Abstracts

Yuri Pines

The Question of Interpretation:
Qin History in Light of New Epigraphic Sources

Recently discovered epigraphic sources of Qin's history often seem to contradict the conventional wisdom regarding the history of this state. Thus, the recently published inscription on the jade tablets records a prayer to Mountain Hua by one of the last Qin kings, in which the latter surprisingly laments the demise of the Zhou house—an action for which traditionally Qin was blamed. On the other hand, some of the Shuihudi Qin statutes contain equally surprising statements according to which the Qin populace on the eve of the imperial unification was clearly differentiated from the members of the Xia ethno-cultural community. In both cases the apparent contradiction between the new evidence and the conventional interpretation of the received texts caused most of the scholars to neglect the confusing evidence altogether or to reinterpret it in accord with the traditional views.

In my paper, I suggest that the new evidence can be reconciled with the received texts, if due attention is paid to the complexity of cultural and political dynamics in the state of Qin prior to the imperial unification of 221 B.C.E. During the last two centuries of the Warring States period Qin appears to be engulfed in two contradictory processes of estrangement from and re-integration with the "Central States." On the one hand, radical reforms of the mid-fourth century B.C.E. brought about not only socio-political but also cultural changes, creating the cultural gap between Qin and the rest of the Zhou world. Concomitantly, endless military conflicts between Qin and its neighbors further strengthened the cohesiveness of Qin's populace, increasing furthermore the sense of antagonism between the people of Qin, particularly among the lower strata, and the dwellers of eastern states. On the other hand, however, Qin's eventual separation from the rest of the Zhou world was counterbalanced by the equally powerful integrative factors. The influx of eastern advisors perpetuated cultural ties between Qin and its neighbors, while the desire of Qin rulers to facilitate incorporation of the eastern territories into their expanding realm dictated a more flexible policy of building rather than destroying

political and cultural bridges with the Zhou world. Understanding this ongoing tension between conflicting integrative and centrifugal tendencies allows us to build a new interpretative framework for the Qin history, fully incorporating the received and the unearthed texts.

"   "

"   " "   "

"   "

"   "

"   "

Michael Schimmelpfennig

The Quest for a Classic: Wang Yi and the Exegetical Prehistory of his Commentary to the Songs of Chu

With the publication of *Madman of Chu: A Myth of Loyalty and Dissent* in 1980, Laurence Schneider established the view that the controversy over Qu Yuan between various erudites during the Han dynasty was a dispute between adherents and opponents about the question of what the Chu minister and poet stood for. The present study challenges this

view by demonstrating that, aside from the so-called biographies by Sima Qian and Liu Xiang, all other contributions to the debate represent readings of the *Li sao*. Once this is understood, each contribution to the debate can not only be seen in its own light but it can also be examined in its relation to the section and sentence commentary by Wang Yi written in the second century C.E. The understanding of the controversy as a discourse of rather varied interpretations of the *Li sao* enables us to regard the *Chuci zhangju* by Wang Yi as a commentary that stood at the end of this controversy that lasted more than three centuries. It also enables us to see that the controversy rested on a particular set of premises, especially the question of the literary status of the *Li sao* and its author. The final thesis resulting from the present study is that the main reason for the lasting influence of Wang Yi's commentary together with the fact that it remained unchallenged until the twelfth century is that it was built on a sound and varied exegetical foundation, namely the controversy on the *Li sao* during the Han.

The first part of this article examines the contributions to the controversy by Jia Yi (201–-165), Liu An (?178–122), Sima Qian (145–?86), Liu Xiang (79–8), Yang Xiong (53 B.C.E.–18 C.E.), Liang Song (?–83 C.E.) and Ban Gu (32–92) in chronological order. The second part juxtaposes their works with the commentary of Wang Yi in order to understand how the Eastern Han commentator employed the contributions of his predecessors and how he reacted to them.

    1980   *Madman of Chu: A Myth of Loyalty and Dissent*

, Laurence Schneider

Lillian Lan-ying Tseng

Representation and Appropriation:
Rethinking the TLV Mirror in Han China
:

No decorative arts in China have aroused as intense modern academic interest as the TLV mirror that was mass-produced in the Han dynasty. Scholars from different fields have strived to rival one another in identifying its obscure design since the beginning of the twentieth century. With new evidence, particularly a mirror and a wooden board unearthed in 1993 at Yinwan, it is time to settle and set aside the old disputation about identification, and to move on to the intellectual adventure of the cultural significance of the TLV mirror in Han China. This paper first considers the complex of art, game and divination. It then discusses how the TLV mirror can serve a cultural sign that demonstrates the "auspicious mentality" of the Han. It also considers how the formal variants of the TLV mirror illustrate the life of a cultural sign.

TLV