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Yuri Pines 尤 銳

CHU IDENTITY AS SEEN FROM ITS MANUSCRIPTS: A REEVALUATION*

Abstract
The question of Chu's cultural affinity perplexed—and continues to perplex—traditional and modern scholars. Some view it as the cultural Other of the Zhou world, while others believe that this state fundamentally belonged to the Zhou cultural sphere. The difficulty in assessing Chu's cultural trajectory derives in not a small measure from the bias of traditional sources, all of which were composed or compiled in the northern and eastern parts of the Zhou world. Yet recently discovered Chu historical manuscripts allow us to overcome this "northeastern bias." How much do the newly available texts display—if at all—a distinct Chu identity? Do they present an alternative version of Chu history? Who were their audience? By answering these questions I hope both to revisit the question of Chu's relations to the Zhou ("Chinese") world, and to put forward novel understandings of the usages of history writing in preimperial China.

Keywords
Chu, identity, historiography, Warring States, *Xinian*, Zhou, *Zuo zhuan*

The question of Chu's 楚 cultural identity is one of the most contested in studies of early Chinese history. Both textual and material evidence can be interpreted in different ways: hence, whereas some scholars insist that Chu was the cultural Other of the Zhou 周 world, other consider it an intrinsic part of the Zhou civilization. To complicate matters more, most of the Chu-related narratives in the transmitted texts were created in the northern part of the Zhou world, and are suspected to reflect "northern biases,"[1] which means that their reliability with regard to the self-image of Chu elites is doubtful.

It is on this backdrop that we can appreciate the importance of historical and quasi-historical manuscripts recently excavated (or looted) from the Chu tombs. By offering a Chu perspective of its history, they allow us to think anew about Chu's cultural trajectory. In what follows, after a brief outline of the debates over Chu's cultural belonging, I shall

Nankai University (Tianjin) and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, email: yuri.pines@mail.huji.ac.il

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[1]See, e.g., Constance A. Cook and Barry B. Blakeley, "Introduction," in *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Early China*, edited by Cook and John S. Major (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 2.

survey the newly discovered manuscripts and evaluate their impact on the ongoing research concerning Chu identity.

PREFACE: THE QUESTION OF CHU'S OTHERNESS

Traditional scholars were overwhelmingly inclined to view Chu as the cultural Other of the Zhou world. The reasons for this verdict are not difficult to find. Already some of the Western Zhou 西周 (ca. 1046–771 BCE) sources indicate considerable enmity between the Zhou realm and the state of Chu. The most notable manifestation of this enmity were campaigns of King Zhao of Zhou 周昭王 (r. 975–957 BCE) against Chu in ca. 960–957 BCE. The latter of these campaigns ended in the disastrous loss of royal armies; and the king himself perished. The memory of this humiliation lived for centuries.[2]

Tensions between Zhou and Chu continued into the reign of King Xuan of Zhou 周宣王 (r. 828–781 BCE). The ode "Plucking White Millet" (*Cai qi* 采芑) in the *Canon of Poems* (*Shijing* 詩經) hails a minister of King Xuan who allegedly invaded and overawed the "Savage Jing" (*man Jing* 蠻荊). Whether or not this term refers to the state of Chu (which often appears under the name Jing or Jing-Chu in early sources) or to other tribesmen of the Han 漢 and middle Yangzi basin is debatable,[3] but elsewhere the *Canon of Poems* seems to unmistakably signify the state of Chu as a major enemy. Two of the Lu 魯 and Shang 商 (probably Song 宋) hymns contain references to battles with the Jing-Chu, which, in a Lu hymn, is placed unequivocally aside the alien tribesmen Rong and Di 戎狄.[4] These hymns probably date from the Springs-and-Autumns period (Chunqiu 春秋, 770-453 BCE), yet they do indicate that the tradition of political cum cultural enmity toward Chu that started in the Western Zhou period continued and perhaps strengthened thereafter.

Zuo zhuan 左傳 (*Zuo Tradition*), our major source for the history of the Springs-and-Autumns period, records the rise of Chu and its epic struggle for supremacy in the Zhou world against the northern coalitions, led first by Qi 齊 and then by Jin 晉. A superficial reading of *Zuo zhuan* will lend support to identification of Chu as a culturally distinct entity. A Lu minister's saying, "They are not of our kin, their heart must be different" (非我族類，其心必異), is commonly—albeit erroneously—interpreted as pertaining to Chu's "racial" otherness.[5] This interpretation is wrong, but *Zuo zhuan* does contain

[2]For King Zhao's campaigns, see Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 93–94 and 327–29. For an invocation of King Zhao's inglorious defeat in 656 BCE, i.e. a full three centuries after its occurrence, see *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, annotated by Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990, hereafter *Zuo*), Xi 4.1: 290–91.

[3]For the poem and for different interpretations of its content, see Cheng Junying 程俊英 and Jiang Jianyuan 蔣見元, *Shijing zhuxi* 詩經注析 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1991), 505–11.

[4]See the Shang hymn "Yin wu" 殷武 and the Lu hymn, "Bigong" 閟宮 (Cheng and Jiang, *Shijing*, 1040 and 1017 respectively).

[5]*Zuo*, Cheng 4.4: 818. For a manipulative misreading of this passage as referring to Chu's racial otherness, see Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 3. This is a patently wrong interpretation: in *Zuo zhuan*, the term *zulei* 族類 refers exclusively to a lineal descent group and not to one's "race" (see *Zuo*, Xi 10.3: 334; Xi 31.5: 487). The rulers of Chu did not belong to the Zhou royal clan (Ji 姬) but this did not make them ethnically or culturally alien.

many other negative comments on Chu, which is perceived as a rival of the Xia 夏 entity centered around the Zhou royal clan. Thus, a Jin commander accuses Chu of eliminating many polities established by the Zhou royal clansmen (the Ji 姬 clan);[6] and many of Chu leaders, from its prime-minister (*lingyin* 令尹) Ziyu 子玉 (d. 632 BCE) to infamous King Ling 楚靈王 (r. 540–529 BCE) are singled out as arrogant and aggressive statesmen eager to violate rules of ritual and propriety. All this often leaves an impression of the text's overall enmity toward Chu.

A careful reading of *Zuo zhuan* shows that the picture is more complex. Chu is never treated in the text as the cultural Other: in distinction from other southern powers, such as Wu 吳 and Yue 越, Chu are never called *manyi* 蠻夷 ("savages"). Some Chu leaders are denigrated indeed, but others—most notably King Zhuang 楚莊王 (r. 613–591 BCE)—are given high respect. Moreover, some of the pejorative remarks about Chu in *Zuo zhuan* should be read *cum grano salis*. After all, the very state of Lu, whose statesman opposed relying on Chu who "are not of our kin," was at times closely allied with Chu, seeking its military assistance against the neighboring power of Qi. And the elimination of Zhou clansmen's polities was performed not just by Chu but also by the self-proclaimed defender of the Zhou, the state of Jin.[7] Actually, some of the imperial readers considered *Zuo zhuan* too biased in favor of Chu; and some of the exegetes—most notably Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)—opined that *Zuo zhuan* itself was a product of Chu historiography.[8]

Going further in history, in many of the Warring States–period (Zhanguo 戰國, 453–221 BCE) texts we encounter ever more pronounced enmity toward Chu. In particular, its association with "barbarians" becomes a commonplace. This association is reiterated throughout the *Discourses of the States* (*Guoyu* 國語),[9] even though the overall view of Chu in this text is far from negative, and parts of it contain laudatory comments on Chu (see below). A pejorative view of Chu is more explicit in *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, a rival (to *Zuo zhuan*) commentary on the *Springs-and-Autumns Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋). Chu is consistently identified in the text as a "barbarian" (*yi* 夷 or *yidi* 夷狄) state; it is oddly claimed to have no ranked nobles (which is patently wrong, judging from the *Annals*' text itself), and it is frequently treated with undisguised enmity.[10]

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[6]*Zuo*, Wen 28.3: 459.

[7]For Lu's alliance with Chu, see *Zuo*, Xi 26.4: 440–42; for Jin's elimination of the Ji polities, see, e.g., *Zuo*, Xiang 29.11: 1160. The complexity of the *Zuo zhuan* portrait of Chu generates ongoing scholarly debates. Compare David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 133–35; Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722–453 B.C.E.* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 42–44; Li Wai-yee, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center 2007), 298–330; and my summary of these debates in Yuri Pines, "Rethinking the Origins of Chinese Historiography: The *Zuo Zhuan* Revisited" (Review Article), *Journal of Chinese Studies* 49 (2009), 441–42.

[8]*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, compiled by Li Jingde 黎靖德 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 93: 2153.

[9]See *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解, compiled by Xu Yuangao 徐元誥, collated by Wang Shumin 王樹民 and Shen Changyun 沈長雲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 5.4: 186 ("Lu yu 魯語 2"); 14.12: 430 ("Jin yu 晉語 8"); 18.7: 527 ("Chu yu 楚語 2"). For a brief analysis of the dating of *Guoyu* and its relations with *Zuo zhuan*, see Pines, *Foundations*, 39–45.

[10]*Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan yizhu* 春秋公羊傳譯注, annotated by Liu Shangci 劉尚慈 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011, hereafter *Gongyang*), Zhuang 10: 130; Xi 21: 241; Zhao 16: 540. For the nature and dating of *Gongyang zhuan* see Joachim Gentz, *Das Gongyang zhuan: Auslegung und Kanonisierung der Frühlings*

One of the *Gongyang zhuan* statements is particularly important because of its lasting influence on subsequent views of Chu:

> Chu is the last to submit when there is a True Monarch, and the first to rebel when there is none. They are barbarians (*yidi*) and immensely hate the Central States. When southern savages and northern barbarians established ties, the Central States were like a thread due to be cut.
>
> 楚有王者則後服，無王者則先叛。夷狄也，而亟病中國，南夷與北狄交。中國不絕若線。.[11]

This statement—coming from amid one of the most famous passages in the entire *Gongyang zhuan*—set the framework for discussions of Chu political and cultural position within the Zhou world for millennia to come. It marked Chu as the epitome of the cultural Other, the malevolent polity which can be subjugated only under the reign of the True Monarch, and even then will forever remain prone to rebel. Coupled with a few other pejorative statements toward Chu, e.g., in *Mengzi* 孟子 and the *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji* 史記),[12] the *Gongyang zhuan* denigration of Chu attained the position of an orthodox view in traditional Chinese scholarship.

The traditional view of Chu as a distinct cultural entity was reinforced in the last quarter of the twentieth century, as many discoveries from the Chu tombs brought to light the peculiar, "flamboyant"[13] style of its mortuary objects. Lothar von Falkenhausen observed: "Dazzled by these unique archeological treasures, many scholars and impressionable laypersons had been clinging to the romantic notion that Chu was a separate southern civilization, an elegant and exuberant other to the dour, disciplined Zhou in the north."[14] Yet this view of Chu as an "alternative civilization" was questioned later in view of subsequent archeological discoveries. The new understanding, summarized by Xu Shaohua in the seminal volume by Constance A. Cook and John S. Major is that "there is little archeological evidence of a distinctive Chu culture during the

und Herbstannalen (Chunqiu) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001) and idem, "Long Live The King! The Ideology of Power between Ritual and Morality in the Gongyang zhuan 公羊傳," in *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, edited by Yuri Pines, Paul R. Goldin and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 69–117. For the existence of ranked nobles (*dafu* 大夫) in Chu, see, e.g., the *Annals*' entry in *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, Xi 28.6: 449.

[11] *Gongyang*, Xi 4: 203. The alleged ties between southern and northern "barbarians" refer to the simultaneous attacks of the Central States by northern tribesmen Rong 戎 and Di 狄, and the southern Chu.

[12] For Mengzi's denigration of Chu (amid praise of Chu personalities who were attracted by the Central States culture and were able to transcend their barbarianism), see *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注, annotated by Yang Bojun (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 5.4: 125 ("Teng Wen Gong, shang" 滕文公上). For a statement that the men of Chu are just "monkeys who were washed and capped" (*mu hou er guan* 沐猴而冠), see *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 7: 315.

[13] Paul R. Goldin, "Representations of Regional Diversity during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty," in *Ideology of Power*, 31.

[14] Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA, 2006), 264. For a representative example of this re-imagining of Chu, albeit as an alternative to Qin 秦 rather than to Zhou civilization, see the final magnum opus by a major Chu historian, Zhang Zhengming 張正明 (1928–2006), published posthumously (*Qin yu Chu* 秦與楚 [Wuhan: Huazhong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007]).

Western Zhou times."[15] It was only from the Springs-and-Autumns period on that a divergent cultural pattern associated with Chu began emerging, and even then Chu's elite culture remained strongly conformant with the Zhou ritual practices.[16] This suggests an entirely different cultural trajectory: Chu was not a "barbarian entity" attracted by the glory of the Zhou culture as hinted in the *Mengzi*,[17] but a normative Zhou polity that developed cultural assertiveness in tandem with the increase in its political power.[18]

The difficulty of analyzing Chu's identity derives not only from the complexity of its cultural trajectory but also from the nature of our textual sources. The overwhelming majority of Chu-related accounts in transmitted texts come from the histories produced outside the state of Chu. The *Springs-and-Autumns Annals* and their commentaries were composed in the states of Lu and Qi; most of the *Discourses of the States* come from the Zhou royal domain, Lu, and Jin; and so is the case of most of historical anecdotes scattered throughout the Warring States–period texts. While the Chu sections of the *Discourses of the States* and of *Stratagems of Warring States* (*Zhanguo ce* 戰國策), as well as segments of *Zuo zhuan*, may well have incorporated original Chu materials, we have no idea about the degree of editorial intervention by northern compilers in these materials. Look for instance at the *Records of the Historian*, our major source for pre-imperial history. Even those who do not subscribe to the accusation of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 90 BCE) as the one who "describes Chu in the imperialist terms of a northerner,"[19] would not deny the obvious northern bias in his—and other historical—writings. This consideration should dictate utmost caution in reading these texts. To accept, for instance, the self-identification of Chu as a "barbarian" polity on the basis of citations in the *Discourses of the States* and *Records of the Historian*,[20] strikes me as a haphazard conclusion.

It is on this backdrop that we can appreciate the import of the newly unearthed historical and quasi-historical manuscripts from the state of Chu. These materials comprise several dozen historical anecdotes, a semi-legendary history (*Rongchengshi* 容成氏), a sketchy history of Chu's capitals and royal palaces (*Chuju* 楚居), and a more detailed Chu-focused history of inter-state relations from the eleventh to the early fourth century BCE (*Xinian* 繫年). An integrative view of these materials may yield a novel perspective of Chu's self-image.

That history writing was—and is—commonly utilized to articulate, strengthen, or shape the collective identity of a cultural, ethnic, or political entity is almost a truism. To be sure, this is just one of a means of strengthening or constructing a separate cultural or political identity, and not necessarily the major one. Yet, the importance of history

[15]Xu Shaohua, "Chu Culture: An Archaeological Overview," in *Defining Chu*, 21.

[16]Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society*, 264 ff.

[17]*Mengzi* 5.4: 125.

[18]Such a trajectory would resemble very much that of Qin, as noticed by Falkenhausen (*Chinese Society*, 264); for the case of Qin, see also Gideon Shelach and Yuri Pines, "Secondary State Formation and the Development of Local Identity: Change and Continuity in the State of Qin (770–221 B.C.)," in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam T. Stark (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 202–30; Yuri Pines with Lothar von Falkenhausen, Gideon Shelach, and Robin D.S. Yates, "General Introduction: Qin History Revisited," in *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited*, edited by Pines, von Falkenhausen, Shelach, and Yates (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 1–36.

[19]Cook and Blakeley, "Introduction," 2.

[20]Zhang Zhengming, *Qin yu Chu*, 8.

writing with this regard, especially insofar as the educated segments of the population are concerned, is undeniable.[21] Paul R. Goldin noted that the emergence of local histories in the Eastern Zhou 東周 (770–256 BCE) period may be related to the nascent sense of regional identity.[22] In what follows I shall check whether or not this observation is valid for the state of Chu. How much do Chu historical texts reflect its separate cultural identity or contribute toward its formation? Do they polemicize with the denigration of Chu's culture in the northern texts? Do they bolster the Chu kings' legitimacy as potential leaders of All-under-Heaven? Do they present a different picture of Chu's relations with the Zhou polities from the one we have in the received texts? Do they use such common means of strengthening collective identity as focusing on Chu's wars with its rivals, glorifying its victories and lamenting its defeats? By answering these questions I hope to advance toward better understanding both of the issues related to the formation of Chu's identity and of the role of history-writing in the cultural processes during the Zhou era.

CHU HISTORICAL ANECDOTES

Didactic anecdotes—short vignettes valued for their edifying messages—are ubiquitous in pre-imperial writings. They permeate most texts later classified as either "histories" (like *Discourses of the States* and *Stratagems of the Warring States*), or "philosophies" (e.g., *Han Feizi* 韓非子, or *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), and even some of the "classics" (e.g., *Zuo zhuan*).[23] The anecdotes figure prominently in the Shanghai Museum collection of Chu manuscripts, of which they constitute more than a half of the heretofore published titles; they are present, albeit less prominently, among the Chu manuscripts possessed by Qinghua (Tsinghua) University; and a few of them appear in other collections of Chu materials.[24] It is therefore appropriate to start our discussion of Chu historiography with the survey of these anecdotes. Since the lion's share of the anecdotes comes from the Shanghai Museum collection, I shall focus in what follows on this collection only.[25]

[21]See for instance how historians reflected and contributed to the formation of national identities in modern Western Europe: *Writing National Histories: Western Europe Since 1800*, edited by Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, and Kevin Passmore (London: Routledge, 1999).

[22]Goldin, "Representations," 37.

[23]For a good introduction to the genre of didactic anecdotes, see David Schaberg, "Chinese History and Philosophy," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. I: *Beginnings to AD 600*, edited by Andrew Feldherr and Grant Hardy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 394–414; see also Paul van Els and Sarah A. Queen, eds., *Rhetorical Uses of Anecdotes in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017).

[24]The cache of Chu manuscripts from Tomb 1, Guodian 郭店 (Hubei), yielded a single manuscript that can be called an anecdote, namely *Lu Mugong wen Zisi* 魯穆公問子思 (Scott Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Series, 2012], 419–427). An anecdotal text resembling the Wu 吳 section of the *Discourses of the States* is part of the badly damaged materials from Tomb 36, Shibancun, Cili County 慈利石板村 (Hunan) (Zhang Chunlong 張春龍, "Cili Chujian gaishu" 慈利楚簡概述, in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu* 新出簡帛研究, ed. Ai Lan 艾蘭 [Sarah Allan] and Xing Wen 邢文 [Beijing: Wenwu, 2004], 4–11). Volumes 6–7 of the Qinghua manuscripts comprise mostly of the anecdotes related to the Springs-and-Autumns period; at present (2017) it is not clear how many other anecdotes are held in the Qinghua collection.

[25]To remind readers, the manuscripts in the Shanghai Museum collection are unprovenienced; they were allegedly looted from a Warring States–period Chu tomb and subsequently bought by the Shanghai Museum

One striking feature of the anecdotes from the Shanghai Museum collection is what Sarah Allan called their "cosmopolitan" content.[26] According to Allan's count, of twenty-four vignettes, thirteen come from Chu while the rest are spread throughout most of the Zhou world, coming from Lu (four), Qi (four), and one each from Jin, Zheng 鄭, and Wu 吳. My own count differs slightly from Allan's, primarily because I count two anecdotes embedded in the same manuscript separately, and also because I follow rearrangements of slips into a different sequence of manuscripts as proposed by a few later redactors.[27] Yet the differences are minuscule. Putting aside multiple anecdotes related to Confucius and his disciples, we may summarize that Chu vignettes constitute just slightly over 60 percent of the anecdotes in the Shanghai Museum collection and the percentage will further decrease should we add anecdotes from another sites and collections, which are overwhelmingly non-Chu in their focus.[28] This allows an immediate observation: members of the Chu educated elite who took anecdotes with them to the final journey to the netherworld appear to be interested in the affairs of the entire Zhou realm rather than being narrowly focused on their own country. The next question will be: to what extent the Chu-related anecdotes from the Shanghai Museum collection represent aspects of Chu political or cultural identity? To facilitate the discussion of this question I have briefly summarized the content of the anecdotes in Table 1 below.

Fifteen Chu anecdotes from the Shanghai Museum collection cover almost two centuries of Chu history: the earliest (#12) is related to the events of 633 BCE (on the eve of the Chengpu 城濮 battle), while the latest (#3) dates from the time of King Jian of Chu 楚簡王 (r. ca. 431-405 BCE).[29] These eventful centuries witnessed the rise of Chu hegemony and a few severe setbacks, glorious victories and disastrous defeats, periods of domestic stability and of woeful turmoil. One may expect that these events will be at the focus of Chu historians' interest, but this is not the case. Of major battles, for instance, only two are mentioned in the anecdotes, and even they are given a marginal place in the narrative. The Chengpu battle of 632 BCE in which Chu lost its hegemony to the newly rising power of Jin is the backdrop of anecdote #12; yet rather than focusing on the battle, the anecdote just tells a story of military incompetence of Chu's Prime Minster

team at the Hong Kong antiquities market. I put aside for the time being the moral aspects of working with looted manuscripts (raised by Paul R. Goldin in "*Heng xian* and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts," *Dao* 13 [2013], 153–60); suffice it to say that I consider major texts discussed in the current article as authentic. For a speculation that Shanghai materials may have been looted from an elite female tomb, see Sarah Allan, *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Recently Discovered Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip Manuscripts* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2015), 53–55.

[26]Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 58–59.

[27]In two cases (##1–2 and 4–5 in the table) two different anecdotes (each bearing its own title) were written in the same manuscript (that is, the new anecdote started on the same slip that the previous one ended). On the other hand, in not a few cases (some of which are specified in Table 1) later redactors proposed rearrangement of the slips merging two previously independent anecdotes into one.

[28]Of the nine anecdotes scattered through volumes 6–7 of the Qinghua collection, only one deals with Chu affairs, while the rest focus on Jin (3 anecdotes), Zheng (3 anecdotes), Qi and Wu-Yue (one anecdote each).

[29]There is considerable confusion in the dates of late fifth century BCE rulers of Chu and other polities as recorded in the *Records of the Historian*. For an attempt to correct some of these mistakes, see Li Rui 李銳, "You Qinghua jian *Xinian* tan Zhanguo chu Chu shi niandai de wenti" 由清華簡《繫年》談戰國初楚史年代的問題, *Shixueshi yanjiu* 史學史研究 2 (2013), 100–104.

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TABLE 1 Chu anecdotes from the Shanghai Museum collection

#	Name	Location	Focus	Comment
1	*Zhao wang hui shi* 昭王毀室	Vol 4: 179–86	King Zhao decides to destroy a new palatial chamber that infringed on his subject's graveyard	Part of the same manuscript as #2
2	*Zhao wang yu Gong zhi Shui* 昭王與龔之脽	Vol 4: 186–90	King Zhao displays humility and self-criticism after his defeat by the Wu invaders	Part of the same manuscript as #1
3	*Jian da wang po han* 柬大王泊旱	Vol 4: 191–215	King Jian discusses proper sacrificial ceremonies to avert drought and to end personal illness	Similar discussion of the importance of ritually appropriate sacrifices to avert troubles recur in many texts starting with *Zuo zhuan*[1]
4	*Zhuang wang ji cheng* 莊王既成	Vol. 6: 239–46	King Zhuang hears prediction of Chu's future decline	Part of the same manuscript as #5
5	*Shen gong chen Ling wang* 申公臣靈王	Vol. 6: 246–52	King Ling meets his erstwhile rival	Part of the same manuscript as #4; paralleled in *Zuo zhuan* (Xiang 26 and Zhao 8)[2]
6	*Ping wang wen Zheng Shou* 平王問鄭壽	Vol. 6: 255–63	A clever remonstrance causes King Ping to improve his ways	
7	*Ping wang yu Wangzi Mu* 平王與王子木	Vol. 6: 263–72	Predicts that King Ping's son, Mu (Prince Jian 王子建) will not become a king because he does not grasp the essentials of agriculture	The prince eventually was dismissed by King Ping and ended his life in exile
8	*Zheng Zijia sang* 鄭子家喪	Vol. 7: 169–88	King Zhuang's actions before and during the Bi 邲 battle	Two copies of the text coexist; many parallels with *Zuo zhuan* (but also considerable differences[3])
9	*Jun ren zhe he bi an zai* 君人者何必安哉	Vol. 7: 189–218	Remonstrance to King Zhao of Chu	Two copies of the text coexist in the Shanghai Museum collection
10	*Wang ju* 王居 + slips 4–5 of *Ming* 命 + most of *Zhishu nai yan* 志書乃言	Vol. 8: 189–226	The ruler (perhaps King Hui) is cautioned not to listen to slanderers	Merge of three manuscripts into one following Asano Yūichi[4]
11	*Ming* 命 (except slips 4–5)	Vol. 8: 189–202	Son of Zigao 子高, Lord of She 葉公, remonstrates to Prime Minister (*lingyin*) Zichun 子春	Following the reconstruction by Asano Yūichi[5]
12	*Cheng wang wei Chengpu zhi xing* 成王為城濮之行	Vol. 9: 141–54	*Lingyin* Ziyu 子玉 displays his incompetence on the eve of the fateful Chengpu battle (632 BCE)	Parallels *Zuo zhuan* (Xi 27.4)
13	*Ling wang sui Shen* 靈王遂申	Vol. 9: 155–64	A short story about King Ling's oppressiveness and the opposition to it	

Continued.

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TABLE 1 Continued

#	Name	Location	Focus	Comment
14	*Chen gong zhi bing* 陳公治兵	Vol. 9: 165–88	An explanation of military training and rituals	Interlocutors' identity is unknown
15	*Bang ren bu cheng* 邦人不稱	Vol. 9: 237–68	Praise of Zigao 子高, Lord of She 葉公	Based on reconstruction by Kudō Takushi[6]

[1]Chen Jian 陳劍, "Shangbo zhujian *Zhao wang yu Gongzhi Shui* he *Jianda wang po han* du houji" 上博竹書《昭王與龔之脽》和《柬大王泊旱》讀後記, http://www.jianbo.org/admin3/2005/chenjian002.htm.

[2]Ebine Ryōsuke 海老根量介, "Shangbo jian *Shengong chen Lingwang* jianlun: tongguo yu *Zuozhuan* bijiao"上博簡《申公臣靈王》簡論——通過與《左傳》比較 (2012), http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=1893.

[3]Wei Cide 魏慈德, "Qinghua jian *Xinian* yu *Zuo zhuan* de Chu shi yitong" 《清華簡·繫年》與《左傳》中的楚史異同, *Donghua Hanxue* 東華漢學 17 (2013), 17–22.

[4]Asano Yūichi 淺野裕一, "Shangbo Chu jian *Wang ju* zhi fuyuan yu jieshi" 上博楚簡《王居》之復原與解釋, trans. Diao Xiaolong 刁小龍 (2011), http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=1685.

[5]Asano Yūichi, "Shangbo Chu jian."

[6]Kudō Takushi 工藤卓司, "*Shangbo jiu—Bangren bu cheng* zhaji" 《上博九·邦人不稱》札記, *Zhili xuebao, renwen yu shenghuo yingyong tekan* 致理學報，人文與生活應用特刊 (2014), 997–1026.

(*lingyin*) Ziyu 子玉. The story closely parallels the *Zuo zhuan* narrative[30] and the picture of Ziyu's inadequacy presented in it mirrors that in *Zuo zhuan*.

That the Chengpu setback is all but glossed over is understandable; yet Chu's successes also generally do not attract the authors' attention. An exception is the Bi 邲 battle of 597 BCE in which King Zhuang of Chu 楚莊王 (r. 613–591 BCE) defeated the Jin armies and solidified his hegemony over the Zhou world. This battle—or, more precisely, the events that led to it—are at the center of anecdote #8. The narrative partly parallels *Zuo zhuan* but also departs from it in a few important details. Most notably, Chu's assault on Zheng which led to the Bi battle is presented as a punitive expedition against Prince Guisheng 公子歸生 (aka Zijia 子家) of Zheng who assassinated his ruler, Lord Ling 鄭靈公, in 605 BCE. This presentation is obviously biased in favor of Chu. As is clear from the very detailed depiction of these events in *Zuo zhuan* and elsewhere, King Zhuang's assault on Zheng in 597 BCE had nothing to do with penalizing Zijia, who was already dead by then and who in any case was posthumously chastened by Zheng leaders. The real reason for King Zhuang's assault on Zheng was to punish the perfidy of Zheng's rulers, who repeatedly switched allegiance from Chu to Jin and back to Chu. By replacing power consideration with the noble goal of punishing Zijia, the authors of the anecdote legitimate King Zhuang's assault on Zheng. The anecdote further implies that it is due to the king's morality and ritual correctness that he had subjugated Zheng and defeated the Jin army. So is it pure pro-Chu propaganda? Possibly yes, but not necessarily so. As Wei Cide noticed, the anecdote is less concerned with defending King Zhuang's actions, but, rather with the didactic conclusion: only morally justified military campaigns will meet with success.[31] Hence this anecdote cannot be considered a decisive manifestation of pro-Chu sentiments.

Among other anecdotes, only one (#14) mentions military affairs of Chu, but this is done very briefly in the context of discussing correct military training; the list of successful campaigns of the past is not invoked to enhance the country's prestige. At times Chu's military successes are hinted at—e.g., in anecdote #4—but only as a backdrop for discussing the imminent danger of Chu's decline. In general, the anecdotes' authors are not much interested in Chu's past attainments and display no pride in the country's successes. When another expansionist ruler, King Ling 楚靈王 (r. 540–529 BCE) is mentioned, this is done to reiterate his negative image as an arrogant and intemperate leader rather than to hail his achievements (anecdotes ##5 and 13).

The major goal of the Chu-related anecdotes from the Shanghai Museum collection is not to glorify the militarily prominent Chu kings but rather to extol those monarchs who were able to heed remonstrance and mend their ways. Most of the remonstrance-focused anecdotes revolve around two of the least powerful Chu kings, King Ping 楚平王 (r. 528–516 BCE) and his son, King Zhao 楚昭王 (r. 515–489 BCE). The first of these rose to power in a fratricidal struggle which not only put an end to the reign of King Ling, but also caused a considerable decrease in Chu's international prestige, and the country's territorial contraction. King Zhao encountered an even greater disaster: an assault by Wu armies in 506 BCE caused him to flee the capital and put the entire

[30] *Zuo*, Xi 27.4: 444–45.
[31] Wei Cide, "Qinghua jian," 17–22.

country on the verge of collapse. As the weakest ruler on the throne of Chu during the period under discussion, King Zhao appears to be more prone than his predecessors or successors to heed remonstrance, mend his behavior, and tolerate criticism. These qualities are hailed in several anecdotes (##1, 2, 9). One's impression is that the authors of the anecdotes prefer weak and compliant kings to those who display extraordinary martial prowess but are also less tolerant of critical-minded aides.

To summarize, Chu vignettes from the Shanghai Museum—with the possible exception of anecdote #8—appear to be unconcerned with the country's separate identity, its pride, its glorious past, and the like. Most of these anecdotes lack an identifiable Chu flavor: they could be placed in a different setting and with a different list of protagonists without altering their meaning.[32] In a few other cases—such as anecdotes ##4 and 5 (which, to repeat, are part of the same manuscript)—there is no doubt that the authors targeted exclusively a Chu audience, because both anecdotes presuppose a high level of knowledge of Chu history, without which they would remain barely comprehensible.[33] However, these anecdotes, much like the rest surveyed above, are devoid of any visible emphasis on Chu's cultural or political specifics. It may be justifiable to speak of them, and of the heretofore published Chu anecdotes in general, as "identity-neutral."

This impression strengthens when we take into account non-Chu anecdotes from the Shanghai Museum collection and other materials from Chu tombs. Take for instance a manuscript named *Wu ming* 吳命, which revolves around a speech apparently delivered by the messenger of King Fuchai of Wu 吳王夫差 (r. 495–473 BCE) to the Zhou Son of Heaven.[34] The speech justifies Wu's ongoing war with Chu as defense of the Zhou house; Chu is accused of "acting not in accordance with the Way" (*Jing* [or *Chu ren*] *wei bu Dao* 荊 [or 楚人] 為不道, slips 4 and 9).[35] That this accusation appears in a speech attributed to one of Chu's staunchest foes is expectable; but that it is not qualified

[32]See, e.g., Chen Jian, "Shangbo zhujian," for one example.

[33]Anecdote #4 contains a prediction of the disaster that will strike Chu "four or five generations" after King Zhuang; it will be inflicted by a boat-riding army. Surely, this refers to the disastrous defeat of King Zhao of Chu by the Wu invaders in 506 BCE; yet since no verification is added, the anecdote's authors evidently presuppose the audience to be able to verify the prediction independently. (Note that "four-five" generations refers to an uncertain position of King Jia'ao 郟敖 [r. 544–41 BCE], who was murdered by his nephew, King Ling, and subsequently stripped off his place in Chu's royal temple). Anecdote #5 tells of King Ling, who appointed to an important position his erstwhile rival although the latter had almost killed the would-be king several years earlier. This crucial background is hinted at in the anecdote but without any elaboration; should we not know the story from the *Zuo zhuan* account, the anecdote would remain incomprehensible. Perhaps, the Chu audience was expected to know the related events well enough to skip a detailed explanation. See the analysis of both anecdotes in Yuasa Kunihiro 湯淺邦弘, *Zhujian xue: Zhongguo gudai sixiang de tanjiu* 竹簡學——中國古代思想的探究, trans. Bai Yutian 白雨田 (Shanghai: Dongfang chubanshe, 2017), 89–112.

[34]The document is badly damaged, and the precise identity of speakers and their audience is contestable. For different interpretations, see Wang Qing 王青, "'Ming' yu 'yu': Shangbo jian *Wu ming* bushi: jianlun 'ming' de wenti wenti" "命" 與 "語": 上博簡《吳命》補釋——兼論 "命" 的文體問題, *Shixue jikan* 史學集刊 7 (2013), 47–55, vs. Wang Hui 王暉, "Chu zhushu *Wu ming* zhuilian pianpai xin kao" 楚竹書《吳命》綴連編排新考, *Zhongyuan wenhua yanjiu* 中原文化研究 2 (2013), 60–65.

[35]Since each of the unearthed materials discussed in this article has been published several times (often with considerable improvement over the original publication), I normally do not refer here and in what follows to the pages of the original publication but only to the slip numbers of the manuscript.

at all in an anecdote that circulated in the state of Chu, was transcribed into a Chu script, and was buried in a Chu tomb is surprising.

The surprise becomes even greater when we notice the Chu manuscripts' attitudes to the figure of Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (d. 484 BCE). Wu Zixu, a son of a high minister of Chu who fell victim to slanderers and was executed by King Ping, vowed to avenge his father's death. He fled to the state of Wu and led its assault against Chu, bringing about Wu's occupation of Chu's capital, Ying, in 506. The occupation was a deeply humiliating and traumatic event; according to the *Guliang Commentary* (*Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳) on the *Springs-and-Autumns Annals*, it involved among other things desecration of King Ping's tomb and flogging his corpse.[36] Wu Zixu made a brilliant career in Wu, but later King Fuchai rejected his advice and ordered him to commit suicide. In due time, Wu Zixu became a paragon of loyalty entering the pantheon of righteous ministers who met an inglorious end.[37] This perspective, however, is decidedly non-Chu: after all, from the Chu point of view, Wu Zixu should be considered a major enemy, a murderous turncoat. Yet in two of the Chu manuscripts—*Poverty and Success are a Matter of Timing* (*Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時) from the Guodian collection and *Good Ministers* (*Liang chen* 良臣) from the Qinghua collection, Wu Zixu is hailed as a model minister without any mention of his anti-Chu deeds.[38]

This latter example further strengthens my tentative conclusion: Chu historical anecdotes, as well as other historical and philosophical texts, lack any visible interest in Chu identity. Their Chu affiliation is marginal to their content. Their focus is decisively supra-regional: they concern the affairs of "All-under-Heaven" and could be produced in any of the competing states.

CHU JU

Aside from multiple anecdotes, recent discoveries of Chu-related histories yielded a few lengthier texts, to which I shall turn now. One of these, *Chu Residences* (*Chu ju* 楚居), from the first volume of the Qinghua collection, is the first known example of a pure Chu history. This brief text, transcribed on 14 slips, records Chu's history from the semi-legendary progenitor of the Chu royal lineage, Jilian 季連, down to King Dao of Chu 楚悼王 (r. ca. 401–381 BCE). It provides a few important details on the early history of Chu,[39] including, significantly, about the formation of its major aristocratic lineages.[40] However, as we

[36]*Chunqiu Guliang jing zhuan buzhu* 春秋穀梁經傳補注, annotated by Zhong Wenzheng 鍾文烝 (1818–77), collated by Pian Yuqian 駢宇騫 and Hao Shuhui 郝淑慧 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 23: 687 (Ding 4). For the discussion about the historicity of flogging King Ping's corpse, see Cang Linzhong 倉林忠, "Guanyu Wu Zixu youfou dui Chu Pingwang juemu bianshi de bianxi" 關於伍子胥有否對楚平王掘墓鞭尸的辨析, *Mianyang shifan xueyuan xuebao* 綿陽師範學院學報 10 (2013), 58–64.

[37]For the evolution of Wu Zixu's story, see David Johnson, "Epic and History in Early China: The Matter of Wu Tzu-Hsü," *Journal of Asian Studies* 40.2 (1981), 255–71.

[38]See respectively Cook, *The Bamboo Texts*, 463, and Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 Vol. 3 (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi, 2012), p. 157; slip 7.

[39]Yin Hongbing 尹弘兵, "Cong *Chuju* kan Jilian yu Xuexiong de guanxi" 從《楚居》看季連與穴熊的關係 (2012), http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1711.

[40]Lai Guolong 來國龍, "Qinghua jian *Chu ju* suo jian Chuguo de gongzu yu shixi" 清華簡《楚居》所見楚國的公族與世系 (2011), http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1588#_ftnref24.

enter the better known historical period (primarily the eighth century BCE and later), the narrative becomes very sketchy. Its only focus is on the changing location of the country's capitals, or, more precisely, of the ruler's palaces.[41] Almost no additional information is given: battles, domestic struggles, victories and defeats are all but absent, except in a few cases when they directly influenced the capital's location (for instance, the Ruoao 若敖 lineage's revolt of 605 BCE, the Wu occupation of Chu's capital in 506 BCE, and the revolt of Duke of Bai 白公 in 479 BCE). Sensitive information is not necessarily concealed (as is the case with *Xinian*, discussed below); it is simply not considered essential.

Chu ju is a puzzling text. Who were its audience? One may well read this sketchy, even if informative, text as an early version of a *gaokao* 高考 material: a draft reply for an exam on Chu's historical geography. Speaking more seriously, I may speculate that this short survey of Chu's royal residences could be prepared specifically for foreigners in the service of Chu kings. Perhaps dwellings of former rulers possessed a certain ritual or cultic importance that should be clarified to a newcomer to the state of Chu. Maybe this was a kind of sensitive domestic information akin to local taboos and prohibitions which the foreigner should learn upon arrival?[42] Needless to say this assertion is currently impossible to verify.

Chu ju is a useful source of information for those seeking to augment sketchy data in the received sources about early ancestors of the Chu royal lineage, and it contains seeds of heretofore unknown early dynastic legends, but these are less relevant to my discussion.[43] Here I want to focus on the opening lines of *Chu ju*, which narrate the story of the primeval ancestor of Chu, Jilian. The story tells:

> Jilian first descended at Mt. Wei, then arrived at Qiong Cave; advanced to depart from Mt. Qiao, making his dwelling at the Yuan Slope. He moved up the stream of the Chuan River, where he met the son of Pangeng, who lived at Mt. Fang. His (Pangeng's son's) daughter was named Ancestress Zhui. She was the utmost beauty, outshining everybody within the four quarters. Jilian heard of her betrothal and pursued her, reaching her at the waterside. There she gave birth to the elder son Cheng and the second-born Yuan.
>
> 季連初降于騩山，抵于穴窮。前出于驕山，宅處爰波（坡）。逆上泝水，見盤庚之子，處於方山。女曰比隹，秉茲率【一】相，罟（胄）四方。季連聞其有聘，從，及之盤，爰生[illegible]伯、遠仲。【二】[44]

Limitations of space prevent me from adequately dealing with the rich geographical and mythological information in this section; I shall focus on its political aspects only.

[41]For interpreting names X+Ying 郢 as referring to royal palaces, see Shou Bin 守彬, "Cong Qinghua jian *Chu ju* tan 'x Ying'" 從清華簡《楚居》談"×郢" (2011), http://www.bsm.org.cn/show_article.php?id=1377.

[42]For the latter, see *Liji jijie* 禮記集解, compiled by Sun Xidan 孫希旦 (1736–84), edited by Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰 and Wang Xingxian 王星賢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), IV.1: 91 ("Qu li shang" 曲禮上).

[43]For these topics, see, e.g., Luo Dan 羅丹, "Qinghua jian suo jian Chuguo zaoqi shishi dingbu" 清華簡所見楚國早期史事訂補, *Chu xue luncong* 楚學論叢 4 (2015), 103–17; Ke Heli 柯鶴立 (Constance A. Cook), "Chu xianzu de dansheng gushi: jianlun Shang yu Chu de guanxi" 楚先祖的誕生故事——兼論商與楚的關係, in *Chu jian, Chu wenhua yu xian Qin lishi wenhua guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 楚簡楚文化與先秦歷史文化國際學術研討會論文集, edited by Luo Yunhuan 羅運環 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe 2013), 134–50.

[44](slips 1-2).

Jilian—whose "descending" (*jiang* 降) apparently implies divine birth[45]—is considered the forefather of the Mi 羋 clan, i.e. the royal clan of Chu. Normally he is not identified as the earliest of Chu ancestors. According to the "Hereditary house of Chu" chapter in the *Records of the Historian*, Jilian was preceded by several primordial ancestors, most notably the primeval Thearch Zhuanxu 顓頊 and the Rectifier of Fire (*huozheng* 火正) Zhurong 祝融.[46] Chu sacrificial materials from Tomb 2, Baoshan, Jingmen 荊門包山 (Hubei), from Tomb 1, Wangshan, Jiangling 江陵望山 (Hubei), and from Tomb 1 at Geling, Xincai 新蔡葛陵 (Henan), all record sacrifices to Zhurong and to his ancestor Laotong 老僮, who were apparently considered more worthy of sacrifice than Jilian.[47] Yet these primeval ancestors are not mentioned at all in *Chu ju*. Instead the focus is on Jilian and on his relations with the son of the Shang 商 king, Pangeng 盤庚, whose daughter Jilian married.[48] This emphasis on the relations with the Shang ruling lineage suggests that the Shang connection was highly important for the narrators. Evidently, marrying Pangeng's granddaughter was a source of pride for the ancestor of the Chu ruling house, possibly an important asset for bolstering the house's legitimacy and prestige.[49]

The emphasis on Jilian at the expense of his illustrious ancestors and some of his meritorious descendants is significant in the context of my discussion. It shows surprising modesty of the Chu historians who composed the *Chu ju*. To demonstrate the degree of this modesty it may be useful to compare *Chu ju* with a rarely noticed piece of pro-Chu propaganda in a transmitted text, namely the Zheng section of the *Discourses of the States*. The "Zheng yu" 鄭語 narrates an advice given by the Zhou Scribe Bo 史伯 to Lord Huan of Zheng 鄭桓公 (r. 806–770 BCE) on the eve of the collapse of the Western Zhou. The dating of the text is debatable, but it is likely that it is anterior to *Chu ju*.[50] One of the most interesting parts of this text is the section in which Scribe Bo predicts the unstoppable rise of Chu. According to his analysis, Chu's good fortunes derive from the merits of its leaders, past and present:

> Viscount Xiong Yan of Jing [= Chu] had four sons: [the elder] Boshuang, [the second] Zhongxue, [the third] Shuxiong, and [the youngest] Jixun.[51] Shuxiong avoided troubles by fleeing to Pu, where he became a savage; hence Jixun was established.[52] The Wei lineage planned to establish [Shuxiong] but failed to overcome troubles. This means that Heaven opened the path for him [Jixun].[53] Moreover, he is perspicacious and clear

[45]Ke Heli, "Chu xianzu."

[46]*Shiji* 40: 1689–1690.

[47]Da Haobo 笪浩波, "Cong Qinghua jian *Chuju* kan Chu shi de ruogan wenti" 從清華簡《楚居》看楚史的若干問題, *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 中國史研究 1 (2015), 85–87.

[48]Yin Hongbing, "Cong *Chuju* kan."

[49]See Ke Heli, "Chu xianzu," for further aspects of Chu-Shang relations in *Chu ju*.

[50]See Qiu Feng 邱鋒, "Lun *Guoyu-Zheng yu* chansheng de diyu he shidai" 論《國語·鄭語》產生的地域和時代, *Gansu shehui kexue* 甘肅省會科學 2 (2007), 124–25, 138.

[51]Note that Bo 伯, Zhong 仲, Shu 叔, and Ji 季 refer to the order of birth; eventually these terms became parts of the protagonists' personal names.

[52]From the *Shiji* (40: 1694) we know that Boshuang died after six years on throne, and the second brother Zhongxue died soon thereafter. Pu, to which Shuxiong fled, was probably located on the southern shores of the Han 漢 River.

[53]Heaven's support as manifested in elimination of one's domestic rivals is a persistent topic in e.g., the *Zuo zhuan* accounts of the rise of Lord Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628 BCE).

minded, harmonious and amicable; [his merits] exceed those of the former kings. I have heard: one for whom Heaven opens the path cannot be replaced for ten generations. His descendants will surely greatly expand their territory: they cannot be pressed.

Besides, he is the descendant of Chong and Li. Li was the Rectifier of Fire under Gaoxin.[54] He was brilliant and resplendent; bright like Heaven and virtuous like Earth; he broadly illuminated all within the four seas; hence he was named Zhurong. His merits were great… The resurrection of [Zhu] Rong's descendants: will it start with the Mi clan?[55] Among the Mi, Kui and Yue do not deserve the Mandate; Mi of the Min are savages; only Jing [Chu] really possess brilliant virtue.[56] If Zhou declines, [Chu] will surely prosper.

夫荊子熊嚴生子四人：伯霜、仲雪、叔熊、季紃。叔熊逃難于濮而蠻，季紃是立，遠氏將起之，禍又不克。是天啓之{心[57]}也。又甚聰明和協，蓋其先王。臣聞之，天之所啓，十世不替。夫其子孫必光啓土，不可偪也。且重、黎之後也，夫黎為高辛氏火正，以淳耀敦大，天明地德，光照四海，故命之曰「祝融」，其功大矣。……融之興者，其在羋姓乎？羋姓夔越不足命也。聞羋蠻矣，唯荊實有昭德，若周衰，其必興矣。.[58]

This passage—which is exceptional in its pro-Chu attitudes among all the texts of the Warring States period—provides two justifications for the anticipated rise of Chu: good qualities of its contemporaneous ruler, Jixun 季紃 (fl. ca.770 BCE), and the merits of Chu's mythical ancestor, Zhurong. Surely this line of argumentation in bolstering Chu's prestige was known to Chu statesmen and historians of the early Warring States period (which is the approximate time of *Chu ju* compilation).[59] That they opted to ignore it and to emphasize instead relations of the Mi clan to the Shang king Pangeng cannot be accidental. For whatever reasons, the composers of *Chu ju* may have considered intermarriage with the Shang royal clan as a more significant factor in supporting the Chu royalty than deeds of meritorious ancestors. Once again, a Chu historical text appears much less concerned with pro-Chu propaganda than could have been expected.

XINIAN

Xinian 繫年 is another bamboo manuscript from the collection of Qinghua University. It is the lengthiest and most detailed historical text unearthed in recent decades. The text is divided into 23 sections that narrate major events from the history of the state of Chu, its rivals, and its allies from the beginning of the Western Zhou period to the early fourth

[54]Gaoxin 高辛 is another primeval thearch. Chong 重 and Li 黎 (who are sometimes treated as a single person) are attributed with the separation of Heaven and Earth (*Guoyu* 18.1: 512–16 ["Chu yu xia"]).

[55]Mi is the royal clan of Chu.

[56]Kui 夔 was a small polity in Hubei, eliminated by Chu in 634 BCE because its ruler discontinued sacrifices to the common ancestors of the Mi clan. Yue 越 is a broad designation of southern tribesmen; it does not refer here to the state of Yue, which did not belong to the Mi clan. Xu Yuangao (*Guoyu*, p. 468) reads Kuiyue as a single name but this is disputable (Qiu Feng, "Lun *Guoyu-Zheng yu*"). Min usually refers to the dwellers of Fujian; it is not at all clear how they are related to the Mi clan.

[57]The character xin 心 is redundant here (see Xu Yuangao's gloss, Guoyu 16.1: 465).

[58](Guoyu, 16.1: 464–68 ["Zheng yu"]).

[59]For the dating of *Chu ju* to ca. 370 BCE, see Asano Yūichi 浅野裕一, "Qinghua jian *Chu ju* chutan" 清華簡《楚居》初探, *Qinghua jian yanjiu* 清華簡研究 1 (2012), 242–47.

century BCE. As I have discussed its structure, its dating, its potential audience, and the question of its authenticity elsewhere,[60] I shall focus here on the following topics: the text's relation to the state of Chu, its relevance to our search for traits of separate Chu identity, and the relation between its narration of Chu history and that in *Zuo zhuan*.

Xinian is a composite text that incorporates materials from several Zhou polities; judging from the chronology it applies, these are the Western Zhou royal domain, and the states of Jin and Chu from the Eastern Zhou period. Yet despite the heterogeneity of the source materials, there are clear indications that *Xinian* was composed and probably edited in the state of Chu. First, each section of the text, except for the first, which narrates exclusively Western Zhou affairs, deals with the state of Chu either directly or through discussing its primary rivals or allies, such as the state of Jin. Second, the geographical perspective of *Xinian* is obviously biased toward the western part of the Zhou world. For instance, the state of Qin—an important ally of Chu during much of the period under discussion—is covered much more expansively than in other contemporaneous texts,[61] while eastern states, such as Qi and Lu which played a lesser role in Chu history, are less prominent; thus, the exploits of Lord Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643 BCE), which occupy pride of place in *Zuo zhuan*, are given only marginal attention. Third, the Chu affiliation becomes more pronounced in the last sections of the text, which—uncharacteristically for the rest of *Xinian*—adopt the Chu chronology even when the narrative deals with Jin. Fourth, there are ritual indications of the text's respect toward the Chu kings: their deaths are invariably recorded as solemnly "passing away" (*jishi* 即世), while this courtesy is not uniformly observed with regard to other regional lords.[62] All this suggests that the text was produced in Chu, although it clearly incorporated non-Chu materials.

In marked distinction from *Chu ju* that focuses on internal history of Chu (or, more precisely, on a single aspect of it, namely the location of royal capitals and palaces), *Xinian* is preoccupied with Chu's foreign relations. Domestic affairs of Chu are rarely mentioned, and major instances of internal turmoil, such as the coups that first catapulted King Ling into power and then caused his fall, are glossed over. This concealment reminds one of the *Springs-and-Autumns Annals*, which never report directly about major domestic troubles in the state of Lu.[63] Yet *Xinian* does not conceal cases of

[60]Yuri Pines, "Zhou History and Historiography: Introducing the Bamboo Manuscript *Xinian*," *T'oung Pao* 100.4–5 (2014), 287–324.

[61]Yuri Pines, "Reassessing Textual Sources for Pre-Imperial Qin History," in *Sinologi Mira k iubileiu Stanislava Kuczery: Sobranie Trudov*, edited by Sergej Dmitriev and Maxim Korolkov (Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniia RAN, 2013), 236–63.

[62]Chen Wei 陳偉, "Qinghua daxue cang zhushu Xinian de wenxianxue kaocha" 清華大學藏竹書《繫年》的文獻學考察, *Shilin* 史林 1 (2013), 44–45.

[63]Whenever a lord of Lu was assassinated, the *Annals* report that he merely "passed away" (*hong* 薨), or, in a case of an heir, "died" (*zu* 卒). See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Yin 11: 71; Huan 18: 151; Min 2: 261 (for the lords) and Zhuang 32: 251; Wen 18: 629 (for heirs). In the latter case, *Zuo zhuan* explains: "The book [*Chunqiu*] says 'the son died' because of the taboo" (*Zuo*, Wen 18.5: 632). Similarly, when Lord Zhao of Lu 魯昭公 (r. 541–510 BCE) was driven into exile by his rebellious ministers in 517, the *Annals* reported just that the lord "retired to Qi" (公孫［＝遜］于齊; *Chunqiu*, Zhao 25: 1454). For more on the concealment in the *Annals*, see Zhao Shengqun 趙生群, *Chunqiu jing zhuan yanjiu* 春秋經傳研究 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2000), 33–35.

Chu's military defeats, nor even tries to soften their impact. Let us look at section 21, which deals with the late fifth-century BCE struggle between Jin and Chu:

> At the seventh year of King Jianda of Chu [i.e., King Jian, r. ca. 431–405 BCE], Lord Dao of Song attended the court audience in Chu, reporting that Pi, Minister of Public Works, acts to weaken the lord's house. The king ordered *mo'ao* Yang Wei to lead an army to stabilize the lord's house [of Song]. [This army] walled Huangchi and walled Yongqiu.[64] The Jin [leaders] Wei Si, Zhao Wan, and Han Qizhang led an army laying a siege on Huangchi; they assaulted it and then returned it to Chu.[65] After two years, the king ordered *mo'ao* Yang Wei to lead an army to invade Jin. He seized Yiyang and laid a siege to Chiyan so as to retaliate for the Huangchi campaign.[66] The Jin [leaders] Wei Si, Zhao Wan, and Han Qizhang led an army to assist Chiyan. The Chu army gave up the siege and retreated, and it fought the Jin army near the Long Wall.[67] The Chu army achieved nothing. They threw away their banners and tents and fled by night. Therefore Chu harbored strong resentment against Jin.

> 楚簡大王立七年，宋悼公朝于楚，告以宋司城坡之約（弱？）公室。王命莫敖陽爲率　【114】師以定公室，城黃池，城雍丘。晉魏斯、趙浣、韓啓章率師圍黃池，⿺辶回而歸之【115】於楚。二年，王命莫敖陽爲率師侵晉，拕（奪）宜陽，圍赤岸，以復黃池之師。魏斯、趙浣、韓啓【116】章率師救赤岸，楚人舍圍而還，與晉師戰於長城。楚師無功，多棄旃幕，宵遁。楚以【117】與晉固爲怨。【118】[68]

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[64]Huangchi and Yongqiu were both contested by Zheng and Song, with the former being also an objective of Jin's expansion. According to Ma Nan's 馬楠 analysis (*Qinghua jian 'Xinian' jizheng* 清華簡《繫年》輯證 [Shanghai: Zhongxi shudian, 2015], 449n2), Chu was using the assistance to Song as a pretext to establish a military presence in the area that was a focus of potential military expansion by its Jin rivals. Therefore walling both cities caused Jin's reiteration. *Mo'ao* is a high military rank in the state of Chu; for debates about the identity of *mo'ao* Yang Wei, see Li Shoukui 李守奎, "Qinghua jian *Xinian* 'moao Yiwei' kaolun" 清華簡《繫年》"莫嗇昜為" 考論 (2014), http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=2259 vs. Su Jianzou 蘇建洲, "Ye lun Qinghua jian *Xinian* 'moao Yiwei'" 也論清華簡《繫年》 "莫嗇昜為" (2015), http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=2426.

[65]Wei Si, Zhao Wan, and Han Qizhang were Jin political cum military commanders who were in the process of establishing their independent polities at the expense of Jin. Wei Si is the famous Lord Wen of Wei 魏文侯 (r. 446–396 BCE); Zhao Wan is Lord Xian of Zhao 趙獻侯 (r. 423–409 BCE); Han Qizhang is Han Wuzi 韓武子 (d. 409 BCE). The precise meaning of what the Jin armies attained is contested. The text's editors read ⿺辶回 as *hengtong* 衡通, referring to Jin's assault on Huangchi; they also opine that *gui zhi yu Chu* 歸之於楚 means causing the Chu armies to return to their homeland. This latter reading is obviously wrong as *zhi* 之 cannot refer to the Chu armies in this context. Du Xinyu 杜新宇 ("Qinghua jian *Xinian* 'Hengtong er gui zhi yu Chu' xiao yi" 清華簡《繫年》"迵而歸之於楚" 小議 [2015], http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/SrcShow.asp?Src_ID=2707) proposed reading the two disputed characters as a verb and an object: *chong tong* 踵同, in which *tong* stands for military conscripts. The meaning according to him is that the Jin armies captured many Chu prisoners and then returned those to Chu. This explanation seems to me far-fetched and not fitting the text's grammar. An easier solution will be that the Jin armies assaulted the city of Huangchi, but were unable to permanently occupy it and returned it to Chu. An alternative would be a scribal error: the city was returned to Zheng and not to Chu.

[66]Yiyang was under the Han control; it is located to the west of Luoyang. Chu wanted to shift the campaign westward, closer to its major power bases. The location of Chiyan is unknown.

[67]The Long Wall here refers to the newly completed line of Chu fortifications near the line of Fangcheng 方城, the traditional boundary of the state of Chu. For the nature of these fortifications, see Li Yipi 李一丕, "Henan Chu changcheng fenbu ji fangyu tixi yanjiu" 河南楚長城分佈及防禦體系研究, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 5 (2014), 44–50, 74.

[68]*Xinian* 21, slips 114–18.

The story of a continuous tit-for-tat struggle between Jin and Chu is depicted in such a neutral fashion that save from the Chu chronology nothing indicates its Chu origin. The text narrates in detail the humiliating defeat of the Chu armies: first, they abandoned the siege of Jin's Chiyan, retreating to Chu's Long Wall at Fangcheng 方城; then they were battered there, throwing away "banners and tents" and fleeing by night. The text which does it best to conceal domestic troubles at Chu, narrates quite candidly how ingloriously its armies fought. This candor becomes even more pronounced in the last section, which depicts a series of Chu-Jin campaigns ca. 400–396 BCE. That section ends with the following passage:

> After two years (396 BCE?),[69] Han Qu and Wei Ji led an army and laid siege to Wuyang, to repay the incursion of Gao (of 398 BCE).[70] The Lord of Luyang led an army to help Wuyang, and fought the Jin army below the Wuyang walls. The Chu army was greatly defeated. Three lords-possessors of the *gui* tablet, the Duke of Luyang, Duke Daowu of Pingye, and Duke Huanding of Yangcheng, as well as *youyin* Si of Zhao (Zhao Si), died in that battle;[71] the Chu forces threw away their banners, tents, chariots and weapons, and returned, running like fleeing dogs. The Chen people thereupon rebelled and let Prince Ding back into Chen.[72] Thus the state of Chu lost a lot of walled cities.
>
> 厭（薦？）年，韓【133】取、魏擊率師圍武陽，以復郜之師。魯陽公率師救武陽，與晉師戰於武陽之城【134】下，楚師大敗，魯陽公、平夜悼武君、陽城桓定君，三執珪之君與右尹昭之竣死焉，楚人盡棄其【135】旃幕車兵，犬逸而還。陳人焉反而入王子定於陳。楚邦以多亡城。[73]

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[69]The precise reading of 厭年 is contested; it may refer to "the next year" or "after two years." See more in Su Jianzhou 蘇建洲, Wu Wenwen 吳雯雯 and Lai Yixuan 賴怡璇, *Qinghua er 'Xinian' jijie* 清華二《繫年》集解 (Taibei: Wanjuan lou, 2013), 912–16.

[70]Han Qu is Lord Lie of Han 韓烈侯 (r. 399–387 BCE), Wei Ji is Lord Wu of Wei 魏武侯 (r. 395–370 BCE). It is not clear whether at the time of the incursion Lord Wu had already ascended the throne or did he act on behalf of his ailing father, Lord Wen of Wei 魏文侯 (r. 445–396 BCE). Notably, despite the official elevation of the lords of Han and Wei to the status of regional lords (*zhuhou* 諸侯) in 403 BCE, *Xinian* treats them here as military leaders of the unified state of Jin. This is not a consistent ideological stance, though: section 22 does recognize the "Marquis" (*hou* 侯) title of Lord Wen of Wei.

[71]Luyang, Pingye, and Yangcheng were Chu's districts ruled by the governors of "duke" (*gong* 公) rank. Possession of the *gui* 珪 tablet marked the highest degree of authority in Chu: the ducal position of an enfeoffed noble (Chen Yingfei 陳穎飛, "Chu Daowang chuqi de da zhan yu Chu fengjun—Qinghua jian *Xinian* zhaji zhi yi" 楚悼王初期的大戰與楚封君——清華簡《繫年》札記之一, *Wenshi zhishi* 文史知識 5 [2012], 106; for the exceptional power of the group of enfeoffed nobles in Chu, see Zheng Wei 鄭威, *Chuguo fengjun yanjiu* 楚國封君研究 [Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe 2012]). Zhao Si 昭竣 was another important noble; probably a descendant of King Zhao of Chu 楚昭王 (r. 516–489 BCE).

[72]Prince Ding was a contender for power in Chu; he was supported by Jin. The manuscript's editors argued that Chen in this sentence refers to the state of Qi that was already ruled (de facto if not de jure) by the Chen 陳 (Tian 田) lineage (Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡, Vol. 2 [Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi, 2011], 200n28). Later, this understanding was challenged: it is likely that Chen here refers to a Chu dependency, a former state of Chen 陳 which was annexed by Chu in 534 BCE, regained independence in 529 BCE, and was annexed again in 478 BCE. Little is known of its management thereafter, but it is possible that the former Chen territory, which served as a springboard for a dynastic coup in Chu in 529 BCE, played a similar role in attempts of the ousted Prince Ding to regain power in Chu (Su Jianzhou et al. *Qinghua er*, 923–24; Ma Nan, *Qinghua jian*, 474n2).

[73]*Xinian* 23, slips 133–36.

Putting precise details of these campaigns aside we can immediately notice the highly unflattering depiction of Chu military performance in the text. The text not only frankly admits the magnitude of Chu's defeat but even buttresses it through a humiliating comparison of Chu's fleeing armies to running dogs. Clearly, the idea of strengthening the Chu identity and its pride in a or its glorious past was not the concern of *Xinian* composers.

Two above examples suffice to show how candid the *Xinian* authors are in depicting Chu's military defeats. Nor do they hail the victories too much. The beginning of Chu's territorial expansion is briefly mentioned in sections 2 and 5, but it is not eulogized nor is it connected to any merits of Chu kings. Rather it is presented as coincidental: favorable inter-state circumstances allowed Chu to advance into the Han 漢 River valley and beyond. Great victories of Chu under King Zhuang, the singularly successful Chu leader, are noticed but do not merit detailed discussion. Oddly, King Zhuang's exploits are highlighted in *Xinian* much less than in *Zuo zhuan*. Nor does the text single out any other Chu leader for exceptional praise.

That *Xinian* is not concerned with Chu's local pride does not require further illustrations. Yet its discovery may allow us to pose another question: How does its presentation of Zhou history differ from that in transmitted sources, especially *Zuo zhuan*? Since the bulk of *Xinian* (sections 4–19) largely parallels the *Zuo zhuan* narrative, this allows a meaningful comparison between the two. Elsewhere I have undertaken this comparison and have demonstrated the considerable similarities between the two narratives.[74] The two texts do differ with regard to certain details, but generally the differences are minor. In a few cases, however, different narration of the same chain of events in *Xinian* may reflect its authors' pro-Chu stance. For our discussion the most interesting case is section 16 of *Xinian*, which differs from *Zuo zhuan* in a few important details. Let us focus on its account:

> In the seventh year of King Gong of Chu (r. 590–560 BCE, i.e. in 584 BCE), Prime Minister Zizhong invaded Zheng, initiating the Fan campaign.[75] Lord Jing of Jin (r. 599–581 BCE) assembled the regional lords to rescue Zheng. The people of Zheng captured [a Chu officer,] Yi, the lord of Yun, and presented him to Lord Jing. Lord Jing returned [to Jin] taking [Yi] with him. [After?] one year (582 BCE?),[76] Lord Jing wanted to establish amicable relations with Chu; hence, he released the Lord of Yun, and let him go back and seek peace. King Gong of Chu dispatched the Lord of Yun for an official visit to Jin and approved the peace. Lord Jing dispatched Fa of Ji (Ji Fa) for an official visit to Chu, renewing the peace. Before [Ji Fa] returned, [Lord Jing of Jin] died, and Lord Li (r. 580–574 BCE) was established.
>
> King Gong dispatched Royal Scion Chen for an official visit to Jin and also renewed the peace. The king also sent the Song Commander-of-the-Right, Huasun Yuan [Hua Yuan] to arrange peaceful relations between Jin and Chu. The next year (579 BCE), Royal Scion Ba of Chu met Wenzi Xie (i.e., Shi Xie 士燮, a.k.a. Shi Wenzi 士文子) of Jin and nobles of

[74]Pines, "Zhou History and Historiography," 303–15.

[75]This campaign took place in 584 BCE; the river is identified as Fan, following *Zuo zhuan*. For debates about this identification, see Su Jianzhou et al., *Qinghua er*, 639–44.

[76]It is not clear what is referred to by "one year" 一年; Yoshimoto Michimasa 吉本道雅 ("Seika kan keinen ko" 清華簡繫年考, *Kyōtō daigaku bungakubu kenkyū kiyō* 京都大學文學部研究紀要 52 [2013], 63), notices that this term does not normally occur in historical texts. The dating inserted by me here follows *Zuo zhuan*. Su Jianzhou proposes reading 一 as mistake for 二 and interprets the phrase as "after two years" (Su Jianzhou et al., *Qinghua er*, 646).

regional lords, and made a covenant at Song, saying: "Put to rest armor and weapons of All-under-Heaven." The next year (578 BCE), Lord Li [of Jin] was the first to raise an army and lead the regional lords to invade Qin, reaching the Jing River. King Gong also led an army, laying siege at Zheng. Lord Li came to rescue Zheng and defeated the Chu army at Yan.[77] Lord Li also encountered misfortune, and died leaving no posterity.[78]

楚共王立七年，令尹子重伐鄭，爲?（氾？）之師。晉景公會諸侯以救鄭，鄭人止鄢公儀，獻【85】諸景公，景公以歸。一年，景公欲與楚人爲好，乃脫鄢公，使歸求成，共王使鄢公聘於【86】晉，且許成。景公使鑼之茷聘於楚，且修成，未還，景公卒，厲公即位。共王使王【87】子辰聘於晉，又修成，王又使宋右師華孫元行晉楚之成。明歲，楚王子罷會晉文【88】子燮及諸侯之大夫，盟於宋，曰："爾（弭）天下之甲兵。" 明歲，厲公先起兵，率師會諸侯以伐【89】秦，至于涇。共王亦率師圍鄭，厲公救鄭，敗楚師於鄢。厲公亦見禍以死，亡（無）後。【90】[79]

This narrative focuses on the first attempt to establish a lasting peace between Chu and Jin—the peace conference in the state of Song in 579 BCE—and the rapid breakup of amicable relations between the two parties thereafter. I shall not focus here on the very minor discrepancies between the *Xinian* and *Zuo zhuan* narratives. What matters for me is the core of the story: Who was responsible for the breakup of the first attempt to reconcile two rival powers?

The events depicted in *Xinian* are narrated in great detail in *Zuo zhuan*, and the two sources agree on the basic facts. What differs, though, is the nature of the peace conference in 579 BCE, and the reasons for its failure. In *Zuo zhuan*, the conference was attended by just two parties, Jin and Chu; and the covenant (the content of which is cited) focused on establishing amicable relations between the two parties only. In *Xinian*, in distinction, the meeting was attended also by the "nobles of regional lords" (i.e., was multilateral), and the covenant's goal was attaining peace in "All-under-Heaven," similar to the later multilateral peace conferences of 546 BCE and 541 BCE.[80] On this point, *Zuo zhuan* appears more reliable: should a 579 BCE peace conference have been attended by more parties, it is likely that this would be reflected in the *Springs-and-Autumns Annals* as well, which is not the case. It is more plausible that the *Xinian* authors (or the authors of their source) conflated the agreements of 546 BCE and 541 BCE with that of 579 BCE.

What happened after the agreement? *Zuo zhuan* insists that Chu was perfidious: soon after the covenant was sealed, the Chu *lingyin* 令尹 (Prime Minister) warned his visiting Jin colleague that the two rulers, if they ever met, would only exchange arrows and not ceremonial greetings.[81] The subsequent Jin assault on Qin in 578 BCE is presented as

[77]The narrative here deviates from the chronological precision of the previous years. Actually, Chu's invasion of Zheng occurred in 576 BCE, full two years after Jin's attack on Qin; and the battle of Yan took place a year later, in 575 BCE.

[78]Lord Li of Jin attempted in 574 BCE to eliminate powerful ministerial lineages; he succeeded in wiping out the major one—the Xi 郤 lineage—but was overpowered by the Luan 欒 lineage; he was murdered, humiliatingly buried as a lowly noble, and succeeded by a scion of another branch of the Jin ruling lineage.

[79]*Xinian* 16, slips 85–90.

[80]For these conferences, see Kōno Osamu 河野收, "Chūgoku kodai no aru hibusō heiwa undō" 中國古代の或る非武裝平和運動, *Gunji shigaku* 軍事史學 13 (1978), 64–74.

[81]*Zuo*, Cheng 12.3: 857–58.

unrelated to the Jin-Chu peace agreement and as fully justifiable in light of Qin's anti-Jin machinations. It is Chu's attack on Zheng in 576 BCE that violates the covenant with Jin; *Zuo zhuan* repeatedly cites pronouncements of Chu and Jin dignitaries, who blame the Chu leadership for violating the peace and leading to the disastrous (for Chu) battle of Yanling 鄢陵 in 575 BCE. Only at the depiction of the battle itself does the *Zuo zhuan* narration shift toward a more critical stance toward Jin: its success is presented as a Pyrrhic victory, leading soon to domestic turmoil.

Xinian's interpretation of these events differs radically. The Jin assault against Qin is viewed as a violation of an agreement to establish "universal" peace; Chu's assault on Zheng appears as a retaliatory measure. Moreover, the *Xinian* authors are manipulative in their account: by dispelling with precise chronology after 578 BCE, they present all the events that spanned five years (Chu's attack on Zheng, Jin's retaliation, the Yanling battle, and the coup against Lord Li of Jin) as happening immediately one after another in the direct aftermath of Jin's anti-Qin aggression. The blame for the collapse of peace is placed squarely on Lord Li of Jin, whose violent death a year after the Yanling battle may be seen as divine retaliation for his perfidy. Chu was the victim; and while it was defeated militarily, the perpetrator, Lord Li, was punished by a humiliating death.

There is no doubt that we have here two radically different interpretations of the same chain of events: the predominantly pro-Jin narrative of *Zuo zhuan* versus the unequivocally pro-Chu version of *Xinian*. Yet we should notice immediately that in terms of facts both narratives do not differ substantially (except for the precise content of the 579 covenant). And while each of the accounts is manipulative, neither appears to abandon the basic factual framework. This supports my earlier observation that the historical accounts of both *Xinian* and *Zuo zhuan* are fundamentally reliable—minor embellishments, mistakes, and manipulations notwithstanding.[82] For the current discussion, suffice it to notice that while there are traits of pro-Chu sentiments in *Xinian*, in general this text contributes very little—if at all—to strengthening the Chu identity. Much like the anecdotes and *Chu ju*, *Xinian* remains overwhelmingly neutral in its depiction of Chu's past.

RONGCHENGSHI

The final text that I want to consider here is *Rongchengshi* 容成氏, from the collection of Shanghai Museum. This relatively lengthy text of slightly over 2,000 characters presents the history of the Chinese world from the time of legendary thearchs down to the founding of the Zhou dynasty. The goal of this presentation is not purely historical: the narrative is built so as to convince the reader of the advantages of non-hereditary power transfer (ideally through the ruler's abdication in favor of a worthier candidate). Since the text had been translated and discussed twice,[83] I shall not address its complexity here but focus only on its Chu-related aspects.

The Chu affiliation of *Rongchengshi* is not self-evident. While the manuscript was produced by a Chu scribe using Chu orthography, and was in all likelihood interred in

[82]Pines, "Zhou History and Historiography."

[83]Yuri Pines, "Political Mythology and Dynastic Legitimacy in the *Rong Cheng shi* Manuscript," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and Asian Studies* 73.3 (2010), 503–29; Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 181–262.

the tomb of a Chu elite member, almost nothing in its content relates it to Chu. The only possible Chu trait is in the final phrase of the narrative about the creation of the Nine Provinces by Thearch Yu 禹 in the aftermath of the great flood. The narrative itself has no observable Chu connection, and the map of the Nine Provinces in *Rongchengshi* is markedly shifted to the north in comparison with its variants scattered through other texts, leaving Chu on the southern margins of the habitable world.[84] Yet the ending lines say: "Yu then created five hundred famous valleys to the south of the Han River and five hundred famous valleys to the north of the Han River".[85] This centrality of the Han River strongly suggests a Chu affiliation of the text's authors. However, as noted by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, it is also possible that the line was added by a Chu transmitter who wanted to make the text—originally produced elsewhere—more relevant to Chu.[86] Aside from this single line, no other aspect of *Rongchengshi* connects it with the state of Chu.

I remain undecided regarding the origin of *Rongchengshi*: perhaps we should not consider it at all as a product of Chu historiography. However, insofar as the manuscript was looted from a Chu tomb, and insofar as it can be assumed that the text circulated in the state of Chu (and might have enjoyed sufficient prestige to merit interment in a tomb) it is justifiable to consider it in the framework of the present discussion. Two points should be raised here. First is the marked absence of identifiable Chu royal ancestors—such as Zhuanxu, Zhurong, and the like—from the lengthy list of legendary heroes discussed in the text. Second, the *Rongchengshi* narrative is markedly "center-oriented," as it focuses exclusively on the monarchs who ruled the entire subcelestial realm. Regional lords, be they the kings of Chu or leaders of other polities, are simply ignored. The norm, as the authors repeatedly emphasize, is universal rule, attaining which represents the apex of the monarch's achievements. Thus, the text hails a primordial thearch whose reign preceded that of Thearch Yao 堯:

> Superiors and inferiors, noble and mean—each attained their [predestined] years. [The people] from beyond the four seas arrived as guests, and those from within the four seas were corrected. Birds and beasts came to court; fish and turtles submitted [tribute]; there was [smooth] communication between [localities with] abundant and deficient [resources].
>
> 上下貴賤，各得其世。四海之外賓，四海之內貞。禽獸朝，魚鼈獻，有無通。[87]

[84]For the *Rongchengshi* narrative of the Nine Provinces and its comparisons to other variants of this story, see Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann "Ritual Practices for Constructing Terrestrial Space (Warring States – early Han)," in *Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC–220 AD)*, edited by John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), Volume 1, 629–36; idem., "The *Rong Cheng shi* version of the 'Nine Provinces': Some Parallels with Transmitted Texts," *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* 32 (2010), 13–58.

[85] 禹乃從漢以南爲名谷五百，從漢以北爲名谷五百 (*Rongchengshi*, slips 27–28).

[86]Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "The Crucial Role of the Han River in the Chu Conception of Space: Questioning 'No Chu-related Traits' in the *Rong Cheng shi* Version of the 'Nine Provinces,'" paper presented at the EACS Conference, Saint Petersburg, August 2016.

[87]*Rongchengshi*, slip 5. For an alternative translation, see Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 230. Allan follows Guo Yongbing 郭永秉 (*Di xi xin yan: Chu di chutu Zhanguo wenxian zhong de chuanshuo shidai gu diwang xitong yanjiu* 帝繫新研：楚地出土戰國文獻中的傳說時代古帝王系統研究 [Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2008], 43–79) in identifying the pre-Yao thearch as Youyu Tong 有虞迵.

Elsewhere, the text hails the rule of Thearch Yu:

> He understood the distant from [inspecting] the near, eradicated quibbling and pursued simplicity; he relied on the people's desires, brought together the beneficent [matters of] Heaven and Earth, so that the near rejoiced in the orderly rule while the distant came on their own initiative. Everybody within and outside the four seas requested to submit tribute.
>
> 乃因迩以知遠，去苛而行簡，因民之欲，會天地之利，夫是以近者悅治，而遠者自至。四海之內及，四海之外皆請貢。[88]

Both passages emphasize the universality of the thearch's rule. In the first case the encompassing power of an unnamed thearch transcends the boundaries of humankind, reaching down to birds, beasts, fish, and turtles: all those strive to become the thearch's subjects.[89] In the second case unity remains confined to the realm of humans, but it is still comprehensive: all those from "within and outside the four seas" duly request to submit tribute. In both cases the entire subcelestial realm—"near" and "distant" alike—remains under the unified control. Regional polities appear in the text only when we enter the calamitous age of the last Shang tyrant, Zhouxin 紂辛 (d. ca. 1046 BCE). Then, rebellions by regional lords and the danger of political disintegration appear as important symptoms of the overall deterioration that eventually justified the overthrow of the Shang.

The *Rongchengshi* insistence that a politically unified world is the only normative situation may explain why Chu remains outside the narrative. In the unified universal realm independent or semi-independent regional lords (such as the king of Chu) are just an aberration. Accordingly, the multi-state system that stands at the center of *Xinian* and which was the norm for centuries prior to the composition of *Rongchengshi* is glossed over altogether. Under the rule of sage kings, regional states play no role, nor is there any meaning for regional identities. In the political vision of *Rongchengshi* there is simply no place for the state of Chu.

SUMMARY: WHERE IS THE CHU IDENTITY?

We may summarize our findings heretofore. Four different types of texts discussed above share certain commonalities insofar as their views of Chu are concerned. First, none of them (with the minor exceptions of anecdote #8 and section #16 of *Xinian*) provides an alternative pro-Chu narration of the country's history. Second, none—with the partial exception of *Chu ju*—displays any interest in primeval deified ancestors of the Chu ruling house. Third, none appears apprehensive of the Chu kings' claims for supreme authority in All-under-Heaven. Fourth, none seems to be interested in eulogizing Chu's military achievements or lamenting its failures so as to bolster the readers' identification with their country. Fifth, all the surveyed texts refrain from overt identification with Chu. They refer to their country neutrally as "Chu" rather than employing the first person pronoun "we, us" (*wo* 我), which is from time to time used in sections of *Zuo zhuan* that deal with Lu. In addition to all these, the above texts pay little attention to

[88] *Rongchengshi*, slips 19–20.

[89] For the trope of the monarch's virtue reaching and transforming birds and beasts, see Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 147–48.

Chu's local sensitivities (as is seen, for instance, from their eulogizing of Wu Zixu). When we compare these texts with identity-focused historical writings elsewhere (just think of Greek or Jewish historiography, for instance), we may conclude that Chu historians were simply not interested in articulating or strengthening a separate cultural or political identity of their country.

How should we understand this almost counterintuitive conclusion? Does it mean that the otherness of Chu is just a myth, a by-product of our uncritical acceptance of anti-Chu propaganda in some of the received texts? Not necessarily. There is ample evidence to show that Chu identity did matter at least to some of its elite members. Look for instance at divination slips from the tombs at Baoshan, Wangshan, and Geling (all—tombs of top-ranking Chu nobles): these routinely mention divinized ancestors of the Chu royal clan as objects of sacrifice, and also incidentally refer to Chu as "our" (*wo* 我) state. While these texts do not belong to historical accounts *strictu senso*, they do appear much more Chu-oriented than the historical texts surveyed above. Or take the famous *Chu Songs* (*Chuci* 楚辭). Without entering discussions about their authorship and dating, we can state that at the very least some of them—such as "Lamenting Ying" (*Ai Ying* 哀郢) or "Fallen to the State" (*Guo shang* 國殤)—all display a strongly pronounced Chu identity.[90] Why then this identity is absent from the historical texts surveyed?

I think there are two complementary explanations for this phenomenon. First, let us consider certain peculiarities of early Chinese historiographic tradition. History writing in China did not start in individual polities of the Springs-and-Autumns period but rather was part of the common Zhou legacy. This common legacy is most vivid in the annalistic tradition represented by the *Springs-and-Autumns Annals*. From the study of the *Annals* and of other annalistic records scattered through *Zuo zhuan* and *Xinian* we may arrive at several conclusions. First, the *Annals* were not peculiar to the state of Lu but belonged to what appears as a common Zhou tradition of ritualized historical records; among other courts these records were prepared also at the court of Chu. Second, annalistic records were subjected to sophisticated "rules of recording" (*shu fa* 書法), which again were shared—and were understood—across the Zhou world. Third, although the annals were not supposed to circulate broadly, their content, or at least parts thereof, was sufficiently known to members of the educated elite throughout the Zhou world so as to turn their records into an efficient means of censuring political misconduct. As such, despite their localized nature, the annals were a means of perpetuating cultural cohesiveness among the Zhou elites rather than a vehicle of estrangement.[91]

[90]See *Qu Yuan ji jiaozhu* 屈原集校注, prepared by Jin Kaicheng 金開誠, Dong Hongli 董洪利, and Gao Luming 高路明 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 485–506 and 282–87. For the Chu poetry, see Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han," in: *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, Vol.1, *To 1735*, edited by Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 76–86.

[91]For a brief introduction to the nature of the Lu *Annals*, see Yuri Pines, "Chinese History-Writing between the Sacred and the Secular," in *Early Chinese Religion,* 318–23. For the rules of recording, see Newel Ann Van Auken, "Could 'Subtle Words' Have Conveyed 'Praise and Blame'? The Implications of Formal Regularity and Variation in *Spring and Autumn* (*Chūn qiū*) Records," *Early China* 31 (2007), 47–111; idem., *The Commentarial Transformation of the Spring and Autumn* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016). For the annals' contribution to perpetuation of common cultural ties throughout the Zhou world see Artemij J. Karapet'iants, "Chun' Tsiu i Drevnekitajskij Istoriograficheskij Ritual," in *Etika i Ritual v Traditsionnom*

Aside from laconic annals, the court scribes (*shi* 史) of competing polities were preparing lengthier narrative histories. Although none of those histories survived, their nature may be inferred from the segments incorporated into *Zuo zhuan*[92] and from comparing *Zuo zhuan* and *Xinian* narratives.[93] For the present discussion what matters is that these histories can also be considered part of the common Zhou tradition. This topic deserves further exploration, but some preliminary observations may be made already. For instance, evident similarities in terms of structure, styles of narration, didactic messages, and the like in narrative histories created throughout the Zhou realm may explain the seamless incorporation of several regional historical accounts into *Zuo zhuan*. Although our evidence is still very limited, it suggests that narrative histories produced in regional states did not exclusively target members of a single polity but rather addressed common concerns of the educated elite throughout the Zhou realm. Once again, history writing was a unifying rather than dividing exercise.

The pan-Zhou similarities in historical production may reflect commonalities in education and training of the court scribes, who were the major (or the exclusive) producers of historical texts throughout the Springs-and-Autumns period.[94] By the Warring States period, however these scribes lost their erstwhile monopoly on preparing historical texts, and ritualistic historiography was eclipsed by a moralizing one, represented most notably by the genre of didactic anecdotes. These anecdotes and most other historical or quasi-historical texts, such as *Rongchengshi*, were composed and read by the members of the *shi* stratum who rose from the margins of nobility to become the new ruling elite throughout the Zhou realm.[95] What matters to our discussion is that the *shi* were much less attached to individual polities than the hereditary nobles of the Springs-and-Autumns period. Rather, they traversed the realm in search for better employment, serving "Qin in the morning and Chu in the evening" (*zhao Qin mu Chu* 朝秦暮楚). The focus of their concerns was the entire subcelestial realm and not a single state, and this is duly reflected in their philosophical and historical production. Therefore,

Kitae, ed. L.S. Vasil'ev et al. (Moscow: Nauka 1998), 85–154. For a sample of Chu annalistic records incorporated into *Xinian*, see You Rui 尤銳 (Yuri Pines), "Cong *Xinian* xuci de yongfa lun qi wenben de kekaoxing: jian chutan *Xinian* yuanshi ziliao de laiyuan" 從《繫年》虛詞的用法論其文本的可靠性——兼初探《繫年》原始資料的來源, in *Qinghua jian* Xinian *yu gushi xintan* 清華簡《繫年》與古史新探, edited by Li Shoukui 李守奎 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2016), 226–28.

[92]Pines, *Foundations*, 18–26.

[93]Yuri Pines, "Zhou History"; You Rui, "Cong *Xinian*."

[94]Recall that scribes had multiple administrative and even diplomatic functions aside from history writing; they were by no means just "historians." See Robin D.S. Yates, "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women: Literacy among the Lower Orders in Early China," in *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, edited by Li Feng and David Prager Banner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 339–69 (esp. 345–60); David Schaberg, "Functionary Speech: On the Work of *shi* 使 and *shi* 史," in *Facing the Monarch: Modes of Advice in the Early Chinese Court*, ed. Garret P.S. Olberding (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 19–41; Armin Selbitschka, "'I Write, Therefore I Am': Scribes, Literacy and Identity in Early China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 77.2 (forthcoming in 2017); Stephen Durrant, "史 *Shi*: From 'Scribe' to 'History'?" in *Keywords in Chinese Thought and Literature*, ed. Li Wai-yee and Yuri Pines (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, forthcoming).

[95]See Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2009), 115–84.

even under these new circumstances historical texts continued to perpetuate rather than weaken the pan-Zhou ties.

This brings me to the second point relevant to our discussion. When we speak of "Chu identity," we should distinguish among cultural identities of distinct social strata in the state of Chu. The highest segment of Chu hereditary aristocracy, represented among others by the occupants of Baoshan, Wangshan, and Geling tombs, were members of the royal clan, whose ancestors for generations served the Chu kings. These men were strongly attached to the state of Chu, and it is natural that their identity was Chu-focused. It is furthermore likely (albeit cannot be proven beyond doubt) that local identity was strong among the commoners, whose destiny was also intrinsically linked to their ancestral state.[96] But the intermediate group, viz. the *shi*, who were the producers and the major consumers of philosophical and historical texts discovered in the Chu tombs, remained less Chu-oriented than either top aristocrats above or commoners below. Their very career pattern which led many (most?) of them to seek employment outside their native state was conducive toward formation of the outlook that prioritized the whole over its parts, All-under-Heaven over an individual state, common culture over local customs.[97] That we discern in the Chu historical anecdotes (and in other Chu historical texts) what Sarah Allan dubs a "cosmopolitan" outlook comes therefore as no surprise.[98]

If my latter observation—based as it is on Chu materials only—is correct, then it may explain why local and regional identities that became increasingly articulated during the Warring States period[99] had never developed into a true "national" identity akin to what happened in early modern Europe. Insofar as the intellectuals—the stratum that contributed decisively toward formation of national identities in Europe—remained overwhelmingly focused on the interests of the oikouménē as a whole rather than on an individual state, regional identities could not coalesce into a politically meaningful factor. The above discussion demonstrates that history writing—a potent means of identity creation elsewhere—remained in the Zhou world a means of cultural integration rather than separation.

[96]This can be inferred from a comparison between Chu and Qin. In the latter, scattered material and paleographic evidence suggest that separate identity was being formed among the lower strata during the second half of the Warring States period (Shelach and Pines, "Secondary State Formation").

[97]See Mark E. Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

[98]Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 58–59.

[99]Goldin, "Representations of Regional Diversity."