact that most of this material has been published before means that it does not present much that is new for the specialist, this book would provide an excellent introduction to the changing use and significance of jade in China for students getting to grips with the field. Its clear chronological layout and careful selection of pieces give a useful overview. There is a wealth of information and each entry is well footnoted and referenced. The inclusion of references to recent archaeological publications is to be particularly commended. As such this is a useful volume for those beginning their study of Chinese jade.

The final volume reviewed here is *China's Terracotta Warriors: the First Emperor's Legacy*.

The discovery in 1974 of the famous terracotta guardians of the first Qin emperor's tomb generated an international wave of interest that has scarcely abated in the succeeding 40 years. Unsurprisingly, it also spawned a vast literature; ranging from specialist academic works to coffee-table publications and souvenir guides aimed squarely at the tourist market. Adding to this already extensive bibliography, recent exhibitions of material from Qin Shihuang's tomb have been supported by lavish and erudite publications, perhaps most notably *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army*, edited by Jane Portal in conjunction with the 2007 exhibition of the same name hosted by the British Museum.

Portal's work set out firmly to embed the Terracotta Army in its historical and archaeological context and Liu Yang deserves praise for having edited a volume that builds upon that legacy. Written to accompany the 2012-13 exhibition at the Minneapolis Museum of Arts, the volume seeks to perform the dual role of exhibition catalogue and up-to-date archaeological survey. This can be a difficult circle to square, and many editors have struggled to balance the demands of general readers with those of a more specialist audience. Supported by an excellent team of contributors (Jeffrey Riegel, Albert E. Dien, Yuan Zhongyi, Edmund Capon and Eugene Wang), Liu Yang has however pitched the volume perfectly.

The work is divided into three chapters: "Before Empire: Qin in the Spring & Autumn and Warring States Periods"; "Unified Under Heaven: The First Empire and the Qin Dynasty"; and "Quest for Immortality: The First Emperor's Tomb Complex and Terracotta Army". Within these chapters, eleven excellent and extensively illustrated essays are supported by up-to-date and expansive footnotes. The two catalogue sections, covering some 123 objects, are similarly comprehensive. The writing throughout is of a consistently high standard, and succeeds in being both informative and accessible. The photography is similarly of a universally excellent quality and both maps and reconstruction drawings are appropriately used.

Inevitably given its subject matter, there is much in this volume that will be familiar to those with an interest in Chinese archaeology. There is however also much material that will be less so, including a review of material recently

excavated from earlier royal tombs and a thought-provoking discussion of the iconography of the Qin Shihuang figures. Overall, this volume represents a rare and happy marriage of high production values with exemplary scholarship. It deserves a space on every Sinologist's bookshelf.

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Yuri Pines (2012), *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. viii + 245 pp. ISBN: 9780691134956, \$ 42.00, £28.95.

To most specialists and non-specialists of Chinese political culture, probably the most intriguing question is why the Chinese empire, one of the largest political entities in human history, attained against all odds its unparalleled longevity for more than two millennia from 221 BCE to 1911. Building upon his previous study of the formation of China's unique imperial ideology prior to the foundation of the first dynasty (*Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era*, 2009), Yuri Pines, an established expert on early Chinese political culture, moves on in his new book *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* to concentrate on "the dynamic interplay between the empire's ideological guidelines and their practical adaption" (p.5). Challenging the once-popular "environmental determinism" developed by Karl A. Wittfogel (*Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, 1957) and the conventional notion of "authoritarianism" advocated by liberal thinkers of the New Culture Movement in the early twentieth century, Yuri Pines stands at the nexus of China's intellectual and political history to explore the underlying reasons for the unprecedented durability of the Chinese imperial system: "the empire's exceptional ideological prowess" (p.3).

Pines starts his provocative narrative with the Mencian dictum "stability is in unity" (p.1). Chapter 1 expounds this overarching argument by diving into ancient texts dating back to the Warring States period (453-221 BCE). Centuries before the Chinese empire came into existence, the idea that "All-under-heaven" should be unified under the aegis of a single ruler had already

been repeatedly reinforced through official rhetoric and historiographical and philosophical writings. Pines acknowledges that unity does not automatically result in stability, as he describes rules like the Qin (221-207 BCE) as “a nightmare of bloodshed and cruelty” (p.30). He also agrees that ages of disunion were not always periods of stagnation and despair, recalling the “ideological richness of the Warring States, the Buddhist flowering under the Southern and Northern dynasties, and economic expansion and technological innovativeness under many of the post-Tang [618-907] regional kingdoms” (p.42). But Pines immediately reminds readers of the devastating destruction brought up by political fragmentation and interstate wars and forcefully suggests that the idea of unity, “the pivotal principle of Chinese political culture” (p.41), remained unchallenged even in times of division or under non-Chinese rules.

In the following chapter, Pines discusses traditional conceptions of rulership - arguably the most crucial issue in Chinese political culture. Based on an extensive reading of early texts, he traces the evolution of the concept of the omnipotent monarch, the ritual supremacy of the emperor, and different institutions on how to prevent the dangers of malevolent rulers' ineptitude or of power abuse. Instead of agreeing with the often idealised but erroneous instinctive assumption that Chinese emperors were all sacred and sagacious “sons of heaven,” Pines sharply points out that in fact most of them were rather mediocrities. To cope with such dangers, there developed a series of “checks and balances” to distinguish between the institutional and the personal power of the monarch, or in other words, to restrain the ruler from actively exercising his power, and relegating everyday tasks to his entourage (p.64). This resulted in a major paradox, since emperors ostensibly enjoyed unlimited power, but were more often than not discouraged from exercising it. In consequence, these unique imperial architects created “a unified system of decision making [which aimed] at preventing internal disorder” (p.74). Despite frequent tensions and conflicts between the emperor and his underlings generated by such contradictions, this mode of emperorship proved to be not only quite successful but also manageable in the long term.

The formation of this group of scholar-officials is traced in the following two chapters, devoted to the upper segment at the imperial core and the lower in the localities, respectively. In both chapters the main discussion focuses on their “voluntary attachment to the ruler's service as their single most

significant choice" (p.77). Through a lucid outline of historical changes in the character of the literati and local elites and in their relations with the imperial system, Pines aptly shows that these people became the "bearers of the realm's cultural tradition and its political leaders" (p.102), bringing outstanding "economic, political, and cultural benefits" to the empire and contributing to the "imperial bureaucracy's vitality" (p.131). However, I remain doubtful about his decision to allocate separate chapters to the two groups of *shi*, or in Pine's words "intellectuals." As in most other early cultures, education in pre-modern China required vast investment of both time and capital, so that the majority of the literati came from the better-off land-owning families, though cases of exceptions are not rare. It is thus understandable that once these men became officials, they shared the same interests as the men of power in the localities. Without the support of these local magnates, most magistrates would have found their task difficult. Hence, more probably than not, the literati and the local elite together formed a collective stratum which maintained cultural, political, and economic dominance in imperial China. Readers familiar with Pine's earlier book may recall that these two groups are indeed dealt with together in one section.

The next chapter is devoted to another component of the imperial polity, the people. Affirming Thomas Meadows' argument that "the right to rebel" was a "chief element of ... national stability," Pines explores various ideological and social factors in imperial China to identify the reasons for the recurrence of large-scale rebellions. He laments the devastating destruction brought by such insurrections, but he also points out that they also have positive contributions to the imperial order. The danger and prowess of rebellions was "a major impetus for much greater concern for the lower strata's needs" (p.150) and could therefore stimulate more people-focused policies, bringing "improvement of the commoners' lot" and "of the empire's functioning in general" (p.161).

In the final chapter, and the most provocative one, Pines proceeds to explore the modern trajectory of the major aspects of Chinese political heritage that he has covered in the previous chapters. The collapse of imperial China in February 1912 involved profound changes in both the institutional structure and ideological norms of the Chinese polity. Through this new assessment of the fate of the imperial political culture in the modern age, Pines forcefully suggests that though the imperial Chinese empire is

diminished, its legacy still persists today. For instance, acknowledging that the vast changes in China's political and social structure in the past hundred years have weakened the traditional leadership of the intellectuals, Pines further speculates that "in due time the CPC [the Communist Party of China] ... might replace the imperial scholar-officials as China's cultural, ideological, and sociopolitical elite" (p.175). Observing the diminishing appeal of Marxism-Leninism and revolutionary zeal in contemporary China, Pines concludes his narrative by identifying three major aspects of traditional Chinese political culture that are still applicable today: the hegemonic position of the political centre (now the CPC) as the single legitimate locus of power, the concept of political unity, and political elitism (p.181-2).

The most intriguing aspect of Pines' book is his facility for fine-grained analysis based on a wide array of primary sources, in particular ancient texts from the pre-Qin period. For example, he quotes the *Lüshi chunqiu* (Annals of Lü Buwei), a text compiled on the eve of the final wars of unification of the Qin, to argue that unity is the guarantor of peace and stability (p.44); he makes deliberate use of excerpts from the writings of Xunzi (ca. 310-230 BCE) to underline the legitimacy of, and necessity for, the True Monarch (p.51); copious quotations from Mencius, Han Feizi (ca. 280-233 BCE), Li Si (d. 208 BCE), and Dong Zhongshu (ca. 195-115 BCE) are offered to provide a comparative examination of early conceptions of, and attitudes towards, intellectuals' relations to the throne (p.84-87). By vividly narrating what happened to the relevant concepts during the following two millennia, Pines successfully builds a bridge that links ideology and reality, history and present-day, facilitating a nuanced comprehension of the coherence of the development of political culture in the long course of imperial China. Moreover, Pines also brings into focus the relevance of history for politics in contemporary China. Building upon his thorough analysis, Pines convincingly argues that "studying China's past is essential for an understanding of China's future" (p.183), because lessons and experiences of the Chinese empire - the most durable political entity in human society - have immediate relevance for China both today and in the future.

Some readers may be surprised to find that three factors that are significant in the formation and the transformation of the political culture in imperial China are underestimated: the writing system, non-Chinese peoples, and demographic and geographic changes. Although both factors are mentioned in

Pines' work, they deserve more in-depth consideration. Firstly, unlike the European experience, although spoken dialects within China vary enormously, alternative systems of transcribing written vernaculars never developed. The nature and the durability of the unified Chinese written language, largely divorced from speech, contributed greatly to a strong sense of cultural community and supported the ideal of unity. Secondly, although conventionally deprecated as "barbarians" undergoing a "sinicization process" and largely overlooked by traditional historiography, various non-Chinese peoples played important roles in shaping the history and culture of China, leaving their own marks. Despite the strenuous efforts of scholars of the New Qing History to rectify some of the biased attitudes surrounding the concept of "sinicization," this term still, unfortunately, persists throughout Pines' narrative of non-Chinese rule (p.69, p.75). Thirdly, any historical atlas will disapprove Pines' claim that later empires occupied "more or less the same territory" as the Qin (p.3). The prolonged and large-scale migration of the Chinese to the mountainous regions of south and southwest China, Manchuria, the Mongolian steppe and Tibet had a profound impact on the politics of the empire at various periods. Pines was right that the power of the environmental deterministic approach should by no means be over-emphasised, yet no one could deny the density of population and wealth of the North China plain means that the ruler who holds it may dominate East Asia.

Certainly these minor quibbles should in no way diminish the great achievement of Yuri Pines' *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy*. The durability of the Chinese empire defies easy explanation, thus Pines should be applauded for providing a painstaking and thought-provoking analysis of the reasons hidden behind the extraordinary sustainability of the Chinese empire. It not only brings a new and important perspective to the study of Chinese political culture but also offers a reliable approach to comprehend its relevance for today. Such an ambitious work will be invaluable to both non-specialists and scholars of Chinese political history, and it will definitely inspire further future studies.

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