

**History and Fiction: Tales of the Hegemons of the Spring
and Autumn Period from c. 300 BC to AD 220**

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis focusses on historical and fictional accounts of the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period: Lord Huan of Qi, Lord Wen of Jin, Lord Mu of Qin, King Zhuang of Chu, King Helü of Wu and King Goujian of Yue.

Chapter One describes the methodological basis. Many ancient Chinese texts underwent periods of oral transmission, but the effect on their form and content has been little researched. Theme and formula are important for understanding the development of these texts. The hegemons are also investigated for the degree to which they conform to greater patterns: the Indo-European models of the hero and good ruler.

In Chapters Two and Three selected tales about the hegemons are considered. Some were chosen because the same story appeared in a large number of texts over many centuries, in the works of widely differing philosophers and historians. This shows the diffusion and popularity of these tales, and the way that the same story appealed to thinkers of very different persuasions. Others were chosen for the range of literary forms in which they appear. Some show the use of theme and formula with particular clarity, and others the way in which a story was adapted to bring it closer to the models of the hero or good king.

In Chapter Four analysis of stories about the hegemons is expanded to cover the full range of tales appearing before the end of the Han dynasty, to demonstrate the degree to which they conform to the stereotypes of the hero and the good king. Chapter Five compares the hegemons to other rulers of their day, and considers their enduring literary legacy. Throughout the imperial period, the hegemons inspired prose, poetry and drama. Apart from their importance as historical figures, the hegemons have an important place in Chinese literary history.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,
That no life lives forever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Swinburne.

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

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Introduction

This thesis considers the relationship between history and fiction in ancient Chinese texts. Using stories about the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period, it is possible to examine how these tales changed, were adapted for new circumstances, and appeared in new literary forms, from the Warring States to the end of the Han dynasty. The hegemons were chosen for this thesis because of their contemporary historical importance, and their enduring literary legacy, but a similar study could have been done with other Eastern Zhou figures.

In Chapter One, the state of the field is considered. Although it has long been recognised that tales of the hegemons contain fictional elements, there have been no systematic studies of how this affects our understanding of the history of the Spring and Autumn period. What studies have been made, have generally been restricted to individual figures, such as Sun Wu or Baili Xi. The lack of a systematic investigation into the literary history of these figures has greatly hampered research in this field. This description is followed by a brief biographical account of the lives of each of the hegemons: Lord Huan of Qi, Lord Wen of Jin, Lord Mu of Qin, King Zhuang of Chu, King Helü of Wu, and King Goujian of Yue. Then the role of the hegemons in the Zhou confederacy is considered. This is of interest given that the title of hegemon was granted by the Zhou king, and yet only the first three hegemons ruled states forming part of the Zhou confederacy.

Following that, the methodological basis of this thesis is set out. It has long been recognised that many ancient Chinese texts underwent periods of oral transmission, but the important ways in which this affected the form and content of these texts have been generally ignored. The concepts of theme and formula are of great importance for understanding the technical development of popular tales. In this thesis, in addition to being analysed in terms of theme and formula, the tales of the hegemons will be investigated for the degree to which they conform to greater patterns: the Indo-European model of the hero, and that of the good ruler. Finally in this chapter, the

audience for the stories of the lives of the hegemon, which were of such great and enduring popularity, will be considered.

In Chapter Two, tales of the lives of the first three hegemon will be considered. These hegemon all had states which formed part of the Zhou confederacy, and as such were, in theory at least, subject to the Zhou king. In the case of Lord Huan of Qi, three stories are considered, with their numerous variants. First, Lord Huan and his Prime Minister Guan Zhong were formulating plots against another state, only to have to give up when their plan became known; secondly, a mysterious apparition appeared to Lord Huan on his travels; thirdly, Lord Huan had to attempt to find a replacement for the moribund Guan Zhong, his disastrous choice bringing about his death in lurid circumstances. In the case of Lord Wen of Jin, three stories are considered with their variants. First, the story of the future Lord Wen's quarrel with his maternal uncle Jiu Fan on his way to take up the reins of government in Jin; secondly, Lord Wen of Jin's failure to reward one of his most loyal followers, Jie Zhi Tui, on his return to his state, and thirdly, a story found only in one ancient text, of Lord Wen going hunting and losing his way, only to come across an indigenous person who harangued him on statecraft. As for Lord Mu of Qin, the three tales of his life considered are as follows: first, the story of Lord Mu losing one of his blood horses and finding its carcass half-eaten by rustics, and those rustics being converted into loyal subjects by his generous treatment of them; secondly, Lord Mu arranging that the Rong king be seduced with wine, women and song, to alienate him from his most able minister You Yu; thirdly, the tale of the human sacrifice at Lord Mu's funeral, in particular, the popular reaction to the deaths of the three members of the Ziche lineage.

In Chapter Three tales of the hegemon whose states were not part of the Zhou confederacy are considered. The stories of the life of King Zhuang of Chu that are considered are as follows: first, King Zhuang's refusal for the first three years of his reign to conduct any government business, and the means by which he was brought to a sense of his duties; secondly, the effrontery (to the Zhou) of King Zhuang's visit to the Royal Domain where he was said to have questioned the Zhou king's representative

about the weight of the nine dings; thirdly, King Zhuang's refusal to punish one of his associates for an assault carried out on the person of his queen, and the happy result of this refusal when Chu was invaded, and the guilty man acted with conspicuous bravery in order to requite his sovereign's magnanimity. In the case of King Helü of Wu, three stories are considered. First, the ambush set at his residence that resulted in the murder of King Liao, his first cousin, and which allowed him to usurp the throne of Wu. Secondly, the tale of King Helü's swords, in particular the blade known as *Zhanlu*, which was endowed with considerable supernatural powers, and which fled the state of Wu for Chu in disgust at King Helü's activities. Thirdly, the story of Wu Zixu, one of King Helü's closest associates, is considered. He was ordered to commit suicide by King Helü's successor King Fucha of Wu, who did not believe Wu Zixu's dire warnings about the state of Yue. As for King Goujian of Yue, the three stories dealing with the events of his reign are as follows: first, the tale of how he succeeded in making terms with the victorious King Fucha of Wu, after his disastrous defeat and retreat to the mountain fastness of Kuaiji. Secondly, the various accounts of how King Goujian trained his people in martial ways, to revenge the humiliation of Kuaiji. Thirdly, the account of the laws passed by King Goujian, aimed at strengthening his nation, and readying them to take their revenge on the state of Wu.

All these stories were selected because they showed interesting aspects of China's literary heritage. Some were chosen because the same story appeared in a large number of texts, over a period of many centuries, in the works of widely differing philosophers and historians. Such examples show the geographical and temporal popularity of these tales, and the way that the same story appealed to thinkers of very different persuasions. Others were chosen because of the range of literary forms (prose, song, poetry) in which they appear. Some show the use of theme and formula with particular clarity, and others the way in which a story was adapted in order to bring it closer to the models of the hero and the good king.

In Chapter Four the analysis of stories about the lives of the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period is expanded to cover the full range of the tales which

appeared before the end of the Han dynasty. In this chapter the characteristics of the hero and the good king are broken down point by point, and the stories about the hegemon that show them in these lights analysed. By comparing the results for each hegemon, it is possible to see the way in which biographical stories about them fitted into one stereotype or another.

In Chapter Five the hegemon is placed in context. They were not the only successful rulers of their states, nor were they the only rulers said in ancient texts to be hegemon. By comparing stories about them with those of their successful predecessors and heirs, it is possible to see how presentation of the hegemon differed from that of their contemporaries in the Eastern Zhou. By considering rival claimants to the title of hegemon, individuals who were stated by the odd ancient text to be hegemon, it is possible to see how great was the historical and literary importance of the undisputed hegemon. Finally in Chapter Five, the enduring literary legacy of the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period is discussed. In addition to their historical importance, from the very beginning, they appeared in a wide variety of literary texts, produced over a vast geographical area. This literary legacy has continued to the present day. After the end of the Han dynasty, the hegemon continued to be written about. An analysis of the way in which ancient tales of the hegemon were adapted by later authors, playwrights and poets is a subject worthy of study in itself, however, I have attempted an overview. As new literary forms appeared, such as the *zhi guai* short story, *bian wen* text, novel, *jueju* poem, and *zaju* or Kunshan play, tales of the lives of the hegemon were repeatedly used as source material, indicating the enduring popularity and lasting relevance of these stories.

The hegemon was among the most powerful feudal lords and kings of their day. They ruled vast states with absolute or nearly absolute authority. However, they chose to extend themselves beyond the boundaries of their states, and to stamp their authority on international affairs. Tales of their lives were used to entertain, warn, exhort, and amuse from the Warring States period to the present day. Frequently, new literary genres were made acceptable by their use of an old story as the basis for the

work, and more than once, the story chosen featured one or other of the hegemons. Thus in addition to their historical importance, the hegemons have a place to themselves in Chinese literary history.

Note to the Diagrams

Diagrams have been added to the analysis of most of the stories in order to indicate graphically the interrelationships of the various versions. In the cases where only a couple of versions are known, no diagram has been included. The aim of including the diagrams is to make the progressive development of a particular story or group of interrelated tales entirely clear, according to Gu Jiegang's instructions:

I discovered... that people of former times looked upon the materials of ancient history as all on the same plane, that is to say, horizontally. They made no attempt to differentiate episodes of different periods, which accounts in part for their rapid multiplication. Now, however, we view history vertically; beginning with a single thread, we see how it rapidly divided into many strands of different lengths, that hang down in confusion like the pendants of pearls from the official headdress of former emperors, which can be unravelled only by a clear differentiation of the various layers.¹

In the diagrams, contemporary texts are placed level. Where one text was clearly derived from another, the relationship is indicated with a vertical line. Where two texts were written or edited by the same person, this relationship is indicated by a horizontal line.

¹ Hummel: *The Autobiography of a Chinese Historian*, p. 81.

“Practical Heroes... do not speak in blank-verse.”

Thomas Carlyle: *Cromwell*.

Chapter 1

The State of the Field

In *The Hero*, Fitzroy Raglan talked of one of the most serious problems facing the scholar of Greek ancient texts, the problem of deciding what is historically accurate in the text in question.

The scholar soaks himself in Homeric literature, and in nothing else, until all the incidents that seem to him realistic assume prominence, while those which seem improbable fade into the background; and eventually there arises in his mind a tale of Troy which is for him real and true, although it is entirely subjective. He then goes again through the literature and divides all the statements that he finds in it into two classes; those which fit in with his version become the genuine, original tradition, while those which do not are dismissed as embellishments or interpolations.¹

This description of a certain kind of crude approach to ancient texts unfortunately is still relevant today. There is a deep-rooted feeling that in the many pre-Qin texts which contain historical stories, there is an underlying historical truth, and that it is possible to reach this truth by comparing texts and determining the relationship between them.

Prior to the major archeological excavations of the twentieth century in China, there was little concrete fact to reinforce the historical information in texts such as the *Zuo Zhuan* (Zuo's Tradition). Now artefacts have been excavated which not only prove the historical existence of the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period (771-475 BC),² but also in some cases evidence has been found which may shed light on some of

¹ Raglan: *The Hero*, p. 101.

² See Guo Moruo: *Liang Zhou Han Jinwenci Daxi Kaoshi*, Qi, p. 209; Jin, p. 229; Qin, p. 247; Wu, p. 154.

the major events of their rule.³ However, at the same time as archeological excavations have been demonstrating the truth of the historical record, some scholars working purely on the texts have shown that the personal circumstances of the hegemon described in these records are in certain cases open to considerable doubt. Jens Petersen has suggested that Sun Wu, as he appears in the account of King Helü of Wu's court,⁴ was in fact a fictional character, and the name Sun Wu in fact is a descriptive title, "The Exiled Warrior,"⁵ which would bring him into the tradition of such heroes as Juan Tonto or Hans Stark, named after a quality of character, which appear in numerous European folk tales.⁶ He goes on to cite the instance of Dian Xie, whose name literally means "The Reckless" who was reportedly executed by Lord Wen of Jin *pour encourager les autres*.⁷ E.G. Pulleyblank considered the story of Baili Xi, who supposedly rose from being a slave sold for five sheepskins to become the chief minister to Lord Mu of Qin, to be largely legendary.⁸ There is also the study by Noma Fumichika on the tales of the death of Lord Huan of Qi, which argues that all accounts of the body lying unburied and maggot-ridden during the political upheavals orchestrated by Lord Huan's favourites, are derived from a simple mistake over the dates of death and burial, and in addition

³ See Puyang Xishuipo Yizhi Kaogudui: "1988 Nian Henan Puyang Xishuipo Yizhi Fajue Jianbao," p. 1066. The team believe that they may have found the graves of some of those who died in the battle of Chengpu at this site. See also Liu Yu: "Guan yu Anhui Nanling Wu Wang Guang Jianming Shi Wen," p. 69 and Dong Chuping: *Wu Yue Wenhua Xintan*, p. 337, which consider alternative interpretations for an inscription on a sword commissioned by King Helü of Wu, which may refer to his campaigns against Yue.

⁴ The locus classicus of this story is Sima Qian's biography of Sunzi and Wu Qi; see *Shi Ji*, 65:2161-2162.

⁵ See Petersen: "What's in a name? On the Sources Concerning Sun Wu," p. 28.

⁶ See Boggs: "The Hero in the Folk Tales of Spain, Germany and Russia," p. 28.

⁷ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 455 [Xi 28].

⁸ See Pulleyblank: "The Origins and Nature of Chattel Slavery in China," p. 192. The Qing scholar Yu Zhengxie: *Guisi Leigao*, p. 400, suggested that Baili Xi should be considered a composite character. The problems of rationalising the character of Baili Xi are illustrated by Ma Feibai: *Qin Ji Shi*, pp. 132-137.

points out that the two traditions, one true and one false, coexisted in antiquity.⁹ In tales based upon the lives of the hegemon there are also characters which were possible instances of the personification of deities. Wu Zixu appeared in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* (The Annals of Wu and Yue) as the euhemerization of the Hangzhou tidal bore,¹⁰ Fan Li has been considered to represent a water deity,¹¹ and Jie Zhi Tui (in his capacity as the motivation for the Cold Food festival) was possibly originally a mountain deity.¹² These instances are comparable with the famous example of the euhemerization of King Arthur, originally a banner carried into battle with a raven on it.¹³

Clearly there is a certain amount of doubt about the historical veracity of many of the major and minor characters that appear in the stories of the hegemon. There is also well-founded doubt about a number of the stories in which the hegemon appear, for example among the many stories of Lord Wen of Jin going hunting there is one tale in which his scouts found a giant serpent barring their way. This story, which is found in a number of texts from the Han dynasty (202 BC-AD 220) onwards,¹⁴ is recounted in the same manner as any other without any sense of incongruity.¹⁵ If there is a historical truth to be found at the bottom of these texts, how does one deal with the serpent? Is

⁹ See Noma Fumichika: "Sai Kankō no Saiki to *Saden* no Seiritsu," p. 30.

¹⁰ See Johnson: "Epic and History in Early China," p. 259.

¹¹ See Schneider: *A Madman of Ch'u*, p. 139.

¹² See Holzman: "The Cold Food Festival in Early Medieval China," p. 78.

¹³ See Raglan: *The Hero*, p. 77.

¹⁴ For different versions; see Jia Yi: *Jiazi Xin Shu*, pp. 68-9 [*Chunqiu*], Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:22 [*Za Shi*], Wang Liqi: *Feng Su Tong Yi Jiaozhu*, p. 421 [*Guaishen*], and Chen Xuanyin: *Jin Wen Chunqiu*, p. 4 [*Da She Zu Dao*].

¹⁵ This story is comparable to the tale of the appearance of a *lin* (unicorn) during the lifetime of Confucius. In his biography of Confucius, Sima Qian explicitly links the appearance of the *lin* with his writing of the *Chunqiu*. See *Shi Ji*, 47:1942-3. The appearance of the *lin* was said to presage disintegration as a result of social confusion. Just as Confucius was inspired on hearing of the *lin* to write a text to correct this situation, Lord Wen was inspired by hearing of the appearance of a serpent to correct the laws of his state.

the story of the serpent or the account of Lord Huan's death not as valid as say, the account of the continued enmity of the states of Wu and Yue? If one ignores the stories which are clearly legendary, is one not guilty of the same crimes against the literary texts as Raglan complains of? These questions should be a source of concern to those attempting to write history on the basis of these texts.

The hegemon must be understood as very rich men, as well as absolute rulers within the borders of their states. Wealthy persons, if they wish it, have always been able to buy a great deal of silence on their activities, and a favourable account of those that were known about. Rich people have also long been the subject of enthralled attention by those less favoured than themselves. By the time of the Han dynasty the Spring and Autumn period was seen by some as a time of open government,¹⁶ when the hegemon, as the great political leader of the pre-Qin period, consulted all and sundry on their rule.¹⁷ However there was also an enduring parallel textual tradition that by this time rulers had already largely withdrawn into their palaces and hunting-parks,¹⁸ although the

¹⁶ See Xu Fuguan: *Zhou Qin Han Zhengzhi Shehui Jiegou zhi Yanjiu*, p. 35. During the Spring and Autumn period the *guoren* (or people of the capital) continued to play an important part in the government of some states, acting as a consultative or decision-making body as appropriate, so to a certain extent this view is justified. See also Kaizuka: "Chūgoku Kodai Toshi ni Okeru Minkai," p. 45.

¹⁷ For example see the stories of Lord Wen of Jin meeting a farmer and a fisherman, which appear in the *Xin Xu*, 2:24-25 [*Za Shi*]. See also the story of Lord Huan of Qi and the man from Maiqiu, or meeting the stranger on the road; see Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 10:334-337, 25:354-355. In the *Han Shu* the relationship between the hegemon and their ministers was frequently mentioned in memorials to the throne, Lord Huan of Qi forgiving Guan Zhong for attempting to assassinate him was the most popular, presumably as it was the most extreme, although Lord Huan listening to Ning Qi's song when he was an unknown trader, and Lord Mu of Qin taking Baili Xi into his administration even though Baili was a slave, were also regularly cited.

¹⁸ The trials and tribulations of ministers attempting to extract an opinion of matters of state from a hegemon are best illustrated by the numerous stories of King Zhuang of Chu refusing to take up the reins of government. See Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, pp. 412-413 [*Yu Lao*]; Xu Weiyu: *Liushi Chunqiu Jishi*, 18:6b [*Zhong Yan*].

process of alienation from their people was far from being as severe as it later became.¹⁹ There are a great many accounts of the deeds of the hegemon and there is no evidence that this was solely the result of people in senior government positions wishing to consult the deeds of previous great rulers for precedents or ideas. It is also important that the deeds of the hegemon whose states formed part of the Zhou confederacy were recounted far beyond the borders of their states and long after they were dead.²⁰ Nor were the stories of the hegemon confined to accounts of their public lives. There was also a fair proportion of the stories, and those far from the least popular, which dealt with their private lives. Interestingly there was very little mention of material goods in the accounts of the hegemon's lives,²¹ with only occasional hints of conspicuous consumption.²² Far more frequently mentioned were the size of their harems,²³ endless drinking parties,²⁴ the quality of the food they ate (with particular reference to the

¹⁹ See Beilstein: "Lo-Yang in Later Han Times," p. 22. The architecture of the capital at this date was clearly designed to reduce contact between the emperor and his people to an absolute minimum. For example when moving from one palace to another within the city, the emperor travelled along a special, covered road, guarded by the army.

²⁰ See Hu Shih: "Shuo 'Shi'," p. 1, and also Xiao Fan: *Chunqiu zhi Liang Han Shiqi Zhongguo xiang Nanfang de Fazhan*, p. 107.

²¹ Apart from occasional mentions of gifts from the Zhou king, the only specific reference to luxury goods in the lives of the hegemon comes in the *Zuo Zhuan* when Chonger was at the court of King Cheng of Chu and he praised the wealth of the state of Chu; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 409 [Xi 23]. This is in marked contrast to later accounts of life at the Han court, and indeed to the multitude of bronzes that describe the material wealth of Zhou culture, such as the Mao Gong Ding; see Dong Zuopin: *Mao Gong Ding*. In later accounts there was occasionally a hint of the luxurious circumstances in which a ruler of the Spring and Autumn period might expect to live; see for example Ren Fang: *Shu Yi Ji*, p. 122 [Helü Mu].

²² See Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xianggu*, p. 283 [Gongmeng]. There is also the story of Lord Huan of Qi giving up wearing purple cloth on the grounds of its extravagance; see Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 655 [Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang].

²³ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 185 [Xiao Kuang].

²⁴ The accounts of drinking parties are too numerous to cite, and on occasion got out of hand, as when a guest of King Zhuang of Chu attempted to assault the queen. See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 14:256-257.

regular consumption of meat),²⁵ and the fact that their wives usually did not have to weave.²⁶ From the multiplicity of stories about the lives of the hegemons, and the longevity of these tales one can see the truth of the statement: “a good story never dies.”²⁷

The Five Hegemons of the Spring and Autumn Period

The hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period in China were men of great power and influence. Traditionally there were supposed to be five of them, the number five being considered particularly auspicious and complete, but the identification of precisely which rulers ranked as hegemons has always been controversial.²⁸ I have chosen to consider here the individuals most frequently cited in the texts of the Spring and Autumn, and then Warring States period, as hegemons; that is Lord Huan of Qi, Lord Wen of Jin, King Zhuang of Chu, King Helü of Wu and King Goujian of Yue. I also include Lord Mu of Qin, for in many texts, the hegemony is discussed in terms of “the five hegemons and Lord Mu.”²⁹

²⁵ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, pp. 595-596 [*Nei Chu Shuo Xia*], and also Kleeman: “Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals,” p. 189.

²⁶ See Xu Weiyu: *Lishi Chunqiu Jishi*, 9:8a [*Shun Min*]. Most women in pre-industrial societies were constantly occupied with weaving, and in times of social upheaval, one much remarked consequence was that high-class women were forced to weave; see Barber: *Women's Work*, p. 190. For a specific study of women's lives in the Eastern Zhou period; see Liu Dehan: *Dong Zhou Funü Shenghuo*, p. 76.

²⁷ This dictum comes from Gwyn Jones' study of European heroic myths: *Kings, Beasts and Heroes*, p. xvi. He goes on to say: “The principal themes of myth, wondertale, and heroic legend are at once too entertaining and instructive, too adaptable to circumstance and yet constant to the human condition, for them not to live on now in this guise now in that.”

²⁸ See Wei Juxian: “Wu Ba Kao,” p. 557.

²⁹ See Ma Su: *Yi Shi*, 54:14a-14b, who considered that Lords Wen of Jin and Mu of Qin could almost be said to have held the hegemony jointly, so interdependent were they.

The first of the Spring and Autumn hegemon, Xiaobai, later Lord Huan of Qi (r. 685-644 BC), was driven from his state by the political upheavals occasioned by his older brother, Lord Xiang (r. 697-686 BC).³⁰ Xiaobai, the youngest of three half-brothers, only succeeded his oldest brother, Lord Xiang, after a civil war in which the other claimant, his older brother Jiu, was killed. This bloody fratricidal battle was perhaps the reason that Lord Huan's numerous sons each succeeded in turn, to the throne of Qi. Lord Huan went on to expand his state, to fight against the growing influence of the southern state of Chu in the affairs of the Zhou confederacy, and to attempt to adjudicate over the various internecine struggles in the Zhou royal family at this time.³¹ For his successes in these fields he was awarded the title of *ba*, or hegemon.

Some years after Lord Huan of Qi's death, after a number of unsuccessful attempts to replace him,³² Chonger,³³ later Lord Wen of Jin (r. 636-628 BC),³⁴ became hegemon. As in the case of Lord Huan, he too had left his state to go into exile, as a result of the succession being disputed. After his famous peregrinations in which he travelled as far afield as Qi and Chu, he was installed by his brother-in-law,³⁵ Lord Mu of Qin, as the ruler of Jin. Lord Wen of Jin lived for a number of years at the court of Lord

³⁰ The scandals of Lord Xiang's reign were exhaustively detailed in the *Shi Ji*, 32:1483, 1485.

³¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 341 [Xi 12].

³² See Gu Jiegang: "Qi Huan Gong de Baye," p. 83.

³³ The name Chonger was perhaps a transliteration of a dialect word; see Theil: "Ch'ung-er und sein Glück," p. 116.

³⁴ More evidence is available about the age of Lord Wen of Jin than any other of the hegemon, but nevertheless it is still inconclusive, since according to some accounts he was forty-three when he went into exile, while according to others he was only seventeen. Attempts to rationalize the various accounts have proved largely unsuccessful. See Zhang Yiren: "Jin Wen Gong Niansui Bianwu," p. 295.

³⁵ The use of the term *na* 納 (to install) carried connotations of the use of force, and against the will of the people; see Hu Anguo: *Chunqiu Hushi Zhuan*, 8:1a-1b.

Huan, and married a female member of his house.³⁶ The geographical locations of the states of Qi and Jin perhaps give rise to the notion of the *fangbo*, or regional hegemon,³⁷ as it appears in the *Li Ji* (Records of Ritual) and *Bai Hu Tong* (Discussions held in the White Tiger Hall);³⁸ it is certainly the case that some non-Chinese states divided their administration into two halves,³⁹ but there is no strong evidence that the Zhou confederacy partitioned its government in this way.⁴⁰ Again like Lord Huan, Lord Wen of Jin assisted the Zhou king in his struggles with Prince Shudai. He also resisted aggression from the state of Chu, and indeed led the forces of the Zhou states into battle against them, winning a decisive victory at Chengpu in 632 BC. Prior to the establishment of Chonger as ruler of Jin, the state had been torn apart by a prolonged and bloody civil war, which ended when the Quwo branch of the ruling family, headed by Lord Wen's grandfather, successfully usurped the title.⁴¹ This family had strong links with the local non-Chinese tribes, and seems to have engaged in the practice of murdering all male relations of the ruler once the succession was assured.⁴² The

³⁶ See Guo Moruo: *Liang Zhou Jimwenci Daxi Kaoshi*, p. 229, which described the *Jin Jiang Ding* which was made for Lord Wen of Jin's Qi wife.

³⁷ This title predated the Zhou, having been used during the Shang dynasty to refer to foreign noblemen or heads of states; see Vandermeersch: *Wangdao ou la Voie Royale*, pp. 85-86.

³⁸ See Zhu Bin: *Li Ji Xunzuan*, p. 169 [*Wang Zhi*], and Chen Li: *Bai Hu Tong Shuzheng*, p. 62 [*Hao*]. In the commentary to his translation of the *Bai Hu Tong*, Tjan noted that the Zheng Xuan commentary identifies the two original holders of the title of *fangbo* as Zhou Gong and Shao Gong during the minority of King Cheng of Zhou; see Tjan: *Po Hu T'ung*, p. 320.

³⁹ See *Shi Ji*, 110:2890, on the administration of the Xiongnu confederacy. Some modern historians have suggested that the *fangbos* were men of authority appointed by the Zhou kings to calm trouble-spots, and that this system evolved into the hegemony; see translator's note, Hsiao: *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, p. 135.

⁴⁰ See Lü Simian: *Du Shi Zhaji*, p.262.

⁴¹ The Quwo lineage murdered six successive generations of Marquises of Jin in order to achieve the usurpation. See Weld: *Covenant in Jin's Walled Cities*, p. 131.

⁴² For a description of this practice in the state of Hunza, where it endured until 1892; see Trevelyan: *The Golden Oriole*, p. 46. A similar situation existed in Benin; see Okephwo: "Once upon a kingdom..." p. 628. This practice was also known in China in

geographical location of the state of Jin, “deep in the mountains, with the Rong and the Di peoples for neighbours, and far from the royal house”⁴³ as well as the prolonged civil strife prior to Lord Wen’s succession, effectively prevented its rulers from taking an active role in the political life of the Central States before this time.⁴⁴

Renhao, Lord Mu of Qin (r. 659-621 BC),⁴⁵ governed a state even more remote from the Central States than Jin. Lord Mu was the first member of this ruling house to involve himself in the affairs of the Central States, and the extent of that involvement is unclear.⁴⁶ His wife, the older half-sister of Yiwu and Chonger, Lords Hui and Wen of Jin respectively,⁴⁷ involved him, with varying degrees of success, in the internal politics of the state of Jin. When Lord Mu captured Yiwu, Lord Hui of Jin (r. 650-637 BC), at the battle of Hanyuan, she was said to have openly interceded to save her half-brother’s

Imperial times; see Eisenberg: “Kingship, Power and the Hsüan-wu Men Incident of the Tang,” p. 242. Lord Xian of Jin seems to have been the first ruler to have abandoned this practice, though his sons were sent into exile in adulthood.

⁴³ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p.1371 [Zhao 15].

⁴⁴ Both Jin and Qin also had strong isolationist traditions; see Dong Shuye: *Chunqiu Shi*, p. 147.

⁴⁵ It has been suggested that in Zhou times the posthumous title Mu would normally indicate a change in the direct line of succession, however none of the historical texts give any indication that this was the case with Lord Mu of Qin. See Kao: “The T’ien-kan Posthumous Names and the Royal Family Inheritance of the Shang and Chou,” p. 76.

⁴⁶ See Peng Yousheng: *Qin Shi*, p. 42. Gu Yanwu considered the achievements of the First Emperor to have given rise to the perception that previous rulers of Qin had been more effective than was actually the case, and that Mu of Qin was a particular beneficiary of this; see Gu Yanwu: *Ri Zhi Lu*, p. 89. “The [state] that crushed six others and destroyed the two Zhou states, was the Qin of the Warring States period and not the Qin of the Spring and Autumn period.” Others would argue that Lord Mu of Qin was instrumental in a major military expansion of his state; see Yao Nai: *Xi Bao Han Biji*, 4:7a, also Chen Pan: “Chunqiu Lieqiang Qianbing Kaolüe,” p. 319.

⁴⁷ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 239 [Zhuang 28].

life.⁴⁸ Although widely regarded at this time as a barbaric and backward state,⁴⁹ under the guidance of Lord Mu, the state of Qin expanded greatly, as they conquered and absorbed neighbouring lands held by various non-Chinese people.⁵⁰ Qi, Jin and Qin were all part of the Zhou confederacy, though links with the Zhou varied in strength between them, and they all, including Qi,⁵¹ had strong associations with non-Chinese peoples, although at the time such people suffered considerable prejudice, as can be seen from the epithets applied to them in Zhou texts, such as the 'Dog' Rong.⁵² The other hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period ruled states that were not part of the Zhou confederacy.

Shi (or Lü),⁵³ later entitled King Zhuang of Chu (r. 613-591 BC) was the ruler of a state centred on the Yangtze river, the major rival to the power of the Zhou. King Zhuang of Chu's early life was overshadowed by the death of his grandfather, King Cheng (r. 671-626 BC), who was forced to commit suicide by his father, King Mu (r. 625-614 BC). The man who advised this drastic measure was the future King Mu's tutor, Pan Chong, who was in turn made the tutor of the future King Zhuang.⁵⁴ Enjoying a different culture, the state of Chu had long had diplomatic and trade relations with the

⁴⁸ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 358 [Xi 15]. See also Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 26 [*Xianming Zhuan*].

⁴⁹ See Lin Jianming: *Qinguo Fazhanshi*, p. 40.

⁵⁰ See *Shi Ji*, 5:194. The statement that a particular ruler captured many states and opened up large areas of land for his people to cultivate should be seen as a standard epithet to describe a good (and bellicose) ruler, and was indeed used to describe a number of the hegemon, not just Lord Mu.

⁵¹ See Liu Weihua: "Qi Wenhua Bitan," p. 3

⁵² A similar usage to demean and isolate foreign cultures has been recorded in Ancient Egypt and Greece; see Engnell: *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, p. 12, and Hall: *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, p. 9.

⁵³ The majority of historical accounts gave the king's name as Shi, however the *Shi Ji* gave it as Lü; see Yan Kejun: *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao Wen*, p. 119.

⁵⁴ See *Shi Ji*, 40:1698-1699.

Zhou, and had come over the years to be greatly respected and admired by them.⁵⁵ The inclusion of Zhuang of Chu in the list of hegemonies is perhaps surprising, as he was not one of the more effective rulers of this state,⁵⁶ very little concrete being known of the events of his reign,⁵⁷ and unlike all the other hegemonies, Chu had a long tradition of aggression against the Zhou. The relationship between King Zhuang of Chu and the other southern hegemonies is unclear, though there quite possibly was a blood-relationship to parallel that of the hegemonies in the Zhou confederacy. The ruling family of the state of Yue has been said to be of the Mi totem, the same as the royal family of Chu, giving rise to the speculation that Yue was originally a sub-infeudated state of Chu.⁵⁸

Helü of Wu, who was known to the central states as King Guang of Wu⁵⁹ (r. 514-496 BC) was known for the longstanding enmity between his state and the

⁵⁵ See Rao Zongyi: "Jing-Chu Wenhua," p. 287.

⁵⁶ See He Guanyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, p. 10, who suggests that it was King Zhuang's involvement in the political life of the Central States that gained him the status of hegemon.

⁵⁷ This can be seen from the paucity of information in the *Shi Ji*, 40:1700-1703, which mentions just five events in a twenty-three years reign.

⁵⁸ See Dong Shuye: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Yanjiu*, p. 114.

⁵⁹ Guang was the name used by the Zhou to refer to the King of Wu. It has been suggested that Helü was the king's original name; see Gu Jiegang: *Shi Lin Zazhi (Chu Pian)*, p. 213. This name variation was possibly adopted for status reasons (the Zhou being extremely successful at cultural imperialism) or in order simply to facilitate contacts with the Zhou. This practice is comparable to the adoption of French names in non-French speaking parts of France in the 19th century, as described in Weber: *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 87.

neighbouring state of Yue,⁶⁰ ruled by King Goujian (r. 496-465 BC).⁶¹ This tension was increased by King Helü dying of wounds received in battle against Yue. The state of Wu initially crushed Yue in 494 BC under the leadership of King Helü's son, King Fucha (r. 495-473 BC), but failed to destroy the infrastructure of the nation. Yue later rose and crushed the state of Wu in 473 BC, and they did not make the same mistake. The wars between these two riverine states were extremely intense, and largely precluded them from involvement in the affairs of the central states. Both Kings Helü and Goujian participated in formal diplomatic missions, and attended covenants in the north, but neither was particularly involved thereby. Although conventionally the hegemon was supposed to support the Zhou house and crush the barbarians, (the latter term usually being in practice synonymous with the state of Chu)⁶² it is apparent that by the later Spring and Autumn period, this was no longer so necessary,⁶³ and in the cases of Kings Zhuang, Helü and Goujian, their commitment to either of these principles was liable to be questionable. Goujian in particular, ruler of a state whose recorded history began in the reign of his own father,⁶⁴ and where every account of the Yue people records their

⁶⁰ Yue was a term invented by the Zhou to refer to this state. It is not known by what name they called themselves. The state name Wu seems to have been derived from the tribal name Gou Wu. See Zhang He: *Wu Yue Wenhua*, p. 3. For an alternative discussion of the names of these two states, with a reconstructed pronunciation; see Ma Liqian: "Shi Wu Yue," pp. 157-158.

⁶¹ From inscriptions on bronzes, it is known that people from the state of Yue had names consisting of four characters. When they appear in the written records of the Central States, their names were reduced to two characters, to fit in with common Zhou usage. It has been suggested that King Goujian's name should properly be given as Gouyuanqiyi; see Ding Shan: "Lun Gouyuanqiyi ji Yue Wang Goujian," p. 45. The character Gou has been identified as a vocative form, a distinctive usage from the Yue language; see Rao Zongyi: "Wu-Yue Wenhua," p. 620.

⁶² It has been suggested that the threat posed to the confederacy by Chu was greatly overstated by aspirants to the hegemony; see Shen Fei: *Chunqiu Bishi*, 2:8a.

⁶³ During the Spring and Autumn period, many of the non-Chinese people in regular contact with confederacy states had been forcibly removed from their land or assimilated. This clearly reduced the perceived risk of the 'barbarians.' See Xu Zihui: "Zhou Ji Yizu Wenhua Kao," p. 210.

⁶⁴ See *Shi Ji*, 41:1739.

tattooed bodies and alien ways,⁶⁵ was unlikely to be in favour of destroying local 'barbarian' cultures.⁶⁶ The states ruled by these hegemon form six of the seven 'Warring States,' following the breakup of Jin into Zhao, Wèi and Hán in 403 BC. This is a measure of the expansion they achieved during this period, and of the continued importance of the hegemonal states.

The Zhou Confederacy and the Chinese World

When writers of the Warring States and the Han dynasty considered the political history of the Spring and Autumn period, two points of view were commonly expressed. The first was centred on the Zhou confederacy, and whose exponents expressed a continuing belief in the moral validity of the Zhou kings, and viewed the Zhou royal domain as the centre of power and authority (spiritual if not temporal).⁶⁷ As a corollary to this belief those who encroached on royal prerogatives, such as the hegemon, were seen as little better than bandits and usurpers,⁶⁸ earning a grudging recognition when they paid exaggerated lip-service to the mandate of the ruling monarch.⁶⁹ The most

⁶⁵ See Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, p. 283 [*Gongmeng*]. Since tattooing was associated with punishment in the Zhou confederacy, this was a particularly shocking sign of otherness; see Tian Yiheng: *Liu Qing Ri Zha*, 10:2a-2b.

⁶⁶ The extent of the exploitation of their neighbours by the states of the Zhou confederacy is detailed in Ma Changshou: *Bei Di yu Xiongnu*, p. 11.

⁶⁷ See for example Li Disheng: *Xunzi Jishi*, p. 251 [*Wang Ba*]. Some historians have argued that this doctrine was very reactionary, as it negated the importance of flexibility at a time of poor communications and profound social change; see Chen Zhu: *Gongyangjia Zhaxue*, p. 28.

⁶⁸ This perception gave rise to such statements as that in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*: "The three kings were vassals who killed their overlord, the five hegemon were sons who killed their fathers." Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p.114 [*Goujian Ru Chen Waizhuan*]. The fact that the last statement was untrue does not negate the correct impression that more than one of the men who became hegemon had attained their titles by murdering their closest relations. See also the Tang historian Liu Zongyuan: *Liu Hedong Ji*, p. 769, for an account of the challenges later intellectuals faced in rationalising the position of the hegemon.

⁶⁹ See Hong Diaopei: *Chunqiu Guoji Gongfa*, p. 138.

accomplished early exponent of this viewpoint was Mencius, who considered the rule of kings to be a legitimate expression of authority, and the rule of hegemons to be an illegitimate and tyrannical government.⁷⁰ Philosophers with this view, (usually classed as Confucian) have tended to incorporate Xiang of Song (r. 650-637 BC) in their list of hegemons, and modern scholars who ascribe to this have also tended to focus their attention on alternative Zhou confederacy titles such as the *mengzhu* or Master of Covenants,⁷¹ which was a hereditary prerogative of the marquises of Jin,⁷² thus sidelining the holders of the title of hegemon.⁷³ It should be noted however that the *Zuo Zhuan* was a text profoundly influenced, if at a relatively late stage in the development of the text, by Confucian thought.

The second point of view, which also has the sanction of contemporary authors, stressed the implosion of central control during the Spring and Autumn period. This was more than a loss of royal power, the states who had formed the heartland of the Zhou confederacy were increasingly powerless, as they found themselves unable to expand.⁷⁴ Those border states who were able to grow were brought into ever-greater contact, not just with nomadic peoples, but with the independent strong states of Chu, Wu and Yue. Real power was thus increasingly invested in the border areas, and in the hands of rulers remote from or marginalised by Zhou culture. During the Qin and Han dynasties, interest in these regional power-centres seems to have increased greatly.⁷⁵ The diffusion of authority at this time could perhaps be seen as an important preliminary step towards

⁷⁰ See for example Jiao Xun: *Mengzi Zhengyi*, pp. 839-840 [*Gaozi Xia*].

⁷¹ The importance of the *mengzhu* lay in his role as arbitrator between the states of the Zhou confederacy. While their relationship with the Zhou king was well defined, the relationships between the feudal lords was subject to considerable disputes. See Wang Guowei: *Yin-Zhou Zhidu Lun*, p. 11.

⁷² See Gao Shiqi: *Zuo Zhuan Jishi Benmo*, p. 351.

⁷³ See for example Rosen: "Changing conceptions of the hegemon in Pre-Chin China," pp. 105-106.

⁷⁴ See Hsu: "The Spring and Autumn Period," p. 562.

⁷⁵ See Gu Yanwu: *Ri Zhi Lu*, p. 468.

unification, for it resulted in the incorporation of alien and potentially divisive cultures and people into the Zhou vision of the Chinese world,⁷⁶ highlighted by the granting of an extraordinary Zhou title, that of hegemon. When the cultural and ethnic diversity of the hegemons was stressed, it gave emphasis to the inclusiveness of the Zhou kings and their spiritual heirs. More cynically, the title of hegemon could be seen as having been granted to powerful and threatening feudal lords or kings in order to distract them from any thoughts of attacking the confederacy.

Although the temporal powers of the Zhou kings was clearly on the wane, a process that can be traced through the *Zuo Zhuan*, *Shi Ji* (Records of the Historian) and *Zhanguo Ce* (Records of the Warring States), Zhou authors were still pre-eminent in the field of prose literature, a fact which perhaps resulted in the former view being disproportionately represented.⁷⁷ The opposition of members of the Zhou confederacy to 'barbarians' (who were frequently compared to animals)⁷⁸ was a very important social and political theory (justifying the depredations of the Zhou confederacy), and a kind of siege mentality was widespread.⁷⁹ During the Spring and Autumn period however, of necessity, these ideas had to change, which was reflected in the writings of the time. After unification, this conflict would be recast again into a new form, as fear of 'barbarians' came to be focussed on the nomadic people living in the steppe regions, and particularly the Xiongnu confederacy.

⁷⁶ The process of sinification, or 'civilization' as a contemporary Zhou audience would have seen it, was a policy carried out even at times of great repression. See Chen Zhu: *Gongyangjia Zhexue*, p. 88.

⁷⁷ This contrasts with other cultural spheres, in which Chu was pre-eminent. See Li: *Eastern Zhou and Qin Civilizations*, p. 188.

⁷⁸ See Schafer: "Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China," p. 319, on the attitude of the elite of the Zhou confederacy to 'dangerous animals,' a categorization which was extended to include non-Chinese peoples.

⁷⁹ See Bodde: *Essays on Chinese Civilization*, p. 89. See also Hsu: "Some Working Notes on the Western Zhou government," p. 515.

The prolonged decline of Zhou royal power, without the introduction of an obvious culprit in the form of a Bad King,⁸⁰ was to force a situation in the Spring and Autumn period which can be compared to the problems faced in Europe in the seventeenth century. In both situations, the crisis was provoked by the development of a new form of government, more centralized, militarized, and more meritocratic.⁸¹ In both cases groups used to making their views felt, the aristocracy and junior branches of the ruling house, were about to find their power severely curtailed.⁸² In China, this difficult transition period was bridged by the hegemons, and to a certain extent by the *mengzhu*. In Europe, it was the favourite or *valido*.⁸³

Perhaps one of the most important differences between the roles played by the hegemons, and the favourites in Europe, was that the favourite maintained his dominant position in political life by personal contact with the king.⁸⁴ Although the hegemons had contact with the Zhou kings, receiving envoys and occasionally the gift of some sacrificial meat, none of them apart from Lord Wen were recorded as having met the

⁸⁰ This lack of a ruler, and his usual adjunct, an evil wife, to blame seems to have been a particularly important factor in perceptions of the Zhou decline. The discovery that a long-established political system could just fall apart was without any obvious precedent, and was to prove a lasting shock, comparable to that in Europe when Constantinople fell to Mehmet II during the reign of Constantine XI. Thus, responsibility for the collapse of the Shang dynasty had been divided between the evil Zhou and his wife, and counterpointed with the rise of the Good King, Wen. See *Shi Ji*, 2:106, 108.

⁸¹ See Fu: *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics*, p. 24.

⁸² The destruction of many of the smaller states of the confederacy during the Spring and Autumn period, combined with the general reduction in hereditary government posts, is frequently cited as an important factor in the creation of the *shi* class, literate people who did not perform manual labour. See Yang Liu: *Xian Qin Youshi*, p. 44. Many of the famous ministers, diplomats and philosophers of the Warring States period came from this background.

⁸³ “The *valido* was the political persona of the ‘Christian King,’ the negative identity of a king who could do no wrong; he was a buffer, a lightning conductor, or at worst burning-glass interposed between king and people at a time when a moral consensus for government policy could not be relied upon.” Thompson: “The Institutional Background of the Minister-Favourite,” p. 19.

⁸⁴ See Boyden: *The Courtier and the King*, p. 41.

kingpins 87 and of the Shu and Qin kings were highlighted as deserving the ruling for two
legitimacy, and under his palace King Kong, after that, the aristocratic families of the
harem are venerated. It is not clear whether the hegemon is a historical figure or a
are made of the Zhou kings, the devoted governance of the Zhou confederacy.
The perception of the favourite, like the hegemon, has always been ambivalent.
The portrayal of figures such as Lerma, Olivares, Richelieu, Mazarin, Buckingham and
Pombal to both history and historical fiction have been of the greatest effect that, such
destroyed the charge of falsity that has subsequently been called in (as exemplified by
the fact that the might be a fact that benefited a few and capricious Han
dynasty, and in particular, just this fact, and the subject of the story. Much of the body of
the text will be taken up with the fictionalised stories about
the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period, attempting to analyse how these
Historical Narratives developed and changed over time. During this period, stories about the
lives of the hegemon retained a certain degree of verisimilitude, and lacked the mythical
element. China has a long history of quite a few traditions of historical figures.
The influence of these texts from the pre-Qin period to this day, though it was
important in the *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals), which gives a year by year account
of events in the state of Lu from 772-481 BC, after which the Spring and Autumn period
was named. The *Shu* (The Book of Shu), the *Zhouyi* (I Ching), the *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals), the
Geogong (Slaying of the States), all of which have a greater or lesser extent of
historical fact. In doing so, the *Qin* body of research on the *Chunqiu* offers such literary
form as the *Chunqiu* (the *Chunqiu*), the *Chunqiu* (the *Chunqiu*), the *Chunqiu* (the *Chunqiu*), often
the *Chunqiu* (the *Chunqiu*), the *Chunqiu* (the *Chunqiu*), the *Chunqiu* (the *Chunqiu*), usually

87 An example of this is the text found at tomb M247 (dated to 202-186 BC),
Zhangjiashan, entitled *Gailü* (Helü), which gives an account of questions and answers
between King Helü of Wu and Wu Zixu. This text shows strong links with the Yin-yang
schools. See Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu* (The Spring and Autumn Annals), pp. 432-433, 462-465 [Xi 28]. Zhujian
Zhengli Xiaozu: "Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanmu Gaishu," pp. 12-13.
88 Similar texts are said to have existed for the states of Jin and Chu, the *Sheng* and the
Taowu respectively. On the nature and antiquity of the *Chunqiu*, see the
texts entitled the *Jinshi Sheng* and the *Chushi Taowu*, is ascribed to the Yuan dynasty
scholar Wu Guan, *Traditional Chinese Popular Fiction*, p. 124.

placed in the vicinity of one hundred and fifty years.⁹⁰ It is true that the exact memorisation of lengthy texts is a great burden, and unlikely to be undertaken for anything other than extremely important information. However there is evidence that in some cultures, such a feat has indeed been undertaken.⁹¹ There is no particular reason to assume that an old oral tradition has necessarily always been corrupted by age, such questions should be considered on an individual basis, in the light of the cultural context from which it was derived. It might perhaps be useful to consider ancient China as a culture where there was both precise (*jing*) transmission and a less exact, story-telling (*zhuan*) tradition.⁹² Secondly there is the question of the process of composition. Oral traditions are not invented on the spot, they are built up from a learnt repertoire of themes (that is the story) and formulae (which are the building-blocks of the narrative).⁹³ Also, the fact that a piece is performed orally does not mean that it is unpolished. The performer may have worked on it for some time before delivering it, particularly if the piece is short.⁹⁴ Since a great deal of oral literature has been produced in the form of poetry, the formulae are usually designed to fit easily into that form of narrative structure. The formulae in Chinese narratives are particularly easy to trace, which is a

⁹⁰ See Raglan: *The Hero*, p. 13.

⁹¹ *The Shorter Saga of St. Magnus* describes in great detail the murder of Magnus, Earl of Orkney, in AD 1114. It had a lengthy oral transmission prior to transcription, but when an autopsy was performed on the body of St. Magnus in the 20th century, the injuries on the body corresponded exactly to those described; see Bentley: *Restless Bones*, p. 149. For other examples of lengthy oral transmission having no discernable effect on the accuracy of the tradition; see also Knappert: "Is Epic Oral or Written?" p. 388.

⁹² This idea was current in the Han dynasty, when Liu Xi defined *jing* as *chang* (constant). See Tsai: *Ching and Chuan*, pp. 25, 40. Liu Xie in the *Wen Xin Diao Long* also considers this interpretation of the term *jing*. See Huang Shulin, Li Xiangbu (eds.): *Zengding Wen Xin Diao Long Jiaozhu*, p. 26 [*Zong Jing*]. Use of the term *Zhuan yue* as meaning "There is a story (or tradition) that..." is discussed in Hightower: *Han Shih Wai Chuan*, p. 5.

⁹³ See Lord: *The Singer Resumes the Tale*, p. 11. Scientists might perhaps prefer the term meme to formula, but they are effectively the same thing; see Blackmore: *The Meme Machine*, p. 14.

⁹⁴ See Vansina: *Oral Tradition as History*, p. 12.

function of the nature of the language.⁹⁵ To take perhaps the most famous of these formulae from the stories of the hegemon, mention of Lord Huan of Qi universally called forth the formula “He brought the feudal lords together nine times, united and regulated the world,” (*Jiu he zhuhou, yi kuang Tianxia*).⁹⁶ A great deal of time has been spent attempting to determine which of Lord Huan’s many covenants should be considered the nine mentioned here,⁹⁷ which is beside the point. Nine is the numeral mentioned here because it had special significance in Chinese thought,⁹⁸ and because it functioned as a counterpoint to the number one (“to unite”). Likewise, when Lord Huan of Qi behaved in an arrogant fashion at the covenant at Caiqiu, nine states felt so strongly about it that they rebelled.⁹⁹

Likewise, discussions of Lord Huan’s separation from his feisty wife from Cai, an immensely popular story, often ignore the strategic importance of Cai in the battle

⁹⁵ Russian, an inflected language, provides a good contrast. In songs about Prince Vladimir he has the single epithets *slavnyi* (“glorious”) and *knjaz* (“prince”), and the compound epithet *stol'ne-kievskoj* (“of the capital Kiev”). These can be arranged a). *Slavnyja Vladymir stol'ne-kievskoj*, (Glorious Vladimir of the capital Kiev); b). *A Vladymir knjaz 'stolne-kievskoj*, (Prince Vladimir of the capital Kiev); c). *Vo slavnojom vo gorodi vo Kievi, Slavnogo u knjazja Vladimira*, (In the glorious city of Kiev, at the glorious prince Vladimir’s). These three versions are all in fact the same formula; see Lord: *The Singer Resumes the Tale*, p. 5.

⁹⁶ The earliest form of this formula would seem to be the *Zuo Zhuan*, where the character *jiu* “to band together” is used for the character *jiu* “nine.” See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 440 [Xi 26]. The mnemonic significance of the juxtaposition of the numerals one and nine seems to have resulted in this version’s popularity. This formula appears in its two halves in the *Lunyu*; see Yang Bojun: *Lunyu Yizhu*, p. 151 [*Xian Wen* 14.16-17]. Later on, Lord Dao of Jin was said to have brought the feudal lords together nine times, in a clear reference to this auspicious idea. This point is considered in Mao Qiling: *Lunyu Jiqiu Pian*, 6:7a-7b.

⁹⁷ See Li Dongfang: *Xian Qin Shi*, p. 68.

⁹⁸ The number nine fills somewhat the same role in Chinese thought as the numeral twelve in Norse mythology, where “[a]ny vague rumour of a number had a tendency to settle itself into Twelve.” Carlyle: *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, p. 24. In China, as well as the number nine, five was also frequently used in this way, almost as a “lucky” number.

⁹⁹ See Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 507 [*Shi Wu*].

against Chu.¹⁰⁰ The theme of this story, that Lord Huan separated from his wife, and sent her home as a punishment, only to attack her family for allowing her to remarry, was one designed to highlight the importance of proper ritual to a feudal lord holding the rank of hegemon. The tale of personal humiliation (Lord Huan was frightened by his wife while out sailing), was probably created to explain the attack, rather than the attack being derived from Lord Huan having been humbled by his wife. This story is one of the few about any of the hegemon's to convey a sense of personality, perhaps one of the reasons for its popularity. Just as there are very few stories which give an account of any aspect of a hegemon's personal thoughts and feelings, there are almost no tales in which their physical appearance was described. Descriptive passages were developed relatively late in Chinese narrative; however in the oral literature in other cultures, lack of descriptive passages allowed the imagination of the audience full rein.¹⁰¹

Research into modern story-telling in China has served to highlight a generally ignored aspect of the oral composition of tales. In all the tales that a story-teller knows there is a core, which may be the theme, the formulae or a combination of the two, that cannot be changed without doing violence to the tale. This essence, in Chinese *qingli*, is believed to be present in all versions of a particular story.¹⁰² Since it is this that is of the greatest importance, embellishments or omissions that do not touch this core would be made almost without thought, or particular attention. Such an attitude would seem to have been held by story-tellers around the world.¹⁰³ It is however these sections that provide the greatest clues to the interrelationship of the various versions of stories about the hegemon's preserved in ancient texts.

¹⁰⁰ See Cui Shu: *Cui Dongbi Yishu*, p. 458.

¹⁰¹ See Jones: *Kings, Beasts and Heroes*, pp. 74-75. In the Welsh medieval prose story *Cuhtwac ac Olwen*, the hero is not described: "Whether he is tall, short, thick, thin, raven-haired or pale as a leek is at no time indicated. Of his resplendent kind he is exactly as the reader's imagination would have him, son of a king of a rightful dominion."

¹⁰² See Blader: "Yen Ch'a-san Thrice Tested," p. 156-9.

¹⁰³ See Lord: *The Singer of Tales*, p. 123.

The stories which describe the lives and times of the hegemon, when considered as a group, show all the problems and variations to be expected in such ancient texts. Some stories are known in many, sometimes mutually irreconcilable versions,¹⁰⁴ while others seem to have been remarkably stable. Although some of these tales can confidently be said to be related, and the nature of that relationship can be defined, many versions and many interim variants have almost certainly been lost.¹⁰⁵ Also, although many of these texts are known to have had a long oral transmission, the relationship between the lost oral versions and the surviving texts is unknowable. Even though two texts may be closely related, is that because they are directly derived from one another, or from a common oral text, or was there an oral version in between?¹⁰⁶ When these texts were finally written down, it is not clear if they were noted by a literate person from an oral rendition, or composed by a writer acquainted with the oral tradition. The antiquity of the written text in China makes such questions unanswerable. What is clear is that the nature of oral literature, that is the formulae (often rhymed) which slot into lines of a set length, affected the earliest forms of written fictional text profoundly.

Stories about the lives of the hegemon were found in a wide variety of ancient texts. The development of these tales however seems very rarely to have been affected by their use as illustrative moral tales by writers of the various philosophical schools. This may be the result of the widely held belief in ancient China that tales from history served a moral purpose, so the stories were already cast in this mould before they were

¹⁰⁴ One example of mutually irreconcilable versions of the same story is the range of accounts of the Honourable Chonger's travels before becoming Lord Wen of Jin. The difficulties of producing a comprehensible itinerary are discussed in Wang Zhichang: *Qing Xue Zhai Ji*, 9:6a-6b, and also Li Longxian: *Jin Wen Gong Fuguo Dingba Kao*, pp. 136-145.

¹⁰⁵ For the interrelationship of stories about the death of Lord Huan of Qi; see Noma Fumichika: "Sai Kankō no Saiki to *Saden* no Seiritsu," p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ It might be possible to answer this question if more was known of the nature of performances of oral literature in Ancient China. See Wivell: "The Chinese Oral and Pseudo-oral Narrative Traditions," pp. 60-61.

adopted by philosophers.¹⁰⁷ Thus, when a story was used in a philosophical text to make a particular moral point, it was not doing violence to the tale, and it is noticeable that fundamentally the same story could appear in historical, philosophical and heterogeneous collections of ancient tales.

Tales of the Hegemons as Heroes, and as Rulers

Although the relationship between the oral and the written transmission of texts is unclear, the texts dealing with the lives of the hegemons written during the Spring and Autumn or Warring States periods show certain characteristics. Historical texts such as the *Chunqiu*, the *Zhu Shu Jinian*, and others written in the annalistic mode,¹⁰⁸ were based on the simple formula of date, event, date, event, and used the sixty day Stems and Branches system for giving the day, while combining this with the use of a decimal system for other numerical information. Thus the authors used a method of textual composition completely divorced from oral forms, to produce a text that was meant only to be read. The stories about the lives of the hegemons used as illustrations in philosophical texts and others, however, seem to have relied on themes and formulae, and though some of these texts may never have had an oral form, the process of composition of written fiction was based on the principles used in creating a tale to be recounted.¹⁰⁹ From the texts that survive, the development of a truly independent mode of composing written fiction would seem to be dated to the end of the Han dynasty. The picture is confused by the fact that many of these texts were subsequently recast, during their period of manuscript transmission.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ See Tan Zhengbi: *Zhongguo Wenxue Shi*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁸ See for example the *Bian Nianji*, found in a Qin tomb (tomb 11) at Shuihudi in Hubei, which recounts the events of 306-217 BC in the state of Qin, incorporating a very brief biography of the occupant of the tomb, one Xi (262- ca.217 BC); see Shuihudi Qinmu Zhujian Zhengli Xiaozu: *Shuihudi Qinmu Zhujian*, pp. 3-8.

¹⁰⁹ See Gu Jiegang: "Shi Jing zai Chunqiu Zhanguo Jian de Diwei," p. 312.

¹¹⁰ See Zhang Xuecheng: *Wenshi Tongyi*, p. 72. Zhang makes the point that all too often, literati liked to record the more unusual versions of tales (*wenren hao qi*) and thus what has been preserved is perhaps unrepresentative. This point has also been raised in

In the following examples of tales about the lives of the hegemon, I will consider the evidence of oral composition, the changes that occurred over time in the way that a particular tale was recounted, the relevance of such changes, and the links that appear between these stories and folktales recorded in other parts of the world. Thus, reference will be made to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, the most comprehensive and widely used system for analysing in detail the principal thematic elements of myth, legend and historical romance.¹¹¹ Although Chinese myths have been analysed according to this system, which gives a letter and numeral combination to show related themes,¹¹² historical tales from China have not, to my knowledge, been systematically investigated in this way. Also I hope to show how such tales affected the representation of individual hegemon, and the hegemony itself. Although Confucian writers seem to have approached the subject of the hegemon with ambivalent or hostile attitudes, to many other ancient Chinese writers, they seem to have come close to being considered as heroes. The most comprehensive analysis of the requisite components for status as a hero in Indo-European cultures has appeared in Lord Raglan's study of the subject, which resulted in the following twenty-two point scale being produced:

- 1) The hero's mother is a royal virgin;
- 2) His father is a king, and
- 3) Often a near relation of his mother, but
- 4) The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and

studies of European tales: "To us, originality implies new invention; to the medieval mind... the best telling of a fine old thing." Scudder: *Le Morte Darthur of Sir Thomas Mallory*, p. 64.

¹¹¹ See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends*. In more concise treatments Vladimir Propp identified thirty-one thematic elements, while Tzvetan Todorov further reduced this to five main elements: 1) Equilibrium, 2) Destabilisation, 3) Recognition of state of destabilisation, 4) Actions to resolve destabilisation, 5) Equilibrium. See Wang: "The Nature of Chinese Narrative: a Preliminary Statement on Methodology," p. 234.

¹¹² For example, J910. Humility of the great, is distinguished from J911. Wise man acknowledges his ignorance, which in turn is differentiated from J914. King shows humility by mingling with the common people. See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 4, p. 63.

- 5) He is also reputed to be the son of a god.
- 6) At birth an attempt is made, usually by his father or maternal grandfather, to kill him, but
- 7) He is spirited away, and
- 8) Reared by foster-parents in a far country.
- 9) We are told nothing of his childhood, but
- 10) On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
- 11) After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon or wild beast
- 12) He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
- 13) Becomes king.
- 14) For a time he reigns uneventfully, and
- 15) Prescribes laws, but
- 16) Later he loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects, and
- 17) Is driven from the throne and city, after which
- 18) He meets a mysterious death,
- 19) Often on top of a hill.
- 20) His children, if any, do not succeed him.
- 21) His body is not buried, but nevertheless
- 22) He has one or more holy sepulchres.¹¹³

Raglan's twenty-two point scale was designed to reflect the basic principals by which the legend of a culture hero was built up. The role of the culture hero has always been to disrupt a settled social system, protecting it from danger within or without the society. Heroic legends are created when one social system or culture displaces another, at a time of pressure. Although conventionally the word 'hero' is used in unmitigated praise, the portrayal of heroes in antiquity was more ambiguous. Heroes were potentially dangerous and anarchic figures, and their presence within a society not an unmixed blessing. The development of any historical figure in accordance with the heroic stereotype should not raise the expectation that the portrayal of this character will be entirely favourable.

¹¹³ Raglan: *The Hero*, pp. 174-175. De Vries attempted to reduce Raglan's list of twenty-two points to ten of primary importance, but his list focussed mainly on the characteristics shared with heroes by gods. See De Vries: *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend*, pp. 210-216. Butler's expanded thirty point scale is also based on that of Raglan, and makes no significant improvements on it, except in so far as he stresses the masculine persona of the hero. See Butler: *The Myth of the Hero*, pp. 28-30.

Alan Dundas, who used Raglan's system to study the biographies of figures as different as St. Patrick and Abraham Lincoln, recommended caution in too hasty dismissal of certain elements as fictional:

The fact that a hero's biography conforms to the Indo-European hero pattern does not necessarily mean that the hero never existed. It suggests rather that the folk repeatedly insist upon making their versions of the lives of heroes follow the lines of a specific series of incidents.¹¹⁴

However, Raglan himself pointed out that during his study of this pattern, he discovered that in no case did a genuine historical figure fulfill more than six points on his scale.¹¹⁵ Those stories that do not fit in with the stereotype of the hero may frequently be said to fit in with the alternative stereotype of the good king. Using Cairns' twelve point system, developed to explain the characteristics of the good king found in European Classical literature, and in particular epics, it is clear that when not acting in a heroic fashion, the tales of the hegemon show them in their capacity of rulers of great states. Thus, the good king is:

- 1) pre-eminent in virtue,
- 2) a model for imitation in virtue,
- 3) the imitator of god to reach virtue,
- 4) the possessor of the four cardinal virtues; i) justice, ii) self-control and abstinence from pleasure, iii) wisdom, iv) warlike ability and courage.
- 5) Possessor of other virtues; i) piety, ii) mercy, mildness, gentleness, pity, kindness, iii) hard work, iv) generosity, especially towards his friends, v) foresight, vi) observance of the law and being the living embodiment of the law and supreme lawgiver, vii) care for his people.
- 6) Because of his care etc. for his people he is considered i) their father, ii) their shepherd, iii) their saviour, iv) a lover of his city and its people, v) possessor of the love of his people as his best bodyguard and as the surest foundation of his kingdom.
- 7) A lover of peace and harmony,
- 8) of good appearance,
- 9) endowed with good advisors and minister-officials,
- 10) seeing and hearing everything, often through his agents,

¹¹⁴ See Dundas: *The Hero Pattern and the Life of Jesus*, p. 190.

¹¹⁵ See Raglan: *The Hero*, pp. 184-185.

- 11) ensuring that the citizens go about their several tasks,
- 12) deriving his kingship from some kind of deity.¹¹⁶

It should be noted that although this twelve point scale was originally developed to consider the fictional heroes of classical antiquity, unlike in the case of Raglan's scale, conformity with this pattern should not be seen as implying that the deeds of the individual under consideration had been invented. Many perfectly historical rulers and princes, both from cultures that consciously harked back to the classical model and that did not, attempted to govern in the way described above.

The presentation in antiquity of certain individuals, be they monarchs or members of the nobility, as heroes mirrored social developments. To reduce it to its most simple form, in the early days of a monarchical system, the king was a powerful figure who had enfeoffed feudal lords beneath him. These lords relied on the monarch's favour for their status, and derived their power from his; they were thus in a dependant relationship towards him. Later on, as the king's role became increasingly institutionalised, and the scope of his activities was more and more limited, he was largely reduced to being a figurehead.¹¹⁷ When the king found himself unable to expand his state, conquer new lands, and reward his followers with new enfeoffments, real power increasingly slipped to his feudal lords, who were able to subinfeudate their own supporters.

¹¹⁶ Cairns: *Vergil's Augustan Epic*, pp. 19-21. This system was particularly designed to fit the patterns found in European accounts of kings and kingship, and so does not cover the forms to be found in other parts of the ancient world. However, it is a useful guide to the basic principles that underlie the self-presentation of monarchies of ancient societies beyond the confines of Europe.

¹¹⁷ See Dobozy: *Full Circle: Kingship in the German Epic*, p. 6.

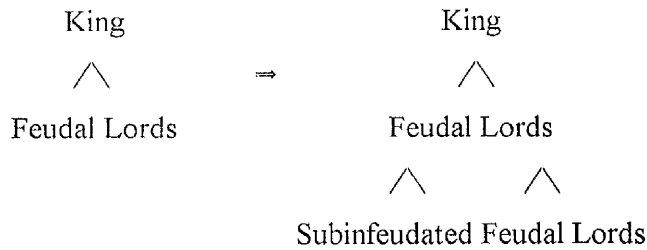


Figure 1

A similar process can be observed in literature dealing with the monarchs and nobles who lived through these social developments. Whereas the monarch is a conservative figure, the hero is a radical one, and the two roles are thus usually fundamentally inimicable and irreconcilable.¹¹⁸ In the first stage of development of this kind of monarchical society, it was possible for the king to take on some of the attributes of a hero, for the founding rulers were not entrenched as stable conservative figures whose authority would be threatened by appearing in tales in which they acted in a manner appropriate to a hero.¹¹⁹ Indeed many monarchs, as the founders of their dynasties, had to act as heroes, disrupting a settled system. At this early stage, the feudal lords took on the function of advisors, followers or supporters. Later on, when the king had become a conservative figurehead, the feudal lords take over in literature as rulers who could function as heroes, and their subinfeudated lords as advisors or followers.

¹¹⁸ While the king represents stable conservative values within his culture, the hero has no social responsibilities: he is a disruptive force, anxious to establish his own reputation even to the detriment of the society in which he lives. The hero is frequently accompanied by a band of followers, too small to be counted as an army and too weak to overwhelm the settled community that they have joined. The hero is also often paired with a weak or flawed king, for a strong, powerful, “good” king would be able to deal with the disruptive effects of the arrival of a charismatic new intruder. See Jackson: *The Hero and the King*, pp. 12-15, 58.

¹¹⁹ An example of this is the account of King Mu of Zhou’s travels given in the *Mu Tianzi Zhuan*, the earliest surviving Chinese historical romance. See Hong Yixuan: *Mu Tianzi Zhuan*, and Mathieu: “Mu t’ien tzu chuan,” p. 342.

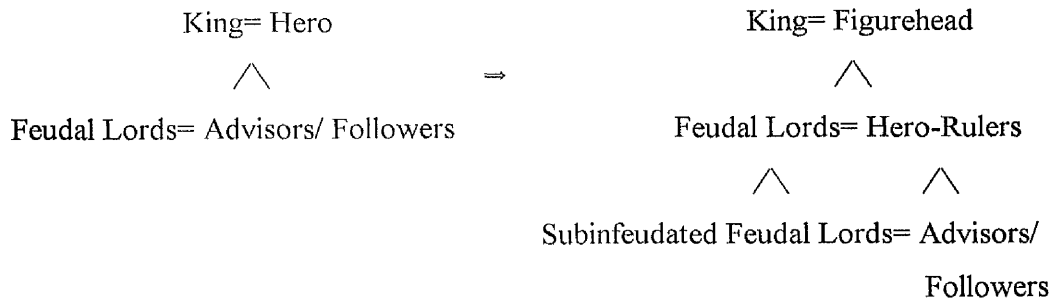


Figure 2

It would be expected that tales derived from a society displaying the second stage of development in a monarchical system would have feudal lords fulfilling the requirements of the hero-ruler. This was indeed the case of rulers of Spring and Autumn period states. In particular this pattern was well displayed in tales involving the hegemon, who were hero-rulers of the classic type, embodying in turn the stable virtues necessary for a hereditary monarch and on occasion the buccaneering manners of the heroic type. This was to be expected, as they were among the most famous members of the ruling elite of their day, at a time when the ruling Zhou house was riven by internal strife as well as being in the main relegated to the sidelines by having had their political influence confined within the Royal Domain, no matter how much lip-service was paid to the idea of “respecting the king.”¹²⁰

The Hegemons and the Hegemony

The hegemon has some claim to be considered as a group, rather than as purely individual figures. Many of the writers from the Spring and Autumn period to the end of the Han chose to treat the fact of appointment to the hegemony as overriding all other considerations, such as ethnic origin or cultural background. This is not true of the overtly historical texts; the *Chunqiu*, *Zhu Shu Jinian* and the *Zuo Zhuan* mentioned the hegemon in their correct chronological places and in their appropriate contemporary

¹²⁰ See Li Longxian: *Jin Wen Gong Fuguo Dingba Kao*, p. 198; see also Chen Pan: “Chunqiu Lieguo Qianxi Kao,” pp. 64-65.

context, while the *Shi Ji* placed them in the context of their state of origin, giving their biographies in the accounts of the Hereditary Houses.¹²¹ However other writers, not working within the tradition of overtly historical writing, chose to consider them as a group, stressing the similarities of the factors that brought them to the hegemony, and the principles connecting their conduct once they had attained their goal. In addition to placing the hegemon together as a group, some have chosen to see the hegemony as a tradition, passed on to those of similar ideals, rather than transmitted with the rulership of a particular state. This view would serve to sideline the rulers of Jin who held the title of *mengzhu*, in favour of those who continued the hegemony in the tradition of Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin.¹²² As an example of similarities between their lives being seen to outweigh their differences, the *Mozi* recorded the way in which the hegemon were profoundly influenced by the ministers who advised them:

Huan of Qi was influenced by Guan Zhong and Baoshu. Wen of Jin was influenced by Jiu Fan and Gao Yan. Zhuang of Chu was influenced by Sun Shu and Chen Yin. Helü of Wu was influenced by Wu Yuan and Wen Yi. Goujian of Yue was influenced by Fan Li and the Grandee Zhong. As for these five lords, those who influenced them were suitable, therefore they were hegemon over the feudal lords and their merit and fame were handed down to later generations.¹²³

In a similar vein, the *Xunzi* gave an account of the similarities in their styles of government.¹²⁴ The grouping might be further sub-divided, for example, Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin were frequently cited as a contrasting pair,¹²⁵ but this may have been

¹²¹ Apart from Qin, which appears in the Basic Annals section of the *Shi Ji*.

¹²² See Ma Su: *Zuo Zhuan Shiwei*, p. 164.

¹²³ Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangtu*, pp. 8-9 [*Suo Ran*]. Although the *Mozi* did not include Lord Mu of Qin on the list, a similar formula could easily have been used in his case. A virtually identical passage appears in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, where these sentiments were again assigned to Mozi. See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 2:13b-14a [*Dang Ran*].

¹²⁴ See Li Disheng: *Xunzi Jishi*, pp. 232-233 [*Wang Ba*]. In the *Zhanguo Ce*, the way in which the hegemon gained their titles is compared; see Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 1012 [*Wei Zheng Wang*].

¹²⁵ Most famously in the Analects of Confucius; see Yang Bojun: *Lunyu Yizhu*, p. 131 [*Xian Wen* 14.17]. The pairing of the first two hegemon was included in a number of

because of their positions as the only two hegemon universally agreed upon, whose deeds were also chronicled in a great deal more detail, and at a much earlier stage, than those of any of the other hegemon. Nevertheless, the hegemon were conventionally grouped together in the vast majority of Spring and Autumn, Warring States (475-221 BC) and Han texts, a grouping that a contemporary audience must clearly have found meaningful, given the frequency with which it occurs.

The Ancient Chinese Story-teller's Audience

It would also perhaps be relevant to consider here the audience for these tales of the lives and deeds of the hegemon. The texts which served to preserve the tales that had previously been transmitted orally were clearly not popular, in the sense that where authorship is known, they were composed by great scholars, at the orders of noblemen, princes, or emperors. These texts were therefore the product of a cultural elite, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that the story-tellers from whom they heard the tales that they recorded would also in some way have represented the elite of their profession. Thus for example while the *Han Feizi* was the product of a member of the ruling family of the state of Hàn, the *Lishi Chunqiu* was commissioned by a great merchant and statesman from the foremost scholars of his time in Qin, and the *Huainanzi* was produced at the orders of Liu An, King of Huainan,¹²⁶ the literary merit of stories found in these texts was not necessarily solely derived from the skill of the authors who produced the written text.

While the popularity of the tales of the lives of the hegemon remains uncertain, below the level of the national elite, it is clear that members of this class were extremely interested in stories about the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period. Many of the tales about them are known in many versions, recorded over an enormous geographical

ancient texts on the hegemony; see for example Chen Li: *Bai Hu Tong Shuzheng*, pp. 60-62 [*Hao*].

¹²⁶ See Levi: "Han Fei tzu," p. 115, Knoblock and Riegel: *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, pp. 3, 14, and Le Blanc: "Huai nan tzu," pp. 189-190.

area, and over the course of many centuries, stories about them continued to find their way into new texts. Tales of the lives of the hegemon therefore had considerable popularity, which was not dimmed with time, within the narrow confines of this particular social class.

Story-telling was an art form enjoyed by both sexes, and those references to recitations of orally transmitted traditions that have survived, recorded that men listened to tales of the deeds of ancient mythical figures and the rulers of antiquity,¹²⁷ while there are no indications of what kind of stories were told to entertain women, even though there are more accounts preserved in ancient texts of women being entertained by professional story-tellers.¹²⁸

However it is perhaps pertinent that women of all but the highest social standing were engaged in daily tasks that allowed groups to congregate and be entertained (or in more humble circumstances, to entertain each other), while hard at work.¹²⁹ This is particularly true of one of the major tasks of women during the Spring and Autumn, Warring States and Han periods, weaving.¹³⁰ Sadly, references to story-telling at this

¹²⁷ See Nienhauser: "The Origins of Chinese Fiction," p. 192.

¹²⁸ According to the *Shi Ji* and the *Han Shu*, in the Warring States period, women from the states of Zhao and Zhongshan were frequently forced by poverty to become musicians or story-tellers, and the best of them circulated between the harems of the aristocracy. See *Shi Ji* 129:3263, *Han Shu* 28b:1655. See also Chen Ruheng: *Shuoshu Shihua*, p. 7.

¹²⁹ A similar situation was recorded in Europe, where women would gather while spinning and weaving to recite stories. See Manguel: *A History of Reading*, pp. 117-118. (Manguel incorrectly identifies the illustration from the 16th century *Les Evangiles des quenouilles* as a reading group. In fact it depicts a story-teller and her audience). Men did not participate in such activities in any numbers until the advent of mass-production. In Zhou dynasty China, elite men were more engaged with classic (written) literature, and on informal occasions when they wished to be amused, music was the most commonly mentioned entertainment.

¹³⁰ See Liu Dehan: *Dong Zhou Funiu Shenghuo*, p. 21. It is perhaps significant in this context that one of the finest collections of figurines representing storytellers was found in a Han dynasty woman's tomb in Yangzhou; see Yangzhou Bowuguan, Hanjiang Xian Wenhuguan: "Yangzhou Hanjiang Xian Huchang Han Mu," p. 7. This find and others

early stage are few and far between.¹³¹ However it seems clear that tales were told on social occasions, that both men and women could be in the audience, though at the highest social levels for which we have the most evidence, they do not seem to have mixed together when being entertained in this fashion. It is also evident that these stories of the great and the good of past ages were seen as having a moral and didactic element,¹³² and so the audience believed themselves to be in some way edified as well as entertained by listening to them. This was the background to the account given in the *Lienü Zhuan* (Tales of Illustrious Women) of the mother of the future King Wen of Zhou listening to verse-tales while pregnant, in order to ensure good prenatal influences. Although it is unclear to what degree members of Warring States and Han society conformed to this ideal, belief in the valuable moral instruction provided by historical tales is most likely to have been widespread among the literate upper-classes, under whose auspices many ancient Chinese texts were compiled. The number of stories about the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period preserved in ancient texts, generally favourable though with an appreciation of their human failings, would seem to be indicative of widespread approval, at least among the elite, of their deeds.

are discussed in Børdahl: *The Oral Traditions of Yangzhou Storytelling*, pp. 9-10.

¹³¹ See Idema: "Prosimetric Literature," p. 83.

¹³² See Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 6 [*Muyi Zhuan*].

“Some on the leaves of ancient authors
prey,
Nor time nor moths e’er spoiled so much
as they:”
Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*.

Chapter 2

Lord Huan of Qi

The stories which described the life and death of the first hegemon, Lord Huan of Qi, consistently emphasised the intelligence and acumen of his closest associates.¹ The reasons for this are unclear; although Lord Huan had to go into exile in the state of Ju,² during which time he was sustained by his followers (of whom only Bao Shuya was commonly mentioned),³ these tribulations were not unique among the men who would become hegemons. This portrayal is in contrast to that of Lord Wen of Jin, whose time in exile was very minutely described, and whose reliance on his maternal and paternal kin was made quite explicit.⁴ However for some reason Lord Wen never seems to have

¹ See Pokora: “Ironical Critics at Ancient Chinese Courts,” p. 63, for a discussion of the counterpoint role ministers and other advisors played in the tales of strong rulers such as Lord Huan of Qi.

² The reasons that Lord Huan chose to go into exile in Ju are unknown. His older half-brother, the Honourable Jiu, went to his maternal relations in Lu, who gave him material assistance in his attempt to attain rulership of Qi; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 179 [Zhuang 9]. The *Shi Ji*, 32:1485, says that Lord Huan’s mother was a lady from the state of Wei. It is possible that Lord Huan had some relationship with the ruling family of Ju, or that his maternal kin have been incorrectly identified as the rulers of Wei, for in virtually all cases of disputed succession, help was naturally sought from kin.

³ Bao Shuya, the loyal follower of Lord Huan, was usually described as forming part of trio with Guan Zhong and Shao Hu, who followed the Honourable Jiu into exile during the civil strife caused by the previous lord of Qi; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 176 [Zhuang 8].

⁴ During his exile, Lord Wen of Jin was accompanied by his maternal uncle, Hu Yan, also known as “Uncle Fan.” When he first left the state of Jin, he joined his cousin, the leader of the local Di people, and lived among his maternal kin for twelve years. Later on, after his epic tour of the Chinese world, he was installed in his state by the husband of his paternal half-sister. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 405 [Xi 23],

garnered quite the same reputation for reliance on others. While the stories of Lord Huan's relations with his various ministers are very numerous,⁵ one of the most interesting involves his acceptance of the wisdom and sagacity of someone of inferior social status. Of all the hegemonies, Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin in particular were frequently described as accepting advice from chance-met persons,⁶ sometimes of very low social status, while in the case of Lord Mu of Qin, he was said to have made a slave, Baili Xi, his chief minister. Such behaviour was clearly seen as appropriate to a ruler, and was frequently cited as instrumental in the rise of a particular lord to the hegemony.⁷ To a contemporary audience, these tales in which poor individuals were plucked from obscurity and instantly raised to the heights of power and luxurious living by a good and moral ruler would have had an obvious fascination.⁸

The first tale to be considered in detail revolved around a secret meeting to plan an attack on another state. The participants at this meeting were Lord Huan of Qi himself and his chief minister, Guan Zhong. A decision was made to mobilize troops, but before this could be done, Lord Huan discovered that his plan was known, and was being discussed in his capital. Lord Huan was therefore dissuaded from putting his plan into action. There were two main versions of this story current in ancient China. In the

413 [Xi 24].

⁵ Lord Huan of Qi's relationship with his minister Guan Zhong was the subject of continued fascination, given that Guan Zhong had once tried to murder him, when they found themselves on opposite sides in the civil strife in Qi; see Henry: "The Motif of Recognition in Early China," p. 5.

⁶ See for example; Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 102 [*Gui De*].

⁷ Apart from the obvious desirability of promoting the able, such behaviour was also closely associated with status as a sage king; see Wang Jianwen: *Zhanguo Zhuzi de Gu Shengwang Zhuanshuo ji qi Sixiangshi Yiyi*, p. 57. For a detailed study of this theme; see Henry: "The Motif of Recognition in Early China," pp. 8-24. Interestingly, the hegemonies were never said to have indulged in the kind of behaviour expected of traditional Chinese heroes; see Chang: *History and Legend*, p. 81.

⁸ See Berkowitz: "The Moral Hero," p. 18. Henry dates the earliest literary examples of such stories to 400-300 BC (when they appeared in a fully developed form); see "The Motif of Recognition in Early China," p. 24.

most common and earliest variant, where an attack was planned by Qi on the state of Ju,⁹ Lord Huan's plans were discovered by a servant, Dongguo You.¹⁰ (His name is given alternatively, and more commonly, as Dongguo Ya).¹¹ A number of explanations have been put forward for this name difference, none of them conclusive.¹² It is however clear that the same person is intended in each case. This story then subsequently appeared, with its male protagonist, in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (The Spring and Autumn of

⁹ The state of Ju was eventually destroyed by Chu between 440-430 BC; see Chen Pan: *Chunqiu Dashibiao Lieguo Juexing ji Cunmiebiao Zhuanyi*, p. 140.

¹⁰ In the *Guanzi*, the name You is given as 郵; see Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 421 [*Xiao Wen*]. According to Luo Genze: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 108, this chapter was compiled in the Warring States period from oral traditions about Guan Zhong. If that is so, then the version of this tale in the *Guanzi* would be the earliest surviving example of this particular story. However, Rickett: *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, p. 186, dates this chapter to the late Warring States, making it an early, but possibly not the earliest version of this story. The *Shuo Yuan*, in which the name is given as Chui 垂; see Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 315-316 [*Quan Mou*], was compiled by Liu Xiang from earlier texts, and so it is not surprising that it preserved an earlier form of name for the servant.

¹¹ The name Dongguo Ya was used in all other instances of this story, that is in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the *Han Shi Waizhuan* and the *Lun Heng*. It should be noted that the *Lun Heng*, written by Wang Chong (AD 27- c.100) between AD 70- 80, did not use the older version of the name which was brought back into circulation in the *Shuo Yuan*, but instead makes use of the later; see Pokora/Loewe: "Lun Heng," p. 309.

¹² For a discussion of the various theories see Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, p. 133. The problems in this case are in contrast to the changes in character use for the name of Lord Wen of Jin's uncle, "Jiu" Fan. In this case the variant character usage derives from the fact that the two characters were homophones. The earlier character used was *jiu* 舅, meaning "maternal uncle" which was later substituted by *jiu* 咎, meaning "disaster." See Karlgren: *Grammata Serica Recensa*, pp. 275-276 [1067, 1068], in which both characters have the reconstructed pronunciation *g'îôg. In Schuessler: *A Dictionary of Early Zhou Chinese*, p. 327, the pronunciation is given as gjau, in Baxter: *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*, p. 769, as *g(r)ju. All agree that the two words were indistinguishable in pronunciation in antiquity as now, and so the change may have resulted from oral transcription, or the variant may have been used to express criticism.



Mr. Lü),¹³ the *Han Shi Waizhuan* (Han's Traditions of the Classic of Songs),¹⁴ the *Shuo Yuan* (Garden of Stories),¹⁵ and the *Lun Heng* (Doctrines Weighed).¹⁶ In the less common version where an attack was planned on the state of Wei, Lord Huan was prevented from carrying out this invasion by an intercession from his wife, Lady Ji of Wei.¹⁷ As a result, the most powerful feudal lord of the period was made to change his plans by a person who had relied on native talents to discover the plot, since neither a menial nor a wife would ordinarily have been involved in the plotting.¹⁸ Interestingly, no version of this story appears to contain any reference to punishment or even censure, in spite of the fact that at least in the case of Dongguo Ya, his actions could be described as treasonable.

In both cases the protagonist made the vital discovery by astute observation of Lord Huan's appearance and manner, though this is particularly mentioned of Dongguo Ya. He is supposed to have combined the ability to lip-read with a clever reading of Lord Huan's gestures,¹⁹ while Lord Huan's wife is only credited with an ability to read his looks, presumably gained by long familiarity, as opposed to Dongguo Ya who would

¹³ The *Lüshi Chunqiu* is said to have been completed in c. 239 BC; see Carson/Loewe: "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," p. 324.

¹⁴ Han Ying (c. 200-c. 120 BC), is believed to have composed the *Han Shi Waizhuan* in around 150 BC; see Hightower: "Han shih wai chuan," p. 126.

¹⁵ The *Shuo Yuan* was compiled by Liu Xiang from earlier texts and presented to the throne in 17 BC; see Knechtges: "Shuo yüan," p. 444.

¹⁶ The *Lun Heng* was composed by Wang Chong (AD 27- c. 100) around AD 70-80; see Pokora/Loewe: "Lun heng," p. 309.

¹⁷ There are only two examples of this version; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 18:11a-11b [*Qing Yu*], and Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 24 [*Xianming Zhuan*]. The *Lienü Zhuan* was compiled by Liu Xiang in around 16 BC; see Nienhauser: *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 584.

¹⁸ For these thematic elements see Thompson: *Motif-Index for Folk-Literature*, Vol. 4, p. 134: J1661.3 Deductions from observation; p. 23: J155.3 Wife as advisor and p. 71: J1111.11 Princess good at pleading.

¹⁹ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 4:133.

have had very little contact with his ruler in comparison.²⁰ However they are both stated to understand Lord Huan's appearance in terms of a simple three-fold formula:

I have heard that a gentleman has three expressions. Joy and happiness: a bells and drums expression; sorrow and stillness: a melancholy expression; excited and agitated: an air of arms and armour.²¹

This formula appears in a more or less elaborate form in all versions except in the *Lishi Chunqiu*, probably due to the fact that this text included both versions of this tale, the one with Dongguo Ya and that with Lady Ji of Wei.²² The authors were perhaps attempting to reduce the similarities which would otherwise seem to indicate that the two versions represent the bifurcation of one story.

In the case of Dongguo Ya, the discovery that he has mooted the plot about the capital city results in Guan Zhong describing him as a sage. By discovering their plans, in spite of the efforts made to keep them secret, he becomes a source of great admiration.²³ Dongguo Ya, however, appears as a fully-fledged character only in this one story,²⁴ and

²⁰ "Now I saw you raising your footsteps high, your expression was severe, and your voice raised, so your intentions were to attack Wei. This is the reason that I asked pardon [on their behalf]." Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 24 [*Xianming Zhuan*].

²¹ Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 1522 [*Zhi Shi*].

²² See Xu Weiyu: *Lishi Chunqiu Jishi*, 18:7a-7b [*Zhong Yan*], 18:11a-11b [*Qing Yu*].

²³ This story can be seen as an example of the traditional genre, whereby a man of talent is recruited for office by means of a riddle. The twist in the tale of Dongguo Ya is that Lord Huan was not intending to set a riddle. See Mark: "Orthography Riddles, Divination and Word Magic," p. 44. The other use of the riddle in traditional Chinese culture was to rebuke a superior, an example of which will be seen in the career of King Zhuang of Chu.

²⁴ The only other mention of this character, whose name in this instance was always given as Dongguo Ya, comes in reference to Lord Huan of Qi's government appointments. Lord Huan is described as having appointed Dongguo Ya to the post of official remonstrator on the advice of Guan Zhong. This snippet of information is given in the Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 452-453 [*Huan Gong Wen*], a chapter dated to

does not appear again in any of the historical texts. There is also no mention of either Ju or Wei failing to attend a covenant, or of an abortive attack on them for this reason, although according to the *Chunqiu* the Marquis of Qi (Lord Huan) did attack and defeat Wei in 666 BC.²⁵ In the *Shi Ji*, an intervention by Qi in the affairs of Wei in 658 BC is mentioned as well, although this was said to have been made to preserve Wei from attacks by the Di people.²⁶ When the story is told of Lady Ji of Wei, she is not credited with the possession of sagely abilities (although in effect she has done the same thing as Dongguo Ya), and her talent for divining her husband's intentions was matched by Guan Zhong, who was able to tell that Lord Huan had given up his plans after her intercession without a word being said.²⁷ The character of Lady Ji of Wei could be compared to that which was common in European medieval literature: a loyal wife who intercedes successfully with her husband on merciful grounds. In such tales the role of the wife (usually noble or royal) was petitionary, seeking redress rather than granting it, and intercessory, attempting to modify a man's resolve rather than overturning it.²⁸ This characterisation of women allowed important men to change their minds without appearing weak. Lady Ji, acting in a feminine fashion by studying her husband's demeanour for signs of his mood, made it clear that she was not usually consulted about his policies. It was also implicit that she would not under normal circumstances involve

the late Warring States period by Luo Genze: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 74. In all other instances, the information was given within the format of a formulaic expression of his qualifications for office, which was repeated with virtually no changes in Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, p. 183, Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 17:18a [*Wu Gong*], Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 698 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Xia*], and Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 15 [*Jun Dao*].

²⁵ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 238 [Zhuang 28].

²⁶ See *Shi Ji*, 32:1488.

²⁷ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 18:11b [*Qing Yu*].

²⁸ See Strohm: *Hochon's Arrow*, p. 95. Women of noble and royal families were encouraged to seek emotional satisfaction in imitating such tales of female supplicants; see Leyser: *Medieval Women*, p. 84.

herself in Lord Huan's political judgements.²⁹ By doing so on this one occasion, her intercession could be perceived to have had the weight of the outsider's opinion.

The character of Lady Ji of Wei was possibly based on a genuine historical figure, since Lord Huan had two favourites who bore the name Lady Ji of Wei, one senior and one junior. However, although the *Lienü Zhuan* (Tales of Illustrious Women) records that Lady Ji was made Lord Huan's principal wife for her virtuous conduct on this occasion,³⁰ it is not recorded in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which states that Lord Huan had only three principal wives during his lifetime, Lady Ji of Wang (that is of the Zhou Royal House), Lady Xu of Ying and Lady Ji of Cai.³¹ The senior Lady Ji of Wei appeared in the *Zuo Zhuan* to have played an important part in the transition of power on the death of Lord Huan, a story which will be discussed later.

The significance of the change of sex of one of the characters is not clear,³² however since the story is substantially the same regardless of the sex of the relevant protagonist, it clearly did not stretch the credulity of the audience for the same series of events to apply to a wife or a menial. The version involving Lady Ji of Wei should be considered the more developed, as a major shift in implied meaning within the thematic level has occurred, although the formulae were largely unaltered. In the versions involving a servant, the attack on Ju was called off because the plan was no longer secret, and thus not effective. In the more politically sophisticated versions, involving Lady Ji of Wei, the plan was called off because of Lord Huan's magnanimity, in forgiving the state after his wife has interceded on their behalf. The version involving Lady Ji of Wei was part of a tradition of tales about the loyal wives of feudal lords

²⁹ See Leyser: *Medieval Women*, p. 85.

³⁰ See Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 24 [*Xianming Zhuan*].

³¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 373 [Xi 17].

³² The most important example of such a change of sex in Chinese culture is the Buddhist deity Guanyin, and it has been suggested that in that case, the change was to fill a perceived lack of female involvement in officially sanctioned religion. See Palmer, Ramsey and Kwok: *Kuan Yin*, p. 20.

remonstrating with their husbands for the good of the state which is found in ancient Chinese literature, another popular example being Lady Ji of Fan, the wife of King Zhuang of Chu, shaming her husband's Prime Minister, Yu Qiuzi,³³ into stepping down in favour of Sunshu Ao.³⁴ The interrelationship of the various versions can be seen in Diagram 2:1.

The interest in this tale of Lord Huan of Qi and Guan Zhong's bellicose plottings lies in the changes that took place at the level of the theme, for the formulae remained largely unaltered. In the next story to be considered, a tale in which Lord Huan of Qi saw an apparition, the importance lies in the fact that two stories seem to have been amalgamated into one, in such a way as to produce a seamless narrative. This tale, which is one of the most important stories involving a hegemon, in terms of the development of fictional genres in China, revolved around the events of Lord Huan of Qi's invasion of the Rong lands to the north, in the twenty-third year of his reign.³⁵ A cluster of tales about these events have survived, mostly in texts dated to the late Warring States or Han dynasty, but the most interesting involved the strange events that overtook Lord Huan of Qi, Guan Zhong and a number of followers in the vicinity of Guzhu (the furthest north Lord Huan ventured on this campaign).³⁶ This story can be shown to have been

³³ This character, the self-important and ineffectual prime minister in power before Sunshu Ao, was known by a number of different names. In addition to this one, he was also known simply as Prime Minister Shen, as Shen Yinjing, Shen Yinwu and Shen Yinzheng. For a discussion of the various names; see Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 345 [*Zhi Gong*].

³⁴ See Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 27 [*Xianming Zhuan*].

³⁵ See *Shi Ji* 32:1488. These events are mentioned only tangentially in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which records that in the winter of 664 BC, and spring of 663 BC, Huan of Qi attacked the Rong, and some of the captives were presented to the Duke of Lu, in contravention of correct ritual practice. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 246-247 [Zhuang 30], p. 249 [Zhuang 31].

³⁶ Guzhu, in present day Hebei province, was in Lord Huan of Qi's day an independent state. The philosopher Mozi was said to have been descended from the ruling family of Guzhu, who were displaced during this campaign. See Jiang Boqian: *Zhuzi Tongkao*, p. 192.

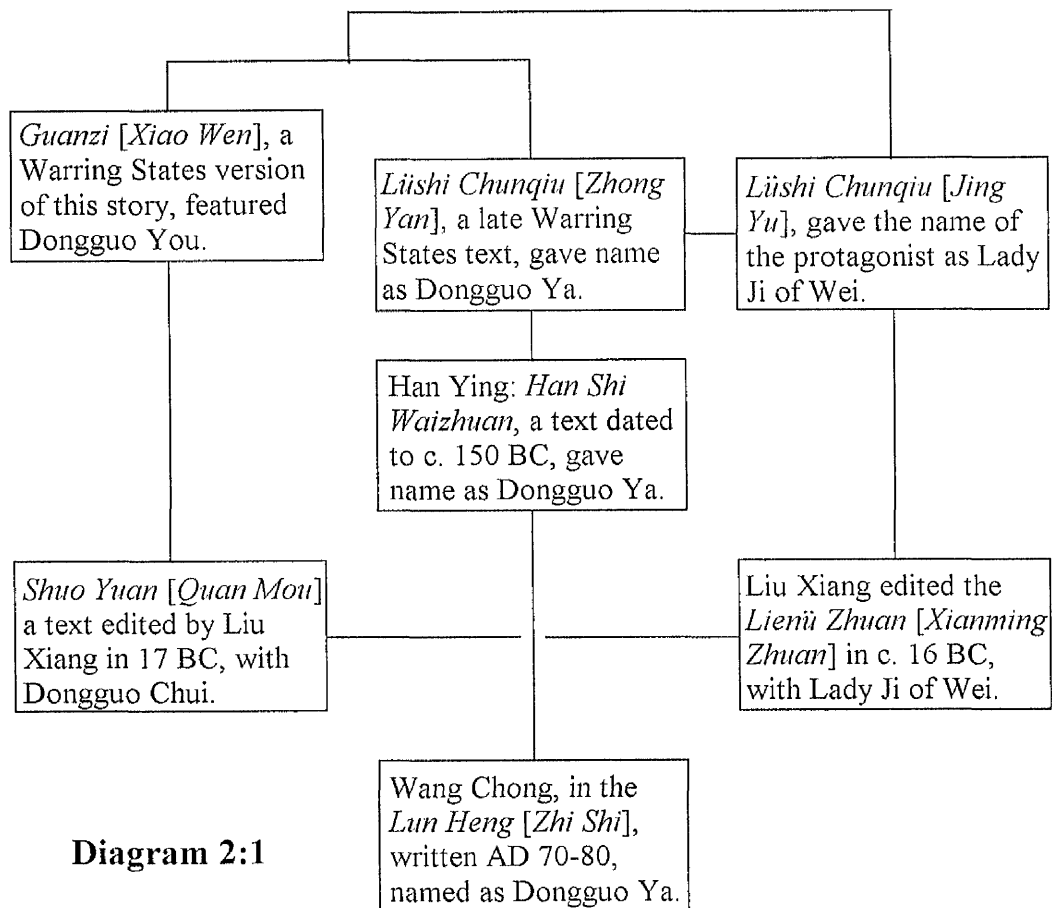


Diagram 2:1

created from two different strands, which seem to have been amalgamated at the very end of the Warring States period, or the beginning of the Han dynasty. Since the amalgamation takes place within the time-scale under consideration, it is possible to trace how the two stories were dovetailed into one.

The earliest version of one half of this story, which is found in the *Zhuangzi*,³⁷ does not place the events described in a specific geographical location; instead it stated that Lord Huan of Qi had gone out hunting in a marsh (from internal evidence it would seem that this marsh was sited within the borders of Qi) with Guan Zhong as his charioteer. This version also lacked any association with a specific date. While hunting in the marsh, Lord Huan saw an apparition that was not visible to his companion, and frightened by this, Lord Huan returned to his capital, only to fall ill and be unable to undertake his duties for some days.³⁸ His recovery was only accomplished when a knight from Qi, Huangzi Gaoao, identified the apparition which was “as wide as the chariot-wheel, as high as the chariot-shafts, wearing a purple gown and a red hat,”³⁹ as the Weiyi, which was only visible to those who would be capable of attaining the title of hegemon.⁴⁰ The apparition which could only be seen by one member of a party is a common theme of oral literature,⁴¹ and a device that would prove important for the development of this tale.

³⁷ See Roth: “Chuang tzu,” p. 57, who dated this part of the *Zhuangzi* to the Warring States, and ascribed its composition to the later followers of Zhuang Zhou.

³⁸ In ancient China, wild and untamed landscapes were seen as dangerous places, where one might encounter malevolent spirits or goblins. For a discussion of this theme from the Shang to the Zhou dynasty; see Keightley: *The Ancestral Landscape*, p. 118.

³⁹ Wang Shumin: *Zhuangzi Jiaozhu*, p. 694 [*Da Sheng*].

⁴⁰ See Wang Shumin: *Zhuangzi Jiaozhu*, pp. 693-694 [*Da Sheng*].

⁴¹ For the appearance of this motif in the folktales of other cultures; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 3, pp. 43, F235.3. Fairies visible to one person alone, p. 87, F412.1.1. Spirits visible to only one person.

According to the *Han Feizi*,⁴² which appears to be the earliest version of the other half of this story (together with the *Zhuangzi* tale), on returning home from the attack on Guzhu, Lord Huan and his followers became lost, and the sagely Guan Zhong turned loose an old horse which promptly found the way,⁴³ and another of their companions found water, by observing the behaviour of ants.⁴⁴ In this way the topography of the area was clarified by indirect means. The moral of this story, that the wise men of old could learn even from the meanest creature, extended the important theme of ‘recognition.’⁴⁵

The next surviving version, which combines the two previously disparate halves of the tales found in the *Zhuangzi* and *Han Feizi*, was probably that found in the *Guanzi*, in a chapter dated variously to the Warring States period, or the end of the Western Han.⁴⁶ This version described how Lord Huan of Qi, going north on the way to attack Guzhu, came across an apparition visible only to himself, when he was within ten *li* of the valley of Mount Bi’er. Thus this version represents a fusion of the two previous stories. This geographical location for the events has caused a great deal of trouble, for it is impossible to conceive of any reason why Lord Huan of Qi would have travelled to Guzhu via Mount Bi’er, given that the former is sited near the sea in Hebei province, and Mount Bi’er is in present day Shanxi province.⁴⁷ Given this irreconcilable geographical

⁴² The *Han Feizi* was a work dated to the very end of the Warring States period, associated with the state of Qin; see Levi: “Han Fei tzu,” p. 115.

⁴³ This story would seem to be related to the motif of the skillful companion; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 3, p. 175, F601.0.1.

⁴⁴ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 431 [*Shuolin Shang*].

⁴⁵ See Henry: “The Motif of Recognition in Early China,” p. 14.

⁴⁶ For the dating of the chapter as a whole to the Warring States period; see Luo Genze: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 108. Rickett: *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, p. 186, dates this particular story to the Han dynasty, on the basis of the anachronistic details. Both however consider this chapter to have been compiled from self-contained stories, and so precise dating would always be problematical.

⁴⁷ See Tan Qixiang: *Zhongguo Lishi Ditu Ji*, Vol. 1, Maps 28, 22-23 respectively.

information, it has been generally accepted that the error derives from mistakes made in later texts about obsolete Spring and Autumn period place-names, many centuries after they had fallen into disuse.⁴⁸ In another chapter of the *Guanzi*, the extent of Lord Huan's travels was given, which would seem to make it clear that while he did go to both places, it was not on the same occasion and stories associated with the two events have been conflated:

Lord Huan said: "To the north I have attacked the Shan Rong, and passed beyond Guzhu; to the west I have attacked Daxia and traversed Liusha, I have reined in my horse and chariot to ascend Mount Bi'er; I have attacked southwards as far as Shaoling, and climbed Mount Xionger to gaze at the Yangtze and Han rivers."⁴⁹

Lord Huan, seeing an apparition that none of his companions could see, was questioned by Guan Zhong on its appearance. He identified the little spirit, only a foot high, but in the form of a man, that ran in front of Lord Huan's chariot as the Yuer, a presage of the hegemony. The details of the Yuer's dress, wearing a ceremonial hat and holding his robe up with the right hand, were also interpreted by Guan Zhong as indicating a river nearby that they would safely be able to ford on the right hand side. When it was tried, those who forded it on the left found the water reached as high as their necks, those who forded on the right found it only reached as far as their knees.⁵⁰

In the next surviving version of this story, in the *Shuo Yuan* edited by Liu Xiang (79-8 BC),⁵¹ the story is again clearly sited in the valley of Mt. Bi'er on the way to Guzhu. Some developments have however been made to the appearance of the spirit,

⁴⁸ See Rickett: *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, p. 186.

⁴⁹ Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 409 [*Feng Shan*]. For the dating of this section; see Luo Genze: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 108, who ascribed this chapter of the *Guanzi* to Sima Qian; for a virtually identically worded passage; see *Shi Ji* 28:1361.

⁵⁰ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, pp. 419-420 [*Xiao Wen*]. This little spirit is discussed in Kleeman: "Mountain Deities in China," p. 231.

⁵¹ The *Shuo Yuan* was presented to the throne in 17 BC; see Knechtges: "Shuo yüan," p. 444.

and this time Lord Huan saw an apparition of a tall man wearing a ceremonial hat, holding up his dress with his left hand, running in front of the horses. On informing Guan Zhong of the details of the appearance of this apparition, he not only prophesied Lord Huan's later success as hegemon, but was also able to identify the appearance of the sleeve as indicating a safe fording-place on the river to the left, as indeed proved to be the case.⁵² Here it was said that the water on the left would reach up to their ankles; the water on the right would reach up to their knees. This version therefore reverses the location of the safe fording-place, from that given in the *Guanzi*.⁵³

The *Shuo Yuan* also contained another story about this campaign to the north against the Rong, which focussed on the division of the spoils. Concerned to conciliate the feudal lords, Lord Huan of Qi was persuaded by Guan Zhong to present the spoils from the Shan Rong to the temple of the Duke of Zhou at Lu.⁵⁴ This was in spite of the Duke of Lu's pusillanimous attitude when asked to provide help for the campaign. A number of other Han dynasty texts made passing reference to the campaign against the Shan Rong that reached as far as Guzhu, such as the *Xin Shu* (New Book),⁵⁵ and the *Yantie Lun* (Discourse on Salt and Iron).⁵⁶ This campaign, judging by the number of references to it, was an important display of the might of the Zhou states in battle against their enemies.

⁵² See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 460 [*Bian Wu*].

⁵³ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 420 [*Xiao Wen*], who in his commentary on this passage, suggests that the reversing of the direction of the safe fording-place was probably due to a misreading of the character *guan* 冠 (hat) for *huai* 踝 (ankle). This point was also discussed in Guo Moruo, Wen Yiduo, Xu Weiyu: *Guanzi Jijiao*, p. 815. The *Guanzi* is therefore wrong; the safe fording-place was on the left and was given correctly in the *Shuo Yuan*.

⁵⁴ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 324-325 [*Quan Mou*].

⁵⁵ See Jia Yi: *Jiazi Xin Shu*, p. 69 [*Chunqiu*].

⁵⁶ See Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 494 [*Fa Gong*].

The story of the campaign to Guzhu undertaken by Lord Huan, firmly associated with the seeing of an apparition, became one of the most popular tales of his reign. This popularity lasted beyond the end of the Han dynasty, when new figures had become prominent, and most of the stories of the lives of the hegemon had faded into obscurity.⁵⁷ The version given by Ren Fang (AD 460-508) in the *Shu Yi Ji* (Record of Marvels) simplified the story further, and as in the *Guanzi*, the apparition was identified as the mountain spirit, Yuer.⁵⁸ In the *Jinlouzi*, a text composed by Liang Yuandi (AD 508-554) again a tiny spirit appeared running in front of Lord Huan's horses, which none of his companions could see. Its very presence was said by Guan Zhong to presage Lord Huan's appointment as hegemon, and as in the versions of this story found in the *Guanzi* and the *Shuo Yuan*, the details of its dress were discovered to be descriptive of the topography of the area near Bier in which they found themselves.⁵⁹ This version, though the little spirit was not named, was closest to that given in the *Guanzi*, the safe fording-place indicated by the little apparition's clothing being found on the right, and so on. The interrelationships of the various versions can be seen in Diagram 2.2.

The fusion of the two tales found in the *Han Feizi* and the *Zhuangzi* resulted in practically the only supernatural tale involving a hegemon. Many Spring and Autumn period rulers and dignitaries, including hegemon, had prophetic dreams,⁶⁰ however otherwise the only supernatural tale involving one of the hegemon was that in which Lord Wen of Jin went out hunting and one of his scouts reported a giant serpent

⁵⁷ See Liu Yeqiu: *Lidai Biji Gaishu*, p. 11.

⁵⁸ See the Liang dynasty collection of stories by Ren Fang: *Shu Yi Ji*, p. 126 [Yuer].

⁵⁹ See Xu Deping: *Jinlouzi Jiaozhu*, p. 224 [Zhi Gui].

⁶⁰ Thus, prior to the battle of Chengpu, Lord Wen of Jin dreamt that he was locked in combat with the King of Chu, a dream that was favourably interpreted by Jiu Fan; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 459 [Xi 28]. For a discussion of this kind of prophetic dream; see Chao Fulin: "Chunqiu Shiqi de Guishen Guannian ji qi Shehui Yingxiang," pp. 33-34.

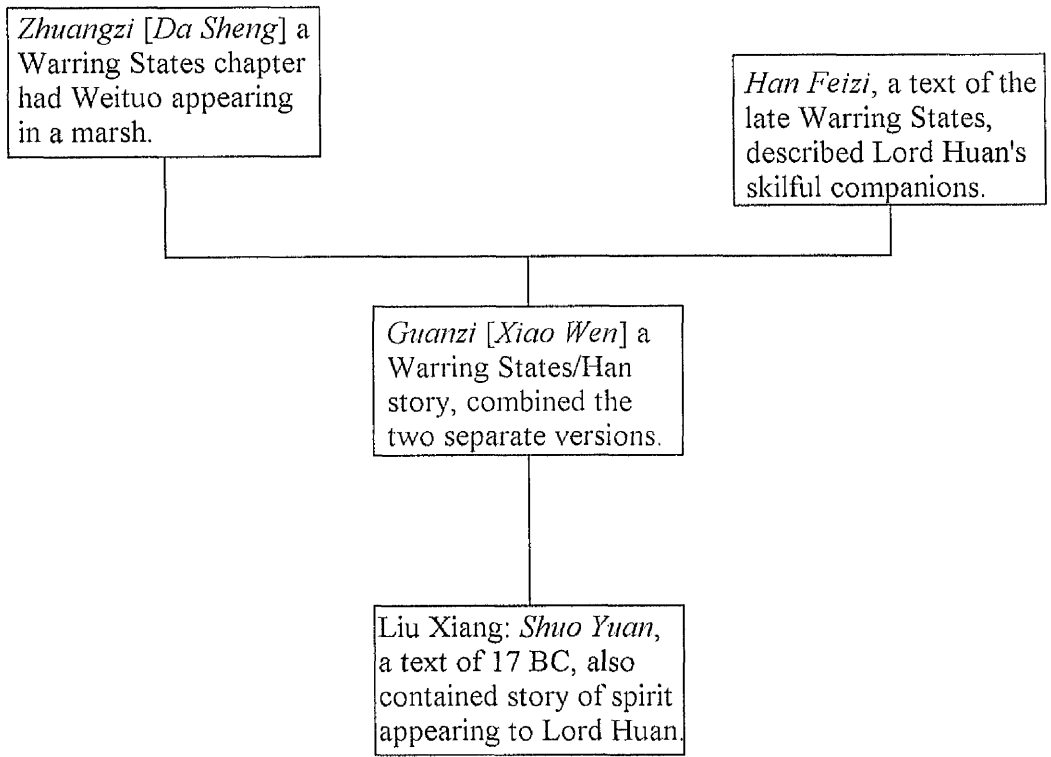


Diagram 2:2

blocking the way, and in this instance he did not actually see the apparition himself.⁶¹ This serves to make these tales about Lord Huan a striking departure from the normally highly rational stories involving these historical figures. These supernatural tales are of particular interest as they prefigure the development of the *zhi guai* (accounts of strange events) genre into the major fictional literary form of the post-Han period.⁶² Such stories served to keep the images of these important historical figures in the popular consciousness, although the tales in which they appeared had been adapted to suit new tastes.

Later on a number of stories involving supernatural events and apparitions, set in the Spring and Autumn period, were to become popular, and some of them pertain to events in the lives of the hegemon. However, the hegemon was usually only tangentially involved, providing a background of power and luxury (and possessing the advantage that the audience for these stories might be supposed to have heard of them). Thus the protagonist was not ever a hegemon, but usually one of their female relations.

In stories dated to the very end of the Han dynasty and into the Age of Disunion (AD 221-581) tales sprang up in which a number of the female relatives of hegemon were said to have been overtaken by very strange fates. In one tale, one of Lord Mu of Qin's daughters, Nongyu, summoned a hen-phoenix by playing her flute, as she performed with her music master (who simultaneously summoned a cock-phoenix).⁶³

⁶¹ There is only one version of this story in which Lord Wen was said to have actually seen the serpent personally; see Wang Liqi: *Feng Su Tong Yi Jiaozhu*, p. 421 [*Guaishen*]. This text dates from the end of the Han dynasty, being the work of Ying Shao (c. 140- before 204); see Nylan: "Feng su t'ung i," p. 105.

⁶² See Li Jianguo: "Lun Handai Zhiguai Xiaoshuo," p. 53.

⁶³ The earliest version of this story comes from the Han dynasty; see Liu Xiang: *Liexian Zhuan*, pp. 29-30 [*Xiao Shi*]. This genuine Han dynasty text was attributed to Liu Xiang in antiquity, but the attribution has been disputed; see Nienhauser: *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 566. Later versions dated to the Jin dynasty made very minor changes to the details of the story; see for example Huang Fu: *Diwang Shiji*, p. 38. It was however so popular that it figured in a number of collections of stories, for example the same story is given with identical wording in Zhang Bangji: *Shier Xiaominglu Shiji*, p. 4. For a discussion of this story;

These birds then gambolled around while the pair played music. The pair then flew off in the wake of the birds.⁶⁴ However, it was King Helü of Wu's female descendants who were to have the most bizarre fates. King Helü is known to have had at least two sons: his Heir Apparent Zhonglei died while his father was still on the throne, as a result of which his younger son, Fucha, succeeded him as king.⁶⁵ None of his daughters were referred to in historical texts such as the *Zuo Zhuan* or the *Shi Ji*, but in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*,⁶⁶ it was said that King Helü had a daughter who committed suicide (feeling herself to have been shamed by her father) and was buried outside the West gate to the capital. As part of the funeral obsequies, the king ordered that cranes should dance in the market square. Ten thousand people turned out to watch the cranes dance, and follow in the procession that they led to the tomb. When they arrived at the grave, all the persons in the procession were entombed with the dead girl, to accompany her in death.⁶⁷ The dancing of the cranes leading to the depopulation of the Wu capital was referred to in a number of other texts.⁶⁸

King Helü's granddaughter, whose name was variously given as Yu or Ziyu, was not allowed by her father, King Fucha, to marry the man that she loved. After her

see Van Gulik: *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, p. 110, and Sterckx: "Transforming the Beasts," p. 24.

⁶⁴ The gazette for Fengxian county, which included the site of the former Qin capital of Yong, recorded that the Fengnü Tai (Phoenix Girl Pavilion) supposedly built by Lord Mu of Qin for his daughter, later became a temple where sacrifices were made to her. Zhou Fangjiong: *Zhongxiu Fengxiang Fu Zhi*, p. 45.

⁶⁵ See Liang Yusheng: *Shi Ji Zhiyi*, p. 1200.

⁶⁶ This text, a romanticized chronicle of the enmities between Wu and Yue, has been dated to the end of the Han dynasty, and is ascribed to Zhao Ye of the late Eastern Han, who was said to have come from the area of Kuaiji. See Lagerwey: "Wu Yüeh ch'ün ch'iu," p. 474.

⁶⁷ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 53 [Helü Nei Zhuan].

⁶⁸ This story was referred to in passing in the *Yue Jue Shu*; see Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 11 [*Ji Wu Di*], and in the *Wen Xuan*; see Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, p. 250 [Bao Mingyuan: *Wu He Fu*]. For a discussion of this story, see Knechtges: *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 3, p. 80.

prompt demise, her ghost was able to conduct a long and complicated relationship with her living lover, giving him presents and so forth, while also appearing to, and upbraiding her father for his unfeeling behaviour.⁶⁹ The use of the female figures related to the hegemony in the supernatural tales of the end of the Han dynasty onwards is inexplicable, except that being less well recorded in the historical records, and less hemmed in by factual information, their lives were more easily fictionalized. It should also not be ignored that the stories of Lord Mu of Qin's daughter and King Helü of Wu's granddaughter contain sexualized elements,⁷⁰ where they were seen in a relationship with an 'ordinary' man, not a royal or noble husband. Although these stories were thus demonstrably fundamentally fictional, they would presumably have touched some chord with their intended audience.

In the tale of Lord Huan of Qi's travels to Guzhu, the themes and formulae from two separate stories were woven together to form a coherent narrative. The story of Lord Huan of Qi's death, however, shows change exclusively at the formulaic level, though the variants are so extreme that this is apparent only after close reading. While the story of Dongguo Ya or Lady Ji of Wei fitted in with the traditional tenor of stories about the feudal lords, in particular the idea that feudal lords should take good advice wherever they found it, regardless of social status, the different versions of the story of Lord Huan's death convey a host of messages, the most important being that of the theme, which illustrates the necessity of good advisors. The story of Lord Huan's death was fictional, and it was intended as a dire warning.

This tale usually consisted of two parts. In the first, Lord Huan visited the elderly, dying Guan Zhong for advice about whom to appoint as the next Prime Minister. The historical texts suggest that Guan Zhong did indeed die some time before Lord

⁶⁹ The earliest known version of this story dates from the end of the Han dynasty; see Zhao Ye: *Wunü Ciyu Zhuan*, p. 39. See also Gan Bao: *Sou Shen Ji*, pp. 38-39 [Ziyu, Han Zhong]. Gan Bao (fl. 317 BC) was himself to appear in a supernatural story by Tao Qian, see Guo Zhenyi: *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shi*, p. 97.

⁷⁰ For a consideration of this point with reference to the latter story; see Kao: "Aspects of Derivation in Chinese Narrative," p. 22.

Huan.⁷¹ In some version of this tale, the ministers under consideration were Baoshu Ya and others, where this story seems to have been confused with tales about the earlier stages of Lord Huan's career.⁷² There are stories of Lord Huan having sought advice on appointments in the administration of Qi from Guan Zhong before. Guan Zhong dismissed Lord Huan's suggestions for replacements, (in later versions standardized at three) with the direst warnings, in a formulaic repetition which appears virtually unchanged in all versions of this story:

It is only a natural feeling for everyone to love their own body; your lordship is of a jealous disposition and you love your harem, so Shu Diao castrated himself in order to be put in charge of the harem. If he does not love his own body, how can he love your lordship?... Qi and Wei are only ten days travel apart, yet since [the Honourable] Kaifeng has served your lordship, in order to ingratiate himself with you, he has not gone home to see his parents for fifteen years. This is contrary to human nature. If he does not love his parents, how can he love you?... Yi Ya is your lordship's head chef, and since you had never tasted human flesh, Yi Ya cooked his own son's head and offered it [to you], as you know. It is human nature for everyone loves their own children. Now if he cooked his son in order to make a tasty morsel for your lordship, he did not love his son, so how can he love you?⁷³

Comparison of this example of the formula with that which appears in the *Shi Ji*, shows a classic example of Gould's law,⁷⁴ which states that over time the formulae used in oral literature will be simplified and tightened:

⁷¹ In the *Zuo Zhuan*, the death of Guan Zhong is mentioned at the same time as that of Lord Huan, but with the suggestion that it occurred some time earlier; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 375 [Xi 17]. The *Shi Ji*, 32:1493, states that both Guan Zhong and Bao Shuya died the same year, Xi 15 (645 BC), and that agrees with the *Guo Yu*.

⁷² See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 1:16b-17a [*Gui Gong*]. Here Lord Huan considers two candidates for the office of chief minister, Bao Shuya and Xi Peng. Both are dismissed by Guan Zhong as having inappropriate characters for the task.

⁷³ Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, pp. 194-195 [*Shi Guo*]. There is a variant which appears in the *Shuo Yuan* where only Shu Diao and Yi Ya are warned against, but given that it has virtually identical wording to the standard accounts, this would seem to be an insignificant difference; see Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 183 [*Zun Gui*].

⁷⁴ See Love: *Sāmoan Variations*, p. 274.

The lord said, "Can Yi Ya do it [ie. assume Guan Zhong's role as chief minister]?" [Guan Zhong] replied, "He killed his son in order to be close to your lordship, this is not in normal human nature, so he cannot do it." The lord said, "What about Kaifeng?" He replied, "He has turned his back on his relatives in order to please your lordship, that is not in human nature, it would be wrong to keep him close." The lord said, "What about Shu Diao?" He replied, "He castrated himself in order to be close to your lordship, that is not in human nature, so it would be wrong to keep him on terms of intimacy."⁷⁵

The widespread diffusion and great stability of this triple formula suggest that it was probably developed in a long-standing oral tradition, before being written down. There was one major variant on this formula which appears in its fullest expression in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, with the introduction of the character of a shaman, Chang Zhi Wu.⁷⁶ The appearance of this extra character disrupts the smooth pattern of the formula, and it is not clear why he was introduced, unless the author felt some particular prejudice against the shamanic aspects of the state rituals of the Zhou.⁷⁷ The professions and backgrounds of the persons attacked in this part of the story suggest a strong puritanical streak, with excessive indulgence in food and sex being censured, as well as fancy religions, and in the case of the Honourable Kaifang of Wei, xenophobia is presumably at work, disguised as horror at his unfilial behaviour. Chang Zhi Wu was frequently identified as the same person as Yong Wu,⁷⁸ who appears in the *Shi Ji* as the favourite of the senior Lady Ji of

⁷⁵ *Shi Ji*, 32:1492

⁷⁶ This individual was also known as Tang Wu, and Yong Wu; see Yang Bojun's commentary to the relevant passage in *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 374 [Xi 17]. His earliest surviving appearance, under the name Tang Wu, would seem to be the *Guanzi* [*Xiao Cheng*]. For the dating of this chapter to the Warring States; see Luo Genze: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 84.

⁷⁷ The *Lüshi Chunqiu* was commissioned by Lü Buwei (d. 235 BC), sometime Prime Minister of Qin, and completed in c. 239 BC, and this preoccupation in the text may reflect a personal prejudice. See Carson/Loewe: "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," p. 324. The circumstances in which the *Xiao Cheng* chapter of the *Guanzi* was composed are too obscure for speculations as to why a the character of a shaman was introduced. It is worth noting that the *Han Feizi*, a text whose date of composition and place of origin was virtually identical to that of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*; see Levi, "Han Fei tzu," pp. 115, 117, does not include the character of a shaman, but instead Baoshu Ya is mentioned as a person unsuitable to hold great power.

⁷⁸ See Shen Qinhan: *Chunqiu Zuoshi Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 41.

Wei, and who had the small but not insignificant task of introducing Shu Diao to her.⁷⁹ Shu Diao is portrayed as a key protagonist in the subsequent political machinations. Han dynasty commentators, who seem to have shared an anti-shamanic bias with the authors of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*,⁸⁰ identified Yi Ya (who appears in the *Zuo Zhuan*) as the shaman.⁸¹ As a group, these four men should perhaps be seen as the personification of the dangerous things that the prudent ruler should avoid: that is overindulgence in food, sex, fancy religions, and foreign ways. This part of the story of Lord Huan's demise seems to have been responsible for the later perception, given expression particularly in the *Yanzi Chunqiu* (The Springs and Autumns of Master Yan), that he was overindulgent in wine, women and song, and that this sullied his fine achievements.⁸²

In the second part of this tale, once Guan Zhong had given his advice, Lord Huan ignored it, and that directly led to his death. In some versions he takes Guan Zhong's advice only to find himself so unhappy and uncomfortable that he recalls the people concerned.⁸³ They then engineer his death. In the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the prime mover is given as the shaman, Chang Zhi Wu; in all other versions, the responsibility is shared equally. Some stories enhance the pathos of Lord Huan's death by introducing the figure of an anonymous and presumably menial woman, who braves the solitary confinement in

⁷⁹ The name is glossed as being pronounced Diao, whether the character is 刁 or 刁. See Wang Shumin: *Shi Ji Jiaozheng*, p. 1313. For a discussion of the different versions of this name; see Wang Xianshen: *Han Feizi Jijie*, 1:28 [*Er Bing*].

⁸⁰ References to shamanism in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* are consistently pejorative. See for example Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu*, 3:9a [*Jin Shu*], 5:8b [*Chi Yue*].

⁸¹ See Du Yu: *Chunqiu Jing Zhuan Jijie*, 6:3a. Yi Ya was otherwise always identified as a cook, and later on was to have a famous cookery book named after him, the *Yi Ya Yiyi*.

⁸² See Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, p. 245. This book concerns a later ruler of Qi, Lord Jing (r. 581-554 BC), and thus possibly reflects a local tradition.

⁸³ See for example Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 275 [*Xiao Cheng*]. See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 195 [*Shi Guo*], which mentioned that Guan Zhong advised Lord Huan to employ Xi Peng, which he ignored.

which Lord Huan is being starved to death, to tell him who is to blame.⁸⁴ Lord Huan's powerlessness is highlighted by the fact that he has to beg her for food and water. When he dies, his body is left unburied, and in the end, when totally maggot-ridden, he is finally laid to rest. Some versions include the detail that his body was carried out of the room in which he died for burial on the leaf of a door.⁸⁵ The general horror expressed at the manner of Lord Huan's death suggest that to a contemporary Chinese audience, the idea (espoused in many countries, including some in Europe)⁸⁶ that a corpse should be reduced to bone before burial was immensely shocking. Thus the warning about the dangers of not listening to good advice could not be starker. It should however be noted that by changing the story in this way, a smooth transition of power on the death of an old ruler to his son and heir was altered to fulfill the requirement for a hero of a mysterious death. The interrelationship of the various versions of the story of Lord Huan's death can be seen in Diagram 2:3.

The only story remotely comparable to that of the death of Lord Huan in accounts of the lives of the hegemon, is the account of the death of King Fucha of Wu, a man who ignored the advice of a wise old minister Wu Zixu, who had previously

⁸⁴ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 275 [*Xiao Cheng*], and Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 16:11b [*Zhi Jie*]. This passage is possibly related to the motif described in Stith Thompson, of a king being unwilling to listen to the problems one of his subjects brings to his attention because he is too busy at his royal duties. His petitioner tells him in that case that he should cease to be a king, with an implicit threat. See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 4, p. 100, J1284.2 Cease to be a king.

⁸⁵ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 275 [*Xiao Cheng*]. The significance of this incident is unclear. Some commentators, such as Sun Xingyan, on the basis of the passage describing this incident in Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 16:11b [*Zhi Jie*], have argued that the character *zang* 葬 (to bury) should be understood as a mistake for *gai* 蓋 (to cover). The efficacy of hiding a body under a door seems questionable, particularly as every account of Lord Huan's strange death included the detail that "maggots came out of the door," before mentioning this concealment.

⁸⁶ In Spain, the Hapsburg kings were only buried after a sojourn in the *podridero*, a room in which their bodies were allowed to decompose fully. See Nada: *Carlos the Bewitched*, p. 181.

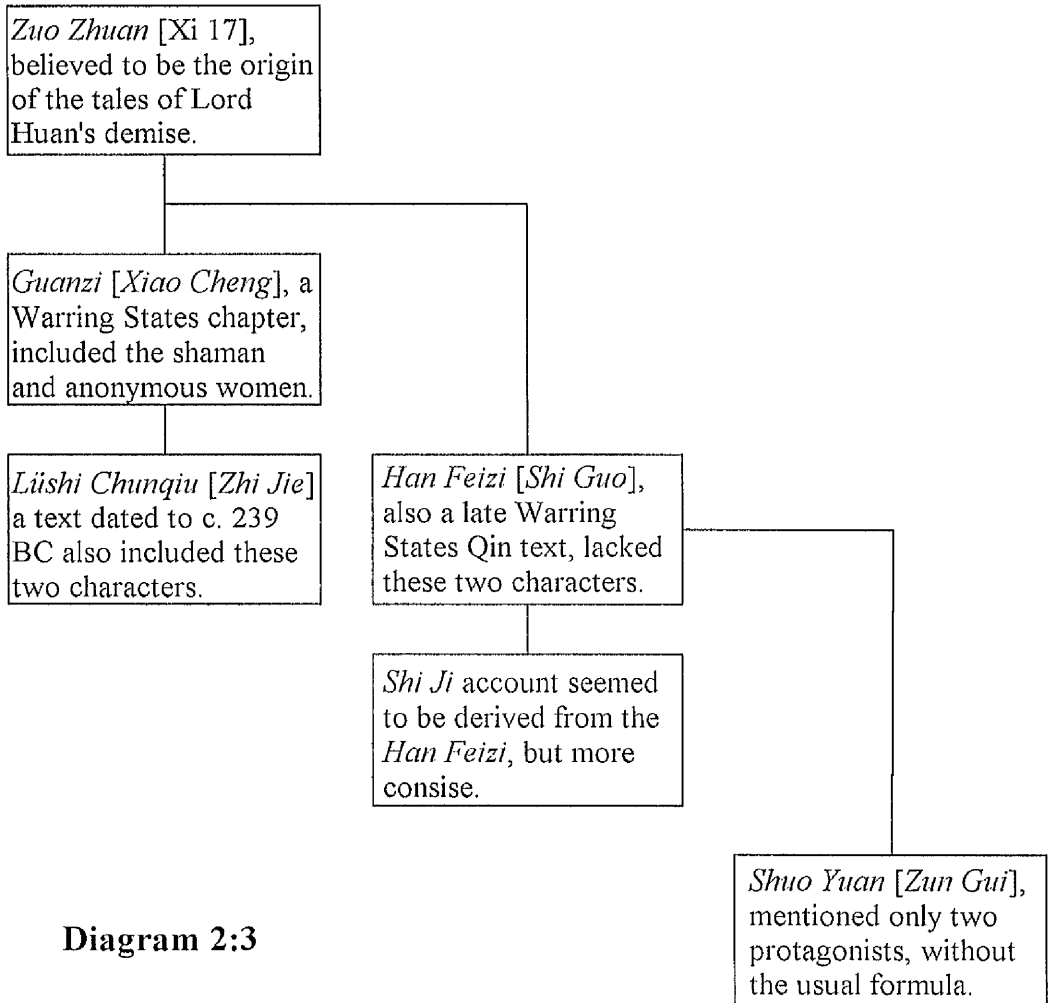


Diagram 2:3

served his father, King Helü of Wu.⁸⁷ When Wu Zixu remonstrated with his king about the foolishness of entering into friendly relations with the state of Yue, King Fucha was eventually goaded into killing him.⁸⁸ Defeated by King Goujian of Yue, King Fucha killed himself, uttering words of regret and shame that he had not followed Wu Zixu's advice.⁸⁹ In this story however, blame is diffused by the fact that King Fucha was advised to act in this way by his chief minister, Bo Xi, who had accepted heavy bribes from the state of Yue. None of the other hegemonies are subjected to such serious criticism as Lord Huan in the above story,⁹⁰ nor are any of the hegemonies portrayed as being quite so dependant on the advice and counsel of their ministers. As Lord Huan was both the first hegemon, who defined the role that others assumed later, and the most discussed, the impact of such stories on the esteem in which the hegemony was held should not be underestimated. The impact Lord Huan had on the contemporary political scene was perhaps diffused, even belittled, by the idea that he could have done nothing without the support of his ministers. However, although the accounts of Lord Huan's death seem to have aroused horror in ancient China, the importance for a hero of an unusual and mysterious death may also have been a factor. Although not usually stressed in writings on the subject, the manner of death and burial is important for an individual to be considered as a hero. Law-giving was a major part of the successful public life of a hero,

⁸⁷ The theme of failure to recognise a brilliant statesman leading to loss of national identity was one consistently developed in Warring States and Han texts. See Ye Daqing: *Kao Gu Zhi Yi*, 4:2a

⁸⁸ Wu Zixu's recklessness in criticising his ruler was often remarked on by later historians. See Yao Nai: *Xi Bao Han Quanji*, 1:3a.

⁸⁹ See *Shi Ji* 31:1475. In the *Zuo Zhuan*, King Fucha is said to have refused Yue's mercy on the grounds that having been used to ruling, he could not learn to serve. All accounts agree that he killed himself after Yue's victory. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1719 [Ai 22]. The version in the *Guo Yu* is the most harrowing: "If the dead have no awareness, then it is all over, but if they are conscious, how will I be able to face Yuan (Wu Zixu)?" Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 628 [*Wu Yu*]. Durrant: *The Cloudy Mirror*, p. 95, makes much of the seeing/blindness theme displayed in several stories about Fucha, but the same is true to a lesser extent of Lord Huan.

⁹⁰ In the *Yanzi Chunqiu*, Lord Huan of Qi's death is compared to that of the culture villains Jie and Zhou; see Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, 1:60.

and was necessarily followed by disgrace⁹¹ and death.⁹² By supplying these features, later versions of the tale of Lord Huan's death bring his story closer to the heroic myths of other nations.

Lord Wen of Jin

It was the practice of the rulers of Jin to send the sons of the ruling family into exile in order to reduce disputes between the contending heirs.⁹³ Before his succession the Honourable Chonger, later Lord Wen of Jin, and his brothers were initially sent to far-flung cities within the borders of Jin, and then forced beyond the borders. The stories relating to Lord Wen of Jin's time in exile are very numerous and detailed. Lord Wen, then the Honourable Chonger of Jin, left his state in 655 BC and undertook a tour of the Chinese world, spending in the first instance twelve years with his mother's people, the Di, presumably either within or near to the borders of Jin,⁹⁴ and then travelling to other

⁹¹ The only ancient text to incorporate this element into the life of Lord Huan of Qi was the *Guliang Zhuan*, which recounted how Guan Zhong had advised Lord Huan not to make a covenant with the state of Huang, on the grounds that Qi was too far away to protect it from the attacks of Chu. After Guan Zhong's death, Chu did destroy Huang, and Lord Huan was indeed unable to rescue it, which exposed him to the reproaches and recriminations of the nobility. See Zhong Wenzheng: *Chunqiu Guliang Jing Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 290 [Xi 12].

⁹² See points 14-18, Raglan: *The Hero*, p.175.

⁹³ This was a less brutal way of dealing with male heirs than that previously practised in Jin, where unnecessary men in the ruling family were killed. See Li Zongtong; "Fengjian de Jieti," p. 316. By removing males with a claim to the throne from the state (or capital) with the possible exception of the chosen heir, it was hoped to reduce the conflicts of a polygamous ruling class. For other examples of this practice; see Gluckman: *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*, p. 150. Some states that did not practice this form of fratricidal succession still were known to send males to live in other states, see for example Lord Huan of Qi's heir (later Lord Xiao), who went to live with Lord Xiang of Song, presumably to learn something of government in a setting where he would not form an opposition party; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 374 [Xi 17]. Lord Xiao was later established in his state by the forces of Song; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 378 [Xi 18]. Lord Wen of Jin and his successors were to adopt this practice; see Hong Anquan: *Chunqiu de Jinguo*, p. 76.

⁹⁴ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 405 [Xi 23].

states within and without the Zhou confederacy, before returning to Jin in 636 BC. Accounts of such a journey, far greater than any undertaken by any of the other hegemon, naturally resembled the travel tales of heroic myth,⁹⁵ with the setting out, breaking off ties with home; the period of initiation and adventure; finally the return and reintegration into the community.⁹⁶ Attempts to reconcile the varying accounts of this epic journey, as they appear in the *Zuo Zhuan* and the *Guo Yu*, have singularly failed to produce a convincing itinerary.⁹⁷ The importance of this story might lie in the relationship with heroic myth, or in the literary principle of the contrastive foil (*dui zhao*).⁹⁸ Lord Wen later attacked a number of feudal lords, events described in the historical records, and these attacks were explained as requiting previous injuries, which he received while in exile. The “injuries” sustained by Lord Wen of Jin were, in these tales, all repaid by humiliating defeats in battle, thus giving great importance to the second hegemon’s lively sense of honour, and perhaps throwing into relief the ignoble aims of others. It is striking that the less savoury aspects of Lord Wen’s career, such as his failed attempt to poison the lord of Wei, as described in the *Zuo Zhuan*,⁹⁹ appeared in none of the later compendia of historical tales.¹⁰⁰ It might have been considered to form a

⁹⁵ See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 5, p. 9, L111.1. Exile returns and succeeds. For a discussion of this theme in heroic legend; see Van Nortwick: *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled*, p. 28. He particularly notes the importance of the journey for legends of reluctant heroes, those who have to be encouraged or forced by others to act in a heroic fashion.

⁹⁶ See Harbsmeier: “On Travel Accounts and Cosmological Strategies: Some Models in Comparative Xenology,” p. 282. Interestingly, the journey undertaken by Lord Wen of Jin shows the same triangular vision of society discussed in this article, involving the Central States, the Di people and Chu (see p. 274). Maspero: *China in Antiquity*, p. 358, considered that accounts of the life of Wen of Jin derive from a historical romance.

⁹⁷ See Zhang Yiren: “Du *Shi Ji* Huizhu Kaozheng Jin Shijia Zhaji,” p. 15.

⁹⁸ See Li Changzhi: *Sima Qian zhi Renge yu Fengge*, p. 283. The translation “contrastive foil” comes from Allen: “An Introductory Study of Narrative in the *Shi Ji*,” p. 57. See also Hu Anguo: *Chunqiu Hushi Zhuan*, 13:1a

⁹⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 478 [Xi 30].

¹⁰⁰ See Dai Xi: *Chunqiu Jiangyi*, 2B:2b.

foil to the earlier events of his reign, and thus fulfil much of the same part that the account of the first hegemon's death played in the perception of his reign.

It happened that after his many trials and tribulations in exile, on the death of his brother Yiwu, Lord Hui of Jin in 637 BC,¹⁰¹ Lord Wen of Jin was installed in his state the following year by his brother-in-law, Lord Mu of Qin. The following story to be considered is that which described Lord Wen of Jin's disagreement with his maternal uncle at the Yellow River, as they were on the way back to Jin to allow him to take up his new life as ruler of the state of Jin. The earliest references to these events are found in the *Zuo Zhuan* and the *Guo Yu* respectively.¹⁰²

According to both the *Zuo Zhuan* and the *Guo Yu*, crossing the Yellow River on his way from Qin to Jin was an event of great importance to the future Lord Wen of Jin: having been so long in exile, and having by some accounts so strenuously resisted the opportunities to take up the reins of power in his state,¹⁰³ crossing the Yellow River represented a point of no return.¹⁰⁴ The success of his attempts to get the army and subinfeudated lords of Jin to accept his rule, prior to his entry into the capital, would be crucial for any attempt to gain control of the government of Jin, and it was this matter that engaged him in the days that immediately followed his crossing of the Yellow

¹⁰¹ For a discussion of the precise dating of Lord Hui of Jin's death, the accession of his son, Lord Huai, the usurpation by Lord Wen and the death of Lord Huai; see Wei Juxian: "Jin Hui Gong Zunian Kao," pp. 75-78.

¹⁰² For the dating of the relevant section of the *Guo Yu* to the period 384-336 BC; see Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, pp. 630-631.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of Chonger's prevarications before becoming Lord Wen of Jin; see Fei Monong: "Chunqiu Waijiao Rencai de Linxuan," p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ Crossing the Yellow River was also the first occasion that the future Lord Wen of Jin openly accepted his destiny; see Xu Zhigang: "Zhoudai de Li yu Zhou dai Guizu de Xingge," p. 17. Prior to that, belief in his future greatness had been marked only among his followers, wives, and chance-met acquaintances.

River.¹⁰⁵ Chonger also did not neglect the ritual side of the matter;¹⁰⁶ he was said to have held court at the temple of his grandfather, Lord Wu of Jin (r. 678-677 BC), at his temple at Quwo.¹⁰⁷

However, prior to his triumphal return to the state of Jin, the *Zuo Zhuan* indicated that the crossing of the Yellow River was the occasion of a quarrel between Chonger and his closest supporter, his maternal uncle Jiu Fan. Jiu Fan was said to have made a present of a jade disc to his nephew and stated that he wished not to return to the state of Jin, giving as his reason his belief that the mistakes he had made in exile would make it inappropriate for him to continue to serve his nephew once he had gained power. The future Lord Wen was able to calm his uncle's fears, and they swore an oath together,¹⁰⁸ which finished with the jade disc being used as an offering to the Spirit of the Clear Waters, who would act as the guardian of their good faith.¹⁰⁹ The wording given for the covenant is consistent with Spring and Autumn period usage, where the oath was

¹⁰⁵ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 413 [Xi 24], and Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizhu: *Guo Yu*, p. 367 [Jin Yu].

¹⁰⁶ The state of Jin at this time was known for its strict religious practices, preserving many elements of old Zhou rituals which had fallen into abeyance elsewhere. See Hong Anquan: *Chunqiu de Jinguo*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁷ The *Zuo Zhuan* recorded that on Bingwu day (10th January 636 BC), Chonger entered Quwo, and on Dingwei day (11th January), he made a sacrifice at his grandfather, Lord Wu's, temple; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 413 [Xi 24]. The *Guo Yu* on the other hand recorded that on Bingwu day, Chonger entered Quwo, that on Dingwei day he entered Jiang, the capital of Jin, and that on the same day he took up his office at the temple to Lord Wu in that city; see Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizhu: *Guo Yu*, p. 367 [Jin Yu]. It is possible that both versions are correct, and that there were temples to Lord Wu in both cities. The dates are derived from Xu Xiqi: *Xi Zhou (Gonghe) zhi Xi Han Li Pu*, p. 411.

¹⁰⁸ The wording of this covenant is analyzed in Mullie: "Les Formules de Serment dans le Tso-Tchouan," p. 55.

¹⁰⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 412-413 [Xi 24].

divided into two parts, an assertion and an appeal to a deity. The same incident was recounted with virtually identical wording and sentiments in the *Guo Yu*.¹¹⁰

Later versions of this story would elaborate on the nature of the disagreement between Lord Wen of Jin and his uncle, who had previously shown exemplary dedication to his nephew's career and prospects, throughout their many years of exile together. These versions would suggest that Lord Wen was afflicted by snobbish concerns as he returned in triumph to his state, that he attempted to distance himself from his loyal but uncouth and travel-worn companions, and that Jiu Fan was upset by this. Jiu Fan was said to have ranged himself on the side of those now despised by his nephew, which led to the quarrel.

The earliest account of this new cause for disagreement was given in the *Han Feizi*.¹¹¹ On arriving at the Yellow River, Chonger was said to have ordered the food and bedding of his followers to be thrown in, to make a sacrifice to the god of the river. He also placed those of his followers whose appearance had been most affected by the exile at the back, where his new supporters from the state of Jin would hopefully not notice them. His loyal but unpresentable followers were described as having "calloused hands and swollen feet, sunburnt faces and darkened eyes."¹¹² Jiu Fan was upset by what he saw as Chonger's lack of feeling towards his own most loyal supporters. The future Lord Wen of Jin was however able to persuade his uncle that he still wished for his help, and that he believed they should together enjoy the rewards of having returned to Jin. They then made an actual blood-covenant, sealed with the blood of the left-hand trace horse.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizhu: *Guo Yu*, p. 365 [*Jin Yu*].

¹¹¹ This text was composed at the very end of the Warring States period in the state of Qin; see Levi: "Han Fei tzu," p. 116.

¹¹² Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 644 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuoshang*].

¹¹³ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 644 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuoshang*].

The next account of these events is found in the *Shuo Yuan*,¹¹⁴ where Jiu Fan was again upset by his nephew's unfeeling behaviour towards the loyal supporters whose appearance was no longer as stylish and fresh as he might wish. Here, rather than focus on the ingratitude displayed by Lord Wen towards past suffering Jiu Fan indicated the future problems liable to be caused by a ruler who distained those capable of enduring hardship:

I have heard it said that when the lord of a state despises knights, he will not be able to get loyal vassals, when grandees despise travellers, they will not get loyal friends; now we have returned to our state, and I am among those that you despise, and so I could not suppress my grief...¹¹⁵

This account of events followed the versions given in the *Zuo Zhuan* and *Guo Yu* more closely than did the *Han Feizi*, for the sentiments expressed in the wording of the oath made between Lord Wen of Jin and his uncle was very similar (though more elaborate) than in the previous versions, and the oath sworn between them was again sealed by throwing a jade disc into the Yellow River.¹¹⁶

Later on, another very brief account of these events was given in the *Lun Heng*,¹¹⁷ where Jiu Fan himself was said to have been ashamed to return to the state of Jin because of the "blackening" of his features which had occurred during the long years of exile. Here it was stated again that Lord Wen did not wish to lose his uncle, but that Jiu Fan felt ashamed (by implication, of himself) that his appearance was no longer that which would grace a court.¹¹⁸ This story, like many about Lord Wen of Jin, described him in relation with his closest advisors, ministers and supporters, and showed him to

¹¹⁴ The *Shuo Yuan* was presented to the throne in 17 BC; see Knechtges: "Shuo yüan," p. 444.

¹¹⁵ Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 120 [*Fu En*].

¹¹⁶ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 119-120 [*Fu En*].

¹¹⁷ For the dating of the *Lun Heng* to AD 70-80; see Pokora: "Lun heng," p. 309.

¹¹⁸ See Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 1067 [*Gan Lei*].

have in some measure failed to appreciate them as he should have done. The theme of this story, a ruler being brought to a sense of his shortcomings by the timely remonstrance, was a popular one among the tales of the lives of the hegemons. In this case the formulae, in the descriptions of the altered appearance of Lord Wen of Jin's followers and so on, seem to have been very constant. The relationship of the various surviving versions can be seen in Diagram 2:4.

In the story of Jie Zhi Tui,¹¹⁹ as with the tale of Dongguo Ya, a ruler was required to recognise the brilliance of a subject. While Dongguo Ya was in a very menial position, Jie Zhi Tui was said to have been a close companion of Lord Wen during his prolonged exile, although not as close as Zhao Cui (Lord Wen's brother-in-law) or Jiu Fan (Lord Wen's uncle) who also accompanied him into exile. The earliest account of Jie Zhi Tui's life is given in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which described him as having been ignored by Lord Wen of Jin after their return to Jin. He discussed his predicament with his mother, and refused to bring himself to Lord Wen's attention, as a result of which both he and his mother decided to go into seclusion.¹²⁰ Lord Wen later granted Jie Zhi Tui a gift of land, *in absentia*.¹²¹ Only three other accounts include the figure of his mother, the *Shi Ji*,¹²² and the two others were both by Liu Xiang, the *Shuo Yuan* and the *Liexian Zhuan*

¹¹⁹ The *zhi* is considered to be a vocative form, which would mean that correctly his name should be given as Jie Tui. However the vocative form is used in all surviving examples of stories in which he figures. In some texts the vocative form is given as Jie Zi Tui. See Yang Shuda: *Gu Shu Yiyi Julie Dubu*, p. 4.

¹²⁰ The historicity of all pre-Han accounts of reclusive behaviour is suspect. In this account, Jie Zhi Tui would seem to be engaging in 'Confucian' (as opposed to 'Daoist') eremitism; withdrawing due to the unsatisfactory nature of the contemporary social and political order. See Berkowitz: "The Moral Hero," pp. 4, 7.

¹²¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 417-419 [Xi 24]. According to the gazette for Yicheng county, which covers the site of the former Jin capital of Jiang, Lord Wen of Jin was also said to have built a temple to the memory of Jie Zhi Tui, at Fufu Shan; see Ma Jizhen, Ji Yanyan: *Yicheng Xian Zhi*, p. 218.

¹²² See *Shi Ji*, 39:1662.

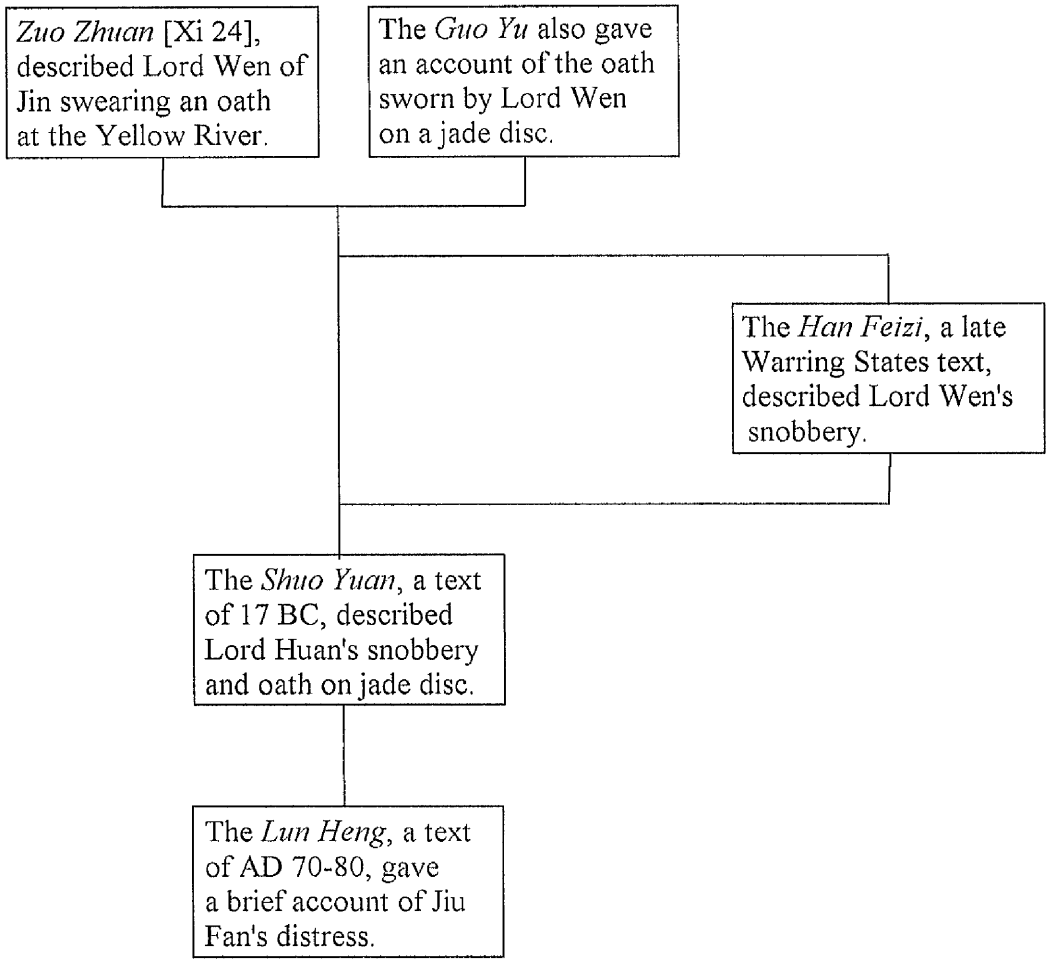


Diagram 2:4

(Tales of Illustrious Sages).¹²³ The character of Jie Zhi Tui's mother, whose admiration for her son's character was such that she followed him into obscurity, was an important contrast to the forgetfulness of Lord Wen. Versions that lack the character of the mother sometimes had a counterpoint figure of an anonymous follower, who reminded Lord Wen that he owed nothing less than his life to Jie Zhi Tui.¹²⁴

The next strand of the tale first appeared in the *Zhuangzi*,¹²⁵ where it was said that at one point during his period of exile, Lord Wen had been unable to go on due to starvation,¹²⁶ and was only fortified enough to continue after Jie Zhi Tui had cut a piece of flesh off his own thigh for him to eat.¹²⁷ Such a deed, though not so commonly recorded at this early date as it later became when such displays of virtue received government encouragement, was nevertheless the height of devotion, and to reward him as he deserved was therefore a matter of some importance. This very violent

¹²³ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 120 [*Fu En*]; Liu Xiang: *Liexian Zhuan*, p. 16 [Jie Zi Tui]. The attribution of the *Liexian Zhuan* to Liu Xiang was made in antiquity, though it is disputed; see Nienhauser: *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 566. However, the text is certainly genuinely dated to the Han dynasty. The account given of Jie Zhi Tui's later life given in the *Liexian Zhuan* is closest to that of other culture heroes like Fan Li. In this version, Jie Zhi Tui disappeared, to reappear briefly thirty years later, selling fans by the sea.

¹²⁴ For example see Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 121 [*Fu En*].

¹²⁵ See Wang Shumin: *Zhuangzi Jiaozhu*, p. 1186 [*Dao Zhi*]. According to Roth, this chapter should be dated to around the third century BC. See Roth: "Chuang tzu," p. 57. The lack of specific details in the *Zhuangzi* text: "Jie Zi Tui was loyal to a fault. He cut his own thigh in order to feed Lord Wen. Later on Lord Wen ignored him. Zi Tui was angry and left. He held a brand and was burnt to death," suggest that the reader would be expected to be familiar with the details of this version. Gu Yanwu considered this part of Jie Zhi Tui's story highly dubious; see Gu Yanwu: *Ri Zhi Lu*, pp. 880-881.

¹²⁶ In another tale about his exile, Lord Wen of Jin is recorded as having had to beg for food while passing through Wulu (in the state of Wei) and for a joke, some rustics gave him a lump of earth instead. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 406 [Xi 23].

¹²⁷ This self-mutilation was also mentioned in the account of these events given in Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 121 [*Fu En*]. It also appears in the *Yuan Si* poem in the *Chu Ci*; see Tang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, p. 284 [*Qi Jian*].

interpretation of the story continued when Lord Wen, having failed to tempt Jie Zhi Tui out of seclusion with gifts, set fire to his place of retreat, and rather than return to the world, Jie burnt to death. This development is also given in the versions of this story that appear in the *Xin Xu* (New Prefaces),¹²⁸ and the *Qin Cao* (Zither Tunes).¹²⁹ This escalation of the violence in the story seems to have been part of a general trend in some of the stories about Lord Wen. As the Honourable Chonger, he was tricked into getting drunk by his wife and uncle who wished him to leave the state of Qi and attain his destiny, and according to the *Zuo Zhuan*, on waking to discover himself already on his way, Chonger chased his uncle with a halberd.¹³⁰ In some versions, he was also credited with blood-curdling threats to eat his uncle.¹³¹ Another example of this violent behaviour occurred in the aftermath of Lord Wen's victory at the battle of Chengpu. Having captured the baggage-train of the Chu army, in the *Shi Ji* he is said to have set fire to their food supplies, and the fires burnt for three days.¹³²

In the third important strand of this story, Lord Wen, who failed to reward Jie Zhi Tui's past loyalty and devotion, was alerted to his omission by a rhymed sequence,

¹²⁸ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 7:118. In some Age of Disunion accounts of the burning of Jie Zhi Tui, a white crow is said to have flown up from the flames, cawing (presumably representing his soul) and later his unburnt remains were enclosed in a commemorative pavilion; see Wang Jia: *Shi Yi Ji*, p. 296 [Lu Xi Gong, 3], and Shen Yue: *You Zhong Ji*, p. 396 [*Si Yan*].

¹²⁹ See Cai Yong: *Qin Cao*, p.16 [*Long She Ge*].

¹³⁰ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 407 [Xi 23].

¹³¹ *Shi Ji*, 39:1658. This passage seems to have been derived from the *Guo Yu*; see Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 344 [*Jin Yu* 4], a passage dated to the middle of the Warring States period (384-336 BC). See Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 524-526.

¹³² See *Shi Ji*, 39:1668. This tale is generally accepted to have derived from a misreading of the original *Zuo Zhuan* passage, (which stated that they *feasted* for three days); see Liang Yusheng: *Shi Ji Zhiyi*, p. 988. This version continued to crop up in later tales about the hegemon, such as the Ming compilation by Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 4:8a, and Chen Xuanyin: *Jin Wen Chunqiu*, p. 13.

most usually said to be a poem (*shi*) or more rarely a song (*ge*), in which Jie Zhi Tui's plight was couched in terms of a dragon and its attendant serpents:

There was a dragon that flew
And travelled all around the world,
Five serpents followed him,
To assist him.
The dragon returned to his homestead,
And took his rightful place,
Four serpents followed him
And got his sweet rain.
One serpent thought this shameful
And withered to death in the wilderness.¹³³

The five serpents would seem to be a reference to Lord Wen of Jin's five main supporters during his exile. In the *Zuo Zhuan* they were identified as Zhao Cui, Hu Yan, Dian Xie, Wei Wuzi and Sikong Jizi.¹³⁴ In this case a reference to Jie Zhi Tui is clearly intended in the mention of the serpent who withered away. In his commentary on this passage, Yang Bojun noted that the identity of Lord Wen's five supporters was frequently disputed in ancient texts. This verse appeared in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*,¹³⁵ as a verbal remonstrance in the *Xin Xu*,¹³⁶ in a letter hung on the palace gate in the *Shi Ji*,¹³⁷ and the *Shuo Yuan*,¹³⁸ and as the *Long She Ge* (Song of the Dragon and Serpents) in the *Qin Cao*.¹³⁹ The relationship between the various versions can be seen in Diagram 2:5.

¹³³ Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 12:6a-6b [*Jie Li*].

¹³⁴ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 404-405 [Xi 23].

¹³⁵ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 12:6a-6b [*Jie Li*].

¹³⁶ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 7:117.

¹³⁷ See *Shi Ji*, 39:1662.

¹³⁸ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 122 [*Fu En*] The authorship of the poem was universally ascribed to Jie Zhi Tui, apart from one version in the *Shuo Yuan*, where this poem was ascribed to another of Lord Wen of Jin's followers, Zhou Zhi Qiao, who was also said to have become a hermit.

¹³⁹ See Cai Yong: *Qin Cao*, p.16 [*Long She Ge*].

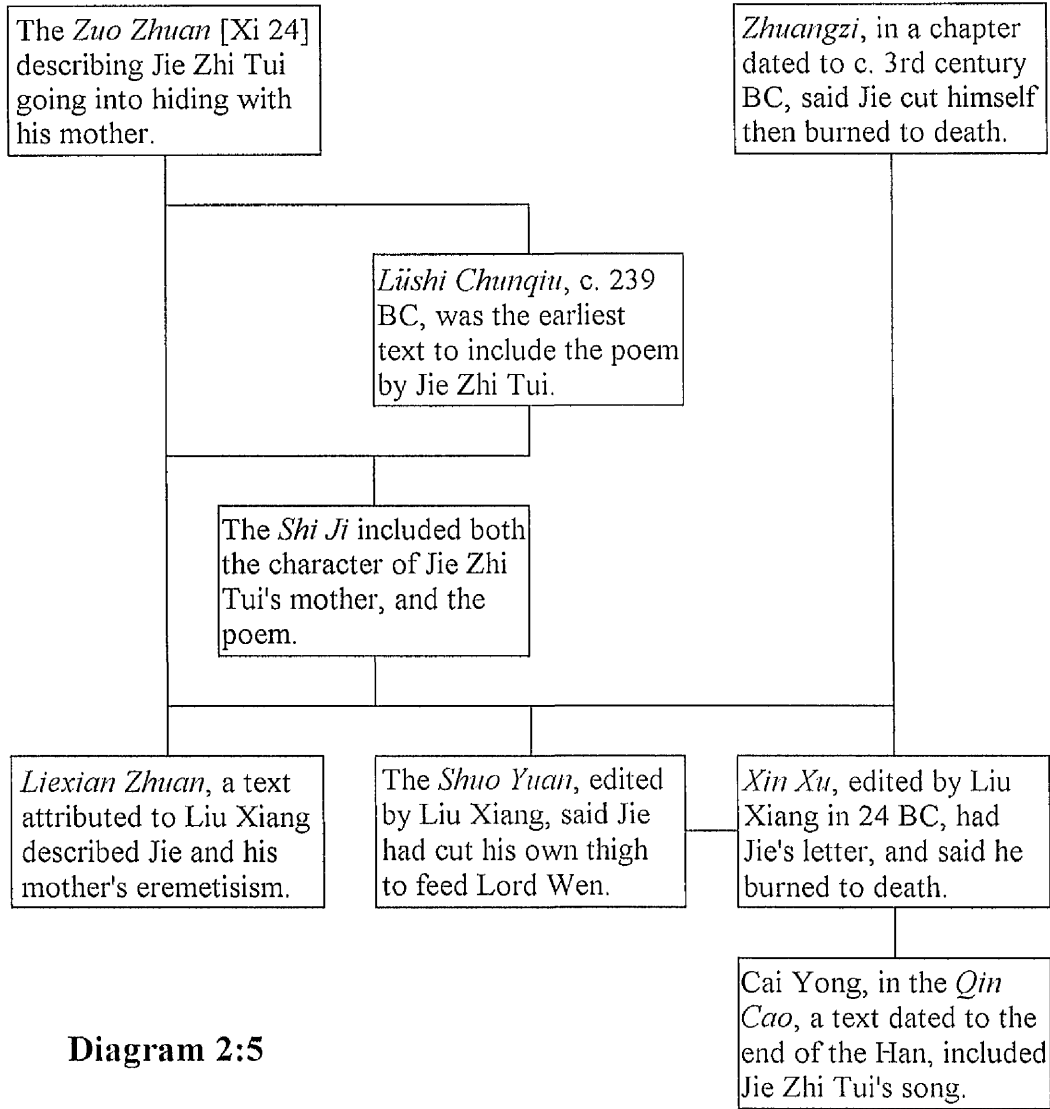


Diagram 2:5

It would seem likely that the poem was altered as the fate of Jie Zhi Tui became more black. In the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the tale as a whole is a positive account of Zhou eremitism, for Jie Zhi Tui could have emerged from obscurity to claim the grant of land made by a regretful Lord Wen. That he did not do so was due to positive choice, and so the reference in the poem in this version to the serpent representing Jie having “withered to death in the wilderness,”¹⁴⁰ is out of place. The versions that most closely resembles this are found in the *Shi Ji* and the *Shuo Yuan*, where again Jie Zhi Tui chose to remain hidden rather than take up court life again. The last line of the rhymed letter in the *Shuo Yuan* fits this account much better; it describes the serpent as having “cried out in the wilderness,”¹⁴¹ before deciding on a life of reclusion.

The song or poem of the dragon and the snakes was clearly strongly associated with Lord Wen of Jin and his followers,¹⁴² even though the precise wording of the song changed greatly from one version to another.¹⁴³ It is noticeable that in some instances the snake metaphor was particularly unsuccessful, such as the *Shuo Yuan* reference to the snake cutting its thigh, and that by far the most complex language was used in the *Qin Cao*, which was the last and longest version. Indeed the differences in the language used, and the lack of the formulae which appear in all the other versions suggest that this ‘song’ was more in the nature of a Han literary response to the Jie Zhi Tui legend, than a reworking of the legend. However, regardless of how the wording is given, the poem of the dragon and the snakes is a strikingly direct criticism of a ruler’s neglect and ingratitude.

¹⁴⁰ Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu*, 12:6a-6b [*Jie Li*].

¹⁴¹ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 121 [*Fu En*]. The poem appears in two versions in the *Fu En* chapter of the *Shuo Yuan*, the one given above was attributed to Jie Zhi Tui, another virtually identical version to Zhou Zhi Qiao; see p. 122.

¹⁴² See He Ning: *Huainanzi Jishi*, p. 1104 [*Shuo Shan Xun*].

¹⁴³ All versions of the poem or song of the dragon and the snakes, apart from that found in the *Qin Cao*, fit with Birrell’s pattern for the ballad as it was created in Warring States and Han China; see Birrell: *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, p. 9.

The story of Jie Zhi Tui is matched by the many others that refer to the events of Lord Wen's return to his state, most of which revolve around the necessity of giving adequate rewards to his followers.¹⁴⁴ The many references to this are comprehensible by consideration of the political upheavals that Lord Wen's return created, which are hinted at in the historical texts.¹⁴⁵ The historical texts that describe this period make it clear that Lord Wen did not have an easy time in the early days of his succession, for the fratricidal conflict of earlier years had left deep scars in the social and political life of Jin.

In the extant versions of this story, there are indications of profound shifts in the thematic level of the story. Although the formulae changed, the general outlines remained much the same. In the first instance, the nature of Jie Zhi Tui's services to his lord in the earliest surviving versions is not mentioned, and being too retiring to bring them to the notice of Lord Wen, the later grant of land presumably derives from Lord Wen remembering him without this notice being solicited. In later versions, Jie Zhi Tui himself solicited Lord Wen's attention by reciting the poem at a feast,¹⁴⁶ or leaving the poem attached to the gate of Lord Wen's palace.¹⁴⁷ The fundamental shift would seem to have been caused by a change in what a contemporary audience saw as virtuous behaviour; whether it was possible for a gentleman to draw attention to himself in this way. To a later audience, Jie Zhi Tui's silent withdrawal from public life was clearly

¹⁴⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 3:112, for a description of the vast programme of disseminating rewards undertaken by Lord Wen. The enfeoffment of Lord Wen's followers (and his father's efforts to create an aristocratic class unrelated to the ruling family) would create lasting political dissent inside Jin, rival clans having been ruthlessly eradicated during the reign of Lord Wen's father, Lord Xian of Jin. See Li Longxian: *Jin Wen Gong Fuguo Dingba Kao*, p. 40, also Yoshimoto Michimasa: "Shunjū Shinha Kō," p. 99.

¹⁴⁵ When Lord Mu of Qin sent Lord Wen of Jin's wife, Lady Ying, to join him from Qin, he included three thousand men in her suite who would form a garrison in the capital of Jin. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 415 [Xi 24]. Lord Wen was forced to publically forgive Li Fuxu, who had robbed him while in exile and thus reduced him to dire straits, in order to quash the unrest in Jin. See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 10:338.

¹⁴⁶ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 7:117.

¹⁴⁷ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 121 [*Fu En*].

unacceptably austere, and so his rejection of worldly values was softened by the appearance of the poetic reminder. This shift in perception parallels that which seems to have occurred on the issue of acceptable reasons for suicide, or responses to the demand of loyalty to one's ruler.¹⁴⁸

Jie Zhi Tui later became an example of the pure soul, misunderstood by those who surrounded him, and as such was frequently mentioned in conjunction with Qu Yuan.¹⁴⁹ Just as Qu Yuan later became the justification for the dragon-boat festival, Jie Zhi Tui's death by fire apparently inspired the *Han Shi* (Cold Food) festival, attested to from the 1st century AD.¹⁵⁰ Although all accounts of the origins of the Cold Food festival ascribe this origin to it, it is possible that these practises derived from earlier festivals, and in this capacity Jie Zhi Tui, although mentioned in historical texts, was a mountain god euhemerised.¹⁵¹ In the accounts that describe his death by fire, and enhance the mystery of his disappearance, Jie Zhi Tui is given some of the features of the mythical hero, helped by the dedication of a festival to his honour. This however has very little to do with the historical figure of Jie Zhi Tui. Jie Zhi Tui, like Wu Zixu, is a good example of a servant whose tale has come to overshadow that of his master. This

¹⁴⁸ This is indicated by changing attitudes towards Lord Wen of Jin's elder brother, the Heir Apparent, Shensheng, who failed to protect himself against the machinations of his step-mother; see Lindell: "Stories of Suicide in Ancient China," p. 187. Guan Zhong's failure to die when his attempt to install the Honourable Jiu in Qi failed and Jiu was executed seems to have given rise to similar ambivalence. Guan Zhong's achievements as a statesman were held by some, but not all, to outweigh any moral obligation to his former lord. See Zhu Dahua: *Guanzi Yanjiu*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁹ See Schneider: *A Madman of Ch'u*, p. 38. See also Qian Mu: "Lun Chunqiu Shidai Ren de Daode Jingshen," p. 66.

¹⁵⁰ Jie Zhi Tui's death was also associated with the unlucky fifth day of the fifth lunar month; see Ouyang Feiyun: "Duanwu 'Wuri' Kao," p. 29. This unlucky date was also said to have been the day that Wu Zixu died. For a discussion of the various festivals held in honour of Jie Zhi Tui; see Hong Lianyu: *Rongchai Suibi*, p. 438.

¹⁵¹ See Holzman: "The Cold Food Festival in Early Medieval China," p. 78. The Ming dynasty historian Zhang Dafu: *Mei Hua Caotang Bitan*, 2:12a, considered the Cold Food Festival to be a fast held to appease ghosts, and the festival was probably not originally associated with Jie Zhi Tui at all, given that his death by burning was a late invention.

must be considered in part due to the lack of information about such minor historical figures which allowed them to be fictionalised with a great deal more ease than the rulers that they served.

There is a small group of stories, all of which are found in the *Xin Xu*,¹⁵² a work compiled by Liu Xiang and presented to the throne in 24 BC, which begin with Lord Wen of Jin going out hunting, chasing a bird or a beast of some description, only to become lost or lose track of the prey, an event common to heroes.¹⁵³ Drawn into an unfamiliar situation, Lord Wen then meets a local person, who proceeds to harangue him on ecological issues, more or less obviously as a political metaphor.¹⁵⁴ These structurally simple tales underline the fact that practically the only time most rulers came into close contact with their subjects was during such hunts, and judging by the number of tales that revolve around various aspects of hunting, it was an important activity for members of the elite. At this date the motif of rulers and nobles who dress up as ordinary people and mingle with the crowds in order to hear the opinions of the common people does not appear to have been fully developed.¹⁵⁵ Lord Wen of Jin is also known to have trained his men for battle by leading them on hunts,¹⁵⁶ though perhaps given that they could be

¹⁵² In his study of this book, Knechtges notes that it was presented to the throne in 24 BC, and now survives in a fragmentary form. See Knechtges: "Hsin Hsü," p. 155.

¹⁵³ See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 5, p. 130. N771. King (prince) lost on hunt has adventure.

¹⁵⁴ Lord Wen of Jin seems to have been frequently harangued in these terms. According to the *Huainanzi*, prior to the battle of Chengpu one of his advisors, Yong Ji, used a hunting metaphor to illustrate a point of government policy. "If you set fire to the forest and then go hunting, you will capture vast quantities of animals, but after that there will be no wild beasts..." He Ning: *Huainanzi Jishi*, p. 1264 [*Ren Jian Xun*].

¹⁵⁵ See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 5, p. 144. P14.19. King goes in disguise at night to observe his subjects. Many European rulers, such as Catherine the Great and George III (in his case possibly correctly), were said to have done this, and it was later added to the repertory of a number of Chinese heroes. Only the *Han Feizi* included a story of a hegemon, in this case Lord Huan of Qi, visiting his people in plain clothes. See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 786 [*Wai Chu Shuo You Xia*].

¹⁵⁶ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 447 [Xi 28].

used for military training, these hunts were more like battues. The moral of these tales would seem to be that good rulers should be able to behave with decorum and politeness when on unfamiliar ground.

One of the most striking aspects of these tales is the way that they retain the verisimilitude discussed by Alessandro Manzoni in *Del romanzo storico* (On the Historical Novel).¹⁵⁷ The issue here is not whether what occurred is ‘true’ but whether it is believable. Where one might expect the tale of a shape-shifter, of the kind found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, in these tales there is no explicit connection made between the pursued prey, which suddenly vanishes, and the rustic who equally suddenly appears to discuss the issues of sustainable exploitation of natural resources with Lord Wen. Nevertheless, on the occasion that Lord Wen chased an unidentified animal into a large marsh, a fisherman, a natural symbol of morality, instructed him as follows:¹⁵⁸

The wild swans and geese are protected in the middle of the rivers and lakes, but if you put pressure on them so that they want to move to the smaller marshes, there they are sure to suffer the sorrow of catapults and bowstrings; turtles and crayfish are safe in the deep pools, but if they are under assault they will come out into the shallower areas, and then there is sure to be the torment of nets and baskets, hooks and shots. Now your lordship was chasing a wild animal, and you have reached as far as this, so why go any further?¹⁵⁹

In another version of this tale, the ecological issue was made subordinate to the fact that the old farmer Lord Wen had met while chasing a deer had sound advice to give him on statecraft. This story was closely related in theme to one about King Zhuang of Chu, who was able to discover the truly loyal through participation in a hunt.¹⁶⁰ The

¹⁵⁷ See Manzoni: *Del romanzo storico*, p. 69.

¹⁵⁸ Fishermen are “traditional symbols of virtue and wisdom;” see Allen: “An Introductory Study of Narrative in the *Shi Ji*,” p. 41. They were believed to grasp sophisticated truths through their elemental lifestyle; see Vervoorn: *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁹ Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:24.

¹⁶⁰ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 93 [*Li Jie*].

formulae used in the two versions of this story from the *Xin Xu* were largely identical, though given that the sources upon which Liu Xiang drew when compiling his work are unknown, the precise nature of that relationship is unclear:

As for the dwellings of tigers and leopards, if you put pressure on the woods they are brought into contact with man, and then they are captured; as for the homes of fish and turtles, if you invade the deep they will go to the shallows, and thus they are taken; as for the homes of the feudal lords, if they put pressure on the masses and then go far away, they will then lose their states. The Odes say: "It is the magpie that has the nest, it is the cuckoo that inhabits it." [Ode 12]. If you do not hurry home, the people will make another man the ruler.¹⁶¹

Having received this important advice, Lord Wen of Jin went home, but did not take the farmer with him. Luan Wuzi remonstrated with Lord Wen, and he rectified his error by bringing the old man to the capital. A similar incident was recorded when Lord Wen went hunting in Guo; having obtained good advice from an old man there, he went home, and was chided by Zhao Cui for having failed to reward his advisor. The rectification of this error was said to have led directly to Lord Wen of Jin becoming hegemon.¹⁶²

These stories represent the beginning of the *xiaoshuo*, or short story tradition. However one element which these early tales lack is the internal 'proof' that was later a hallmark of this genre of storytelling.¹⁶³ Having received an unambiguous warning, Lord Wen of Jin hurried home, but the telling of the tale lacked the verification (which an isolated rustic could not have 'known') that indeed, he had returned in the nick of time, for some dastardly plot was afoot. This important addition to the structure of the traditional ancient Chinese short story would be developed in the Age of Disunion.

¹⁶¹ Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:24-25.

¹⁶² See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 4:64-65. "Lord Wen ... summoned and rewarded him, and therefore the state of Jin was happy at acquiring good advice and in the end Lord Wen of Jin became hegemon."

¹⁶³ See Zeitlin: *Historian of the Strange*, p. 197.

Lord Mu of Qin

Lord Mu of Qin succeeded his two brothers, Lords Xuan (r. 675-664 BC) and Cheng of Qin (r. 663-660 BC) amicably (unlike the two previous hegemon), in spite of the fact that both of his brothers had sons to succeed them. Whatever the reasons that his nephews were passed over in the succession,¹⁶⁴ Lord Mu ruled so capably that his reign represented a peak of power and prestige for the state of Qin.¹⁶⁵ One of the most interesting stories of his reign involves the loss of one of Lord Mu's thoroughbred horses. Having lost the horse, Lord Mu went to look for it personally. When he found the horse, it was dead, and in the process of being eaten by a large number of rural people or peons,¹⁶⁶ usually said to be three hundred. The formulae used subtly manipulate the reader to expect Lord Mu to be profoundly unhappy at the untimely death of his expensive horse, and the dramatic denouement in which Lord Mu not only forgave the killers of his horse, but also insisted on treating them to a round of drinks,¹⁶⁷ placed Lord Mu firmly in the tradition of great rulers forgiving their more or less unsatisfactory subjects. He reassured the peasants with a simple jest, given with different wording but much the same import in all versions:

“Anyone who eats the meat of a thoroughbred horse, and does not drink some piment, will die!”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ It seems that it was not unusual in Qin for sons to be passed over in the succession in favour of brothers, this had previously happened when Lord Wu of Qin was succeeded by his brother Lord De, and Lord Wu's son Bai was enfeoffed at Pingyang. For a discussion of this pattern of succession; see Tschepe: *Histoire du Royaume de Ts'in*, p. 26. Pingyang was the site of the majority of the tombs of the lords of Qin.

¹⁶⁵ See Lü Simian: *Xian Qin Shi*, p. 161, and Lin Jianming: *Qiguo Fazhan Shi*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁶ For the translation of *yeren* as peons; see Kuhn: *Status und Ritus*, p. 189.

¹⁶⁷ *Jiu* is usually translated as beer (or wine), but perhaps a better translation would be piment (beer used for ceremonial purposes, in particular for oaths of loyalty).

¹⁶⁸ Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 10:351.

The audience for this tale would presumably have suspended disbelief at the obviously fictional aspects of this tale, such as Lord Mu happening to have a keg of beer large enough to feast three hundred persons on him during a hunt, when faced with a story in which a ruler behaved in such a satisfactory manner. In the second half of this tale, Lord Mu was hard pressed during the battle of Hanyuan against Lord Hui of Jin. At a critical juncture of the narrative, after much emphasis on the personal danger of Lord Mu's position, the hippophagists joined the fight and saved Lord Mu, who then completed this stunning reversal in fortune by capturing his enemy, Lord Hui.¹⁶⁹

This story is known in five main versions. The oldest surviving version is from the *Lüshi Chunqiu*,¹⁷⁰ a text of great importance as a source for stories about Lord Mu, which is not surprising given the association of this text with the state of Qin. In this version, no timescale was given for Lord Mu of Qin's search for his horse, and when the carcass was found, it was on the south side of Mt. Qi.¹⁷¹ The following year, at the battle of Hanyuan, more than three hundred loyal horse-eaters turned up to turn the tide of the battle. The next version, found in the *Huainanzi*,¹⁷² gave no indication of how long Lord Mu spent searching for his horse, but like the *Lüshi Chunqiu* said that the horse was found being eaten on the south side of Mt. Qi. A year later, while doing battle with Lord Hui of Jin, more than three hundred rustics, who had eaten the horse, saved the day. The third version, in the *Shi Ji*,¹⁷³ attached this story to the account of the battle of Hanyuan. Again, Lord Mu after a search for his horse of unknown duration, found it being eaten

¹⁶⁹ One of the more dramatic accounts of Lord Mu's difficulties appears in Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 8:13b [*Ai Shi*].

¹⁷⁰ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 8:13a-14a [*Ai Shi*].

¹⁷¹ This mountain was located just east of the Qin capital; see Tan Qixiang: *Zhongguo Lishi Ditu Ji*, Vol. 1, Map 22-23. The identification of this mountain as a place visited by Lord Mu of Qin is thus entirely possible.

¹⁷² See He Ning: *Huainanzi Jishi*, p. 974-975 [*Fan Lun*]. The *Huainanzi*, compiled under the auspices of Liu An, the King of Huainan, was presented to Emperor Wu of the Han on an imperial progress in 139 BC. See Le Blanc: "Huai nan tzu," pp. 189-90.

¹⁷³ See *Shi Ji*, 5:188.

below Mt. Qi. More than three hundred people ate it, and were forgiven by Lord Mu. When he was in trouble during the battle, these rustics rescued him and fought to the death. The fourth version of this tale, in the *Han Shi Waizhuan*,¹⁷⁴ said that the horse was lost for three days, and Lord Mu discovered the carcass on the south side of Mt. Jing.¹⁷⁵ The following year, more than three hundred of the rustics who had eaten the horse-meat saved Lord Mu's life in battle against Jin. The last version of this story, in the *Shuo Yuan*,¹⁷⁶ gave no timescale for Lord Mu of Qin's search for his horse, nor did it give any location for where he found the body of the horse. Three years later, at an unnamed battle against Jin (but which from context must have been Hanyuan because the capture of Lord Hui of Jin was mentioned) a number of the rustics turned up to provide crucial reinforcements just as the Qin forces were in trouble. This version would seem to indicate the lack of precise detailing noted by Allyn Rickett in his study of the *Guanzi*, that Han dynasty versions of earlier tales did not feel the need for the same kind of level of accuracy in place names and other details which would have preserved a regional aspect to the story.¹⁷⁷

These various versions of the tale are thematically similar, but not entirely identical in formulae. Thus, the dates and places given are slightly different, and the result of the rustics' intervention was not the same. The relationship of the various surviving versions, can be seen in Diagram 2:6.

The battle of Hanyuan and the capture of Lord Hui of Jin by his brother-in-law, Lord Mu of Qin was a historical fact, dated to Renwu day of the 11th lunar month (i.e. 8th

¹⁷⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 10:351-352. The relative dating of this text and the *Shi Ji* is problematical, since the precise date of composition of either is not known.

¹⁷⁵ This mountain name is not given in any historical geographical dictionaries.

¹⁷⁶ See Xiao Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 125 [*Fu En*].

¹⁷⁷ See Rickett: *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, p. 186. Rickett was referring to the Han dynasty sections of the *Guanzi*, but it would seem to be more widely applicable to many of the stories reworked in the Han dynasty.

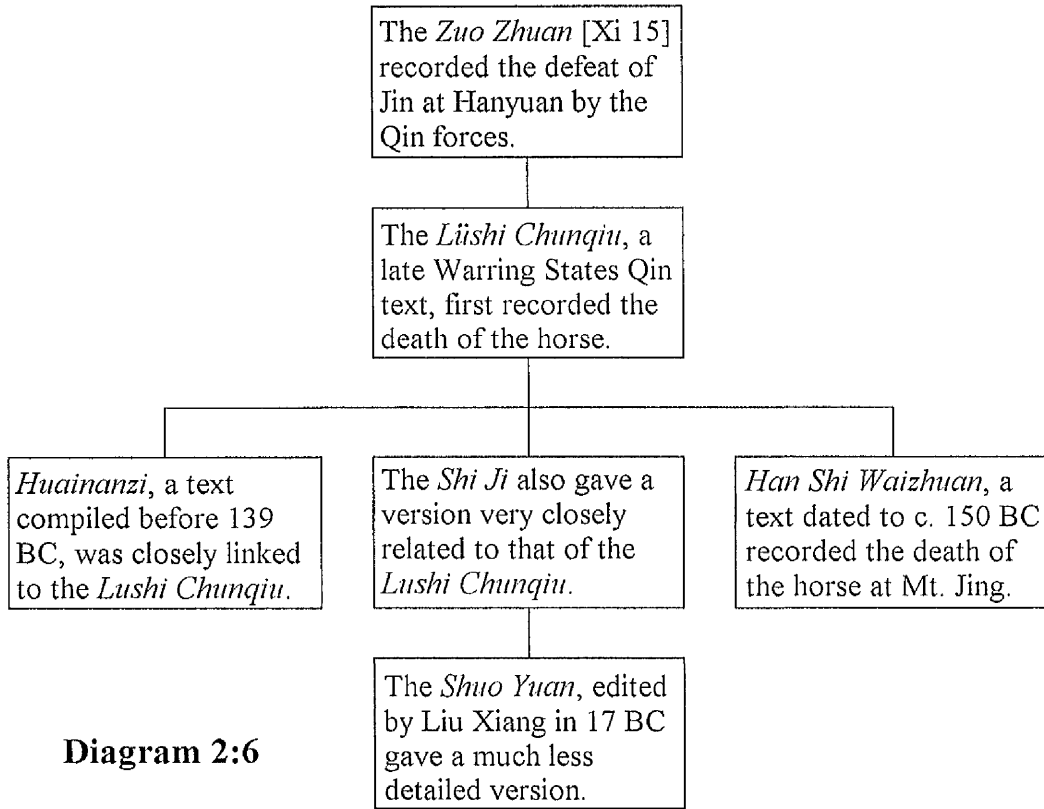


Diagram 2:6

November) in the year 645 BC.¹⁷⁸ Relations between the two states had been poor for some years, as described in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which firmly lays the blame on Lord Hui of Jin.¹⁷⁹ Nothing is known of the conduct of the battle, and although the relative strengths of the two armies are unknown, there is no particular reason to suggest that at this date Qin was significantly weaker than Jin. Indeed only nine years later, in 636 BC, as mentioned above, Lord Mu garrisoned the capital of Jin in order to ensure his brother-in-law, Chonger, Lord Wen of Jin, was secure in his authority. The outcome of the battle was therefore not as unexpected as that of Chengpu in 632 BC as described in the *Zuo Zhuan*, where in order to make the achievement of Jin seem greater, the contribution of other states including Qin was eliminated from the record.¹⁸⁰

At the time of Lord Mu of Qin, one of the pressing issues of the day was the need to recruit ever larger armies, to cope with the technological advances and political developments of the time. Military matters had ceased to concern only the elite, with the introduction of infantry troops, the pressure on feudal lords wishing to hold their own, let alone to expand their territories, was founded on the need to conscript and train large numbers of men. Hence the glorification of battle to be found in this story, for Lord Mu's behaviour when finding his horse had been killed seems to have induced boundless enthusiasm and loyalty in the local people involved.¹⁸¹ Joseph Needham has suggested that the widespread proliferation of effective weapons obliged feudal lords at this date to

¹⁷⁸ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 350, 356 [Xi 15]. The date is given according to Xu Yiqi: *Xi Zhou (Gonghe) zhi Xi Han Li Pu*, p. 394. In the *Chunqiu*, the battle is said to have taken place at Han, in the *Zuo Zhuan* at Hanyuan. The site of the battle is in present-day Shanxi province.

¹⁷⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 351 [Xi 15]. Lord Hui was said to have accepted aid from Qin during a famine in Jin, and then refused assistance when the situation was reversed.

¹⁸⁰ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 448, 461-2 [Xi 28]. The *Chunqiu* records that Lord Wen of Jin had the assistance of the armies of Qi, Song and Qin in this battle. This view was supported by the Ming scholar who compiled the Puzhou gazette; see Li Xianfang: *Puzhou Zhi*, p. 921.

¹⁸¹ See Lei Meizong: *Zhongguo Wenhua yu Zhongguo de Bing*, p. 8.

pay greater attention to the morale of their subjects,¹⁸² however in the long term for a large proportion of the elite it may also have induced the withdrawal from public life which was so marked a feature of late Spring and Autumn and Warring States life. Again the means of warfare, including horses, were increasingly important, and the quality and speed of an army could be crucial, therefore it is interesting that Lord Mu of Qin was also the subject of a story in which he obtained the services of a man able to judge horses.¹⁸³

Another important story about Lord Mu of Qin began with the king of the Rong sending one of his advisors, You Yu, to Qin on a diplomatic mission. Lord Mu was intensely worried by the Rong possessing such a wise minister, and schemed with his advisors to obtain the services of this man. The chief scribe, a man named Liao,¹⁸⁴ came up with a plan to alienate the Rong king from his wise advisor by presenting a debauching gift of female musicians to the king.¹⁸⁵ The king, delighted with the gift, was seduced from his duties to drink and listen to music, a diversion from which he found he was unable to tear himself, with the result that he refused to continue with the necessary business of government, rendering his people incapable of resisting the onslaught of the Qin forces. This might seem a more obviously crucial loss than that of You Yu, who disgusted with his ruler's self-indulgence, left his service and accepted a ministerial post in Qin.¹⁸⁶

The earliest versions of this tale appear in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* and the *Han Feizi*, thus again indicating the importance of these texts in the preservation of a regional

¹⁸² See Needham: *The Grand Titration*, p. 169.

¹⁸³ See Yang Bojun: *Liezi Jishi*, pp. 163-4 [*Shuo Fu*].

¹⁸⁴ The name of the chief scribe is given as Liao (廖) in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the *Han Feizi* and the *Shuo Yuan*. In the *Han Shi Waizhuan*, the name is given as Wan Mu (王繆).

¹⁸⁵ In the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the gifts to the Rong king include a good cook. See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 23:12b-13a [*Yong Sai*]; 24:2a [*Bu Gou*].

¹⁸⁶ See Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 186-7 [*Shi Guo*].

tradition that was absorbed into mainstream Chinese culture after the unification. The *Lüshi Chunqiu* contains two versions of this story, one of which mentions You Yu, and one that does not.¹⁸⁷ The formula used to describe the gifts given by Lord Mu of Qin to the king of the Rong is virtually identical in both cases, and the theme of the story is the same, though the version in the *Yong Sai* chapter, without You Yu, lacks motivation for Lord Mu's gift. The version that appears in the chapter *Yong Sai*, emphasises the personal nature of the disaster for the Rong king: seduced away from his duties and given over to drink, he was found by the invading Qin forces dead drunk under a liquor jar.¹⁸⁸ He had previously compounded his errors by shooting dead someone who dared to warn him of the Qin troops incursions. The version in the chapter *Bu Gou*, however, concentrated on the importance for Qin of the victory that they gained over the Rong; it was part of their efforts to expunge the shame of their defeat at the hands of Jin at Xiao.¹⁸⁹ The implications of this defeat for perceptions of Lord Mu's reign are discussed in Chapter Four. The *Han Feizi* version gave different consequences as a result of Lord Mu's gift. The king of the Rong was so delighted with the gift of female musicians, and was so taken up with drinking and carousing, that he refused to allow his people to move to winter pastures, as a result of which half their animals were said to have died. In the wake of this disaster, Lord Mu of Qin was able to make large territorial gains at the expense of the weakened Rong people.¹⁹⁰ This version of events was to prove the most popular, being taken up by several Han dynasty writers: it appeared in the *Shi Ji*,¹⁹¹ *Han*

¹⁸⁷ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 24:2a [*Bu Gou*], and 23:12b-13a [*Yong Sai*] respectively.

¹⁸⁸ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 23:13a [*Yong Sai*].

¹⁸⁹ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 24:2a [*Bu Gou*].

¹⁹⁰ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 186-7 [*Shi Guo*].

¹⁹¹ See *Shi Ji*, 5:192, a 2nd century BC text. This account is distinctive in that You Yu was identified as a person of Jin origin who had joined the Rong, and who was able to speak the Jin language. Also it dates the Qin conquest of the Rong to 623 BC, two years before Lord Mu of Qin's death. See *Shi Ji*, 5:194.

Shi Waizhuan,¹⁹² and the *Shuo Yuan*.¹⁹³ The interrelationships of the various versions of this tale can be seen in Diagram 2:7.

This story illustrates none of the xenophobia against foreign senior officials displayed in the stories of the Honourable Kaifeng of Wei's stay in Qi, nor the later worries that led to the execution of Han Feizi and Shang Yang in Qin itself.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the cosmopolitan nature of Lord Mu's administration was frequently remarked on, with general approval, in much the same way as the employment of social inferiors by other hegemonies was praised.¹⁹⁵ The use of female musicians to entice the Rong king from his duties demonstrates that the feeling among the elite of the Central States that 'barbarians' were unable to resist luxuries, and that these had a corrupting effect on them, has a very long history. Such theories would later profoundly influence Han policy

¹⁹² See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 9:328-329. This text was written by Han Ying around 150 BC.

¹⁹³ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 519-521 [*Fan Zhi*], a text compiled by Liu Xiang presented to the throne in 17 BC. In all other versions, the female musicians were said to be two groups of eight, the *Shuo Yuan* said that Lord Mu presented the Rong king with three groups of nine female musicians. Commentators agree that this is an insignificant difference.

¹⁹⁴ Shang Yang's patron, Lord Xiao of Qin, was a great admirer of the reforms undertaken by You Yu and others for Lord Mu. See Qi Sihe: "ShangYang Bian Fa Kao," p.171.

¹⁹⁵ See Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 154 [*He Qin*]. It has been suggested that the backward nature of Qin culture at this date was the reason for this. Unable to find well-educated people from within the state to fill senior administrative posts, the rulers of Qin were forced to find them abroad. See Hsiao: *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, p. 59. The aspect of Qin's assimilationism that was particularly not appreciated was the absorption of Rong and Di practices into "Chinese" culture. See Hardy: *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo*, p. 171. An alternative interpretation of this pattern is given in Thatcher: "Central Government of the State of Ch'in in the Spring and Autumn Period," p. 32 which argues that the lack of centralised government in the state of Qin at this period meant that Lord Mu relied on numerous advisors and had no settled governmental structure to exclude foreigners from contact with the ruler, and it was this aspect of the government that particularly characterised Qin, rather than their use of foreign advisors.

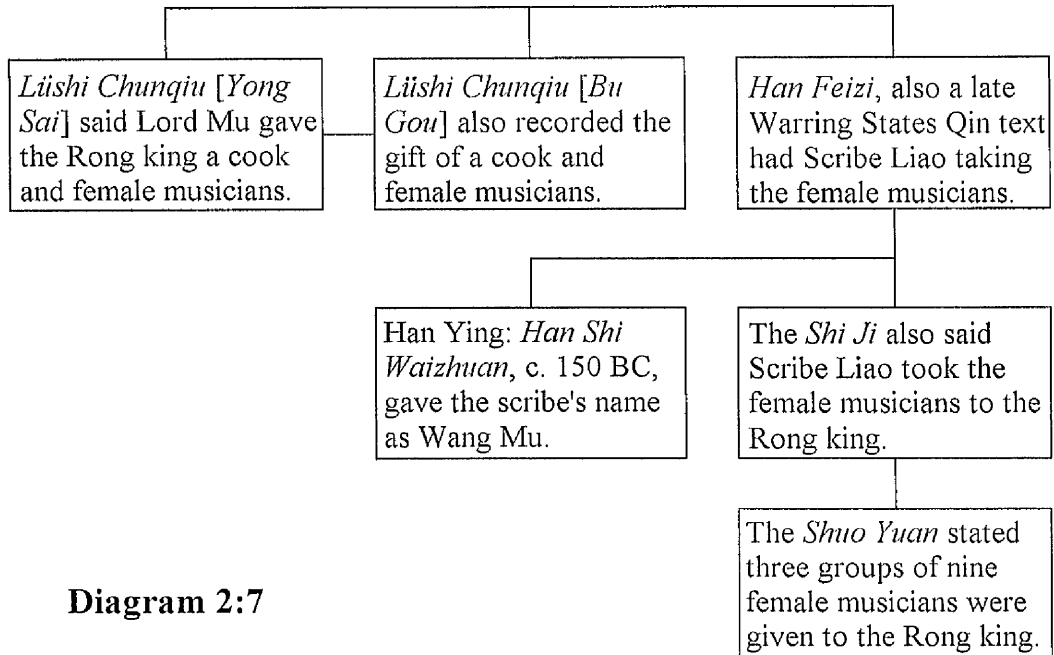


Diagram 2:7

towards the Xiongnu.¹⁹⁶ This brand of contempt for non-Chinese peoples, particularly nomads, is strikingly absent from much of the *Zuo Zhuan*, and from stories derived from it.¹⁹⁷ It is clear that greed for luxury goods was the undoing of feudal lords of the Central States, just as much as of kings of the Rong.¹⁹⁸ In both this story and the previous one, the importance of gift-giving is highlighted. At this time, as can be seen from both literary texts, and the inscriptions cast on bronzes, the Zhou kings were largely reduced to giving 'Stoic' gifts,¹⁹⁹ while hegemon and other ruling feudal lords were in a position to give 'real' gifts.²⁰⁰ In the previous story, the presentation of a gift created the obligation for the recipients to die for the giver, and thus, though in theory glorious, was in practice probably a gift they could happily have done without. In the second, another aspect of the dangers of such a real gift is emphasised, for by perverting traditional Rong culture, it led to serious depravation and hardship, and indeed death, for the Rong people. In retrospect, the Stoic gifts of the Zhou kings were significantly less dangerous, being sanctified by tradition as well as quite frequently being historic heirlooms of the

¹⁹⁶ See Barfield: *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 51, on the Han dynasty policy of the "Five Baits."

¹⁹⁷ The *Zuo Zhuan* is generally associated with the state of Jin, which maintained close links with the Rong over many years, which may perhaps account for this feature. See Cheng: "Ch'un Ch'iu," p. 71.

¹⁹⁸ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 167 [*Shi Guo*], on the ruler of Yu being trapped by Lord Xian of Jin into a fatal indiscretion, on account of his greed for good horses and a jade disc. In the *Zuo Zhuan* there is a story of the Honourable Chonger of Jin in exile, when an aristocrat attempted to deflect his humiliation at the way he had been treated by the gift of a jade *bi* and food. A wise recipient, he handed the valuable jade back to the donor, and thus reserved the right to take vengeance when he had come into his inheritance as Lord Wen. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 407 [Xi 23].

¹⁹⁹ For example see the Da Yu *ding*, which describes the king making a ritual presentation of a hunting standard which had long belonged to the family of the recipient. See Dobson: *Early Archaic Chinese*, p. 226.

²⁰⁰ Seneca, who promoted the idea that the gesture of giving was more important than the nature of the gift, was merely expressing an idea that would always be enthusiastically cultivated by those hoping to remain in power, who actually had nothing concrete to give their supporters. For an example of how this worked in Europe; see Ranum: "Words and Wealth in the France of Richelieu and Mazarin," p. 130. The classic study of this kind of gift-giving is Mauss: *The Gift*, pp. 21-22.

family of the recipient, officially handed back for the occasion.²⁰¹ The Rong king, and the rural people of Qin, outside the Zhou pale, were also beyond the range of safe gifts.

It is interesting that this story was to prove extremely resilient in both theme and formulae. 'Barbarians' on the northern frontier were to continue to be a problem long after Lord Mu was reported to have annexed large tracts of Rong land, and become their hegemon.²⁰² Indeed the hegemonies of Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin were equally marked by hostilities towards non-Chinese peoples, and the Spring and Autumn period saw constant aggression by the Central States towards their 'barbarian' neighbours.²⁰³ Thus into the Han dynasty, stories about leaders of such people being unmanned by luxury, and deprived of their ablest advisors by cunning statecraft would presumably have had a willing audience. Qin's manner of incorporating new citizens has been the subject of a great deal of debate in the 20th century, for Qin social organisation was quite different from that of any other state, lacking a hereditary nobility and any system of fiefdoms.²⁰⁴ The assimilationist nature of Qin society was consistently reflected in tales of the life of Lord Mu, as well as his position as a great lord and able ruler.

The final story to be considered of the life and reign of Lord Mu of Qin deals with the events of his death. Lord Mu had a long and eventful reign lasting thirty-nine years. When he died in 621 BC, he was succeeded by his Heir Apparent Ying, Lord Kang of Qin (r. 620-609 BC), the son of his principal wife, Lady Ji of Jin. The succession was managed smoothly, but the obsequies caused continued controversy, for Lord Mu of Qin was followed to the grave by three of his nobles of the Ziche lineage as

²⁰¹ On occasions the failure of the king to return a family heirloom to its original owners caused a great deal of trouble. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 218 [Zhuang 21], also Zhang Qijin: *Zuo Zhuan Li Shuo*, p. 34.

²⁰² Lord Mu was frequently referred to as the hegemon of the Rong. See *Shi Ji*, 5:194.

²⁰³ See Fang Ting: "Lun Di," p. 212.

²⁰⁴ See Li: *Shang Yang's Reforms and State Control in China*, p. lxxxvi.

human sacrificial victims,²⁰⁵ named as Yanxi, Zhonghang and Zhenhu. This famous event was said to have inspired the people of Qin to compose the ode “*Huang Niao*” (Yellow Birds),²⁰⁶ which was critical of the ruler depriving the state of such fine men.²⁰⁷ The fame of these events spread beyond the borders of Qin, and the tragic fate of these gentlemen was commemorated elsewhere as well.²⁰⁸

The earliest account of the events that led up to the composition of this ode, was that found in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which recorded the death of the Three Good Men (*san liang*).²⁰⁹ It was this account that explicitly linked the funeral rites of Lord Mu of Qin with the composition of the ode, and recorded the distress and concern attributed to the people of Qin at the turn of events.²¹⁰ The main account was followed by a long statement attributed to the ‘Gentleman’ (*junzi*), to the effect that the barbaric sacrifices carried out at the funeral of Lord Mu of Qin, which deprived his successors of the

²⁰⁵ In fact, Lord Mu of Qin’s funerary rites saw the sacrifice of one hundred and seventy-seven human beings, however only the three mentioned above seem to have been the subject of regret within the state of Qin. See *Shi Ji*: 5, 194.

²⁰⁶ See Qu Wanli: *Shi Jing Shiyi*, pp. 94-95 [Mao 131: *Qin Feng: Huang Niao*]. For a discussion of the association of the Yellow Birds with ill-omen; see Hentze: *Chinese Tomb Figures*, p. 39, Wang: *The Bell and the Drum*, p. 117.

²⁰⁷ See Gu Jiegang: “*Shi Jing zai Chunqiu Zhanguo Jian de Diwei*,” p. 322, for an identification of the four main types of odes, of which one category was the critical, into which grouping this ode falls.

²⁰⁸ A temple to the memory of these three men was erected in Jin, near the capital Jiang; see Ma Jizhen, Ji Yanyan: *Yicheng Xian Zhi*, pp. 212-213. A festival was held there annually on the third day of the third lunar month.

²⁰⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 546-7 [Wen 6].

²¹⁰ The degree to which the population of Qin would indeed have been distressed at the inclusion of human sacrifices in the funeral rites for Lord Mu of Qin cannot be known. Human sacrifice is known to have formed part of the obsequies for many of Lord Mu’s predecessors, for example Lord Wu of Qin was buried with sixty-six people; see Lin Jianming: *Qinguo Fazhanshi*, p. 14. Humans continued to be killed to accompany their rulers in death in non-Zhou societies for many centuries after Lord Mu; see for example Guangzhoushi Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui, Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo, Guangdongsheng Bowuguan: *Xi Han Nanyue Wang Mu*, pp. 220, 254, 257.

services of able ministers,²¹¹ made it entirely appropriate that he had never held the title of *mengzhu* or Master of Covenants. This statement is interesting, for it firmly placed the blame for what occurred on the shoulders of Lord Mu of Qin, who at the time of the events described was naturally dead.²¹² The responsibility for what occurred might seem to fall more correctly on the next Lord of Qin, for even had Lord Mu when alive expressed a wish for these men to follow him in death, it could have been circumvented by his heir.²¹³ The blame was not even laid on the customs of the state of Qin, whose links with the customs and opinions of the Central States was relatively tenuous.²¹⁴ Only at the very end of the statement was the idea that these sacrifices had any import for Lord Mu's descendants expressed, with the statement that: "Thus the gentleman was aware that Qin would not campaign in the east again."²¹⁵ This would prove to be wishful thinking, but this pious hope is an expression of the feelings of people outside Qin culture at the events in Yong.

The second account of these events is found in the Basic Annals of Qin, in the *Shi Ji*. When Lord Mu's funeral at Yong was described, it was said that he was accompanied by one hundred and seventy-seven sacrificial victims, including the Three Good Men. The comment made by the 'Gentleman' in the *Zuo Zhuan* was paraphrased, and again the point was made that it was only too appropriate that Mu of Qin had not

²¹¹ No concern was expressed at the deaths of the other one hundred and seventy-four people, who died on the same occasion. The Three Good Men were also honoured by having their own tombs, rather than being buried with their lord. See Chen Zizhan: *Shi Jing Zhijie*, p. 393.

²¹² The minor tradition of blaming Lord Kang of Qin for these events is mentioned in Fang Yurun: *Shi Jing Yuanshi*, p. 275.

²¹³ Attempts by heirs to modify the more bloodthirsty wishes of their predecessors with regard to human sacrifice were not unknown in the Spring and Autumn period, and seem largely to have been successful. See for example Zhu Bin: *Li Ji Xunzuan*, p. 144 [*Tan Gong Xia*] for Chen Zunji's refusal to bury his father's two concubines with him, in spite of his father's wish, on the grounds that it would not be ritually correct.

²¹⁴ See Li Xueqin: "Qinguo Wenwu de Xin Renshi," p. 25.

²¹⁵ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 548 [Wen 6].

been Master of Covenants.²¹⁶ Again Lord Mu of Qin was held responsible for the excesses of his funeral ceremonies.

Two accounts of the events at the funeral of Lord Mu were written by Ying Shao (c. 140-pre 204). The first of these versions was given in the *Feng Su Tong Yi* (Complete Account of Customs),²¹⁷ where the posthumous title borne by Renhao, Lord Mu of Qin, was described as a pejorative one, meaning “False” or “Wrong.” According to this text, Lord Mu of Qin’s actions which culminated in his defeat at Xiao and the sacrifice of the three members of the Ziche lineage at his funeral, made it only too appropriate that the posthumous title given to him expressed condemnation.²¹⁸ Unfortunately for this contention, no other texts seem to mention the idea that the title “Mu” was pejorative.²¹⁹ The second is found in the commentary by Ying Shao to the *Han Shu*. In the main text of the *Han Shu*, there is an interesting positive reference to these events, where the memorial sent up to Han Yuandi (r. 49-33 BC) by one Kuang Heng, a man who was noted for making frequent quotations from the *Shi Jing* (Book of Odes), included a description of Lord Mu of Qin as noble and trustworthy, to the point that knights felt obliged to follow him in death.²²⁰ This is believed to be a reference to a story only preserved in the commentary by Ying Shao to the *Han Shu*,²²¹ which described how some time previously the Three Good Men had agreed with Lord Mu that having enjoyed the good times with him, they would also die with him.²²²

²¹⁶ See *Shi Ji*, 5:194.

²¹⁷ This text was written by Ying Shao at the very end of his life; see Nylan: “Feng su t’ung i,” p. 105.

²¹⁸ See Wang Liqi: *Fengsu Tongyi Jiaozhu*, p. 19 [*Huang Ba*].

²¹⁹ For example see Kong Chao: *Yi Zhou Shu*, p. 200 [*Yi Fa Jie*], which indicated that the posthumous title “Mu” was for those who had “spread virtue and upheld justice.”

²²⁰ See *Han Shu*, 81:3334.

²²¹ According to Hulsewé: “Han shu,” p. 130, commentaries like that by Ying Shao were transmitted independently until AD 641, after which they were transmitted as part of the text.

²²² See *Han Shu*, 81:3336 (note 3).

At the very end of the Han period, these events were the subject of a series of verses by Jian'an poets, who responded to the sacrifice of these men eight centuries before in a new way, for these poems were not versions of the story so much as literary meditations on the nature of loyalty to the ruler, and duty. Three poems on this subject survive, the *San Liang Shi* (Poem on Three Good Men) by Cao Zhi (AD 192-232),²²³ the *Yong Shi Shi* (Poem on History) by Wang Can (AD 177-217),²²⁴ and the poem of the same title on the same subject by Ruan Yu (AD 165-212).²²⁵ The poems are all believed to have been composed around the year AD 212, when all three men took part in a campaign by Cao Cao (AD 155-220) which took them past the tombs of the First Emperor, Lord Mu of Qin, and then the Three Good Men.²²⁶

The form and wording of the poems suggests that the poets were aware of at least several versions of the stories on this subject. All of them were clearly familiar with the ode preserved in the *Shi Jing*, and the account given in the *Zuo Zhuan*. The wording of Cao Zhi's poem suggests that he was aware of Ying Shao's account of these events found in his commentary on the *Han Shu*:

While he lived, they were equal in glory and joy;
Once he died, they shared the affliction and woe.²²⁷

²²³ See Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, p. 368 [Cao Zhi: *San Liang Shi*].

²²⁴ See Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, p. 368 [Wang Can: *Yong Shi Shi*]. This poem was also known as the *Jijin Qin Feng*; see Ling Xun: "Wang Can Zhuan Lun," p. 304.

²²⁵ See Lu Qinli: *Xian Qin Han Jin Wei Nan Bei Chao Shi*, Vol. 1, p. 379 [Ruan Yu : *Yong Shi Shi*]. The verse dealing with Lord Mu of Qin was paired with another about Jing Ke's attempt to kill the First Emperor of Qin, though the date of composition of this second part is not known; see Yu Xianhao, Zhang Caimin (eds.): *Jianan Qizi Shi Jianzhu*, p. 268.

²²⁶ See Cutter: "On reading Cao Zhi's 'Three Good Men'," p. 9, and Jiang Jianjun: *Jian'an Qizi Xueshu*, p. 154.

²²⁷ Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, p. 368 [Cao Zhi: *San Liang Shi*].

However, the primary purpose of these poems was not to produce a new account of the obsequies for Lord Mu of Qin, but instead to allow the poets to meditate upon their visit to such a storied, culturally important place. The interrelationship of the various surviving versions of this tale can be seen in Diagram 2:8.

The importance of this tale lies in its continued resonance for later generations, who took it as an opportunity to present their own ideas on the nature of authority and power. It is however striking that the practice of human sacrifice did not in any way prevent Lord Mu from being a widely admired ruler,²²⁸ and an appropriate candidate for the hegemony.

²²⁸ For a discussion on this point; see Hu Yinglin: *Shaoshi Shanfang Bicong*, p. 365.

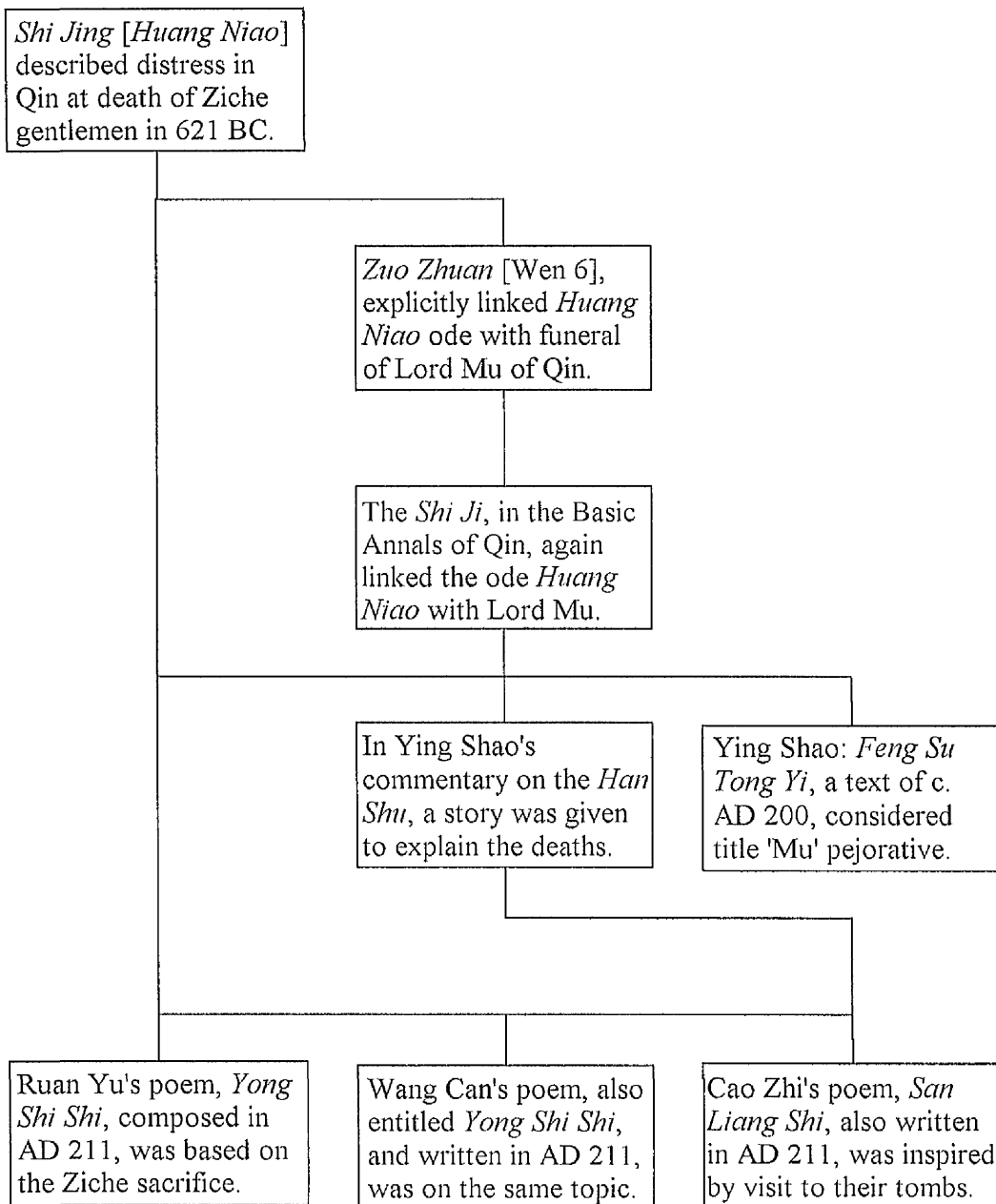


Diagram 2:8

“It is an excellent thing for kings to raise men up, and make them by their own hand.”
Antonio Pérez: *Aphorisms*.

Chapter 3

King Zhuang of Chu

One of the most famous stories of King Zhuang’s reign was that which centred on his refusal to deal with government matters for three years after his succession, before being brought to a sense of his duties by a timely remonstrance. This tale should be seen in the context of aggressive expansionism under a succession of strong Chu kings, beginning with King Wu (r. 740-690 BC).¹ In the time of King Wen (r. 689-677 BC), Chu had incorporated states along the Han river, moving the capital to Ying (in present day Hubei province) in 689 BC. From around 666 BC, Chu began to threaten states along the Yellow River, and in 655 BC Chu started to incorporate Huai river states.² The precise dates of much of this expansionism is not clear, but only two states are known to have been conquered and assimilated during the reign of King Zhuang: Yong and Shuliao.³ However, the *Han Feizi* claimed that King Zhuang was of great importance in extending the territorial domination of Chu.⁴ This expansionism was naturally the source of great concern to states threatened directly and indirectly. Chu, the most important non-Chinese state (in the impact that it had on the Central States of the Zhou confederacy to the north), possessed a unique power-structure unrelated to the

¹ See Blakeley: “King, Clan and Courtier in Ancient China,” p. 1.

² See He Guangyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, pp. 8-10. These territorial gains would have been incorporated into the Chu state as *xian*; see Gu Jiuxing: “Chunqiu Chu, Jin, Qi Sanguo Xianzhi de Bijiao,” p. 217.

³ See Chen Pan: “Chunqiu Lieqiang Qianbing Kaolüe,” p. 324.

⁴ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 85 [*You Du*]. In this text King Zhuang was said to have united twenty-six unnamed states and opened up three thousand *li* of land.

forms developed in states centred on the Yellow River,⁵ which was preserved largely intact into the Warring States period; its rulers seem to have enjoyed absolute power within their borders.⁶ Their rulers bore the title king, but were frequently referred to in documents written in Zhou states as the *Chu Zi*, usually translated as Viscount of Chu, but which in this case should perhaps better be translated as “Claimant to the title of feudal lord of Chu,” for the kings of Chu did not seek to ratify their titles with the Zhou kings.⁷ This independent and powerful status is subtly suggested in some of the stories about King Zhuang, as when he inquired about the nine ding-tripods of the Zhou kings.⁸

In the tale about the beginning of his reign, King Zhuang of Chu is portrayed as having caused considerable consternation by refusing to participate in the normal duties of a ruler. Such duties would have involved participation in the day-to-day running of the state, with particularly reference to law-giving, for at that time much legislation was enacted by royal or noble decree. A refusal to *ting zheng*, literally to “listen to government,” that is to attend to the advice of his ministers and come to a decision, followed by the issuing of a decree about the matter, would have threatened the government of the state with stagnation, and destroyed the one great benefit of not having written legislation: the ability of the ruler to act quickly and appropriately to new circumstances. The concept of a written law-code was only gradually adopted during the Spring and Autumn period, (and then criticised for the fact that such laws were not flexible enough) and Chu was not in the vanguard in this respect.⁹ The failure of the king to perform this vital part of his proper duties was thus an extremely subversive, and potentially very dangerous, act. So, it is not surprising that the story of King Zhuang’s

⁵ See Blakeley: “Functional Disparities in the Socio-Political Traditions of Spring and Autumn China (Part 4),” pp. 86-88.

⁶ See Wen Zongyi: *Chu Wenhua Yanjiu*, p. 62. See also Gu Jiegang: “Chu Zhuang Wang de Baye,” p. 434.

⁷ For a conservative discussion on this point; see Yoshimoto Michimasa: “Shunjū Gotōshaku Kō,” p. 16.

⁸ See Zhao Tiehan: *Gushi Kaoshu*, p. 122.

⁹ See Huang Jianxin: *Zhongguo Xingfa Shi*, p. 157.

unsatisfactory behaviour should have proved one of the most popular (in terms of the number of surviving versions) tales of his reign.

The earliest versions of this story are found in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* and the *Han Feizi*,¹⁰ texts associated with the state of Qin and dated to the very end of the Warring States period.¹¹ In these versions of the story, which are very similar in both theme and formulae, a senior government official identified as Cheng Gong Jia or the Marshal of the Right respectively, broke the impasse with a riddle about a bird. King Zhuang of Chu replied in kind, showing that he had understood the metaphor and that he had a solution to the riddle:

The Marshal of the Right... spoke privily to the king: "There is a bird which perches on a hill to the south of the city, for three years it has not fluttered its wings nor flown nor made a cry. Since it does not make a sound, what shall we call it?" The king said, "For three years it has not flapped its wings so that its feathers and wings will be strong. It has not flown nor made a sound in order to observe the disposition of the people. Although it has not flown, when it does so it will certainly soar into the sky; although it has made no cry when it does its song will certainly strike awe into people. You have made your point, and I have understood you."¹²

Just as the bird which behaves in a non-avian fashion will be all the better for it (and recognised as a true bird) the king who behaves in an un-regal fashion is paradoxically a better king for it, and one day his subjects will recognise the truth of this. In this way apparent laziness is thus revealed to be true labour. Having made his point, King Zhuang returned to his contemplations, only to burst forth with reforming zeal some time later. The details of his reforms were given in much greater detail in the *Han*

¹⁰ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 18:6a-7a [*Zhong Yan*], and Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 412 [*Yu Lao*] respectively.

¹¹ For the dating of these texts; see Carson/ Loewe: "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," p. 324, Levi: "Han Fei tzu," p. 116.

¹² Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 412 [*Yu Lao*]. The riddle of the bird was given with virtually identical wording in all the versions in which it appeared.

Feizi than the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, though both indicate that wide-ranging changes were made.¹³

The next version of this tale appeared in the *Shi Ji*,¹⁴ where in addition to a general failure to pay due attention to the business of government, it was also suggested that King Zhuang found the company of women too attractive. This change in the theme would however be fully developed in later versions. The role of the remonstrator, who brought King Zhuang to his senses, was devolved upon two characters, Wu Ju who failed (though he was said to have used the riddle of the bird),¹⁵ and Su Cong who succeeded. Interestingly, the riddle of the paradoxical bird also appeared in a different context in the *Shi Ji*.¹⁶ This might be an instance of a good story being appropriated for a more famous character, or a confusion between two similar stories resulting in the same formulae being used in both cases.¹⁷ Both remonstrators, who were specifically said to have been risking their lives by doing so, were rewarded by being ‘put in charge

¹³ The tradition that serious government reforms were undertaken during the reign of King Zhuang is found in many other texts; see for example Jia Yi: *Jiazi Xin Shu*, p. 71 [*Xian Xing*] (“King Zhuang of Chu... demoted the decadent and depraved and promoted the loyal and correct”), and Dong Zhongshu: *Chunqiu Fanlu*, 1:1a [Chu Zhuang Wang].

¹⁴ See *Shi Ji*, 40:1700.

¹⁵ This Wu Ju was said to be the grandfather of Wu Zixu; see Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 23 [Wang Liao *Shi Gongzi Guang Zhuan*].

¹⁶ See *Shi Ji*, 126:3197, a tale completely unrelated to King Zhuang of Chu, where the remonstrator is identified as the courtier Chunyu Kun and the ruler who accepts his criticism is named as King Wei of Qi (r. 356-320 BC). For a discussion of the character of Chunyu Kun; see Knechtges: “Wit, Humour, and Satire in Early Chinese Literature,” pp. 83-84. It is possible that this is an example of a good story, and in particular a good riddle, being appropriated by a more famous historical figure. See Wilhelm: “Notes on Chou Fiction,” p. 255, and Zhao Yi: *Gaiyu Congkao*, p. 434.

¹⁷ Another example of this occurs in the story of a ruler of Qi meeting an old man at a place called Maiqiu and demanding an impromptu blessing, a tale most commonly told of Lord Huan of Qi, but which appears in the *Yanzi Chunqiu* as an event in the life of Lord Jing of Qi. In this instance, the problems are the same as those described above. See Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, p. 48, and Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 4:61-63.

of the government,' though no real details of governmental reform were given, in contrast to the earlier accounts.

Liu Xiang edited two texts in which versions of this story appeared, the *Xin Xu* and the *Shuo Yuan*.¹⁸ Both would seem to have been quite closely derived from the *Shi Ji*, though they emphasised different aspects of the earlier account. The *Xin Xu*, like the *Shi Ji*, suggested that in addition to a general failure to engage with his official duties, King Zhuang was debauched in his association with women. The remonstrator, here named as one Shi Qing, recited the riddle of the bird, and in recompense was appointed Prime Minister. No information was given about any reforms. In the *Shuo Yuan* the story focussed strongly on King Zhuang of Chu enjoying his three years respite from official duties by listening to music, with women in attendance. This version of the tale involved a certain change in theme as well as in formulae, for King Zhuang was changed from a passive figure (whose refusal to undertake his duties was quite sufficiently objectionable since at any moment a crisis might arise which the king would refuse to make a decision on), to a character very actively engaged in wrong and inappropriate activities. Listening to music was at that time frequently cited as an indication of moral weakness,¹⁹ and overt enjoyment of the company of women (rather than the kingly pursuits of war, hunting and government) would also have been suspect.²⁰ This version of events was thematically much more subversive, and the moral regeneration, which was provoked by the remonstrance of an official, much more profound. King Zhuang of Chu had no excuse for his failure to engage in royal duties, and he was actively going to

¹⁸ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:29-30, and Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 208 [*Zheng Jian*] respectively. The *Xin Xu* was presented to the throne in 24 BC; see Knechtges: "Hsin hsü," p. 155, while the *Shuo Yuan* was presented to the throne in 17 BC; see Knechtges: "Shuo yüan," p. 444.

¹⁹ The decline of particular states (including Chu) was said in some ancient texts to be due to the deviant, unsound music played there. See Von Falkenhausen, "Chu Ritual Music," p. 51.

²⁰ This can be shown by the stories of hegemony getting rid of women that they might otherwise be distracted by, such as when King Zhuang of Chu was persuaded not to allow Lady Xia into his harem. See Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 136 [*Niebi Zhuan*].

the dogs. In this version as in the *Shi Ji*, the remonstrator Su Cong braved his ruler's threat to kill anyone who tried to criticise him, and as in the *Xin Xu* he was appointed Prime Minister for his pains.

A version of this story also appeared in the *Jinlouzi*,²¹ a text compiled by Xiao Yi, the Emperor Yuan of the Liang dynasty from ancient texts in his library, which was burnt after conquest by the Wèi.²² This version is included as it may represent a much earlier tradition, the precise origins of this text being unknown. This variant showed King Zhuang of Chu in much the same light as the *Shuo Yuan*, a ruler actively engaged in debauchery. Following a double remonstrance by Wu Ju and Su Cong, which did not include the riddle of the bird, King Zhuang began to fulfill his official duties. It would therefore seem likely that this version dates from the Eastern Han or later. The interrelationships of the various surviving versions of this story can be seen in Diagram 3.1.

Zhuang of Chu was not the only ruler of this period to have had difficulties in coming to terms with his new role. The *Yanzi Chunqiu* recorded the difficulties Lord Jing of Qi faced at a similar early stage of his rulership.²³ The versions of this story that do not feature the riddle about the bird seem to emphasise the extent to which King Zhuang had not grasped the restraints his office imposed on his behaviour, while appreciating to the full the constraints he might impose upon others. Thus in the *Shuo Yuan* version of this tale, King Zhuang threatened his officials with death should they criticise him, while behaving with the utmost license himself, and this story was paired with another about King Zhuang in which he went hunting while keeping his army on a

²¹ See Xu Deping: *Jinlouzi Jiaozhu*, p. 108 [*Shuo Fan*].

²² An account of Emperor Yuan's literary interests, and the disastrous end of his reign, is found in his biography; see Yao Silian: *Liang Shu*, 5:135.

²³ See Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, p. 6. Shortly after his accession, Lord Jing of Qi wished to entertain his associates without the formalities appropriate to his new position, and had to be told by Yanzi that such behaviour was no longer appropriate.

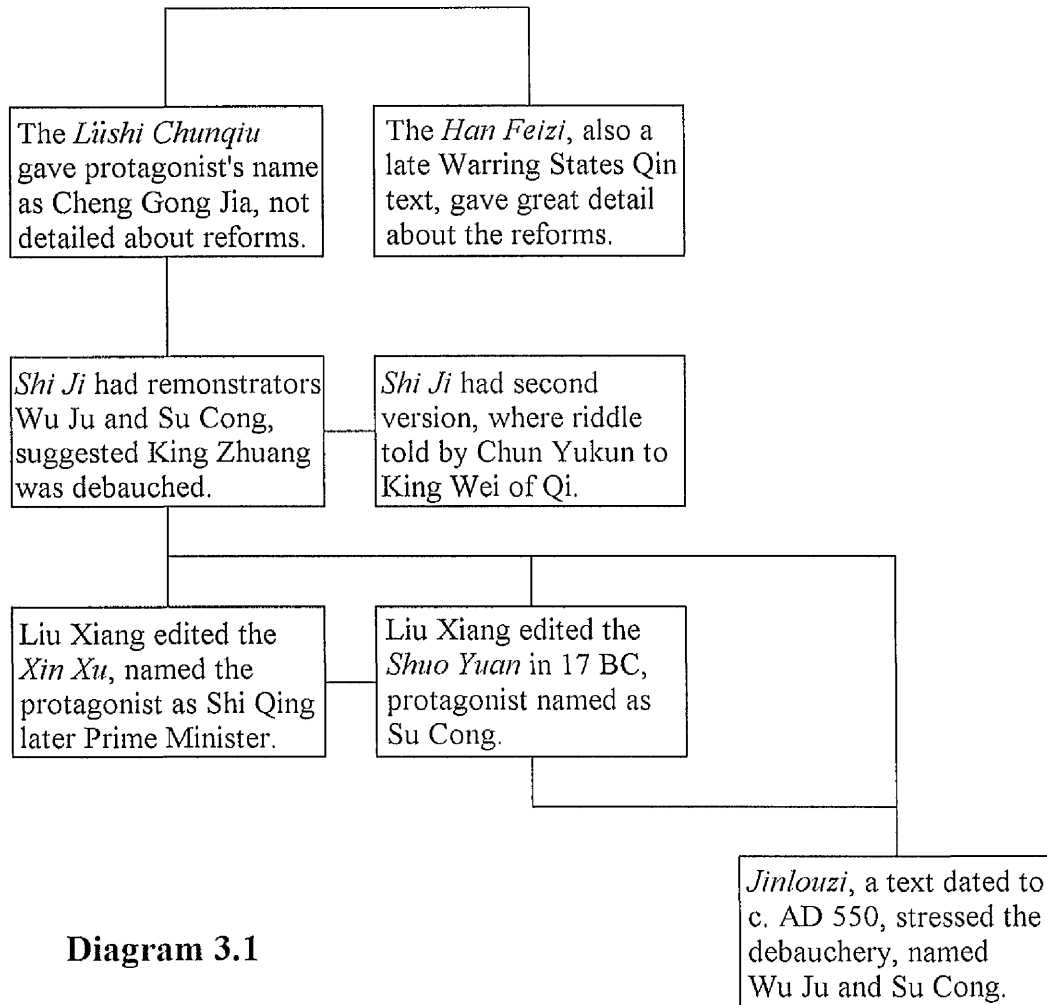


Diagram 3.1

long campaign against Yangxia without rest.²⁴ The uncertainties of life as a ruler of the Spring and Autumn period made King Zhuang's autocratic style of government comprehensible, without lessening its inherent dangers.

Although the passivity of King Zhuang as described in this tale might seem to be antithetical to good government, in fact such passivity was a quality highly prized in traditional Chinese political theory, and a constant feature in tales about good rulers. It was for ministers to be active.²⁵ Some historical accounts suggest that there was a germ of truth in the statement that King Zhuang refused to participate in government for three years after his accession.²⁶ The *Zuo Zhuan* records no campaigns undertaken by King Zhuang prior to that of 611 BC, against Yong, in the third year of his reign.²⁷ This negative evidence, however, is not enough to suggest that this story should not rank as fiction. There was also a persistent suggestion that King Zhuang of Chu was a minor when he came to the throne, and this was the reason for his failure to govern in the first few years of his reign.²⁸ Again, while it is unusual for a fictional tale to be so precisely dateable, being definitely ascribed to the year 611 BC, that is the third year of King Zhuang's reign, this cannot be seen as giving the story any factual validity. Also this tale is in distinct contradiction to the other main account of how the state of Chu became well governed during the reign of King Zhuang. This tale focussed on Sunshu Ao, who became Prime Minister after the king's wife, Lady Ji of Fan,²⁹ contrasted her own

²⁴ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 208, 214 [*Zheng Jian*].

²⁵ See Ruhlmann: "Traditional Heroes in Chinese Popular Fiction," p. 142.

²⁶ See He Guangyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, p. 10.

²⁷ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 619 [Wen 16]. Liang Yusheng: *Shi Ji Zhiyi*, p. 1010, suggests that in fact the campaign against Yong occurred in the second year of King Zhuang of Chu's reign.

²⁸ See Du Yu: *Chunqiu Jing Zhuan Jijie*, 9:8b [Wen 14]. This claim seems to be supported by a line in the *Guo Yu*; see Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 421 [Jin Yu 6].

²⁹ Lady Ji of Fan was later the subject of a story emphasising her selflessness in maximizing the number of sons born to King Zhuang. See Yu Zhigu, Yuan Huazhong:

behaviour (not monopolising the king's favours) with that of the previous Prime Minister Yu Qiuzi. As a result of which:

The king made [Sunshu Ao] Prime Minister, he governed Chu for three years and King Zhuang became hegemon because of it.³⁰

Having shamed the Prime Minister into promoting someone in his stead, Sun Shuao was appointed,³¹ and he reformed the government of Chu in the space of three years, the same length of time as that given for King Zhuang of Chu's period of apathy.³² In later discussions of these events, all mention of the role of Lady Ji of Fan in bringing about Yu Qiuzi's resignation was removed, and it was solely the Prime Minister's own appreciation of Sun Shuao's virtues that brought it about.³³

Probably the single most famous event of King Zhuang of Chu's reign, in terms of the impact it would have upon later representations of the character of this monarch, was his questioning of the Zhou grandee Wangsun Man as to the size and weight of the nine dings. These bronze sacrificial vessels, said from the Warring States onwards to have been of extreme antiquity,³⁴ and by the Han were generally identified as having

Zhu Gong Jiushi Yizhu, p. 55.

³⁰ See Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 27 [*Xianming Zhuan*].

³¹ Such behaviour was particularly promoted by Confucianists who heavily stressed the virtue of those who stepped aside to allow others to be promoted. See Wang Jianwen: *Zhanguo Zhuzi de Gu Shengwang Zhuanshuo ji qi Sixiang Shi Yiyi*, p. 57.

³² For examples of this tale; see Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 2:35-36, and Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 1:2-3.

³³ Shi Hongyun: *Chu Shi Ru Zhuan Dianjiao*, p. 140.

³⁴ The *Mozi* was the first text to attribute the nine dings to the Xia dynasty; previously they were usually said to have been Shang dynasty bronzes; see Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, pp. 266-267 [*Jiang Zhu*]. For the dating of this text to between the 4th- 2nd centuries BC; see Graham: "Mo tzu," p. 338.

been cast by Yu,³⁵ were the most important of the Zhou royal treasures, since they were said to have been taken over from the Shang.³⁶ Above and beyond their role as important sacrificial vessels, it is clear from texts like the *Zuo Zhuan* that the nine dings were seen in some way as royal insignia, representing the power of the Zhou kings in a concrete fashion. In order for the Zhou capital to be the capital of the Central States, the nine dings had to be present in it.³⁷ By asking these questions, King Zhuang of Chu was none too subtly indicating his belief that the mandate of the Zhou house was in peril. The popularity of this tale derived from the contrast between the real power of King Zhuang of Chu, conducting military exercises at the very gates of the Zhou capital, and the moral legitimacy of the Zhou king, who remained the Son of Heaven.³⁸ It is worth noting that although Chu enjoyed a culture in many ways distinct from that of the Central States, both cultures used dings as their most important ritual vessels. Indeed the largest of all Eastern Zhou dings was made in Chu.³⁹

The earliest version of this story was that found in the *Zuo Zhuan*, which described how in 606 BC, having gone on campaign against the Rong of Luhun,⁴⁰ King Zhuang of Chu held a military review within the borders of Zhou. The Zhou monarch sent a grandee, Wangsun Man, to assist the king of Chu, and King Zhuang responded by

³⁵ See Zhao Zhongwen: "Jiu Ding Kaolüe," p. 89. Yu would seem to have been particularly closely associated with the number nine, which may be the origin of the belief that these nine dings had been commissioned by him. See Liang Yusheng: *Shi Ji Zhiyi*, p. 117, and Porter: *From Deluge to Discourse*, p. 46.

³⁶ There is a story in the *Zuo Zhuan* about the Duke of Lu being remonstrated with by one Zang Aibo for placing the Gao Da ding, a sacrificial vessel taken from Song in the great temple at Lu. In Zang's remonstrance he made reference to the objections of some of King Wu's loyal knights at the removal of the nine dings from Shang to Zhou. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 86-90 [Huan 2].

³⁷ See Gu Jiegang: *Shilin Zazhi (Chu Pian)*, p. 153.

³⁸ See Xu Shaohua: *Zhoudai Nantu Lishi Dili yu Wenhua*, p. 265.

³⁹ Liu Binhui: *Chuxi Qingtongqi Yanjiu*, pp. 110-111.

⁴⁰ These Rong people lived in the mountains south of the Zhou capital; see Li Dongfang: *Xian Qin Shi*, p. 71.

questioning him on the size and weight of the nine dings.⁴¹ Wangsun Man replied carefully on behalf of the king:

“[Royal power] rests in virtue, it does not lie in the dings. In the past, when the Xia were distinguished for their virtue, the distant regions sent in pictures of things (*wu*),⁴² tribute offerings of metal were made from the nine Pastors,⁴³ and they cast the dings with images of these things, the [representations of the] myriad things were a preparation, to ensure that the people would recognise the spirits and demons. Therefore the people could enter the rivers and marshes, mountains and forests, without meeting things that could do them harm; as for the hill and water spirits, and monstrous things, none were able to meet them [and do them an injury]. They used them (the dings) to be able to make harmony between superior and inferior, in order to extend Heaven’s blessings. When Jie behaved viciously, the dings moved to Shang for six hundred years. Zhou of Shang was evil and debauched and so the dings moved to Zhou. When virtue is commendable and brilliant the dings, though small, would be heavy; when evil turns into darkness and chaos, even though large, they would be light. Heaven rewards enlightened virtue, it is on that that it takes its stand. King Cheng fixed the dings at Jiayu, and divined that it (the Zhou royal house) was mandated by Heaven for thirty generation and seven hundred years. Even though the virtue of Zhou has diminished, the mandate of Heaven has not changed. The weight of the dings is therefore not something that can yet be enquired into.”⁴⁴

The story ended without any reaction from the king of Chu. He was however next mentioned attacking Zheng in the summer of that year. Wangsun Man had therefore implicitly saved the Zhou royal domain from a crisis in which the armies of their greatest hereditary enemy were at the gates of the capital.

⁴¹ This story seems thematically related to that described by Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 516. C411. Taboo: asking about marvels that one sees.

⁴² When the Zhou grandee, Wangsun Man, spoke of the things depicted on the nine dings, he was speaking of magical, mysterious representations. See Vandermeersch: *Wangdao ou la Voie Royale*, Vol. 2, p. 226.

⁴³ The nine Pastors (*mu*) were believed to be the senior officials of the nine regions of the world. This statement is thus equivalent to saying that every part of the world gave metal as tribute. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 669 [Xuan 3], for his gloss on this phrase.

⁴⁴ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 669-672 [Xuan 3].

There are two versions of this story in the *Shi Ji*. The first is found in the Basic Annals of the House of Zhou, which states that in the first year of King Ding of Zhou's reign (606 BC), King Zhuang of Chu sent an envoy to ask about the nine dings.⁴⁵ The king was said to have sent Wangsun Man to make his excuses, and the Chu army then left.⁴⁶ The second account of these events was found in the chapter on the Hereditary House of Chu, which described how in the 8th year of his reign, King Zhuang of Chu garrisoned his troops in the suburbs of the Zhou capital. King Ding of Zhou was said to have sent Wangsun Man to help the king of Chu. The king responded by asking about the size and weight of the dings.⁴⁷ When the grandee Wangsun Man replied to King Zhuang of Chu's questions on behalf of the king, as in the *Zuo Zhuan*, he set out a carefully argued understanding of the Zhou mandate common in the Spring and Autumn period, that is that the *tian ming* (mandate of Heaven) had not changed, and that the early Zhou kings, in particular King Wen, had accumulated sufficient merit or virtue for the deeds of his descendants to be insufficient to expunge it.⁴⁸

This story has frequently been said to be fictional.⁴⁹ It seems to be true that stories about the nine dings of the Zhou became very popular in the Warring States and Han periods, and it is possible that this story was used to enhance the reputation of King Zhuang of Chu.⁵⁰ The theme of an important person or ruler of another state attempting to wrest the nine dings from the hands of the Zhou king appeared in numerous ancient Chinese texts. The most notable examples of this theme were found in the *Zhanguo Ce*,

⁴⁵ The Qing scholar, Gao Songchou: *Shi Ji Zhaji*, p. 28, considered that the terms in which this incident was described in the *Shi Ji* suggested that King Zhuang of Chu was deliberately insulting the Zhou king. Gao suggested that in fact King Zhuang was deploring the lack of a true king in Zhou.

⁴⁶ See *Shi Ji*, 4:155.

⁴⁷ See *Shi Ji*, 40:1700.

⁴⁸ See T'ang: "The T'ien Ming [Heavenly Ordinance] in Pre-Ch'in China," p. 205.

⁴⁹ See for example Liu Zhenghao: *Taishigong Zuo Shi Chunqiu Yishu*, p. 342.

⁵⁰ See Gu Jiegang: *Shilin Zazhi (Chu Pian)*, p. 163. This view is also put forward in Blakeley: "Chu Society and State," pp. 62-63.

which described how a succession of rulers attempted to force the then lord of Zhou to hand over these precious relics.⁵¹ Eventually these efforts were successful and the nine dings of the Zhou kings went to Qin.⁵² This theme would seem to have been related to the idea that foreign rulers were increasingly encroaching upon royal Zhou privileges, and no longer paid the attention to Zhou rituals and mores that they had done previously.⁵³

The nine dings of the Zhou kings were lost at the end of the Warring States period, but they continued to be sought after treasures and important signs of imperial legitimacy. The First Emperor of the Qin (r. 221-208 BC), influenced by tales of how his great-grandfather King Zhaoxiang of Qin (r. 306-251 BC) had taken the nine dings from Zhou to Qin but had lost one en route when it fell into the Si river,⁵⁴ was said to have sent one thousand men to dive after it, but failed to get the missing ding.⁵⁵ Although the nine dings of the Zhou were lost, the ceremonial importance of bronzes of this shape continued to be great into the imperial period, and so they were highly sought after. Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (r. 141-87 BC) named a reign-period 'Yuan Ding' (115-109 BC), after a ding was found in the Fen river in Shanxi. There was a story in the *Shuo Yuan* describing Emperor Wu's delight at getting a further Zhou ding in 112 BC; it was an important sign of the legitimacy of his rule, and the way in which the Han had taken over the mandate of Heaven from the Zhou.⁵⁶ In the Tang dynasty, Empress Wu

⁵¹ See Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, pp. 1-3 [Qin Xing Shi Lin Zhou er Qiu Jiu Ding], p. 59 [Chu Qing Dao yu Er Zhou zhi Jian].

⁵² See *Shi Ji*, 5:218.

⁵³ See Yu Weichao: "Zhoudai Yong Ding Zhidu Yanjiu," p. 93.

⁵⁴ See *Shi Ji*, 5:218.

⁵⁵ See *Shi Ji*, 6:248. There is a famous depiction of this scene at the Wu Liang Shrine; see Wu: *The Wu Liang Shrine*, fig. 32, pp. 59, 92-96.

⁵⁶ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 270-271 [*Shan Shuo*]. This story also appeared in the *Han Shu*, 34A:2797-2798.

(r. AD 684-705) cast nine dings as a sign of her control over the empire, and likewise in the Song dings were cast by imperial command.⁵⁷

King Zhuang of Chu was also the subject of a very interesting story about loyalty and trust. In this tale, which normally consists of two parts, King Zhuang was holding a drinking party with a number of his ministers, and King Zhuang's chief wife was also present. The party went on after dark, and the lamp illuminating the room went out. During the prolonged interval before a new light could be obtained, one of the (presumably drunken) participants fumbled at the queen's clothing.⁵⁸ The severity of the assault is not indicated in any extant version of this tale. With great presence of mind, the queen broke a tassel off the man's hat, and demanded that he be identified and punished. King Zhuang, unwilling to uphold the honour of a wife above that of one of his ministers, ordered them all to break a tassel off their hats before lights could be brought and the culprit identified. In the second part of the tale, the relevant minister behaved with great bravery in battle against Chu's enemies, in order to show that he was worthy of his ruler's confidence. When the king questioned his minister on his behaviour (feeling that he had done nothing to create a sense of obligation), the man confessed that he had been the guilty party.

All surviving versions of this tale appear in texts of the Han dynasty. Although tales of the lives of the hegemonies were transmitted beyond the borders of the states that they ruled in antiquity, Chu was not well served in terms of prose written texts. It is therefore not surprising that written accounts of the deeds of King Zhuang of Chu were really only widespread after the unification, a situation that was to be repeated with the other hegemonies whose states did not form part of the Zhou confederacy. In the version of this tale which appeared in the *Han Shi Waizhuan*,⁵⁹ it was recorded that the minister performed his prodigies of valour in battle against Wu some years after the events at the

⁵⁷ See Zhao Tiehan: *Gushi Kaoshu*, p. 140.

⁵⁸ The queen and the minister are anonymous in all versions.

⁵⁹ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 7:256-257. For the dating of this text; see Hightower: "Han shih wai chuan," p. 126.

feast. However, according to the *Shuo Yuan*,⁶⁰ the minister played a key part in the defeat of Jin by Chu. Of the two options, success in battle against Jin was the more true to life; the *Zuo Zhuan* records no campaigns undertaken by Chu against Wu during the reign of King Zhuang, the majority of his battles were fought with Zheng, Chen and Jin.⁶¹ Conflict between Chu and Wu belongs to a later period than that of King Zhuang. This would seem to be a rare instance where homeostasis can be seen in a tale about one of the hegemon. Some scholars studying oral literature consider homeostasis to be a particularly important defining feature of this literary form. Homeostasis involves a popular oral tradition, about a hero or some such, being continually updated in order to ensure continued contemporary relevance.⁶² This would seem to indicate that the version of this tale that appears in the *Han Shi Waizhuan* (although not written down until c. 150 BC) dates to the later Spring and Autumn period when the conflicts with Wu were critical, during the reigns of Kings Liao (r. 526-515 BC), Helü and Fucha of Wu.⁶³ Therefore, the version which appeared in the *Shuo Yuan*, though it was part of a later text, preserved an earlier tradition.

Interestingly, the formula used in this tale places emphasis on the correct behaviour of the queen. When she complains of the minister's assault on her, the king announced:

“How could I want to advertise my wife's purity by shaming a gentleman?”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 126 [*Fu En*]. The origins and transmission of this text is discussed in Knechtges: “Shuo yüan,” p. 444.

⁶¹ The most important campaign against Jin undertaken during the reign of King Zhuang was fought and won in 597 BC; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 744 [Xuan 12].

⁶² See Goody and Watts: “The Consequences of Literacy,” p. 30.

⁶³ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1482-1483 [Zhao 27], p. 1512 [Zhao 31], p. 1529 [Ding 2], pp. 1542-1545 [Ding 4].

⁶⁴ Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 126 [*Fu En*].

King Zhuang's wife had behaved correctly and preserved her purity. It was the king's choice not to revenge himself on the person who had attempted to sully that virtue, and he did so because of that person's status as a gentleman, and his own position as a patron both to the guilty party and other members of his social class. The minister himself, in conversation with the king in the later part of the story, admitted that his actions deserved a very severe punishment:

"In former times, I was the one whose tassel was broken in the upper hall; from that time it would have been appropriate for my entrails to fall into the mud. I have waited a long time, but I have never before had an opportunity for repaying [my debt of honour]."⁶⁵

This theme, clearly related to that explored by Stith Thompson,⁶⁶ was very common in the pre-Qin period, and is known in endless permutations. The story that seems to be thematically closely related to that recounted in the *Shi Ji*, of Lord Pingyuan, one of the four great lords of the Warring States, who killed his concubine in order to satisfy his clients that he was not in thrall to his harem.⁶⁷ This tale of King Zhuang came from a comparatively less brutal age, so all the participants survived intact, and although the obligations of the vassal to his ruler are clearly exemplified, they had yet to reach the excesses of the late Spring and Autumn period, and the Warring States.⁶⁸ This story from the life of King Zhuang of Chu was remarkably static, for the

⁶⁵ Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 7:257.

⁶⁶ See Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol.5, p. 142. J221.1. A king overlooks his wife's unfaithfulness rather than cause trouble in the state. The theme of the woman present at the feast (the queen is the only woman recorded as taking part in this drinking-party, and this is the only story that suggests that women did attend out of the innumerable accounts of such parties) is also seen in the ancient literature of a number of other cultures, for example the 10th century Saxon poem, *Heliland*, or the Biblical story of Vashti in the *Book of Esther*. See Scholes and Kellogg: *The Nature of Narrative*, p.132.

⁶⁷ See *Shi Ji*, 76:2365-2366.

⁶⁸ For example the *Han Feizi* recorded people cutting their throats in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the hegemon, King Goujian of Yue; see Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 554 [*Nei Chu Shuo Shang*].

themes and formulae seem to have been virtually unchanged. Its enduring popularity is attested to by the number of versions that are found in later texts about the hegemons.⁶⁹

King Helü of Wu

Understanding the background to the actions of the last two hegemons is hampered by a general lack of historical information about the states of Wu and Yue.⁷⁰ This lack has only been partially filled by recently discovered archeological evidence. Although Wu had at least seven centuries of independent culture prior to its conquest by Yue, they did not participate in events recorded by Zhou historians until the end of the Spring and Autumn period, from the reign of King Shoumeng (r. 585-561 BC).⁷¹ As a result, although once Wu did appear in Zhou records, it was as a powerful and warlike state, the early written history of this important kingdom was very scarce. Indeed of all the hegemons King Helü of Wu appears to have had the least impact in terms of the stories that survive about his life and reign.⁷² Even those that do survive are rarely known in more than one or two versions. The most important exception, of the stories concerning the king personally, was the account of the part that he played in the dramatic and violent assassination of the previous king of Wu, King Liao, in the 4th

⁶⁹ For example this tale is found in two Ming dynasty re-workings of tales of the Spring and Autumn period; see Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 5:10b-11a, and Wu Guan: *Chu Shi Taowu*, p. 9 [*Jue Ying*]. The first would seem to have been derived from the *Han Shi Waizhuan*, for it recorded a battle between Chu and Wu, the second, which recorded a battle between Chu and Jin, would have been derived from the *Shuo Yuan*.

⁷⁰ See Zhang Yinlin: *Zhongguo Shigang (Shanggu Pian)*, pp. 71-72, and Liu Huisun: "Tai Bo Ben Wu yu Xian Wu Shishi Shitan," p. 74.

⁷¹ See Li Boqian: "Wu Wenhua ji qi Yuanyuan Chutan," p. 89; see also *Shi Ji*, 31:1448-1449.

⁷² In the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, there are references to one Wen Zhi Yi, who was a minister to King Helü, who is otherwise missing from any surviving tales of his life; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 2:14a [*Dang Ran*]. This passage is derived from the *Mozi*; see Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, p. 9 [*Suo Rang*]; 4:7b [*Xian Ji*].

month of Zhao 27, which would have been March or April of 515 BC.⁷³ The future king Helü, who appeared from the Central States texts to have been called Prince Guang at this time (though later research has suggested that this was incorrect), was portrayed as an ambitious man, incensed at having been passed over in the immensely complicated succession to the throne of Wu.⁷⁴ As with the first two hegemon, King Helü's life was largely defined by his struggle to succeed to and hold his title.⁷⁵ His response to the slight of having been passed over was to invite his cousin, the king of Wu, to a banquet held at the prince's own home, which King Liao agreed to attend, after stringent security measures, which were stressed in all accounts of the subsequent events:

The king posted soldiers all along the road to [Prince Guang's] gate. At the gate, on the stairs, by the door, by his mat, there were the king's bodyguards, pressed close to him with their swords.⁷⁶

During the course of the banquet, the prince slipped out after making his excuses, and made his way to another room in his palace. From there he sent out an

⁷³ For a discussion of the contradictory information on the precise date; see Liu Zhenghao: "Taishigong Zuoshi Chunqiu Yishu," p. 396. The *Shi Ji* gives the day as *Bingzi*, the source of this being unknown, but this date seems to be incorrect. The correlation with the Gregorian calendar comes from Xu Yiqi: *Xi Zhou (Hegong) zhi Xi Han Li Pu*, p. 653.

⁷⁴ According to the *Shi Ji*, 31:1461, the state of Wu practised brother-brother inheritance. In default of a brother, the son of the last king was established. Thus, in this instance, King Shoumeng of Wu had four sons: Zhufan, Yuji, Yumei, and Jizha. The first three having ruled, Prince Jizha refused the throne, and so it went to Yumei's son Liao. This was disputed by Prince Guang, the oldest son of the former king Zhufan, and thus King Liao's first cousin. Brother to brother inheritance has traditionally caused particularly virulent strife; see Gluckman: *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*, p. 150.

⁷⁵ The complicated system used in the Zhou confederacy to maximize the number of children born without dividing inherited land created endless tensions, not confined to the states of Qi and Jin. See Li Zongtong: *Zhongguo Gudai Shehui Shi*, p. 155.

⁷⁶ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1484 [Zhao 27]. In the *Shi Ji*, 86:2518, a passage of almost identical wording, the people guarding the route to Prince Guang's residence were said to be King Liao's blood-relatives (*qinqi*) rather than his bodyguards (*qin*: glossed by Yang Bojun as *qin bing*).

assassin, named as one Zhuan Zhu,⁷⁷ who, disguised as a serving-man, made his way past the king's guards only to pull a sword out of the dish of grilled fish he carried and plunge it into King Liao's body.⁷⁸ Although the assassin was instantly cut down by the king's bodyguards, King Liao was fatally wounded in the attack, and so Prince Guang ascended the throne as King Helü of Wu.⁷⁹ It is striking that versions of this tale which survive have proved remarkably consistent. The details given of the assassination are virtually identical, Prince Guang is said to have excused himself from the feast due to a painful foot, and the murder weapon was pulled out of a dish of fish. The sword concerned was named (apparently before being pulled out of a cooked fish) *Yuchang jian*, or "Fish-belly Sword."⁸⁰ In the *Yue Jue Shu* (The Lost History of Yue) this is recorded as one of the three famous swords belonging to King Helü.⁸¹

There are seven extant versions of this tale, the earliest of which is found in the *Zuo Zhuan*. These events are mentioned in the *Chunqiu*, but only to say that the "Wu" had killed their king. In this version, the assassin's name is given in the vocative form,

⁷⁷ In the *Zuo Zhuan*, he was called Zhuan She Zhu, the She being a vocative form; see Yang Shuda: *Gu Shu Yiyi Julie Dubu*, p. 4. In the earlier sources the name Zhuan is given with the fish radical.

⁷⁸ This is a rare mention of food in the lives of the hegemon, while they were frequently reported to be drinking with their attendants and subjects, there is almost never a mention of food. The principle exception is the tale of Lord Wen of Jin, investigating the appearance of some hairs in a dish of kebabled meat that he had been served. See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 595 [*Nei Chu Shuo Xia*]. The fish would have been a common food in a riverine state like Wu.

⁷⁹ For examples of this motif in other cultures; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 5, p. 340. K811.1. Enemies invited to banquet and killed.

⁸⁰ See for example Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 35 [Wang Liao *Shi Gongzi Guang Zhuan*]. It is possible that the name of this sword may be derived from some patterning on the blade; see Hayashi Minao: *Chūgoku In-Shū Jidai no Buki*, p. 225. The use of a named sword would have been appropriate for an murder of such historical importance. See Wheeler: "Joan of Arc's Sword in the Stone," p. xi.

⁸¹ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 80 [*Ji Bao Jian*].

the sword with which King Liao was killed is not identified by name, and the detail is given that the son of the assassin was rewarded by being appointed a minister.⁸²

The only significant variant of this story occurred in the *Gongyang Zhuan*,⁸³ and there the difference lay in the motives ascribed to the future King Helü. On discovering that both he and his youngest uncle were being passed over in the inheritance in favour of King Liao, he was angry at the slight:

Helü said: "The reason that our former rulers did not pass the state on to their sons was on account of Jizi.⁸⁴ If we were going to follow the commands of our late rulers in the succession, then the state ought to go to Jizi. If we are not going to follow the rules of our late kings in the succession, then I ought to be established, so how can Liao be our ruler?" Then he sent Zhuan Zhu to assassinate Liao, and gave the state to Jizi. Jizi would not accept it... he left and went to Yanling, and never returned to the state of Wu for the rest of his life.⁸⁵

In this version, the details of the assassination are largely missing. It is however mentioned elsewhere that Jizha did go into exile from Wu at this time,⁸⁶ though the suggestion that King Helü had intended to set him on the throne is unique to this text, and totally foreign to what is known of King Helü's actions and intentions.

The next two versions were both found in the *Shi Ji*, in the Annals of the House of Wu and the Assassins chapter.⁸⁷ Of the two, the latter version was the closest to that in the *Zuo Zhuan*, for it included a statement on the likelihood of success given that King Liao's mother was old and his son young, attributed to Zhuan Zhu, which also

⁸² See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1484 [Zhao 27].

⁸³ This text is believed to have originally been compiled in the Warring States period; see Cheng: "Ch'un ch'iu, Kung yang, Ku liang and Tso chuan," p. 68.

⁸⁴ Elsewhere known as Jizha. See *Shi Ji*, 31:1461.

⁸⁵ Chen Li: *Gongyang Yishu*, 60:146-15b [Xiang 29].

⁸⁶ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1461.

⁸⁷ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1463, and 86:2517-2518 respectively.

appeared in the earlier text. The fifth version was found in the *Yue Jue Shu*,⁸⁸ where few details were given, however for the first time the sword used to kill King Liao was given a name.⁸⁹ The last variant is included in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, a text attributed to Zhao Ye of the Eastern Han,⁹⁰ gave details much the same as in the other earlier versions, but again the sword was named.⁹¹ This synthesis was to be expected in a work which drew heavily on sources such as the *Shi Ji*, *Guo Yu* and *Yue Jue Shu*. There is an interesting late version of this tale, which is found in the *Jinlouzi*,⁹² where the story of Zhuan Zhu murdering King Liao was given as a prelude to an account of the fate of his son, who in this text was named as Qiangji, whom King Helü shut up in a stone room with a bronze door. The interrelationship of these versions is given in Diagram 3.2.

The story of the murder of King Liao could be said to have been paralleled in a number of Warring States and Han dynasty texts by one recounting the attempted assassination of his son, Prince Qingji of Wu. Again, King Helü made use of an assassin, Yao Li, to achieve his aim. This tale is in many ways more gruesome than the previous, for Helü was said to have murdered Yao Li's family in order to add verisimilitude to the assassin's story of his resentment of King Helü. The would-be assassin was thus able to convince Prince Qingji of his bona fides. Having failed to complete his mission and his life having been spared for the knightly fashion in which he had conducted his attempted murder, Yao Li killed himself, in order to avoid having to revenge himself on his

⁸⁸ The *Yue Jue Shu* is believed to be an Eastern Han text of unknown authorship, possibly written around AD 52. See Schuessler/Loewe: "Yüeh chüeh shu," p. 491. All attempts to ascribe authorship to Zi Gong, Wu Zixu and others have proved untenable; see Zhang Xuecheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 639.

⁸⁹ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 80 [*Ji Bao Jian*].

⁹⁰ For a consideration of the dating of this text, and its relationship with other surviving accounts of the conflicts between Wu and Yue; see Lagerwey: "Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu," pp. 473-475.

⁹¹ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 35 [*Wang Liao Shi Gongzi Guang Zhuan*].

⁹² See Xu Deping: *Jinlouzi Jiaozhu*, p. 253 [*Zha Ji*].

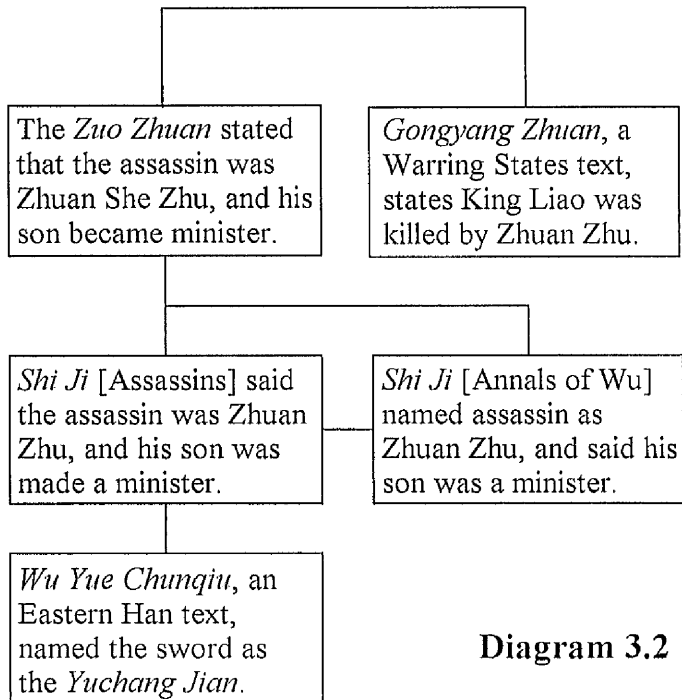


Diagram 3.2

employer as it would have been correct for him to do.⁹³ The earliest version of this tale is found in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, in which Prince Qingji survived the assassination attempt,⁹⁴ in later versions like that found in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, the prince did not survive, and forgave Yao Li with his dying breath. Yao Li, realizing that he would be obliged to avenge his family if he returned to the state of Wu committed suicide by the bizarre method of cutting off his hands and feet before falling on his sword.⁹⁵ This would again seem to point to the increasing level of violence in later versions of stories about the Spring and Autumn period.⁹⁶

This story would seem to be almost certainly fictional, as unlike the situation with the assassination of King Liao, there would seem to be no question of paying or rewarding the assassin for his work. Yao Li's family were killed, and so could not benefit from his work, and their deaths took place before Yao Li made any attempt to kill the prince. For Yao Li to have gone ahead with his plans would seem unnaturally quixotic. Although later on, many men were said to have killed themselves as a way of displaying their unswerving loyalty to their ruler, this would seem to have been a formula to indicate a charismatic ruler rather than a statement of fact. Also the *Zuo Zhuan* recorded quite a different fate for a man of this name. During the last years of King Fucha of Wu, one Prince Qingji (whose relationship to the ruler was nowhere indicated) warned the king of imminent danger from the state of Yue and was rebuffed.

⁹³ See for example Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 11:8b [*Zhong Lian*]. At this time, suicide was seen as an honourable option if loyalty to the ruler and state was in conflict with the duty to revenge the deaths of family members; see Lindell: "Stories of Suicide in Ancient China," p. 177.

⁹⁴ Prince Qingji of Wu was later credited with almost supernatural powers in dodging arrows; see Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, p. 91 [*Zuo Si: Wu Du Fu*]. For a discussion of this development; see Knechtges: *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 402.

⁹⁵ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, pp. 50-51 [*Helü Neizhuan*].

⁹⁶ It was this more violent version of the story of Prince Qingji that inspired another of the *Wen Xuan* poems that makes reference to these events; see Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, p. 226 [*Guo Pu: Jiang Fu*].

Having failed to convince the king of the gravity of the situation, he instituted a programme of appeasement with Yue. This angered the populace of Wu, who killed him.⁹⁷ How this individual relates to the supposed son of King Liao is not clear.

From the earliest times, stories featuring King Helü of Wu show a high level of violence being instigated by that monarch personally. This may reflect a certain contemporary view of his actions, for the historical texts record a number of campaigns undertaken by King Helü against his kin.⁹⁸ It is noticeable that all of the versions of the tale of King Liao's murder were to be found in texts which laid claim to historical veracity. So of all the stories of the hegemony discussed here, the tale of the death of King Liao is the most likely to be factually true. The variations between versions were, with the exception of the account in the *Gongyang Zhuan*, insignificant, and the association with a specific date (which was certainly at least the year that King Liao did indeed die) make it possible that the events did occur as described here.

The manufacture of fine swords such as the *Yuchang jian* held a particularly high place in the cultures of both Wu and Yue,⁹⁹ a place comparable with that given to bronze ritual vessels in the Central States. The popularity of these weapons is interesting, as they indicate a different fighting style to that prevalent in the north, where long-range weapons held a much more important place in the warrior's arsenal.¹⁰⁰ It is

⁹⁷ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1715-1716 [Ai 20].

⁹⁸ King Helü was said to have persecuted two of the princes of Wu (whose precise relationship with him is not known, but who would presumably have been cousins) Zhuyong and Yanyu. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1485 [Zhao 27]. In the *Shi Ji*, 31:1467, the name of the latter is given as Gaiyu. According to the *Shi Ji*, 31:1466, King Helü's administration originally included his younger brother, Fugai, who fled to Chu to escape his brother's wrath following an attempted coup.

⁹⁹ See Yang Hong: *Zhongguo Gu Bingqi Luncong*, pp. 118-119. Twelve kinds of swords were made in Wu, twenty-four kinds in Yue; see Dong Chuping: *Wu Yue Wenhua Xintan*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁰ This point can be illustrated by comparing the "killing distance" (ie. the optimum distance at which a weapon can still be effective while the wielder is himself out of danger) of the weapons popular among the Central States, and in Wu and Yue; see Lan

striking that the vast majority of the objects with proprietary inscriptions to indicate that they belonged to Kings Helü of Wu or Goujian of Yue were swords.¹⁰¹ King Helü of Wu was himself a patron of the art of sword-smithing, both in fact and in fiction, as numerous fine swords made for his personal use have been excavated,¹⁰² and in literature, he was described as having commissioned Gan Jiang, the legendary swordsmith of antiquity, to make him a sword. Gan Jiang made two, the *yang* sword named after him and which he hid away, and the *yin* sword named after his wife, Mo Ye. King Helü was presented with the second.¹⁰³ This sword, *Moye*, was not otherwise mentioned in ancient texts.¹⁰⁴

On a number of occasions, the king made use of famous named swords, such as when he had King Liao killed with the sword *Yuchang*, as described above. Later on, King Helü's most famous minister, Wu Zixu, would commit suicide on the orders of King Fucha using the sword *Zhulü* (a sword name probably referring to the quality of the blade, 'well-tempered'), a story to be considered below. Both the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and the *Yue Jue Shu* gave detailed accounts of the swords owned by King Helü. These texts both indicate that of all the famous swords he owned, the king of Wu had only commissioned one, that made by Gan Jiang. The rest came from Yue. The *Yue Jue Shu*, a text dated to the Eastern Han dynasty,¹⁰⁵ gave no indication of how the swords made

Yongwei: *Chunqiu Shiqi de Bubing*, p. 117.

¹⁰¹ One of the rare exceptions was two dishes with identical inscriptions excavated from the tomb of Marquis Zhao of Cai; see Shi Xiejie: *Wu Yue Wenzi Huibian*, pp. 534-535.

¹⁰² A number of fine swords have been excavated with inscriptions indicating that they were made by order of King Helü of Wu; see Dong Chuping: *Wu Yue Wenhua Xintan*, pp. 337-338, see also Beijing Daxue Lishixi Kaogu Jiaoyanshi Shang Zhou Zubian: *Shang Zhou Kaogu*, p. 254.

¹⁰³ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 40 [Helü *Neizhuan*].

¹⁰⁴ This story, and other related tales are considered in Lanciotti: "Sword Casting and Related Legends in China," pp. 107-114.

¹⁰⁵ For the dating of this text to around AD 52; see Schussler/ Loewe: "Yüeh chüeh shu," p. 491.

by Ou Yezi arrived in King Helü of Wu's possession, and identified the three swords as *Shengxie* (a name meaning 'victor over evil'), *Yuchang* and *Zhanlu* ('black').¹⁰⁶ The other text that dealt exclusively with the conflicts between Wu and Yue, *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, a text also dated to the end of the Han dynasty but believed to be at least partly derived from the previous one,¹⁰⁷ explicitly stated that these swords were made by the master swordsmith Ou Yezi, and given as a gift by King Yunchang of Yue, King Goujian's father. This present consisted of three named swords, *Yuchang*, (the naming of this sword was discussed above), *Panying* (a name which seems to mean 'hard'), and *Zhanlu*.¹⁰⁸ The names of the last two swords would thus seem to fit into the expected pattern of famous swords, the names referring to some special quality of the blade.¹⁰⁹ These named swords would therefore fall into the category of gift swords.¹¹⁰

The story to be considered next is that of the strange behaviour of the sword *Zhanlu*, which was included in accounts of the events of the year 512 BC, the third year of King Helü's reign. The account given in the *Yue Jue Shu* of the exploits of the sword *Zhanlu* was quite simple.¹¹¹ In this version, the sword was revolted by the deaths of the people of Wu to accompany dead members of the royal family. (In this instance, both sons and daughters were mentioned). The sword therefore decided to leave the unpleasant atmosphere of the court at Wu, and travel to Chu. Thus one day when King Zhao of Chu (r. 515-489 BC) had been asleep he woke up and found the *Zhanlu* on his pillow. However, the sword had not gone directly to Chu, but made a considerable

¹⁰⁶ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 80 [*Ji Bao Jian*].

¹⁰⁷ See Lagerwey: "Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu," p. 474.

¹⁰⁸ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 56 [*Helü Neizhuan*].

¹⁰⁹ See Davidson: *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 177.

¹¹⁰ It would seem a universal theme in sword-lore that a named sword belonging to some great hero or ruler had to have come to him from someone else. See Davidson: *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 129, 162. For an analysis of this theme; see Wheeler: "Joan of Arc's Sword in the Stone," p. xii.

¹¹¹ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, pp. 79-80 [*Ji Bao Jian*].

detour to pass through Qin, and as a result the King of Qin attacked Chu in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain this highly-prized sword.¹¹² The virtue of this sword was implicitly compared with that of the sword *Yuchang*, which King Helü used to stab King Liao of Wu. According to this version of the story:

This [assassination] was just a small test for enemy states, they had not yet seen his great plans for the world.¹¹³

This version of the story was thus more ambivalent about King Helü's actions than other accounts. While his reputation was not enhanced by the murder of King Liao, it was not ruined either, except in the fine perceptions of the sword. The role of this assassination in perception of the reign of King Helü is thus comparable to that of the human sacrifice at the obsequies to Lord Mu of Qin. Although horrific events of which no-one could approve, they had no power to damage the reputations of these two hegemony irreparably.

Similarly, according to the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, this sword, disgusted at the behaviour of King Helü, specifically at the death of his daughter, a supernatural tale discussed in Chapter Two, left Wu and travelled through the waters to Chu.¹¹⁴ King Zhao of Chu was asleep, and when he woke up he found the *Zhanlu* on his pillow. Unable to identify the sword, King Zhao asked one Feng Huzi about it. It was Feng Huzi who identified the sword correctly, and described the various careers of the three swords presented by King Yunchang of Yue to the future King Helü. The *Yuchang* was an unlucky sword destined for rebellion; a sword that would be used by subjects to kill

¹¹² Although this story was associated with the year 512 BC, Qin did not acquire a king until 337 BC. The identification of the ruler of Qin as a king would seem to be another example of homeostasis, where a story was updated with anachronistic references to ensure relevance with a later audience; see Goody and Watts: "The Consequences of Literacy," p. 30.

¹¹³ Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 80 [*Ji Bao Jian*].

¹¹⁴ This part of the story would seem to be thematically related to that described in Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 262. D1524.10. Magic staff comes to one over water, and D1524.12. Magic axe comes to one over water.

their rulers, and by sons to kill their fathers. The *Panying* would never benefit its owner, it could only be used to bury with the dead. The *Zhanlu* however was a proper sword of great worth, but it would invariably leave when the ruler had unprincipled plans.¹¹⁵ This account went on to say that King Helü was so distressed at the loss of this one sword that he attacked Chu, the forces of Wu being led by Wu Zixu, Bo Xi and Sun Wu.¹¹⁶ According to the *Shi Ji*, Wu did indeed attack Chu in this year, but the reason given in historical accounts was a wish to kill the two princes of Wu who had taken sanctuary there, an aim in which they were successful.¹¹⁷

The story of the sword *Zhanlu* going to Chu should be seen in the context of the serious aggression between Chu and Wu at this period. During the reign of King Zhao, Chu was attacked by Wu in the first (515 BC), fifth (511 BC), and tenth (506 BC) years of his reign. The campaign by Wu in 506 BC resulted in King Zhao being forced to go into exile from his capital, Ying. King Zhao attempted to seek refuge at Yunmeng, but he was wounded there.¹¹⁸ The king then fled first to Yun, but fearing assassination there he moved on to Sui. The following year, 505 BC King Zhao was able to return to his capital, only to be attacked again by Wu in 504 BC. As a result, the king moved the

¹¹⁵ For related themes in other cultures; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 175. D1316.11. Sword turns upon owner when untruth is uttered.

¹¹⁶ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 56 [Helü *Neizhuan*].

¹¹⁷ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1466. These events were also described in the *Zuo Zhuan*, but the aim seems to have been for Wu to weaken Chu, rather than simply to murder the remaining princes of the Wu royal family. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1507-1509 [Zhao 30].

¹¹⁸ Accounts of the injury King Zhao received differ. According to the *Zuo Zhuan* he was attacked by bandits there, and received a spear-thrust in the shoulder; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1546 [Ding 4]. According to the *Shi Ji*, he was shot with an arrow; see *Shi Ji*, 40:1515.

capital to Ruo.¹¹⁹ Only Wu's turning its attention to Yue saved King Zhao from further attacks.¹²⁰

Sword legends continued to be of great popularity. The sword *Zhulu*, having been used by Wu Zixu to commit suicide, was later part of King Goujian's spoils of war. The king sent it to the Grandee Zhong for him to commit suicide with.¹²¹ The first Han Emperor, Gaozu, owned a sword which he used to cut off a snake's head.¹²² This sword later known as *Baishhe* ('white snake') became the subject of a story in the Jin dynasty which described how this sword had escaped from a fire in the armoury of Emperor Wu of Jin to become a purple aura (*qi*) in the region of the Jupiter stations Niu and Dou.¹²³ These stories all served to highlight the belief that some swords were mysterious, magical objects, with strange powers.

King Helü suffered from the fact that accounts of his life have been largely overshadowed by the prolonged conflict between Wu and Yue, and by perennial popularity of the stories written about one of his ministers, Wu Zixu. The conflict between Wu and Yue was to give lasting cultural prominence to a number of historical figures, who were to form a consistently fascinating theme for writers and artists all over Southeast Asia,¹²⁴ the kings Helü and his successor Fucha in Wu,¹²⁵ together with

¹¹⁹ For a detailed account of these events; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1505-1557 [Zhao 30- Ding 6], and *Shi Ji*, 40:1715-1717.

¹²⁰ See *Shi Ji*, 40:1717.

¹²¹ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 176 [Goujian *Fa Wu Wai Zhuan*].

¹²² After the snake was cut in half, an old woman appeared and identified the serpent as the son of Baidi (a representation of the state of Qin) killed by a son of Chidi (that is Han). The death of the snake thus prefigured Qin's destruction by Han. See *Shi Ji*, 8:347. The identification of the snake and Gaozu as representing the two empires was made by Ying Shao, see note 8, p. 378. The snake was later identified as a white snake; see *Han Shu*, 100A:4212. By the Jin dynasty the sword used was called *Baishhe*.

¹²³ See Ma Gao: *Zhonghua Gujin Zhu*, p. 10.

¹²⁴ For example, the Japanese painter Kiyohara Yukinobu painted a series of depictions of the tragic relationship between Hanrei (Goujian's minister Fan Li) and Seishi (Xi Shi).

Goujian of Yue; the loyal minister Fan Li, the disregarded and executed Wu Zixu, and the corrupt minister Bo Xi. These characters form the basis for a myriad more or less historically accurate representations of the struggles between Wu and Yue.¹²⁶

Unfortunately, one of the characters later to be most associated with these events did not really appear in the earliest surviving accounts. The beautiful Xi Shi, though possibly already making her mark in oral accounts of the struggle between Wu and Yue, was known at this date from only a handful of references.¹²⁷ Also, in many of these early references, she was depicted as a legendarily beautiful woman, with no mention of any particular association with the destruction of Wu.¹²⁸

Wu Zixu was portrayed as an exile, who came from Chu to Wu in order to wreak his vengeance on King Ping of Chu (r. 528-516 BC), who had executed his father and older brother.¹²⁹ Interestingly when disaster overtook Wu Zixu's father, usually ascribed to an unfortunately frank criticism of his ruler's sexual behaviour, both his sons were out of reach of King Ping. The oldest, Wu Zishang, obeying the instructions of

See Fister: *Japanese Women Artists 1600-1900*, p. 39.

¹²⁵ There are many more stories about the life of King Fucha than King Helü, and he is occasionally credited as being a hegemon; see Wei Juxian: "Wu Ba Kao," p. 560. The importance of King Fucha perhaps rests in the special place in Chinese thought reserved for the last ruler in any kingdom or dynasty.

¹²⁶ For example Xiao Jun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu Shihua*, and Fei Junliang: *Wu Zixu*. There is also a dramatic treatment of the Xi Shi legend, of anonymous authorship, entitled *Xi Shi*.

¹²⁷ See for example Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 271 [*Xiao Cheng*]. This passage is dated to the Warring States period; see Luo Genzu: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 83.

¹²⁸ An exception is the *Yue Jue Shu*, where Xi Shi, and another beauty, Zheng Dan, were presented to the king of Wu by King Goujian, and when Wu Zixu remonstrated, King Fucha decided that he was being disloyal and had him executed. Xi Shi and her companion thus passively played a vital part in the process by which Yue gradually destroyed Wu. See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 84 [*Jiu Shu*].

¹²⁹ At this time the state of Wu was increasingly being brought into conflict with Chu, and this proved a turning-point for Wu's development. Increasingly they were obliged to form links with the Central States, and develop their military technology which had previously been concentrated on the navy. See Yu Zonghan: "Wu Shi Ru Ying zhi Zhan Youguan Wenti Tantaoy," pp. 93, 96-97.

filial piety, returned to Chu to face the king's wrath. Wu Zixu saved himself, in order to avenge his father and brother. To have failed to die at the appropriate moment (as in the case of Guan Zhong), was the defining aspect of his life, and the subject of enduring interest and condemnation for later generations.¹³⁰ The respective roles of the older and younger brother were also psychologically acute, as studies of sibling behaviour have demonstrated.¹³¹ Wu Zixu was said to have achieved his vengeance at the head of the Wu troops, and in the most extreme accounts of his revenge, he was said to have whipped King Ping's corpse three hundred lashes.¹³²

Wu Zixu's career is exhaustively described in the *Zuo Zhuan*, with entries ranging over a fifty year period,¹³³ and that information is supplemented by other sources. One strand of these tales indicates that there was a tradition of Wu Zixu being ugly, and thus failing initially to gain the patronage of the then Prince Guang of Wu due to his repulsive appearance.¹³⁴ Wu Zixu is not the only minister of a hegemon to be described in this way, for according to the *Xunzi* King Zhuang of Chu's chief minister, Sunshu Ao, was bald and had a huge left foot.¹³⁵ Another strand of this tradition survives in the *Qin Cao*, which records odes supposedly composed by Wu Zixu,¹³⁶ and

¹³⁰ See Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 83 [*Lun Ru*].

¹³¹ See Sulloway: *Born to Rebel*, p. 51.

¹³² See *Shi Ji*, 66:2176. King Ping of Chu's tomb was indeed broken into, but the desecration of the corpse is believed to be entirely fictional; see Liang Yusheng: *Shi Ji Zhiyi*, p. 1199.

¹³³ See Durrant: *The Cloudy Mirror*, pp. 76-77.

¹³⁴ For similar instances of this kind of behaviour; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 5, p. 143, P14.2. King refuses to meet ill-formed person.

¹³⁵ See Li Disheng: *Xunzi Jishi*, p. 74 [*Fei Xiang*]. For the thematic element of a wise but ugly person; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 5, p. 29, M93. Some texts record physical abnormalities of the hegemon, most famously Lord Wen of Jin's 'double ribs' but an unusual physique was also accorded to King Goujian of Yue. See for example Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, pp. 159, 171 [*Gu Xiang*].

¹³⁶ See Cai Yong: *Qin Cao*, p. 25 [*Wu Zixu Ge*].

which bring him into the tradition of versifying heroes, like Qu Yuan, with whom he was so often to be compared.¹³⁷

After King Helü's death, and King Fucha's accession, Wu Zixu found himself out of sympathy with his ruler. Such a fate would have been greeted with considerable dismay under any circumstances, but Wu Zixu felt that his king was not fully alive to the threat to Wu's stability posed by the continued existence of Yue. This disagreement, combined with the enmity of the Prime Minister, who according to subsequent accounts had been heavily bribed by Yue, culminated in the downfall of Wu Zixu, and ended with him being ordered to commit suicide. All versions of this tale culminate in the desecration of the body, either having the eyes gouged out, or the body thrown into the river, or both. King Fucha, after his defeat by the forces of Yue, also killed himself, lamenting his treatment of Wu Zixu.¹³⁸ This story was to prove perennially popular, and was known in many versions.

The earliest surviving account of the death of Wu Zixu is found in the *Wu Yu* section of the *Guo Yu*.¹³⁹ Here it was said that Wu Zixu killed himself with a sword, and that when he told King Fucha of his dying wish to have his eyes hung on the East Gate to the capital of Wu, in order that he might "see" the entry of the Yue troops, the king was enraged. The king ordered that the body should be placed in a leather sack and thrown in the Yangtze. The account of Wu Zixu's death in the *Jiazi Xin Shu* described his eyes as having been hung up on the East Gate, his body tied up in a leather sack and

¹³⁷ The *Chu Ci* is a particularly rich source of comparisons, Wu Zixu being compared to Jie Zhi Tui, Prince Bigan, as well as Qu Yuan; see Yang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, p. 163 [*Jiu Zhang: Xi Wang Ri*], p. 284 [*Qi Jian: Yuan Si*], p. 321 [*Jiu Huai: Zun Jia*].

¹³⁸ The Bei Qi dynasty writer Yan Zhitui (styled Jie) who presumably felt a certain affinity with martyred ministers of this period, wrote a bizarre variant of the story of Wu Zixu, where the dead minister was named as Gongsun Xian, whose ghost communicated with Bo Xi from heaven. See Yan Zhitui: *Huan Yuan Ji*, pp. 141-142.

¹³⁹ See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 602 [*Wu Yu*]. This section of the text has been dated to 431-384 BC; see Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 630.

thrown into the Yangtze.¹⁴⁰ There are two versions of Wu Zixu's death found in the *Shi Ji*, one in the Annals of the House of Wu, and one in Wu Zixu's biography. The first recorded that he was sent a sword to kill himself with, and that he asked for catalpa trees to be planted above his tomb, and his eyes to be pointed towards the East Gate.¹⁴¹ As would be expected, the account in Wu Zixu's biography was much fuller, and for the first time the sword used is named as the *Zhulu*.¹⁴² Again, Wu was said to have asked for catalpas to be planted above his tomb, and his eyes hung on the East Gate. Refused this by an angry king, his body was placed in a leather sack and thrown in the Yangtze. This version states that the people of Wu established a cult to him.¹⁴³ The *Yantie Lun*, a text ascribed to Huan Kuang who compiled it during the reign of Han Xuandi (r. 74-49 BC) from the debate that took place in 81 BC,¹⁴⁴ also included a description of the death of Wu Zixu. He was said to have been presented with the sword *Zhulu* with which to kill himself, the body was then thrown into the Yangtze in a sack. It was again said that his death was widely mourned in Wu.¹⁴⁵

The next version, a very short account, is found in the *Chu Ci* (Songs of Chu), which simply recorded that the body was thrown into the Yangtze.¹⁴⁶ The *Shuo Yuan*, a text presented by Liu Xiang to the throne in 17 BC, also includes the tale of Wu Zixu's

¹⁴⁰ See Jia Yi: *Jiazi Xin Shu*, p. 74 [*Er Bi*]. The textual history of this text is very confused, but it may represent genuine Western Han usage, and as such should be considered here. See Nylan: "Hsin shu," pp. 161, 167.

¹⁴¹ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1472.

¹⁴² The name of this sword would seem to refer to the ornamentation of the blade, perhaps some form of patterning in the metal. In this matter, the naming of Chinese swords would seem to follow the same lines as that of European swords, which were called after some excellence of the blade, such as the swords Afspringr and Kvernbitr; see Davidson: *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 177.

¹⁴³ See *Shi Ji*, 66:2180.

¹⁴⁴ See Loewe: "Yen t'ie lun," p. 477.

¹⁴⁵ See Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 96 [*Fei Yang*].

¹⁴⁶ See Yang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, p. 321 [*Jiu Huai: Zun Jia*]. This poem is ascribed to Wang Bao (fl. 74-49 BC).

death. It says that he was presented with an engraved sword with which to commit suicide, but otherwise the details were exactly the same as those given in the *Shi Ji* biography of Wu Zixu, and again, the people of Wu were said to have established a cult to him.¹⁴⁷ The *Yue Jue Shu* included several references to the circumstances in which Wu Zixu died. In the first, it stated that the king of Wu believed that Wu Zixu was disloyal and so he presented him with a sword with which to kill himself.¹⁴⁸ In the second, it stated that Wu Zixu was given a sword to commit suicide with, that the body was thrown into the river bore, and that afterwards a cult formed whereby the people of Wu believed that he had become a water-spirit.¹⁴⁹ According to the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, which is also believed to be an Eastern Han text, though later than the *Yue Jue Shu*,¹⁵⁰ recorded that Wu Zixu committed suicide with a sword called the *Zhulu*, and that his body was put in a sack and thrown in the Yangtze. This text is distinguished by the detail that Wu Zixu's head was cut off and placed on a high building.¹⁵¹ The last version which is within the remit of this thesis is found in the *Fengsu Tongyi*,¹⁵² a quite distinctive account, which says that Wu Zixu was executed by King Fucha (which though both methods resulted in death, gave a different feel to the events), and that the body was then thrown in the Yangtze. It was also said that it was by King Fucha's wish that the eyes were hung on the East Gate.¹⁵³ The relationships of these versions can be seen in Diagram 3.3.

¹⁴⁷ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 230-231 [*Zheng Jian*].

¹⁴⁸ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 38 [*Qing Di*].

¹⁴⁹ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 102 [*De Xu Waizhuan Ji*].

¹⁵⁰ For the relative dating of these two texts; see Lagerwey: "Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu," p. 473.

¹⁵¹ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 85 [*Fucha Nei Zhuan*].

¹⁵² For the dating of this text to the very end of the Eastern Han; see Nylan: "Feng su t'ung i," p. 105. This work was written by Ying Shao (c. AD 140- before 204) at the end of his life, so a date of c. AD 200 would seem reasonable.

¹⁵³ See Wang Liqi: *Fengsu Tongyi Jiaozhu*, p. 596 [*Shi Wen*].

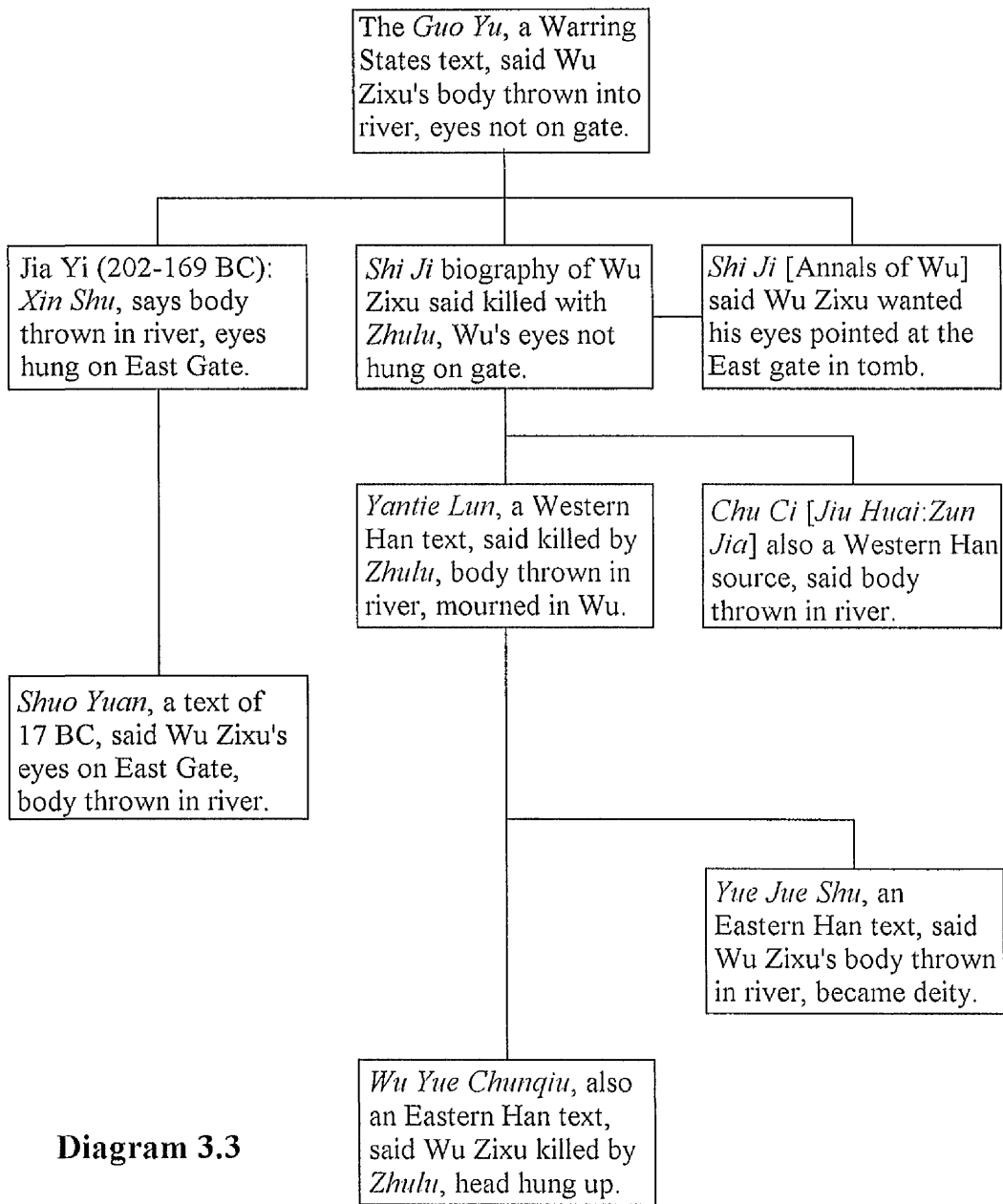


Diagram 3.3

The treatment of this episode is an important indicator of the nature of this kind of narrative. Many scholars have discussed the origins of the stories of the life of Wu Zixu that survive, some considering him to be a river god euhemerised,¹⁵⁴ others suggesting that the account of his life was more a travel saga, a very important early Chinese romance.¹⁵⁵ The neat parallels of this story have also been commented on. Wu Zixu hounded out of Chu with his life at risk later returned to Chu to force its king into exile, and likewise King Helü of Wu who murdered his cousin King Liao was in turn killed himself; King Goujian began as a victim of Wu and ended as a victimiser.¹⁵⁶ However at this early date, in a 'historical' narrative, packed with genuine historical figures, it was not possible for Wu Zixu to fully demonstrate his fictional status. In later narratives, swords for example, took on considerable magic significance, and other historical figures would find their swords behaving as magic talismans.¹⁵⁷ This change seems to have occurred at some point in the late Han, though it may reflect an earlier shift in oral literature, or a pre-existing form not previously recorded. Prior to that time, however, items such as swords were not allowed to behave in the undisciplined fashion later ascribed to them. Thus, it was not until the development of fiction as a separate literary genre that this kind of story would fulfill its potential.

Wu Zixu's fictional end can be compared with that of one of King Goujian of Yue's ministers, Fan Li.¹⁵⁸ After King Goujian's final victory over Wu, Fan Li fell out of

¹⁵⁴ See Johnson: "Epic and History in Early China," p. 259. Rudolph: "The *Shih Chi* Biography of Wu Tzu-hsü," p. 105, noted that although Wu Zixu was particularly associated with the Hangzhou tidal bore, he came to have temples dedicated to him all over China, as a water spirit.

¹⁵⁵ See Maspero: *China in Antiquity*, p. 360. By the Tang dynasty there was certainly a fully-fledged epic treatment of the life of Wu Zixu; see Waley: *Ballads and Stories from Tun-huang*, pp.25-52.

¹⁵⁶ See Hardy: *Objectivity and Interpretation in the "Shih Chi"*, p. 227.

¹⁵⁷ See Ma Gao: *Zhonghua Gujin Zhu*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ See Johnson: "The Wu Tzu-hsü *Pien-wen* and Its Sources (Part 1)," p. 143.

favour with his monarch and chose to leave rather than face his displeasure.¹⁵⁹

According to the *Liexian Zhuan* he lived to a great old age, travelling round the Chinese world, and improving the life of the people of Tao to whom he became feudal lord.¹⁶⁰

While possibly he had once been a real person, his fate, as recorded in the *Shi Ji* and other sources, eliminated such ties to the world as his children.¹⁶¹ In the earlier accounts Fan Li's departure along the Yangtze was explicitly compared with the death of Wu Zixu,¹⁶² after the Han the idea arose that Fan Li had been accompanied by Xi Shi.¹⁶³

King Helü of Wu died after being wounded in battle against Yue. His last words, spoken to his son and heir Fucha,¹⁶⁴ are given as having been that his son should never forget to revenge his father's death.¹⁶⁵ This strong injunction was to prove a profound influence on his son's policies, and he did indeed conquer Yue. The tradition of associating these words with the dying king fits the tradition of *Geflügelte Worte*, that is a statement (often the supposed last words of a historical figure), usually apocryphal, which sum up a life and career.¹⁶⁶ King Helü's words encapsulate the aggressive, warlike attitudes for which he would continue to be remembered. King Helü's words would also

¹⁵⁹ For a consideration of the different accounts of Fan Li's life; see Wei Juxian: "Fan Li Shiji Kao," pp. 571-578.

¹⁶⁰ See Liu Xiang: *Liexian Zhuan*, p. 21 [Fan Li].

¹⁶¹ See Yao Nai: *Xi Bao Xian Quanji*, 1:1a.

¹⁶² See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 18:11b [*Li Wei*].

¹⁶³ See Yu Yue: *Xiaofoumei Xian Gu*, p. 4a.

¹⁶⁴ Fucha was not King Helü's original heir, that was his son Zhonglei, who died young. See Liang Yusheng: *Shi Ji Zhiyi*, p. 841.

¹⁶⁵ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1468. According to the *Zuo Zhuan*, King Fucha employed a person, of his own volition, to remind him to take vengeance against Yue. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1596 [Ding 14]. For a discussion of these different versions; see Guo Songtao: *Shi Ji Zhaji*, p. 168.

¹⁶⁶ See Vansina: *Oral Tradition as History*, p. 27. In a comparable instance, King Andriampoinimerina said on his deathbed: "The ocean is the border of my ricefield," thus giving his heir the programme of continuing the unification of Madagascar.

act as a challenge to his son, to avenge his father's death. King Fucha did so, but did not seize the moment to remove the threat posed by Yue. Having failed to use the opportunity, when he attempted to recoup, he was too late and his life was forfeit.¹⁶⁷

King Goujian of Yue

Consideration of the background of Yue culture, and any impact that it may have had on the stories told of King Goujian, is hampered by the fact that very little is known on the subject.¹⁶⁸ There have been virtually no examples of Yue material culture excavated,¹⁶⁹ and such things as have been found, most famously the swords of King Goujian, came from tombs far to the north of Yue. Attempts have been made to link Yue culture with that of the Yellow River valley culture to the north, but such attempts have been largely unsuccessful.¹⁷⁰ To the Central States, states like Yue were strange and obscure, but also known as the source of many interesting and exotic products.¹⁷¹ Such obscurity was reflected in King Goujian's relatively late addition to the list of hegemonies, though interest in his life and deeds increased greatly during the Han,¹⁷² when two important accounts, the *Yue Jue Shu* and the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* were compiled. The evidence suggests that King Goujian had perhaps the least participation in the affairs of

¹⁶⁷ This aspect of King Fucha's life is comparable to the Irish folk-tales of Fionn, who having failed to complete a challenge at the right moment, attempts to recoup, and is fatally injured. See Ó hÓgám: "Magic Attributes of the Hero," p. 218.

¹⁶⁸ See Zhang Yinlin: *Zhongguo Shi Gang: Shang Gu Pian*, p. 73.

¹⁶⁹ See Chen Pan: "Chunqiu Lieguo Qianxi Kao," p. 74, and Peters: *Tattooed Faces and Stilt Houses: Who were the Ancient Yue?* p. 19.

¹⁷⁰ See Wei Juxian: "Wu-Yue Kaogu Huizhi," p. 363.

¹⁷¹ See Xiao Fan: "Qin Han Shiqi Zhongguo dui Nanfang de Jingying," p. 17.

¹⁷² See Gu Yanwu: *Ri Zhi Lu*, p. 468. The account given in the *Shi Ji* seems to indicate that the First Emperor was an admirer of King Goujian's policies. In 210 BC, he set up a stone inscription at Kuaiji, indirectly lauding the king's lawgiving, and announcing that his own legislation would follow a similar pattern. See *Shi Ji*, 6:260-262.

the Zhou confederacy of all of the hegemons;¹⁷³ although the *Shi Ji* recorded that on one occasion the Zhou king sent him meat from a sacrifice,¹⁷⁴ it has been suggested that this tale was invented later to add weight to the King of Yue's claim to the hegemony. However, many texts from the Warring States on referred to King Goujian as one of the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period.

The defeat of King Goujian of Yue by his arch-enemy, King Fucha of Wu in 494 BC, the third year of his rule, was to prove the turning point of his reign. Having been defeated by the Wu forces at Fujiao,¹⁷⁵ he and his five thousand remaining troops took refuge in the mountain fastness of Kuaiji, and attempted to come to some kind of agreement with the Wu government. The importance of these events can be seen from the enormous number of accounts of King Goujian's capitulation. The earliest account of these events was that of the *Zuo Zhuan*, which briefly states that King Goujian sent Grandee Zhong to negotiate the terms of his surrender with the Prime Minister of Wu, Bo Xi. Wu Zixu was said to have objected to the terms of this agreement on the grounds that Wu and Yue were traditional enemies, and that it was impossible to secure the future of Wu while the state of Yue survived as an independent entity.¹⁷⁶ King Fucha of Wu paid no attention to Wu Zixu's warnings, and so:

In the third month, Yue and Wu made peace. That Wu defeated Yue was not recorded [in the *Chunqiu*] because Wu did not report their victory, nor Yue their defeat.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ See Xiao Fan: *Chunqiu zhi Liang Han Shiqi Zhongguo xiang Nanfang de Fazhan*, p. 68.

¹⁷⁴ This ritually significant action allowed the monarch to compliment a feudal lord, by presenting meat that was imbued with the spirit of the ancestors to whom the sacrifice had been made, in this case Kings Wen and Wu. See Kleeman: "Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals," p. 189, and Toyota Hisashi: "Shū Tenshi to Bun, Bu no Sa no Shiyo ni tsuite," p. 13.

¹⁷⁵ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1605 [Ai 1], and *Shi Ji*, 41:1740.

¹⁷⁶ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1605-1607 [Ai 1].

¹⁷⁷ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1607 [Ai 1].

No mention was made in the *Zuo Zhuan* account of the precise provisions of the peace agreement, or of what happened in practice.

The next version was that found in the *Guo Yu*,¹⁷⁸ which described the terms of the agreement reached by the Grandee Zhong and Prime Minister Bo Xi in some detail. In a brief introduction to the main events, it was said that King Goujian, holed up on Mt. Kuaiji, issued a decree to his remaining troops which in effect asked anyone with any good ideas for preventing the complete annihilation of Yue to come forward. It was his response to this decree that brought the Grandee Zhong to the attention of the king, and he was made responsible for the negotiations with Wu.¹⁷⁹ The final terms of the agreement reached seem to have been that Wu was given the state treasure of Yue, the women of Yue would be made subjects of Wu, and the Yue army was regrouped as a force to be led by the king of Yue but under the sole command of the king of Wu. As described in the *Zuo Zhuan*, Wu Zixu was said to have objected vociferously to any treaty being made with Yue. As for how the treaty worked in practice, the *Guo Yu* states that Yue presented Prime Minister Bo Xi with eight women,¹⁸⁰ in order to ensure his backing for an agreement that would leave the borders and governmental structure of Yue intact. King Goujian was said to have sent three hundred of his officials to Wu, and to have walked in front of King Fucha's horses in what would have been some form of victory parade as an act of personal humiliation.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ For the dating of this section of the text to 384-314 BC; see Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 631.

¹⁷⁹ See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 631 [*Yue Yu Shang*].

¹⁸⁰ One of these women would later become famous under the name of Xi Shi. See for example Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 84 [*Jiu Shu*].

¹⁸¹ See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 632 [*Yue Yu Shang*] for the terms which were suggested by the Grandee Zhong, and which were agreed by King Fucha. For the bribery of the prime minister and the account of the practical results of this treaty; see p. 634 [*Yue Yu Shang*].

The next account of the aftermath of King Goujian's defeat at Kuaiji was that in the *Han Feizi*,¹⁸² which described the king as a subject of the state of Wu, carrying a halberd and walking in front of King Fucha's horses, presumably in some sort of victory parade. This public shaming of the defeated king was explicitly linked with King Goujian's subsequent victory over Wu at Gusu, and King Goujian was compared with Kings Wen and Wu of Zhou, in his capacity to rise above such humiliation. As a result, the *Han Feizi* stated that it was entirely appropriate for King Goujian to have become hegemon.¹⁸³

The next mention of these events, in the *Han Shi Waizhuan*, a text dated to around 150 BC,¹⁸⁴ developed one aspect of the account given in the *Guo Yu*. There it was stated that the decree issued by King Goujian on Kuaiji to encourage new advisors to come to him with ideas, brought forward Grandee Zhong. The *Han Shi Waizhuan* developed this idea by saying that the crisis on Kuaiji would have proved disastrous for Yue had the king not quickly placed his affairs in the capable hands of Fan Li and the Grandee Zhong.¹⁸⁵ As a result of this action not only was he drawn from his difficulties but he also became hegemon over the southern states.¹⁸⁶ King Goujian was thus amply recompensed for his perspicacity in employing advisors of the highest calibre. In this text, the happy results for King Goujian were compared with other occasions when future hegemons were in difficulties such as the troubles of the Honourable Chonger of Jin with his father's new wife, Lady Ji of the Li Rong, which were resolved when he

¹⁸² For the dating of this text to the very end of the Warring States period; see Levi: "Han Fei tzu," p. 117.

¹⁸³ Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 403 [*Yu Lao*].

¹⁸⁴ See Hightower: "Han shih wai chuan," p. 126, for the dating of this text.

¹⁸⁵ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, p. 217.

¹⁸⁶ This unique characterisation of King Goujian as hegemon over the southern states would seem to be comparable to the much more common description of Lord Mu of Qin as hegemon over the Rong, or over the West. See for example *Shi Ji*, 5:194.

relied on Jiu Fan, Zhao Cui, and Jie Zhi Tui, and which ended with him becoming Lord Wen of Jin.¹⁸⁷

The *Shi Ji* gave one of the most detailed accounts of the events after King Goujian's defeat by the armies of Wu. According to the version that appeared in the account of the Hereditary House of Yue, King Goujian had been advised against an arms-race with Wu by Fan Li, for it was Yue's military preparations that forced Wu to attack them then. This is a unique explanation for the events, which were usually attributed to King Fucha's wish to avenge the death of his father, King Helü.¹⁸⁸ The terms of the treaty between Wu and Yue negotiated by the Grandee Zhong are given that King Goujian and his family were demoted to the status of subjects of the king of Wu. Again, Wu Zixu was said to have objected, but Grandee Zhong, under orders from King Goujian, presented Prime Minister Bo Xi with beautiful women and treasure which ensured his support for the agreement they had reached. The chapter on the Hereditary House of Wu in the *Shi Ji* said that King Fucha would not listen to Wu Zixu's warnings but that he did listen to Prime Minister Bo Xi, and that having made peace with Yue they held a blood covenant, after which King Fucha demobilised his army.¹⁸⁹ The practical impact of the treaty was that Grandee Zhong was put in charge of the

¹⁸⁷ In this text the name Jie Zhi Tui was given in the later variant of Jie Zi Tui; see Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, p. 217.

¹⁸⁸ The chapter on the Hereditary House of Wu gave King Fucha's wish to revenge his father's death as the sole reason for his revenge attack on Yue; see *Shi Ji*, 31:1468.

¹⁸⁹ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1469. The degree to which a blood covenant would have been seen as binding at this late date is hard to determine, as their international effectiveness declined, they were increasingly used to maintain order inside states. For a discussion on this point; see Zhou Bokan: "Chunqiu Hui Meng yu Bazhu Zhengzhi de Jichu," pp. 47-48, and Kaizuka Shigeki: "Chūgoku Kodai Toshi ni okeru Minkai," p. 51. Part of the problem is that it is not clear what the status of Yue vis-à-vis Wu was, whether it was legally an independent country in the wake of its conquest by King Fucha. For a consideration of this question; see Chen: "The Equality of States in Ancient China," pp. 648-650.

government of Yue while Fan Li and Grandee Zheji went as hostages to Wu. Fan Li was returned by Wu two years later.¹⁹⁰

The next two versions come from texts compiled by Liu Xiang from earlier documents. The *Shuo Yuan*, a text edited by Liu Xiang and presented to the throne in 17 BC,¹⁹¹ gave a slightly different account of the events after the king of Yue took refuge at Kuaiji. Again, the Grandee Zhong was said to have been sent to the prime minister of Wu to ask for peace, and he was said to have bribed him to grant it. However, here there was no mention of women being presented to Prime Minister Bo Xi, in fact when the nature of the bribes was mentioned it was clearly a financial transaction.¹⁹² The terms of the agreement indicated here suggest that all inhabitants of Yue, male and female, were made subjects of Wu, a development of the account given in the *Guo Yu* which only mentioned women. Again, Wu Zixu's objections were stated, and were overruled.¹⁹³

The *Zhanguo Ce* made several references to the events in the aftermath of Yue's defeat by Wu.¹⁹⁴ For example, King Goujian's success in turning a terrible defeat into a platform from which he was able to launch his conquest of Wu and becoming a hegemon

¹⁹⁰ *Shi Ji*, 41:1740-1742.

¹⁹¹ For the dating of this text; see Knechtges: "Shuo yüan," p. 444.

¹⁹² The account of these events given in the *Shuo Yuan* described the hostilities between Wu and Yue from the death of King Helü to the death of King Fucha. See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 227-231 [Zheng Jian]. In this account, bribes from the king of Yue to the Prime Minister of Wu were frequently mentioned, and explicitly stated to be "treasure."

¹⁹³ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 228 [Zheng Jian].

¹⁹⁴ This text was compiled by Liu Xiang from 26-8 BC, from anonymous Warring States period texts, which seem to date from 454-209 BC. The text may include some Western Han interpolations; see Tsien: "Chan kuo ts'e," pp. 4-5. The extent of Liu Xiang's emendations to the text is discussed in Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, pp. 640-647.

was commented on with awe.¹⁹⁵ This aspect of the events at Kuaiji was later taken up by other writers, such as Han Ying (c. 200-c. 120 BC) in the *Han Shi Waizhuan*. Another reference to these events in this text, gave a different account of the terms of King Goujian's surrender. Here it was said that the king of Yue authorised the Grandee Zhong to offer the surrender of his people as subjects of Wu, while he himself would walk behind the chariots of the king of Wu's entourage bearing the animals killed in the hunt. Interestingly, the *Zhanguo Ce* suggested that by accepting these conditions, Wu felt that it was going against public opinion, and so they omitted the ceremony of a covenant, that would have made the treaty legally binding. As a result of this omission, Yue felt entitled to break the treaty at the first opportunity.¹⁹⁶ This is in direct contradiction of the account given in the *Shi Ji*, which stated that there was a blood covenant held between Wu and Yue before King Fucha turned his army homewards.

There are several mentions of these events in the *Han Shu*. In the treatise on economics, Goujian received advice at Kuaiji from an otherwise unknown advisor, Ji Ran:

“If you know about fighting, then you prepare well; if you know about things then you seize the moment. If you understand these two things then the essential nature of the myriad things can be grasped. Therefore in a drought you make boats and in a flood you build chariots, this is the principle of things.”¹⁹⁷

This advice was said to have led King Goujian along the path that would eventually allow him to wipe out the shame of Kuaiji. In another reference to these events, in the Treatise on Geography, as in the *Han Shi Waizhuan*, King Goujian's victories over Wu and his later successes in diplomacy with the feudal lords of Jin and Qi, which culminated in him being charged by King Yuan of Zhou's envoy as hegemon,

¹⁹⁵ Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 1068 [Qi Fa Song, Song Ji].

¹⁹⁶ Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 1012 [Wei Zheng (Han) Wang].

¹⁹⁷ *Han Shu*, 91:3683.

are all attributed to his promptitude in appointing Fan Li and Grandee Zhong to the government of Yue.¹⁹⁸

The final account of these events was found in the *Yue Jue Shu*,¹⁹⁹ which stated that having been terribly defeated by the Wu forces, King Goujian took refuge on top of Mt. Kuaiji, while sending Grandee Zhong to sue for peace. The terms of the peace were that King Goujian was reduced to the status of commoner, and went to Wu effectively as a hostage for three years.²⁰⁰ The version in the *Yue Jue Shu* thus forms part of a tradition first found in the *Guo Yu*, but which also appeared in the *Han Feizi*, that King Goujian was himself held for a time in the state of Wu. For the interrelationships of the various versions of this tale, see Diagram 3.4.

One of the most popular stories of the reign of King Goujian of Yue, in terms of the number of versions known, was that of his training his populace in martial ways.²⁰¹ The story appeared in several forms. In the simplest form of the story, King Goujian ordered that something should be set on fire and the people of Yue encouraged to risk their lives to put it out. The aim of this was to make his people conscious that losing their lives might in certain circumstances be advantageous. The earliest versions would seem to be the two found in the *Jian Ai* chapter of the *Mozi*.²⁰² In the first version, it was stated that King Goujian set fire to a boat and waited til it was engulfed in flames. Then

¹⁹⁸ See *Han Shu*, 28 *Xia*:1669.

¹⁹⁹ See Schuessler, Loewe: "Yüeh chüeh shu," p. 491, for the dating of this text to circa AD 52.

²⁰⁰ Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 39 [*Qingdi Neizhuan*].

²⁰¹ For other examples of this kind of challenge being set by a ruler to his populace; see Thompson: *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Vol. 3, p. 451 H921 King assigns tasks, p. 469 H1132.1.7 Recovering crown from sea, H1132.2 Recovering object from large fire.

²⁰² For the dating of this notoriously corrupt text to the 4th-2nd century BC; see Graham: "Mo tzu," p. 338.

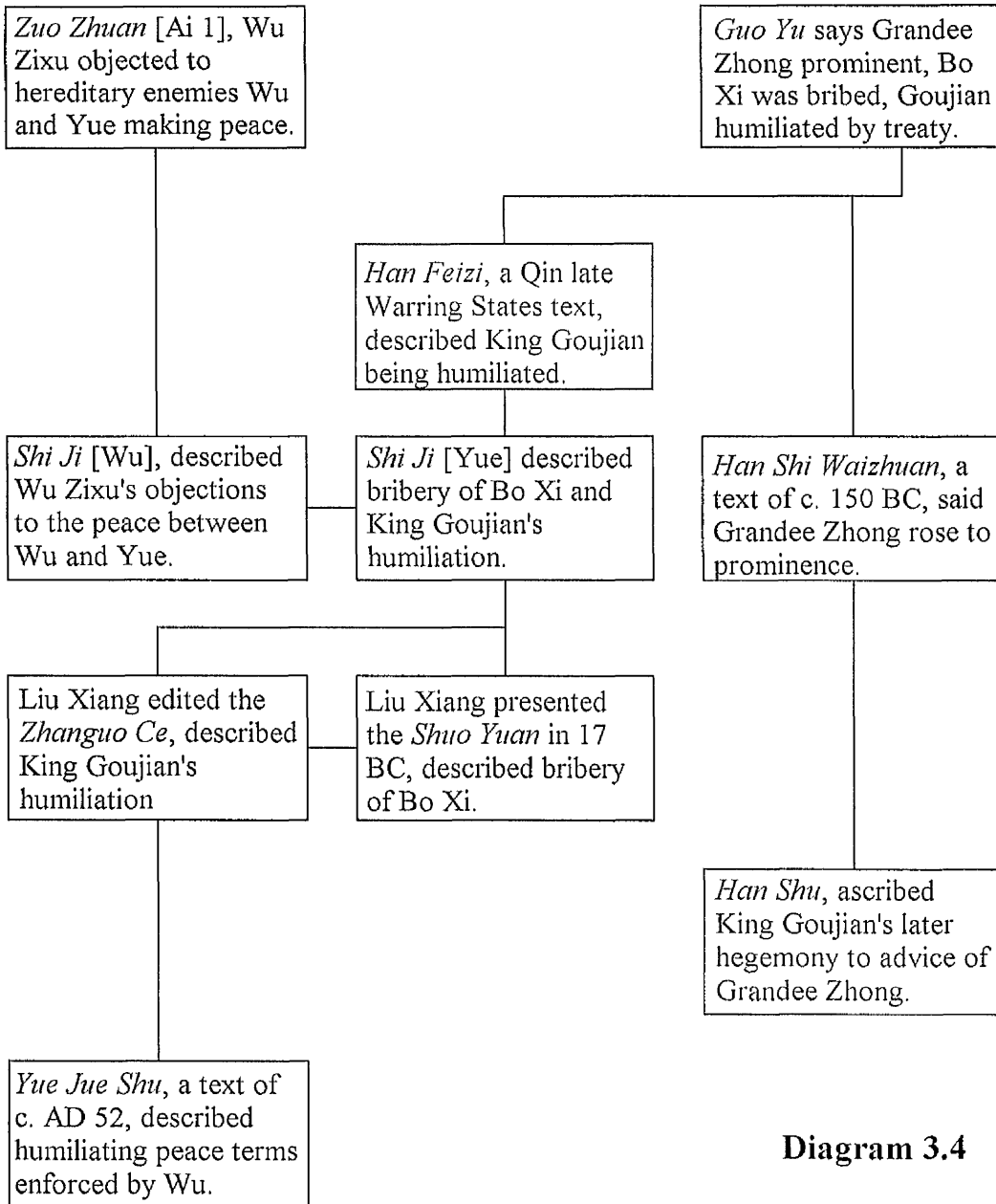


Diagram 3.4

he told his knights that the state treasure of Yue was on board and personally drummed them forward. He was said to have waited until over one hundred people had died in the fire before striking the chimes that would signal a withdrawal.²⁰³ The second version stated simply that King Goujian set fire to a boat, drummed his people forward, and only signalled the withdrawal when many of them had died in the fire or the water.²⁰⁴ This second version would seem to have been included to demonstrate the theme of the unconscious nature of authority, whereby power is enacted without conscious effort, or being derived from a higher human authority, on the part of the powerful individual.²⁰⁵ This tale matched with one about Lord Wen of Jin wearing what would, for a ruler of his day and age, have been outlandish garb,²⁰⁶ and being imitated by all his court. The accounts given in the *Mozi* of the dress of the various hegemonies are one of the few instances where the written texts preserve a strong regional character, which is one of the hall-marks of oral literature.²⁰⁷

Mozi said: In former times Lord Huan of Qi had a high hat and a wide belt, a bronze sword and a wooden shield, and so he governed his state and his state was well-governed. In the past Lord Wen of Jin wore rough clothes and a sheepskin cloak, with a leather belt from which he hung a sword, and thus he governed his state and his state was well-governed. In former times King Zhuang of Chu wore a fashionable hat with a fringe of pearls, a silk gown and a wide sash, thus he governed his state and his state was well-governed. In the past Goujian, King of Yue, wore his hair cut short and had his body tattooed, in this way he governed his state, and his state was well-governed. The dress of these

²⁰³ See Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, p. 69 [*Jian Ai Zhong*].

²⁰⁴ See Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, p. 82 [*Jian Ai Xia*].

²⁰⁵ This idea would seem to be in direct contradiction to that expressed in the many texts that suggest that the hegemonies required written authority, and that true power (*ming*) was held only by the Zhou king; see Ruan Yuan, *Gu Jing Qing Quan Wen Ji*, p. 333.

²⁰⁶ See Ma Changshou: *Beidi yu Xiongnu*, p. 18.

²⁰⁷ See Dudbridge: *The Hsi-yu chi*, p. 9. A lack of other than generic epithets though is a hallmark of folk-literature, so any detailed description is relatively rare. See Propp: *Theory and History of Folklore*, p. 21.

four rulers was not the same but they acted as one. Therefore I know that one's deeds do not depend on what one wears.²⁰⁸

The next two versions of the story of King Goujian training his people were both found in the *Han Feizi*, a text dated to the very end of the Warring States period.²⁰⁹ In the first, the king of Yue consulted one of his grandees, Wen Zhong, about whether it would be possible for him to attack Wu. Wen Zhong suggested that setting fire to the palace would settle the matter. To begin with, no-one came to rescue the burning building, but after a decree went out that military rewards and punishments would apply, six thousand men arrived, their bodies plastered with mud and their clothes wet, to deal with the blaze.²¹⁰ In the second version from the *Han Feizi*, again the king of Yue hoped to prepare his people for battle with Wu, and so when he went out in his chariot, he bowed to an angry frog, and claimed that he did so in recognition of its effrontery in croaking at him. When this was spoken of in the state, it caused more than ten men to commit suicide that their heads might be presented to so worthy a monarch. Here it is suggested that a good king recognises and rewards the loyalty and in particular the bravery of his subjects, including the non-humans. The fact that people chose to cut their throats to allow their heads to be given to the ruler was another instance of the increasingly bloody turn of life in the late Spring and Autumn period. It has also been pointed out that all the evidence suggests that weapons ownership (and skill in using these weapons) was very high in Yue at this time.²¹¹

This bowing having been so successful, he drummed his people forward to a burning tower, and then into the Yangtze, and finally on to the field of battle. In this way the tale assumed a desirable triplicate form. Such ordeals seem to have been commonly ascribed to non-Chinese people: in the history of the Xiongnu, as given by Sima Qian,

²⁰⁸ Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, p. 283 [*Gong Meng*]. There is a very similar passage in the *Huainanzi*; see He Ning: *Huainanzi Jishi*, pp. 781-784 [*Qi Su Xun*].

²⁰⁹ For the dating of this text; see Levi: "Han Fei tzu," p. 116.

²¹⁰ See Chen Qiyong: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 550 [*Nei Chu Shuo Shang*].

²¹¹ See Gu Jiegang: *Shilin Zazhi (Chupian)*, p. 166.

the great Xiongnu hero Modu, later the leader of his people and holder of the title Shanyu, led his followers through a quadripartite ordeal in which both their bravery and loyalty was tested.²¹² Although the Zhou generally despised non-Chinese cultures, there was a minor but persistent tradition of admiration for some of their qualities, particularly bravery, of the kind displayed in these tales of training by ordeal. In the *Zuo Zhuan* there are a number of accounts of rulers training their people to go into battle,²¹³ at a time when states did not have standing armies, for example Lord Wen of Jin and King Cheng of Chu were said to have conducted programmes of this kind.²¹⁴ However, these accounts lack the element of genuine immediate danger to life and limb that King Goujian used to test the devotion of his populace to his orders.

In the *Shizi*,²¹⁵ there is a variant of the comparison between Lord Wen and King Goujian, where instead of emphasising the different ways in which a ruler may consciously or unconsciously influence his people, the contrast is between a good and bad use of this power. Thus King Goujian encourages his people to be brave, in order that he should be able to defeat his enemies, and King Ling of Jin encouraged his womenfolk to be slim and thus a number of them starved to death.²¹⁶ These versions

²¹² Modu led his followers to kill his favourite horse, then his favourite wife, then his father's horse, and then finally his father, the Shanyu Touman. When they hesitated at the earlier stages of the ordeal, Modu beheaded them; see *Shi Ji*, 110:2888 [*Xiongnu Zhuan*].

²¹³ For a discussion of the ritual significance of this training; see Lewis: *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, p. 160.

²¹⁴ The account of the training undertaken in Chu emphasises the brutality of their discipline. On one occasion, seven people were whipped and three had a hole punched through their ear as was the practice with military punishment. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 444 [Xi 27]. The coercive aspect of training the people is rarely mentioned, though it also figures in the *Shi Ji* tale of Sun Wu training King Helü of Wu's palace women. See *Shi Ji*, 65:2161-2162.

²¹⁵ This text is believed to date from the Eastern Han with some later interpolations, though it was ascribed to a Warring States individual who was said to be a disciple of Shang Yang; see Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, pp. 1006, 1008.

²¹⁶ See Sun Huangyan: *Shizi*, 1:13a [*Chu Dao*].

seem to confirm the presence of topoi in the tales of the hegemon, ²¹⁷ that is, here there is a fixed subject of the stories, that is a hegemon training his people, and the theme varies. In one case the theme demonstrates that a ruler is obeyed because of his intrinsic majesty, in the other the wise ruler displays his fulfilment of his duty to recognise good men. The formulae are to a certain extent interchangeable between the two themes. For the relationship between these surviving versions see Diagram 3.5.

Lawgiving was an important part of the duties of all the hegemon, as well as forming part of the duties of a hero. ²¹⁸ As they were also the absolute rulers of their states, the creation of legislation formed an major element of their domestic duties, as with any ruler of their time. ²¹⁹ In the case of Lord Huan of Qi, he was credited with great institutional change in Qi, as described in the *Guo Yu* and the *Guanzi*, ²²⁰ which were closely related texts when it comes to discussion of this aspect of Lord Huan's rulership. ²²¹ (The *Zuo Zhuan*, in contrast, did not describe the internal government of Qi but mainly recorded foreign policy, and in particular the endless covenants and meetings held between feudal lords). ²²² The idealized nature of the legislation described in these two texts has long been recognised. Historical accounts like the *Zuo Zhuan*, which

²¹⁷ See Scholes and Kellogg: *The Nature of Narrative*, p. 27.

²¹⁸ See Raglan: *The Hero*, p. 175, point 15.

²¹⁹ Only two states developed written law codes in the Spring and Autumn period, Zheng and Jin. Zheng cast its codes onto bronze tripods in Zhao 6 (536 BC), Jin followed suit in Zhao 29 (513 BC). Some thirty years after casting their first code, Zheng produced a law-code written on bamboo strips. See Han Lianqi: "Lun Chunqiu Shidai Falü Zhidu de Yanbian," p. 3, also Huang Jianxin: *Zhongguo Xingfa Shi*, pp. 157, 162-163.

²²⁰ See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizhu: *Guo Yu*, pp. 221-249 [Qi Yu], and Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, pp. 182-208 [*Xiao Kuang*].

²²¹ See Luo Genze: *Guanzi Tanyuan*, p. 63, and Gu Jiegang: "Wu De Zhongshi Shuoxia de Zhengzhi he Lishi," p. 390.

²²² See Rosen: "In Search of the Historical Kuan Chung," p. 434. Rosen argues that the system of government described in the *Guo Yu* was a bureaucratic utopian fantasy, see p. 437.

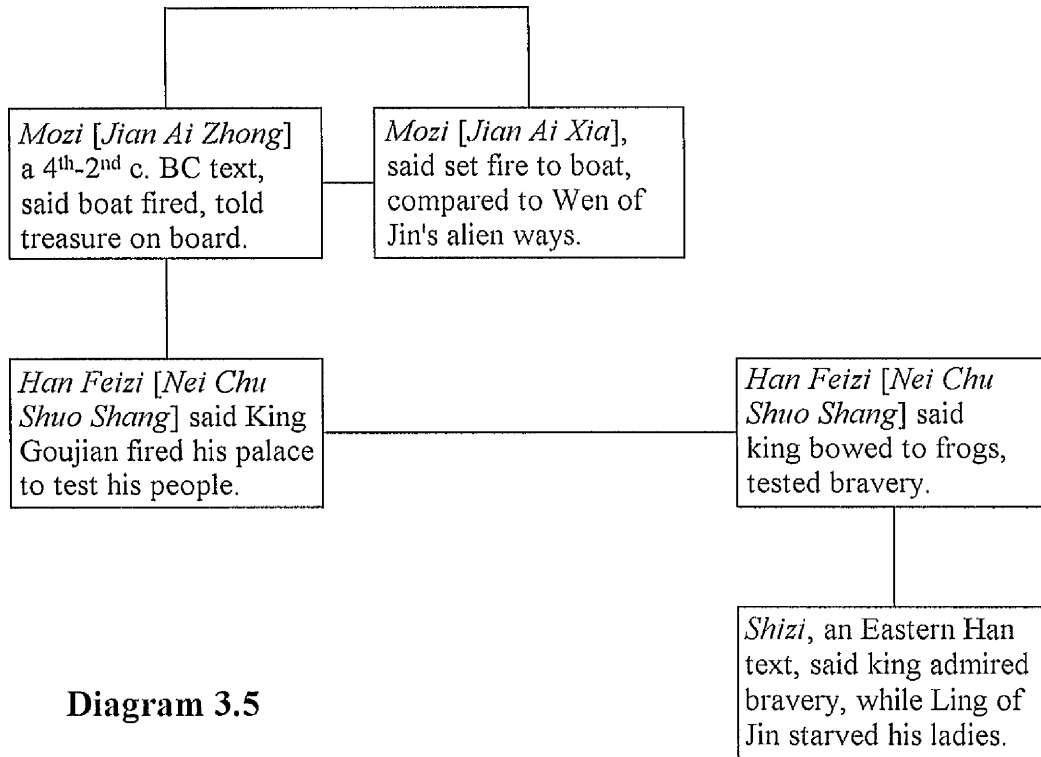


Diagram 3.5

included descriptions of the social and political organisation of Qi in passing, gave no indication that it was as regimented and circumscribed as these fictional accounts would suggest. They suggest that Lord Huan was able to divide the population of his state into small units which in turn made up larger units, and which were closely related to military recruitment. These accounts of the governmental organization of Qi were to have a profound affect on the posthumous reputation of Lord Huan from the Spring and Autumn period onwards.²²³

The issue of lawgiving was also incorporated into tales of Lord Wen's regime. For example, according to the account in the *Zuo Zhuan* of his attack on Yuan, Lord Wen called off his troops in spite of information that Yuan was about to surrender, in order to keep faith with his subjects, with whom he had set a strict schedule of the length of time to be spent on this campaign.²²⁴ Naturally such a display of good feeling was triumphantly vindicated by the prompt surrender of the previously recalcitrant residents of Yuan. This episode was taken to demonstrate goodwill and trustworthiness in practice, an important consideration at a time when much legislation was created at the demand of the ruler. In the *Zuo Zhuan*, there is the suggestion that Lord Wen of Jin also undertook some personal displays of rulership within his state. There is an undated passage on 'training the people' which describes the virtuous behaviour that was supposedly the basis of Lord Wen's triumph at Chengpu, which makes reference to the incidents at Yuan:

When the Marquis of Jin [Lord Wen] first entered his state, he trained his people. After two years he wanted to make use of them. Zi Fan said, "The people do not yet know the meaning of righteousness, because they are not yet safe in their homes." Then he went out [of his state] and settled King Xiang, he returned and devoted himself to the benefit of his people, and they cherished their livelihoods, and he was about to use them. Zi Fan said, "The people do not yet know the meaning of the word trust, they do not yet understand their usefulness." Then he attacked Yuan in order to demonstrate trust to them. When the people engaged

²²³ For example see Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, p. 188-189.

²²⁴ A similar story is told of King Zhuang of Chu during a siege of Song; see Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 2:31

in trade, they did not seek to profit thereby, and they clearly honoured their word. The lord said, “Can I do it?” Zi Fan said, “The people do not yet know the Rites, you have not yet awoken their sense of respect.” Then he held a great hunt in order to demonstrate proper ritual to them, he made laws in order to correct his officials. The populace listened without confusion, and after that he was able to make use of them.²²⁵

Lord Mu of Qin was said to have rectified the laws of Qin during the Prime Ministership of Baili Xi,²²⁶ while in the case of King Zhuang of Chu, the most famous instance of law-giving, in its wider sense, is that discussed above. After remaining passive for three years, King Zhuang was said to have ended his restraint from governmental affairs with a profound shake-up of the government, both dismissing personnel and changing legislation, it is explicitly stated for the better. Again, the text excavated at Zhangjiashan which recorded discussions on rulership between King Helü and Wu Zixu also seems to fit into this tradition.²²⁷ The *Wu Yue Chunqiu* also recorded that in his first year as king, Helü engaged in very proper behaviour, bringing wise and able people into his administration.²²⁸ However of all the hegemonies, the greatest information was given about Lord Huan and King Goujian.²²⁹

There are numerous accounts of the law-giving that King Goujian of Yue undertook in the wake of his defeat by Wu in 496 BC. The earliest account of this legislation was found in the *Yue Yu Shang* section of the *Guo Yu*, a section written

²²⁵ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 447 [Xi 27]. See also Wang Shirun: *Shangjun Shu Pingzhu*, p. 4 [*Shang Xing*]. In the *Shi Ji*, references to such “training” emphasised the military might and coercive power of the hegemonies; see Gu Lisan: *Sima Qian Xuan Xie Shi Ji Caiyong Zuo Zhuan de Yanjiu*, p. 51.

²²⁶ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 24:2a-2b [*Bu Gou*].

²²⁷ See Zhangjiashan Hanmu Zhujian Zhengli Xiaozu: “Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian Gaishu,” p. 12.

²²⁸ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 39 [Helü *Nei Zhuan*].

²²⁹ None of the accounts of King Goujian’s reforms can equal that given of Lord Huan’s reforms in the *Guanzi*, such as for example the discussion of taxation. See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 175 [*Da Kuang*].

during the Warring States period, after 384 BC.²³⁰ This detailed account showed that King Goujian made laws on matrimony, childbirth, the treatment of foreign advisors and knights, and the treatment of the indigent:

He ordered young men not to marry old women, and he commanded old men not to marry young women.²³¹ If a girl reached the age of seventeen without being wed then her parents were committing a crime; if a man reached the age of twenty without taking a wife then his parents were committing a crime. When a pregnant woman reported her condition, the ruler ordered a doctor to attend her. If she bore a son, [she would be given] two jugs of beer and a dog; if she bore a daughter, [she would be given] two jugs of beer and a pig. If she gave birth to triplets, the ruler would provide her with a wet-nurse, if she gave birth to twins, the ruler would give her extra food. When the scion of a family had died, [the father] left the government for three years. When a junior son had died, [the father] left the government for three months. He always wept at the burial, as if it were his son. He decreed that orphans, widows, the infirm and poverty-stricken should be brought in and he gave emoluments to their children. He met with knights, and improved their homes, beautified their clothes and enriched their food, and they sharpened his sense of justice. When knights came from all directions, he always treated them with due ritual at court. Goujian loaded grain and delicacies on their boats to allow them to continue their journeys, and when *Ru*-scholars came, he invariably gave them food and drink, and he was sure to ask their names.²³²

The next account, which was included in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, a text from the very end of the Warring States period,²³³ emphasised his personal austerity, which he extended over his family and court, thus for example he set his wives to weave. This served to encourage his people to engage in a regime of national austerity. It was also

²³⁰ See Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 631.

²³¹ This was also an important issue in the lawgiving of Lord Huan of Qi. See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 102 [*Gui De*].

²³² Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizhu: *Guo Yu*, p. 635 [*Yue Yu (shang)*]. A very similar, but more concise, description of King Goujian's legislation appears in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*; see Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 160 [*Goujian Fa Wu Waizhuan*].

²³³ See Carson/ Loewe: "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," p. 324.

said that he fed the poor.²³⁴ This version made it clear that King Goujian lived in a fashion very different to that in which a ruler of that period might have been expected to live:

He would not allow himself to rest on cushions or mats, his mouth did not taste rich flavours, nor did his eyes see beautiful women, and his ears did not hear [the sounds of] bells and drums.²³⁵

The *Han Feizi*, a text of similar date and place of origin to the *Lüshi Chunqiu*,²³⁶ recorded that Goujian rewarded his people, passed new laws and advanced the able.²³⁷ The *Shi Ji* likewise recorded King Goujian's personal austerity, and included the detail that the king of Yue kept a piece of gall by his mat, and tasted it before meals, to remind him of the bitterness of his defeat at Kuaiji.²³⁸ This memorial would seem strikingly similar to the manner in which King Fucha of Wu was said to keep a man to remind him of the bitterness of the defeat that killed his father, King Helü.²³⁹ This version goes on to say that King Goujian treated men who came to his court with generosity, and that he assisted the indigent. In the *Shuo Yuan* a very brief account was given of King Goujian's personal behaviour; he was said to refrain from personal extravagance and to show much fellow-feeling with his subjects.²⁴⁰

²³⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 9:7b-8a [*Shun Min*].

²³⁵ Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 9:7b [*Shun Min*].

²³⁶ See Levi: "Han Fei tzu," p. 115.

²³⁷ See Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 554 [*Nei Chu Shuo Shang*].

²³⁸ See *Shi Ji*, 41:1742.

²³⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1596 [Ding 14]. For a comparison of the various vengeful mnemonics used by King Fucha; see Guo Songchou: *Shi Ji Zhaji*, p. 168.

²⁴⁰ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 228 [*Zheng Jian*].

The account of King Goujian's reforms given in the *Yue Jue Shu*, a text dated to the Eastern Han period,²⁴¹ gave indications of a much grander policy of social reform, undertaken to recoup the losses sustained after the defeat at Kuaiji.²⁴² Unlike the situation with Qi, very little is known of the internal social and political structure of Yue, either before or after the reign of King Goujian, and so it is impossible to know whether the changes detailed within this text bore any relation to reality. The version given in the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*,²⁴³ drawing heavily on earlier accounts, recorded the king of Yue introducing legislation on marriage, and making special arrangements for childbirth within his state.²⁴⁴ For the interrelationship of these versions, see Diagram 3.6.

The paucity of archeological evidence has hampered understanding of this very important period of development in the south, which raised Yue to a such a peak of power that King Goujian was able to participate in the political life of the Central States.²⁴⁵ Regardless of the historical veracity of the tales that survive, it would seem clear from the historical records that at this time, Yue underwent a period of great

²⁴¹ See Schuessler/ Loewe: "Yüeh chüeh shu," p. 491.

²⁴² For example, the chapter of the *Yue Jue Shu* that described the architectural and geographical landscape of Yue recorded major building projects and administrative changes undertaken by King Goujian. This chapter cited enfeoffments of Goujian's ministers and their families, the building of major tomb sites for his predecessors, the creation of army farms, training-grounds, customs posts, foundries and so on; see Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, pp. 57-67 [*Ji Di Zhuan*].

²⁴³ For a discussion of the sources for this text; see Lagerwey: "Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu," p. 473.

²⁴⁴ See Zhou Shengchun: *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, p. 160 [*Goujian Fa Wu Wai Zhuan*].

²⁴⁵ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1717 [Ai 21], 1722 [Ai 23], 1723 [Ai 24].

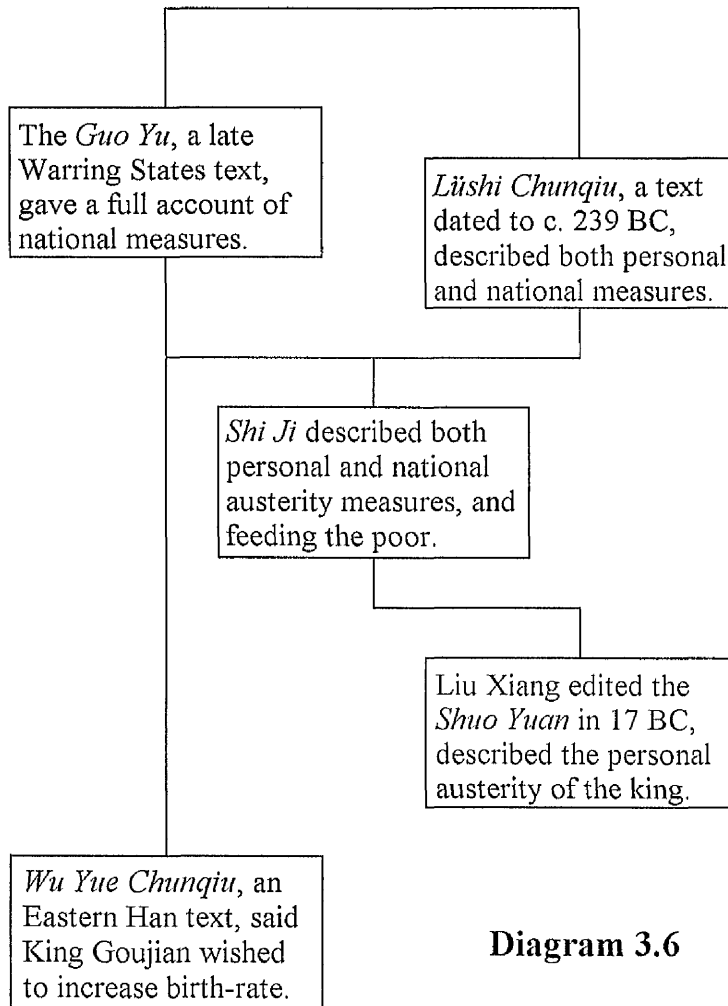


Diagram 3.6

development.²⁴⁶ It is possible that in fact the law-giving of King Goujian was an important factor for this, and the defeat at Kuaiji, which was later to form a very emotionally charged rallying point,²⁴⁷ was the turning point.

Interestingly, although the defeat of Yue by Wu at Kuaiji was referred to in all ancient texts as a crushing blow, accounts of the campaign tend to stress the humiliation meted out by Wu.²⁴⁸ This is in contrast to the recorded aftermath of other famous defeats; when Lord Xiang of Song was defeated by Chu at the battle of Hong in 638 BC, although Lord Xiang was later presented as a great gentleman of the old school, historical accounts record the popular unrest in Song.²⁴⁹ There is no suggestion that King Goujian faced this kind of revolt in Yue.

The Qing scholar Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801) considered that such social legislation was very much aimed at cosmetic changes; laws such as those encouraging early marriage were intended to achieve an aim without widespread social education, or inquiry into people's motives for compliance.²⁵⁰ It would seem clear that King Goujian's actions were intended to achieve two results, to reduce criticism of those of his policies which had led to a humiliating defeat by showing suitable contrition himself, and to encourage his people as far as possible to increase the birthrate, while preparing the

²⁴⁶ Interestingly, archeological excavations have generally failed to turn up artifacts of the sophistication one would expect given the prominence of Yue at this time. However, this is not an unusual situation, and reflects the uncertain nature of archeology. See Peters: *The Role of the State of Chu in Eastern Zhou Period China*, pp. 226-228. The Ming dynasty Kuaiji gazette recorded the tradition that enormous changes had been made during this period; see Zhang Yuanbian: *Kuaiji Xian Zhi*, pp. 131, 168, 600, 601.

²⁴⁷ According to the *Han Shu*, 64:2787, the King of the Min Yue, ruler of one of the Yue peoples, attempted to raise a series of rebellions against the Han dynasty between 138-135 BC. He particularly wished to take control of Kuaiji in order to bolster his pretensions.

²⁴⁸ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 403 [*Yu Lao*].

²⁴⁹ See *Shi Ji*, 38:1626.

²⁵⁰ See Zhang Xuecheng: *Wenshi Tongyi*, p. 204.

country for a prolonged period of warfare. In these policies, he seems to have met with a remarkable degree of success, for by the time he died, King Goujian had led the expansion of his people as far north as the Shandong peninsula.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ See Zhang Yinlin: *Zhongguo Shigang (Shanggu Pian)*, p. 74.

“Story-telling is never an innocent occupation.”

Lucy Hughes-Hallett: *Cleopatra*.

Chapter 4

The Hegemons as a Group

Luo Genze, in an essay on the study of ancient texts, warned of the dangers that the sheer scale of antiquity poses for the unwary reader:

Some people have a hazy idea of time: they think that Fuxi was an ancient, and that the seventy philosophers were ancients, and that the Han Confucians were ancients, and that an ancient would naturally have special knowledge of other ancients.¹

To a certain extent, this kind of view is the result of the floating gap,² for events and personages who are generally admitted to belong to remote antiquity tend to be conflated. The stories considered in this thesis were produced over a time-span of around five hundred years, and while they may reflect a genuine historical tradition, either oral or written, based in fact, it is equally possible that a great many of these stories are totally fictional, in the sense that although life-like,³ and described with verisimilitude, they were accounts of events that did not happen in the lives of the hegemons. Thus, the difficulty lies in separating fact from fiction. Evidence of oral traditions affecting these tales, now generally accepted, is very important for understanding these stories. Due to the paucity of evidence in so ancient a literary tradition, it is rarely possible to even suggest an original source for a clearly fictional story about a hegemon. However, in spite of the fact that the evidence does not survive,

¹ Luo Genze: “Zhongguo Wenxue Qiyuan de Xin Tansuo,” p. 6.

² See Vansina: *Oral Tradition as History*, p. 24.

³ Most of the tales of the lives of the hegemons fall into the category of historical fiction as defined by Manzoni, that is the people act in a fashion believed by the audience to be appropriate to their time and station, without the events described being necessarily true. See Manzoni: *Del romanzo storico*, p. 69.

literary creation is not in fact a matter of pure invention. It should be noted that studies of classic European novels and poetry show that virtually every idea, every statement, can be traced to a known (and frequently factual) origin, even though the end fictional product may have been considered very innovative.⁴ It should also be noted that while some philosophical authors showed no qualms at including fictional accounts of the lives of the hegemon when it suited the point that they wished to make, others were attempting to write serious historical works, and went to some trouble to attain this end. Their reasons for believing a story to be true cannot now be verified, but the possibility of supporting evidence having been lost should not be completely ignored. Lastly, it should be mentioned that, given the frequency with which many of the tales about the hegemon appear, they must have struck their intended audience as satisfactory expressions of how such great men would have acted.

As stated in Chapter One, many writers of the Warring States to Han dynasty considered that the fact of an individual being granted the title of hegemon meant that he had more in common with the other hegemon than he had with his predecessors and successors in his own state. As a result, comparisons were frequently made between them,⁵ and the similarities in their rule were often presented as having outweighed any differences in their cultural background or times.⁶ Therefore, when considering the

⁴ See Lowes: *The Road to Xanadu*, pp. 358, 391, 395, and Seymour: *Mary Shelley*, pp. 43-44, 76-77.

⁵ Comparisons between Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin were particularly common, as befits their status as the only two hegemon on whose status all writers of antiquity were agreed.

⁶ See for example Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 17:23b [*Zhi Du*], a work completed in c. 239 BC and strongly associated with the state of Qin; see Carson/ Loewe: "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," p. 324; Li Disheng: *Xunzi Jishi*, p. 317 [*Yi Bing*] also a late Warring States period passage, associated with the state of Zhao; see Loewe: "Hsün tzu," p. 178; Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 179 [*Zun Xian*], a text edited by Liu Xiang and presented to the throne in 17 BC; see Knechtges: "Shuo yüan," p. 444; Chen Li: *Baihutong Shuzheng*, p. 62 [*Hao*], a Western Han text dated to c. 79 AD; see Loewe: "Pai hu t'ung," p. 349. This shows something of the range of texts that have treated the hegemon as a group.

hegemons as heroes, and then as great rulers, I shall treat them as a complementary group.

The Hegemons as Heroes

The hegemons, when considered together as a group, show most of the signs of a hero as described in Raglan's scale. Some of these features were inherent in the fact that they were men who came to rule great states, and so were bound to behave in such a fashion. However some of the more unusual features of the Indo-European heroic ideal identified by Raglan were also shown in the lives of the hegemons, as they were described in ancient sources.

1) The hero's mother is a royal virgin.

Only the identities of Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin's mothers are known,⁷ but it would be reasonable to suppose (given the prevalence of alliances cemented by interstate matrimony, exogamy,⁸ and the fact that not a few of the hegemons required the help of their relatives to attain their titles) that in all cases they

⁷ Lord Huan of Qi was the son of a Lady Ji of Wei; see *Shi Ji* 32:1485, Lord Wen of Jin was the son of a Lady Ji of the Di people; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 239 [Zhuang 28].

⁸ The Zhou aristocracy practised totemic exogamy; see Li Zongtong: *Zhongguo Gudai Shehui Shi*, p. 44. Though not as severe as in some societies, such as the Navaho who equated totemic endogamy with introducing a wasting disease into the family, the Zhou elite clearly did not encourage endogamy on the grounds that offspring of such a union would not flourish. See for example Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 407 [Xi 23].

were of high social origins,⁹ if not actually members of the Zhou or another ruling house.¹⁰

2) The hero's father is a king.

The hegemon was all legitimate sons of rulers, though not necessarily the designated heirs.¹¹ Since the dates of birth of none of the hegemon are known, it is not clear if their fathers had already succeeded to their titles at the time of their birth. However, all of the hegemon had fathers who ruled large and powerful states.

3) The hero's father is often a near relation of his mother.

Given the paucity of information about female members of ruling houses (since they tended to be recorded in the historical records only when they caused trouble, or sometimes should they happen to have born an heir to the title or a child later to be of

⁹ Wives, among the feudal aristocracy of the Spring and Autumn Period, functioned somewhat as ambassadors for their natal families, retaining close links with them; see Chao: *Chinese Kinship*, p. 51. The importance of this function can be seen in a number of the tales in the *Lienü Zhuan*, concerning the wives and daughters of hegemon; see Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, pp. 24, 26-27 [*Xianming Zhuan*], p. 82 [*Jieyi Zhuan*]. Great care was taken to ensure that the wives of the ruling elite were of sufficiently high status. Lord Huan of Qi's interstate covenant at Caiqiu stressed this particular point; see Zhong Wencheng: *Chunqiu Guliang Jing Zhuan Buzhu*, pp. 282-283 [Xi 9].

¹⁰ Although none of the hegemon seem to have been particularly closely related to the royal family on their maternal side, both Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin are said to have married princesses of the Zhou ruling house. However, marrying a princess was hedged with a great many difficulties; see Chang: *Art, Myth and Ritual*, p. 30.

¹¹ The hegemon Lord Huan of Qi, Lord Wen of Jin, and King Helü of Wu were certainly not designated heirs, although Helü chose to regard himself as such, who would have been bearers of the title of *Taizi* (or Heir Apparent); see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1483 [Zhao 27]. All three obtained their titles by usurpation. In Qin, succession ran through brothers, and Lord Mu inherited as the next brother in line, so at one time he would presumably have been understood to be the Heir Apparent, even though he is not recorded as having held this title; see *Shi Ji*, 5:185. The status of the other hegemon, Zhuang of Chu and Goujian of Yue prior to their succession, is not known.

great historical importance), it is not possible to determine how closely related the parents of the various hegemony were to each other. However it would seem likely that there was a close blood relationship in at least some cases, given the statistical likelihood that interstate ties would be reaffirmed by intermarriage generation after generation.¹² Lord Wen of Jin's parents were however generally believed to be distant cousins and certainly belonged to the same totem.¹³

4) The circumstances of his conception are unusual.

No surviving tales about any of the hegemony correspond to point four on Raglan's scale. Although there are stories of strange conceptions and miraculous births concerning individuals who were their contemporaries, such as Lan, the son of Lord Wen of Zheng (r. 672-628 BC),¹⁴ Confucius,¹⁵ and others,¹⁶ for some reason either the hegemony did not have this kind of tale told about them, or these stories have not survived.

5) As a result of his the unusual circumstances of his conception, the hero is also reputed to be the son of a god.

Again, there are no surviving tales about the hegemony that correspond to point five on Raglan's scale, for although there are supernatural stories about the hegemony, they do not suggest that these individuals were in any way divine or possessed of

¹² See Yang Xizhang: "Xian Qin Zhuhou Shoujiang Xianjie yu Yifou Zhidu Kao," p. 116.

¹³ See Liu Wenqi: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Jiuzhu Shuzheng*, p. 203.

¹⁴ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 673 [Xuan 3].

¹⁵ See *Shi Ji*, 47:1905.

¹⁶ See Guo Quxun: "Jin zhi Shifeng," p. 19.

unusual gifts, beyond having the approval of Heaven. Some figures from Chinese history were however said to be the children of deities, so this kind of story was not unknown.¹⁷

6) At birth an attempt is made, usually by his father or maternal grandfather, to kill the hero.

Attempts were made to kill the first two hegemon, Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin, although not at birth. In the former case, it was at the behest of his brother, the Honourable Jiu of Qi,¹⁸ (though given that the future Lord Huan had already fled from Qi to take refuge in Ju, it is possible that he had previously been concerned at the possibility of attempts being made on his life by another brother, Lord Xiang of Qi).¹⁹ In the latter case, the assassination attempts were ordered by his father, Lord Xian (r. 676-651 BC),²⁰ and then some years later by his brother Lord Hui of Jin.²¹ So far as is known, the other hegemon were not subject to attempts at murder by their male relatives.

7) The hero is spirited away.

¹⁷ See Raphals: *Sharing the Light*, p. 64. Baosi, the wicked queen of King You of Zhou, fitted into this heroic stereotype well, as she was the fatherless child born of a concubine impregnated by a black snake, representing the spirit of the rulers of Bao.

¹⁸ See *Shi Ji*, 32:1485.

¹⁹ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 165 [*Da Kuang*]. According to this text, the Honourable Xiaobai had been forced to leave Qi by his oldest brother, Lord Xiang. However this is the only text to mention this. The state was in some turmoil as Lord Xiang of Qi was involved in a serious feud with his first cousin, Gongsun Wuzhi, a relative who had been favoured by his father, Lord Li, as well as dealing with the repercussions of having murdered his brother-in-law, the Duke of Lu.

²⁰ Lord Xian did succeed in forcing his oldest son and heir, Shensheng, to commit suicide. See Lindell: "Stories of Suicide in Ancient China," p. 187.

²¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 414 [Xi 23].

Both Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin, whose age at the time their lives were threatened is not known,²² fled hurriedly at the behest of their advisors, and spent some time (in the case of Lord Wen many years) in exile.

8) The hero is reared by foster-parents in a far country.

Lord Huan of Qi was supported in Ju, and counselled by his wise advisor Baoshu Ya. Lord Wen was assisted by a number of close friends and relations, spending his exile mainly under the auspices of his maternal, paternal or uxorial relations. Ju was a state on the Shandong peninsula, closely allied to Lu,²³ so Lord Huan was not far from his natal state. Lord Wen on the other hand, though he spent his first years in exile with his maternal relations close to Jin, went on to travel far away, and to rely on the kindness of strangers.

9) We are told nothing of his childhood.

As for point nine, there are no stories at all dealing with the childhood of any of the hegemon. This is particularly striking given the predilection of Chinese ancient writers for producing a vignette of childhood or youthful deeds which prefigure actions

²² According to the *Shi Ji*, 39:1656, Lord Wen of Jin was aged about forty-three at the time of his exile from Jin. However, some historians argue that he would have been seventeen at the time. For a discussion of the conflicting evidence on this point; see Zhang Yiren: "Jin Wen Gong Niansui Pianwu," pp 302-303.

²³ See Gu Lisan: *Zuo Zhuan yu Guo Yu zhi Bijiao Yanjiu*, p. 158.

which the individual will take as an adult.²⁴ Some of the characters who surrounded the hegemon were the subject of tales in this nature, for example Sunshu Ao.²⁵

10) On reaching manhood the hero returns or goes to his future kingdom.

As adults, at a suitable moment, Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin returned to their states from exile, to assume rulership. King Helü of Wu, who undertook the generalship of a series of campaigns against Chu prior to coming to the throne, also went home in order to begin the campaign that would lead to his usurpation.²⁶ If these early campaigns were ever the subject of tales, they have unfortunately been lost.²⁷ The other hegemon is not known to have left their states prior to their succession.

11) There the hero wins a great victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon or wild beast.

As for achieving a victory, most of the hegemon were seen to have derived their mandate to rule from a single event, quite apart from any rights derived from membership of the direct line of a ruling family. In the case of the first two hegemon,

²⁴ See Dewoskin: "Famous Chinese Childhoods," p. 72. Sima Qian was particularly fond of this rhetorical device, the *dui zhao* (對照); see Li Changzhi: *Sima Qian zhi Renge yu Fengge*, p. 282. For example the famous words challenging authority, spoken by Xiang Yu as a youth, on the occasion of a state progress by the First Emperor of Qin; in *Shi Ji*, 7:296, presaged his later actions as the destroyer of the Qin empire. Xiang Yu later adopted the title of Xi Chu Bawang (Hegemon King of Western Chu) which included the word *ba* (hegemon), in order to convey his sense of having real power. See *Shi Ji*, 7:317, and Wei Juxian: "Wu Ba Kao," p. 562.

²⁵ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 1:2. As a child Sunshu Ao killed a snake in order that no-one should be hurt by it, even though he was superstitiously concerned about the dangers to himself in doing so. This story was so popular that it overshadowed all other accounts of his deeds as an adult; see Yang: "The Anecdotes in Ancient Chinese Literature," p. 114.

²⁶ See *Shi Ji*, 31:1461, 1462. These campaigns were fought in the 2nd and 8th years of King Liao's reign. See also Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1392-1393 [Zhao 17], pp. 1445-1446 [Zhao 23].

²⁷ The outline of these campaigns was given briefly in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 16:22a [*Cha Wei*].

the victory that was the sign of their mandate to rule was comparatively subtle, and less obviously significant than the events that mandated other hegemonies. Thus when travelling back to his state Lord Huan of Qi was ambushed and shot at by Guan Zhong, and the arrow hit the buckle of his belt.²⁸ Seizing the opportunity, he pretended to be dead, so he survived.²⁹ Lord Wen of Jin escaped an assassin sent by his father, leaving only a cut sleeve behind him.³⁰ The *Zuo Zhuan* also laid considerable stress on the idea that since Jin had survived in spite of the political upheavals following Lord Xian's determined efforts to dispossess his older sons, it was somehow waiting for a great ruler. The Honourable Chonger's success in the hostile conditions of his exile was also an important factor in the perception that he had a mandate to rule.³¹ There are no surviving stories about Lord Mu of Qin indicating that a victory was important in the perception of him as a hegemon.

In the cases of King Helü of Wu and Goujian of Yue, the importance of the pivotal event to the perception of their right to rule, is clear. King Helü, having been passed over in the succession to the rulership of Wu by his grandfather's wish to favour his youngest son, had a strong claim to the throne on the death of his uncle, King Yumei

²⁸ The importance of this event was such that it could not be any ordinary arrow that so nearly killed the first hegemon, in the *Guo Yu* [*Jin Yu* 4] it was named as the "Arrow of Shensun." For a consideration of the information given about this arrow in various ancient texts; see Zheng Liangshu: *Chunqiu Shi Kaobian*, p. 49. This section of the *Guo Yu* is dated to 384-336 BC; see Zhang Xuecheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, pp. 630-631.

²⁹ The story of Guan Zhong shooting the buckle does not appear in full in the *Zuo Zhuan*, but it was quoted therein in Xi 24, suggesting that this was possibly an ancient story by the time the *Zuo Zhuan* was written. See Liu Wenqi: *Chunqiu Zuoshi Zhuan Jiuzhu Shuzheng*, p. 372.

³⁰ See Nagahiro Tosio: *Taikō no Kenkyū*, p. 136.

³¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 409 [Xi 23]. This comment was recorded as having been made by King Cheng of Chu, during the Honourable Chonger's stay at his court, prior to his installation as Lord Wen of Jin. Prior to that, Shu Zhan had commented to Lord Wen of Zheng on the fact that, as a child born of totemic endogamy (both his parents were members of the Ji totem), Chonger could not have been expected to prosper. That he had done so was an additional sign that he was destined to rule over Jin. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 407 [Xi 23].

(r. 530-527 BC). By building up his personal authority, and then arranging the murder of King Liao and forcing his cousins, the other princes of the ruling house of Wu, to flee into exile, King Helü established an unassailable grasp on the throne. King Goujian used the humiliating terms of his surrender enforced after the defeat at Kuaiji in such a way as to debase himself and his people while still preserving the nation intact.³² As a result of his self-denial at a time of national crisis, he was able to lead his people to a great victory.

12) He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor.

As for marrying a princess, Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin literally achieved this, when they married daughters of the Zhou king. It was not possible for any of the hegemonies to marry the daughter of a predecessor, given the fact that all of them returned to their natal states to rule, and they were living in a society in which as far as possible, exogamy (in the sense of marrying out from one's totem) was encouraged.³³ This point is reinforced by a consideration of the wives of hegemonies recorded in the historical records. Although the identity of mothers did not always appear, the marriages

³² For example King Goujian is recorded as having walked in front of King Fucha's chariot in the victory parade in the Wu capital. See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 403 [*Yu Lao*], where this was explicitly compared to King Wen of Zhou enduring imprisonment prior to his defeat of the tyrant Zhou. However it is clear that Wu was unable to stamp out Yue nationalism, or to control the activities of its king, beyond such cosmetic if humiliating capitulations.

³³ See Li Zongtong: *Zhongguo Gudai Shehui She*, pp. 76-77. This is in contrast to the successful marriage strategies of a number of other cultures, most famously Pharaonic Egypt, in which incestuous marriage was encouraged as a means of restricting the number of households in which an heir could be born. See Tyldesley: *Judgement of the Pharaoh*, p. 91. Such marriages however tended to occur in societies in which some or all of a person's status was derived from the mother. In addition to totemic exogamy, marriages among the ruling elite in Zhou dynasty China were clearly contracted for political advantages, thus the vast majority were made internationally. Exceptions tended to involve powerful minorities within the state, such as the marriages both Lords Xian and Lord Wen of Jin are recorded as having made with nomadic peoples from Jin; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 239 [Zhuang 28], p. 405 [Xi 23].

of state involving hegemonies were more frequently recorded.³⁴ Thus Lord Huan of Qi married ten women, one a Zhou princess, the others from the ruling families of the states of Cai, Xu, Wei, Zheng, Ge, Mi and Song.³⁵ Lord Wen of Jin married a Zhou princess,³⁶ and also women from the ruling families of Chen,³⁷ Qin and Qi; when living in exile with his maternal kin, the Di, he married a Di lady of the Gui totem.³⁸ Lord Mu of Qin, though he is said to have had a large number of children with other women, had only one recorded marriage, to Lord Wen of Jin's half-sister, who was the mother of his Heir Apparent, Ying.³⁹ King Zhuang is said to have married women from the ruling families of Zheng, Fan and Yue.⁴⁰ The marriages of Kings Helü and Goujian are not recorded directly,⁴¹ though they both had sons who succeeded them.

13) The hero becomes king.

³⁴ Such marriages were of immense importance to the rulership of a feudal lord, let alone a hegemon. Thus when Lord Wen of Jin was considering matrimony with Lord Mu of Qin's daughter, previously the wife of his predecessor, the seriousness of this step politically required careful thought. See Yu Zhengxie: *Guisi Cungao*, p. 194.

³⁵ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 373-374 [Xi 27].

³⁶ See *Shi Ji* 39:1676.

³⁷ Some commentators seem confused over whether this lady was or was not the same person as Huai Ying, the daughter of Lord Mu of Qin and the wife of Lords Huai and Wen of Jin in turn.

³⁸ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 405 [Xi 23].

³⁹ Ying later became Lord Kang of Qin. As a child, the Heir Apparent Ying was used as a pawn in his mother's campaign to ensure that her husband treated her half-brother, Lord Hui of Jin in a manner appropriate to his rank, when he was captured in the aftermath of the battle of Hanyuan. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 358 [Xi 15], also Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 26 [*Xianming Zhuan*].

⁴⁰ See *Shi Ji* 40:1700, and Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 27 [*Xianming Zhuan*]. The woman from the ruling family of Yue might have been a princess.

⁴¹ The Liang dynasty text by Ren Fang: *Shu Yi Ji*, p. 122 [*Helü Mu*], recorded the splendours of the tomb of King Helü of Wu's principal wife. The *Yue Jue Shu* mentions women's quarters in which King Goujian had Xi Shi and Zheng Dan trained, and a pavilion built for his wife, the *Nüyang Ting*; see Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, pp. 59, 64 [*Ji Di Waizhuan*].

As feudal lords of the Zhou confederacy, or independent kings, the hegemonies all ruled states of considerable size and importance. Due to the existence of the confederacy, presided over by the Zhou king, Lords Huan of Qi, Wen of Jin and Mu of Qin could not claim sovereignty of their states, but it is doubtful if this restrained their actions to any great degree. By that time, rulers of states of such wealth and importance were absolute rulers within their borders, apart from a token lip-service paid to the central authority of the Zhou monarch. Beyond that, their status as hegemonies ensured that when they left their states to preside over covenants, they were guaranteed the respectful consideration of their neighbours and peers. Indeed, at the covenant of Jiantu, Lord Wen of Jin was able to compel the Zhou king to attend, a source of some censure.⁴² The last three hegemonies, King Zhuang of Chu, King Helü of Wu and King Goujian of Yue were all sovereign rulers of their own kingdoms.

14) For a time he reigns uneventfully.

The issue of whether any of the hegemonies could ever have been said to have reigned uneventfully is problematical. For example, Lord Wen of Jin was at no time particularly secure in his rulership of Jin. He had been installed by force, Lord Mu of Qin provided him with a personal garrison, and arranged for the murder of his nephew, the dispossessed Lord Huai of Jin.⁴³ Once installed in Jin, Lord Wen was faced with the conflicting needs to reward his loyal followers,⁴⁴ while not alienating those who had stayed behind and served in the governments of his brother and nephew. Again, he had to preserve public order, and gain the trust of his people. These difficult demands required many adjustments, and forced Lord Wen on at least one occasion to a humiliating rapprochement.⁴⁵ In accounts of this period the existence of any opposition

⁴² See Chen Li: *Gongyang Yishu*, 35:9b-10b [Xi 28].

⁴³ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 414-415 [Xi 24].

⁴⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 3:112.

⁴⁵ According to the *Zuo Zhuan*, Lord Wen of Jin was forced to publicly forgive the man who had attempted to assassinate him on two separate occasions, once at the behest of Lord Xian and once on the orders of Lord Hui. This was particularly difficult, as Lord

is not stressed, apart from in the historical texts. It is the magnanimity of Lord Wen, his ability to separate his personal antipathy from what was necessary for the good of the state, and his conciliatory policies which are particularly emphasised. Lord Wen of Jin's image was thus changed in order to fit better with the heroic stereotype.

It would seem that most of the hegemon had periods of difficulty in their reigns, which were perhaps mentioned in passing, but even events that might be expected to cause prolonged civil unrest, such as King Helü's usurpation, and King Goujian's crushing defeat, were not described as having had any profound repercussions. Thus it would seem that if there was any opposition to their rule, either it was not seen as an appropriate subject for a story-teller's tales, or such stories were not recorded, and so the rule of the hegemon was made to fit this hero-pattern. Assuming the number of stories about the lives of the hegemon to be some kind of reflection of the popularity of these tales, it is striking that some events described in historical sources were not included, suggesting that 'inappropriate' actions by the hegemon were ignored as source material.

15) He prescribes laws.

All the hegemon, and indeed all contemporary feudal lords, acted as lawgivers. It was an integral part of their duties as members of the ruling elite. This point is covered in Chapter Three.

16) Later he loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects.

Wen felt the man had gone about his work with unjustified vigour; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 414 [Xi 24]. In later versions of this tale, the assassin is changed to become the guardian of the Honourable Chonger's privy purse, who having followed him into exile steals the money and returns home. It is this theft that results in a serious lack of food for the exiles, so that Jie Zhi Tui cut a lump of flesh from his thigh to feed to his lord. See Wang Shumin *Zhuangzi Jiaoquan*, p. 1186 [*Daozhi Pian*] and Cai Yong: *Qin Cao*, p. 16 [*Long She Ge*]. The motifs used in the two versions are practically identical, as is the theme, to forgive one's enemies.

Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin were never said to have lost the support of the gods or their people. To the Zhou, a defeat in battle indicated that the gods, or Heaven, were not with you.⁴⁶ That this support had been withdrawn might be directly the fault of the defeated, nevertheless it was a clear sign of disfavour. Thus prior to the battle of Chengpu, Ziyu ignored a dream in which the deity of the Yellow River (He Bo) commanded him to give a sacrifice of jade to the river, as a result of which he compounded his other errors and lost the battle.⁴⁷

However, in an ill-fated attack on Jin, Lord Mu of Qin's troops were comprehensively defeated at the battle of Xiao. Lord Mu had been warned, before beginning his campaign, that he was courting utter disaster.⁴⁸ This crushing defeat by Jin clearly caused Lord Mu to lose favour with his people, for it was credited with being the occasion of the *Qin Shi* (Oath of Qin), which appears in the *Shu Jing* (Book of Documents).⁴⁹ Lord Mu of Qin's funeral was also the occasion of human sacrifices, an event traditionally associated with the composition of the ode *Huang Niao* which appears in the *Shi Jing*.⁵⁰ The lamentations of the people of Qin at the selfishness of the ruling family at allowing such sacrifices were recorded in the *Zuo Zhuan*.⁵¹ If defeat in battle can be seen as a loss of divine favour, then both Lord Mu of Qin and King Helü of Wu had lost the assistance of the deities. Of the two, King Helü's failings were clearly

⁴⁶ See Kierman: "Phases and Modes of Combat in Early China," p. 46. See also Zhang Ruisui: *Zuo Zhuan Sixiang Tanwei*, p. 14

⁴⁷ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 467 [Xi 28].

⁴⁸ Descriptions of the warnings given appeared in many ancient texts. See for example *Shi Ji*, 5:190, for a conservative account of these events. A more harrowing version is to be found in the *Zuo Zhuan*; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 489-491 [Xi 32], pp. 494-501 [Xi 33]. See also Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 16:12a-15b [*Hui Guo*].

⁴⁹ See Qu Wanli: *Shang Shu Shiyi*, pp. 146-148 [*Qin Shi*].

⁵⁰ See Qu Wanli: *Shi Jing Shiyi*, pp. 94-95 [*Huang Niao*]. The traditional linking of this song with Lord Mu of Qin's funeral is discussed in footnote 1.

⁵¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 546 [Wen 6].

worse, for he lost his life after the battle against Yue. Indeed, in accounts of the longstanding aggression between Wu and Yue, it was frequently mentioned that Wu (in the person of King Fucha) had turned its back on the wishes of Heaven by failing to destroy Yue when it had the opportunity.⁵² King Goujian of Yue was never said to have lost the favour of the gods, though he had to be restrained from forgiving King Fucha of Wu, an act of mercy which might have turned the tide of his luck.⁵³

17) The hero is driven from the throne and city.

Tales of Lord Huan's demise were clearly adapted so that he appeared to have been, in the most developed account of these events,⁵⁴ deposed by a palace coup, organised by some of his closest companions. Although not explicitly driven from the throne and city, he was held in solitary confinement in a single room and prevented from dealing effectively with the usurpation of his powers by his associates, as described in Chapter Two. None of the other hegemonies were said to have suffered such a fall from grace.

18) He meets a mysterious death.

As described in Chapter Two, the story of Lord Huan of Qi's tragic death was popular in antiquity. Having gained control of the palace, and physical control over the ageing Lord Huan, the plotters arranged that he be starved to death. News of his death was given out prematurely, and having died alone and sequestered, his body was left unburied. So far as is known, Lord Wen of Jin did not die in a mysterious fashion, though the *Zuo Zhuan* includes a story about his burial. As the coffin was being carried towards the tomb, it gave out a strange noise, which a diviner favoured by the ruling family of Jin, Diviner Yan, interpreted as meaning that Jin would soon win a great

⁵² See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 597 [*Wu Yu*], pp. 652-653 [*Yue Yu Xia*].

⁵³ See for example *Shi Ji*, 41:1745

⁵⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 16:9b-12a [*Zhi Jie*].

victory over its enemies. While the state of Jin was still involved in the mourning period for Lord Wen, Lord Mu of Qin's forces (returning from an abortive attack on Zheng) were ambushed, and utterly routed.⁵⁵ The deaths of none of the other hegemon were ever described as mysterious, or indeed mentioned in any way other than the factual. Interestingly though, the burial of King Helü of Wu was the subject of a tale of the supernatural, for three days after he was interred in state a white tiger was said to have appeared above his tomb.⁵⁶

19) Often the hero dies on top of a hill.

No surviving story associates the demise of a hegemon with the top of a hill, though one very unusual variant of the story of King Fucha of Wu, who was occasionally considered as a hegemon, does do so.⁵⁷ However, although none of the hegemon were said to have died on top of a hill, at least four of them can definitely have been said to have been buried on hills or mountains. This should not be seen as significant for heroic status, given that it was then the custom to place all graves on hill or mountain-sides, or under tomb mounds. Lord Huan of Qi was buried at Dingzu Shan in Linzi county in Shandong, near a tomb said to be that of his daughter. The river that has its source at this mountain, the Nü Shui, was said to have derived its name from this second tomb.⁵⁸ Lord Wen of Jin's funerary procession having been disrupted by a strange noise from the coffin, as mentioned above, Lord Wen was not buried with other

⁵⁵ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 489 [Xi 32].

⁵⁶ This appearance of a white tiger is mentioned in the *Yue Jue Shu*; see Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 11 [*Ji Wu Di*]. The First Emperor was said to have dug a trench through the burial mound to get the swords buried with the king, only to have his men frightened off by discovering a tiger guarding the coffin. For a discussion of the many tiger stories associated with the burial of King Helü; see Tschepe: *Histoire du Royaume de Ou*, pp. 99-100. The trench dug by order of the First Emperor, Jian Chi (Sword Trench) remains a Suzhou landmark; see Wei Songshan (ed.): *Zhongguo Lishi Diming Dacidian*, p. 833.

⁵⁷ See Yan Zhitui: *Huan Yuan Ji*, pp. 141-142 [Gongsun Xian].

⁵⁸ See Shu Xiaoxian: *Linzi Xian Zhi*, pp. 121-122.

members of his family at Quwo, but was interred en route, though apparently not in connection with any hill or mountain.⁵⁹ Lord Mu of Qin is known to have been buried under a mound,⁶⁰ and King Zhuang of Chu was said to be buried at Long Shan in Hubei.⁶¹ Likewise King Helü of Wu was said, in ancient accounts, to have been buried on a hillside.⁶² The location of King Goujian's burial place is unknown. His original intention seems to have been that he would be buried at Du Shan where a large tomb was built for him during his lifetime, but he later moved the capital to Langye (in present day Shandong province) and so the tomb was never completed.⁶³

20) His children, if any, do not succeed him.

Point twenty applies to all of the hegemonies; none were able to pass on the hegemony to their sons. Although their basic titles as feudal lords of states within the Zhou confederacy, or monarchs, were inherited by their son or sons, the hegemony did not follow such a set pattern. When another ruler was recognised as a hegemon, he laid claim to a spiritual legacy, and did not expect to derive it from a blood relationship. Some Warring States and Han writers, and some later historians however have stated their belief that certain residual powers remained with their descendants, even though the hegemony had subsequently been conferred out of the family.⁶⁴ The succession of the

⁵⁹ See Hu Yan: *Jiang Xian Zhi*, p. 425, and Tschepe: *Histoire du Royaume de Tsin*, p. 97.

⁶⁰ See Zhou Fangjiong: *Zhongxiu Fengxiang Fu Zhi*, p. 50.

⁶¹ See Cui Longjian, Huang Yizun: *Jiangling Xian Zhi*, p. 1103.

⁶² The burial of King Helü of Wu at Tiger Hill (Hu Shan or Hu Qiushan) is described in the *Yue Jue Shu*; see Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 11 [*Ji Wu Di*]. See also the Ming dynasty gazette for Suzhou by Lu Xiong: *Suzhou Fu Zhi*, pp. 60, 150, for the location and a description of the tomb.

⁶³ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, p. 61 [*Ji Di Zhuan*].

⁶⁴ See Dong Zhongshu: *Chunqiu Fanlu*, 2:4a [*Zhu Lin*]. Lord Jing of Qi (Lord Huan of Qi's grandson in the direct line) was described as having "had (from the feudal lords) the residual respect (for a family that had produced) a hegemon ruler." The same sentiments appear in the *Yanzi Chunqiu*; see Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, p. 189. See also Wei

lordship was interrupted by internecine fighting between potential heirs in both Qi and Jin, but the issues of inheritance were eventually resolved.⁶⁵

21) His body is not buried.

So far as is known, all the hegemonies were buried in the conventional fashion for feudal lords or monarchs of their day, even Lord Huan was said to have been buried eventually.

22) He has one or more holy sepulchres.

All the hegemonies received sacrifices from their descendants at temples built to their memory. However, such sacrifices only lasted for five generations of the succession.⁶⁶ Beyond that, Lord Huan of Qi is known to have been revered by later generations, Wei Wudi, better known as Cao Cao, built a temple to the east of his tomb. Sacrifices at this temple later fell into abeyance.⁶⁷ A temple to the memory of Lord Wen of Jin was built at his tomb, and it was believed that sacrifices were held there from the Spring and Autumn period onwards.⁶⁸ It is known that sites associated with the hegemonies were the subject of pilgrimage in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and it is

Juxian: "Wu Ba Kao," pp. 565-567, for subsequent rulers of Jin and Chu claiming the mantle of their predecessors.

⁶⁵ See *Shi Ji*, 32:1494-1495, and 39:1671 respectively.

⁶⁶ Thus, in a state where succession ran from father to son, a ruler would make sacrifices to all his direct male ancestors up to his great-great-grandfather. However, in states where succession ran through brothers, each counted as one "generation." As a result, a very important feudal lord, such as for example Lord Huan of Qi, might only receive sacrifices from his descendants for a surprisingly short time. See Vandermeersch: *Wangdao ou la Voie Royale*, Vol. 1, p. 103.

⁶⁷ See Shu Xiaoxian: *Linzi Xian Zhi*, p. 157. The construction of this temple was not mentioned in his biography in the *San Guo Zhi*, but he was certainly well aware of Lord Huan's reputation. See *San Guo Zhi*, 1:32-34.

⁶⁸ See Hu Yan: *Jiang Xian Zhi*, p. 361.

possible that such sites were revered in earlier times; it is perhaps suggestive that on his progresses, the First Emperor of Qin went to two locations particularly associated with King Goujian.⁶⁹ The two texts dealing particularly with the affairs of Wu and Yue, compiled in the Han dynasty, that is the *Wu Yue Chunqiu* and the *Yue Jue Shu*, record many places in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces as having a particular association with either King Helü or King Goujian.⁷⁰ In spite of some places clearly having very strong links with events from the lives of individual hegemon, and retaining those links in the popular imagination for centuries, evidence is lacking that these were in any way revered, or that temples were built for them at these sites until the late imperial period.⁷¹ However, at least four of the hegemon, Lords Wen of Jin and Mu of Qin, Kings Helü of Wu and Goujian of Yue were later in receipt of sacrifices made at temples to their memory, and festivals in their honour, two millennia after their deaths.

Some of the hegemon's companions were clearly also commemorated in this way. Guan Zhong's tomb was enriched with memorial stele on numerous occasions, most recently in 1981.⁷² Jie Zhi Tui, who was eventually said to have been burned to death by the order of Lord Wen, was commemorated by a shrine at the site of his supposed demise.⁷³ He was also associated with the Cold Food Festival, from its earliest

⁶⁹ See *Shi Ji*, 6:244-255, 260-262. See also Huang Gongzhu: *Zhou-Qin Jinshi Wenxuan Pingzhu*, p. 164.

⁷⁰ See Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, pp. 10-19 [*Ji Wu Di Zhuan*], 58-65 [*Ji Di Zhuan*]. Interestingly, a temple dedicated to the memory of Jizha, King Helü of Wu's youngest uncle, survived a Tang purge of regional cults in the Anhui, Zhejiang and Jiangsu regions. See McMullen: "The Real Judge Dee," p. 8.

⁷¹ For example, the Qing dynasty gazette for Fengxian prefecture in Shanxi province mentions that annual sacrifices were performed to Lord Mu of Qin on the same day as to the Three Good Men, at that period. See Zhou Fanghui: *Zhongxiu Fengxianfu Zhi*, pp. 80-81.

⁷² See Li Xintai: *Qi Wenhua Daguan*, p. 688.

⁷³ See Wang Jia: *Yi Yi Ji*, p. 296. Here Jie Zhi Tui's memorial is called the *Sieryan Tai*. The Qing dynasty gazette for Jiexiu county in Shanxi, the site of Jie Zhi Tui's death, recorded a large number of temples associated with his cult. See Xu Pingshan, Lu Yuanhui: *Jiexiu Xian Zhi*, pp. 130, 219, 1251. This gazette also mentioned that in AD

recorded days.⁷⁴ Jizha, the prince of Wu whose refusal to accept his accession brought King Helü to the throne, had a tomb at Jiangling whose funerary inscription was supposedly written by Confucius, also had two temples to his memory built at Xiagang, and a festival on his supposed birthday (the twenty-ninth day of the fourth lunar month).⁷⁵ Wu Zixu, whose body was said to have been enclosed in a sack and tossed into the Yangtze, was commemorated by stele, and his cult was linked with that of Qu Yuan.⁷⁶ Interestingly some of the authors of texts containing tales of the lives of the hegemon were themselves the subject of commemoration. Thus persons wishing to pay their respects to the shade of Zuo Qiuming had a selection of tomb sites to choose from.⁷⁷

Thus, taken as a group, the hegemon effectively function in a complementary manner, as a single heroic legend. In all they fulfill eighteen of the twenty-two points on Raglan's scale. This can be compared with Romulus and Perseus who scored eighteen points, Hercules who scored seventeen, Bellerophon who scored sixteen, Siegfried who

1017, Jie Zhi Tui was given the honorific title of Marquis Jiehui (Pure and Kind), by the Song Emperor Zhenzong, indicating an enduring interest in his legend; see Xu Pingshan, Lu Yuanhui: *Jiexiu Xian Zhi*, p. 219.

⁷⁴ See Holzman: "The Cold Food Festival in Early Medieval China," p. 68. The Tang emperor Gaozong, on one of his progresses, paid a visit to a temple at Fenyin, dedicated to a deity called Tushen (the Jealous Goddess), who was said to have been a younger sister of Jie Zhi Tui, who avenged those who slighted her with hail, rain and thunder. See McMullen: "The Real Judge Dee," p. 11.

⁷⁵ The temple at Jiangling which enclosed the supposed tomb of Prince Jizha burnt down in 1864 and was rebuilt with rich endowments in 1874. A description of these events and a reproduction of the funerary inscription ascribed to Confucius can be found in Tschepe: *Histoire du Royaume de Ou*, pp. 29, 47-49.

⁷⁶ See Tang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, p. 309 [*Zi Shi Ming*], p. 231 [*Zun Jia*], p. 353 [*Xi Xian*]. See also Lu Kanru: "Wu Yue Wu Ri," p. 63.

⁷⁷ See Gui Fu: *Zha Pu*, p. 358. Sites claiming to be the tomb of Zuo Qiuming were to be found in Jinzhou and Fucheng (both in present-day Shandong Province).

scored eleven and Robin Hood who scored thirteen on Raglan's scale.⁷⁸ Incidentally, Raglan noted that "I have not found an undoubtedly historical hero to whom more than six points can be awarded."⁷⁹ Individually, Lord Huan of Qi scored fifteen (possibly seventeen) points, Lord Wen of Jin fourteen (possibly sixteen), Lord Mu of Qin eight (possibly eleven), King Zhuang of Chu seven (possibly nine), King Helü of Wu nine (possibly thirteen), and King Goujian of Yue seven (possibly eleven). The results are summarized in Table 1.

	Lord Huan of Qi	Lord Wen of Jin	Lord Mu of Qin	King Zhuang of Chu	King Helü of Wu	King Goujian of Yue
1	√?	√?	√?	√?	√?	√?
2	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	√?	√	√?	√?	√?	√?
4	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	√	√	x	x	x	x
7	√	√	x	x	x	x
8	√	√	x	x	x	x
9	√	√	√	√	√	√
10	√	√	x	x	√	x
11	√	√	x	x	√	√
12	√	√	√	√	√?	√?
13	√	√	√	√	√	√
14	√	√	√	√	√	√
15	√	√	√	√	√	√
16	x	x	√	x	√	x

⁷⁸ See Raglan: *The Hero*, pp. 176-184.

⁷⁹ See Raglan: *The Hero*, pp. 184-185.

	Lord Huan of Qi	Lord Wen of Jin	Lord Mu of Qin	King Zhuang of Chu	King Helü of Wu	King Goujian of Yue
17	✓	x	x	x	x	x
18	✓	✓?	x	x	x	x
19	x	x	x	x	x	x
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	x	x	x	x	x	x
22	✓	✓	✓?	x	✓?	✓?
Total	15 (17?)	14 (16?)	8 (11?)	7 (9?)	9 (13?)	7 (11?)

Table 1

From this it can be seen that Lord Huan of Qi, the first hegemon, was the one to fit the heroic mould the most closely, even though the events of his life and reign had to be changed to achieve this. However, in spite of the success of many ancient authors in making the hegemons fit this pattern, they may be seen as reluctant heroes. As historical accounts of their deeds coexisted with more or less overtly fictional tales, it would have been harder to adapt their biographies beyond a certain point to the demands of the heroic ideal. Thus, as examples of heroes, they will always be overshadowed by their more purely fictional companions.⁸⁰ Bill Butler notes that many of the best loved heroes and heroines were fairly short of redeeming features, being regularly described as stupid, foolish, deformed, short and so on.⁸¹ He would argue that their great popularity derived from the success they showed in overcoming these obstacles. This aspect of heroic characterization (not mentioned by Raglan), was present in the accounts of the hegemons, but was much more common among the hegemons' followers. Thus, at a time when much scholarly endeavour is expended to demonstrate the factual basis of

⁸⁰ See Butler: *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 15.

⁸¹ “[W]e know ourselves, secretly, to be as socially inadequate as Cinderella, as stupid as Sleeping Beauty.” Butler: *The Myth of the Hero*, p. 15.

many ancient texts, it is perhaps a useful corrective to return some of these texts to the realm of fiction.

The Hegemons as Rulers

Not all of the fictional tales about hegemons can be fitted into the pattern Raglan developed to describe the necessary characteristics for a hero. These other stories can be demonstrated to fit into the patterns displayed in folk-tales found all over the world. They are the tales which bring out the inherent qualities of the great kings, and noble rulers. It is possible that the hegemons were chosen as characters for these tales because they were well-known figures, and suitable for characterization as good rulers. It should be noted that such stories by and large avoid describing negative characteristics of rulers, unlike the traditional accounts of heroes, which required a degree of failure and vulnerability. Using Cairns' system for classifying the rulers of Classical European literature,⁸² it can be seen that the hegemons also fitted well into this pattern of rulership. It should however be emphasised that although this system was developed in order to further understanding of fictional rulers, adherence to this pattern does not in any way imply that the deeds of the individual under consideration were invented, unlike Raglan's twenty-two points. Many perfectly historical pre-twentieth century monarchs, such as for example Queen Victoria, would show a very high degree of compatibility with Cairns' system.

Thus, to consider Cairns' pattern point by point:

- 1) A good ruler was pre-eminent in virtue.

The hegemons, in their capacities as rulers of great states, are required to display the virtues of a good ruler. Lord Huan of Qi was said to have become hegemon because

⁸² See Cairns: *Vergil's Augustan Epic*, pp. 19-21.

of his virtue.⁸³ In the *Zuo Zhuan*, he was also said to have laid considerable stress on being ritually correct, this being seen as necessary for a ruling feudal lord to display his virtue.⁸⁴ A vital part of this ritual correctness was a concern with the altars of soil and grain, structures taken to represent the state and sacrifices made at which were considered vital to ensure spiritual security. At a time of great political changes, when many states were in decline or had indeed fallen, a ruler's concern for his country and to a certain extent his virtue,⁸⁵ was expressed through a concern about the state sacrifices.⁸⁶ When Lord Wen of Jin was in exile, his virtue was frequently commented upon, with the understanding that it would one day raise him to the heights of power in Jin.⁸⁷

2) A ruler should be a model for imitation in virtue.

Lord Mu of Qin was in turn said to be a model,⁸⁸ and his virtues were lauded.⁸⁹ It was of great importance that a ruler should not be seen to take his mandate for granted, nor that he should seem to believe his rule secured on the basis of previous virtuous behaviour. Many texts stressed that the hegemon did not become complacent in this way.⁹⁰ However, none of the other hegemon were explicitly stated to have been considered a model for imitation in this way.

⁸³ See Wang Liqi: *Xin Yu Jiaozhu*, p. 29 [*Dao Ji Pian*].

⁸⁴ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 317 [Xi 17].

⁸⁵ *De* 德 (virtue) was linguistically related to the word *De* 得 (power/possession). A similar linguistic link exists between the word *virtūs* in Latin, and the word virtue. See Kryukov: "Symbols of Power and Communication in Pre-Confucian China," p. 330.

⁸⁶ See Yang Bojun: *Liezi Jishi*, pp. 164-165 [*Shuo Fu Pian*].

⁸⁷ See Song Wengong: *Chushi Xintan*, p. 289. See also Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 68 [*Xing Ou*].

⁸⁸ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 256 [Xi 9].

⁸⁹ The same sentence is repeated twice in the *Lun Heng*; see Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 97 [*Wu Xing*], p. 345 [*Fu Xu*].

⁹⁰ See Chen Liang: *Longchuan Wenji*, pp. 27-28.

3) A ruler was the imitator of god to reach virtue.

The hegemon whose states formed part of the Zhou confederacy had an important role to play in the religious life of the lands they ruled. They performed the necessary sacrifices at the state altars. However, given the status of the Zhou kings as *tianzi* or Son of Heaven, none of the feudal lords whose states fell within the bounds of the Zhou kingdom would have been able to claim any particular relationship (imitative or otherwise) with the Zhou supreme deity, *Tian* (Heaven). It is possible that the hegemon who were kings of their own states did claim such a relationship with their deities, but mention of this has not survived. Hegemon did on the other hand lay claim to an imitative relationship with their predecessors, Lord Wen of Jin was frequently described as continuing the work of Wen (believed to be a reference to the previous Lord Wen of Jin (r. 780-746 BC),⁹¹ a famous Zhou loyalist),⁹² and some later rulers claimed to be continuing the work of Lord Huan, thus laying claim to a spiritual legacy from the successful hegemony.⁹³

4. i.) A good ruler should be the possessor of the cardinal virtue of justice.

In one tale illustrating the theme of justice, Lord Wen of Jin's Minister of Justice Li Li committed suicide when he discovered that an innocent man had been condemned to death. On being informed of his intention, Lord Wen remonstrated with him, arguing that it was his underlings that had actually made the mistake, but Li felt that in the just administration that had been created in Jin, the fault was his.⁹⁴ This could also be taken as a good example of a ruler observing the law. Lord Mu of Qin was also said to have

⁹¹ This previous Lord Wen of Jin (r. 780-746 BC), whose personal name was Chou, was the subject of the *Wen Hou zhi Ming* (Charge to Marquis Wen) in the *Shang Shu*; see Qu Wanli: *Shu Yong Lun Xue Ji*, p. 85.

⁹² See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 431 [Xi 25].

⁹³ See for example *Han Shu*, 48:2233.

⁹⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 2:54-56; Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, pp. 116-117.

had a particular interest in laws being observed correctly.⁹⁵ King Zhuang of Chu's instincts for justice would also not allow him to let his son and heir escape punishment for an infringement of the laws of Chu.⁹⁶

4. ii.) A good ruler should be the possessor of the cardinal virtue of self-control and be capable of abstinence from pleasure.

As an example of self-control, Lord Wen of Jin was able to overcome the humiliations visited upon him during his years in exile and once installed in his state, he controlled his rancour and won the love and trust of his people.⁹⁷ In the same vein, King Goujian of Yue, having led his people to a terrible, crushing defeat, was able to endure the humiliating terms of his surrender, and regain the respect and leadership of his subjects.⁹⁸ Abstinence from pleasure was also a virtue displayed by King Goujian when, after his surrender at Kuaiji, he deliberately lived a life devoid of the comforts usual to a ruler.⁹⁹

4. iii.) A good ruler should be the possessor of the cardinal virtue of wisdom.

Wisdom, as an attribute, was more usually ascribed to the followers and ministers who served the hegemons, and in so far as wisdom was included in accounts of their lives, it tended to take the form of recognising the sagely qualities of others, and in particular taking their advice.¹⁰⁰ Thus, in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* it was said: "Even though Baili Xi was wise, without Lord Mu, he would certainly not be so famous."¹⁰¹ However,

⁹⁵ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 24:2a-2b [*Bu Gou*].

⁹⁶ See Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 750 [*Wai Chu Shuo You Shang*].

⁹⁷ See *Shi Ji*, 39:1662.

⁹⁸ See Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xiangyu*, p. 1 [*Qin Shi*].

⁹⁹ For a detailed account; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 9:7b [*Shun Min*].

¹⁰⁰ See for example Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 13:217, and Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 18-19 [*Jun Dao*].

¹⁰¹ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 14:27b [*Shen Ren*].

all the hegemonies were seen as possessing wisdom of a sort, in that they recognised people who could help them even in the most unpromising guises.¹⁰² King Helü of Wu, who possessed this ability and was raised to the hegemony thereby was regularly contrasted with his son, King Fucha, who ordered his father's wise advisor Wu Zixu to commit suicide and then threw his body in the Yangtze.¹⁰³

4. iv.) A good ruler should be the possessor of the cardinal virtue of being warlike.

As for being warlike, this particular attribute was regularly mentioned in a wide variety of texts as a particular characteristic of all the hegemonies.¹⁰⁴ Since the Spring and Autumn period was a particularly violent era, when many battles were fought between states as well as civil wars, it is not surprising that rulers of great states, such as the hegemonies, would be required to build up large and effective armies and lead them into battle.¹⁰⁵

5. i.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as piety.

¹⁰² See for example Lord Huan of Qi hearing Ning Qi's song and realizing that here was no ordinary man; see Yang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, p. 25 [*Li Sao*], or King Helü of Wu taking Wu Zixu, a beggar in the marketplace into his court; see Yuan Kang, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, pp. 6-7 [Jing Ping Wang *Nei Zhuan*]. Tales of this type were told of all the hegemonies.

¹⁰³ For the various versions of the dramatic death of Wu Zixu, see Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁴ See for example Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 550 [*Nei Chu Shuo Shang*] for King Goujian of Yue's military exploits. Whereas in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the military might and warlike attitudes of a number of the hegemonies were described, as the text cited the record in battle of Lord Huan of Qi, Lord Wen of Jin and King Helü of Wu; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu*, 8:9a-10a [*Jian Xuan*]. King Zhuang of Chu's military exploits were described in Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 17 [*Jun Dao*].

¹⁰⁵ For example, Lord Wen of Jin founded the three armies of Jin, and later, when preparing to fight the Di people, he created three infantry troops. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 446-447 [Xi 27], p. 474 [Xi 28].

None of the hegemonies seem to have been particularly noted for their piety, though it would seem likely that this aspect was largely ignored by story-tellers of a later age, for the importance and all-pervasive nature of piety in Zhou society has until recently been neglected. The religious significance of hunting during the Zhou would give the many tales of hegemonies engaging in this activity a pious aspect,¹⁰⁶ which was not stressed.¹⁰⁷ Hunting held a particular place in the duties of a ruler: it displayed his bravery and was also hard work, and when the spoils were divided, it was also an opportunity to display generosity and kindness.¹⁰⁸ King Zhuang of Chu was said to have been fully alive to the importance of hunting for displaying just these virtues.¹⁰⁹ Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin presided over many blood-covenants,¹¹⁰ that would also have had religious significance. Lord Wen of Jin was also described as having performed suitable rituals at his ancestral temples on his accession and after his victory at Chengpu,¹¹¹ and as having made Mt. Jie, where Jie Zhi Tui lived as a recluse, into a holy site.¹¹²

5. ii.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as mercy, mildness, gentleness, pity.

¹⁰⁶ See Lewis: *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ For tales of hunting which contain no hint of any religious significance; see for example Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 10:334-337; Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁸ See Cairns: *Vergil's Augustan Epic*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁹ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 19 [*Jun Dao*]. This view of the positive role of hunting in the lives of the hegemonies was not universal, King Goujian felt it to be a distraction from the duties of a good ruler. See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 648 [*Yue Yu Xia*].

¹¹⁰ See Gao Shiqi: *Zuo Zhuan Jishi Benmo*, pp. 193, 199, and Chen Zhu: *Gongyangjia Zhexue*, p. 34.

¹¹¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 413 [Xi 24], p. 471 [Xi 28].

¹¹² See Yang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, p. 163 [*Jiu Zhang: Xi Wang Ri*].

Lord Huan's mercy and mildness can be seen in his forgiving of Guan Zhong, and his respectful treatment of him. This behaviour was widely praised and admired.¹¹³ Later on, he was also regularly described making munificent gifts to his former enemy, now his chief minister.¹¹⁴ Lord Huan's generosity towards his enemies was also on display when he met the Duke of Lu, whose retainer, variously named as Cao Mo, or Cao Gui,¹¹⁵ drew a sword and forced him to agree to return land that Qi had captured from Lu.¹¹⁶ Later, Lord Huan was advised by Guan Zhong not to repudiate this covenant made at Ke, and he did not do so. Likewise, Lord Wen of Jin behaved with mercy towards those who had served his brother and injured him,¹¹⁷ Lord Mu of Qin forgave those who had eaten his horse,¹¹⁸ and King Zhuang behaved with mercy towards the ruler of Zheng when he had captured that state.¹¹⁹ The dealings of Kings Helü of Wu and Goujian of Yue with others were conspicuously untouched by mercy and kindness.

5. iii.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as hard work.

Hard work was something that all the hegemonies, indeed all rulers of the Spring and Autumn period would have been expected to engage in. In addition to their duties of attending audiences, listening to the advice of ministers and then formulating policy and legislation in accordance with that advice, they were also expected to undertake

¹¹³ See Li Disheng: *Xunzi Jishi*, p. 114 [Zhong Ni].

¹¹⁴ See for example Ma Su: *Zuo Zhuan Shiwei*, p. 50.

¹¹⁵ *Shi Ji*, 32:1487, and Zhong Wencheng: *Chunqiu Guliang Jing Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 180 [Zhuang 13] respectively.

¹¹⁶ For the whole story, see for example Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 4:54. This was an immensely popular tale of a ruler's generosity, and was included in a great many texts. It was also selected to be represented in stone on the walls of the Wu Liang shrine; see Wu: *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 311.

¹¹⁷ See for example *Han Shu*, 51:2348.

¹¹⁸ The divergent versions of this tale are discussed in Chapter Two.

¹¹⁹ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 4:56.

religious, diplomatic and military duties. On top of that, in emergencies, such as invasions or famine, the ruler took ultimate responsibility.¹²⁰ The only hegemon who was ever recorded as having failed to work hard enough at his duties was King Zhuang of Chu, for the first three years of his reign. After that, he was recalled to his responsibilities. The various versions of this story are considered in Chapter Three.

5. iv.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as generosity, especially towards his friends.

Only a handful of stories directly record a hegemon's generosity. Among them was that of Lord Huan of Qi rewarding his closest advisor, Guan Zhong. Several versions of this story exist; in one Guan Zhong found himself unable to assert his authority over the nobility of Qi, and so Lord Huan made significant gifts of wealth and titles to assure his position.¹²¹ In another, Guan Zhong was said to have received significant gifts in order to draw upon himself all the enmity aroused in the state by Lord Huan's personal extravagance.¹²² Likewise, on his return to Jin after his prolonged exile, Lord Wen of Jin was said to have made great gifts to those who followed him into exile.¹²³

¹²⁰ Thus, when there was a famine in Qin during the reign of Lord Mu, it was his responsibility to obtain grain supplies from the neighbouring state of Jin, and when Jin refused, he organised the attack on them. See for example the account given of these events in Wang Zhaoyuan: *Lienü Zhuan Buzhu*, p. 26 [*Xianming Zhuan*]. Likewise, during the famine in Yue in King Goujian's reign, he obtained grain from Wu; see Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 332-333 [*Quan Mou*].

¹²¹ See for example Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, pp. 702 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Xia*], 814 [*Nan Yi*]; Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozhu*, p. 198 [*Zun Xian*]; Yang Bojun: *Liezi Jishi*, p. 124 [*Jiu Ming*].

¹²² See for example Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 15 [Zhou Wen Jun *mian shi* Gong Shiji]. The interpretation of the presents given to Guan Zhong are discussed in Hu Yujin: *Xu Qing Xuelin*, pp. 107-108.

¹²³ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 3:112, for a description of the vast programme of disseminating rewards undertaken by Lord Wen. His presentation of rewards was the subject of much contention, as can be seen from the story of Jie Zhi Tui, discussed in Chapter Two.

5. v.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as foresight.

There are no stories suggesting that the hegemon were gifted with foresight. If anything, this was an area in which they showed their fallibility. Thus Lord Huan of Qi failed to realise the dangers of entrusting his state and his life to Shu Diao, Yi Ya and the Honourable Kaifang of Wei;¹²⁴ Lord Mu of Qin ignored any suggestions from his ministers that attacking Zheng would invariably lead to disaster;¹²⁵ King Goujian failed to foresee the devastating retaliatory attacks from Wu that would lead to his shameful defeat at Kuaiji.¹²⁶

5. vi.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as lawgiving.

All the hegemon had stories told of their lawgiving, but particularly Lord Huan of Qi and King Goujian of Yue, see Chapter Three. There is a tale of King Zhuang of Chu upholding the laws that he had created even against his own son, who had broken them. King Zhuang was said to have raised the rank of the official who acted against his Heir by two degrees.¹²⁷

5. vii.) A good ruler should also be the possessor of other virtues, such as care for his people.

Lord Huan of Qi was said to have successfully restrained the taste of his people for extravagance, a policy that may be described as caring for his people.¹²⁸ Lord Huan

¹²⁴ See Chapter Two for the various versions of this story.

¹²⁵ For versions of this story; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 16:12b-15a [*Hui Guo*]; *Shi Ji*, 5:190-192.

¹²⁶ This was the subject of many stories, such as that included in Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 228 [*Zheng Jian*].

¹²⁷ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 750 [*Wai Chu Shuo You Shang*].

¹²⁸ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 248 [*Nei Chu Shuo Shang*].

of Qi's understanding of his duties of care for his people was demonstrated by the story where he left off wearing purple clothes because the demand among the people of his state for garments of this colour was ruinous. Lord Huan pretended to be unable to bear the smell, and ceased wearing such clothes himself in order to ensure a change in the fashions.¹²⁹ King Zhuang of Chu was said to have gone to great lengths to ensure that his policies pleased the people, for he regarded their approval as vital to the well-being of his state.¹³⁰

6. i.) Because of his care and concern for his people the ruler is considered their father.

As for being regarded as a father to the people, there are no tales of the hegemon that directly suggest that they were regarded in this light. The belief that the ruler was the father of the nation seems not to have developed at this date.

6. ii.) Because of his care and concern for his people the ruler is considered their shepherd.

As with being regarded as the father of the people, it is also not known if the hegemon was regarded as the shepherd of their people. The word *mu* (shepherd or pastor) is known to have appeared in a number of Zhou dynasty official titles of various ranks.¹³¹ According to the *Zhou Li* (Rites of Zhou), the title of Pastor was granted by the Zhou king as one grade below that of Hegemon:

“... Eight charges make a Pastor, nine charges make a Hegemon.”¹³²

¹²⁹ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 663 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang*].

¹²⁹ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:28-29.

¹³⁰ See Wang Hengyu: “Yin Zhou de Mu yu Muguan,” p. 200.

¹³¹ Sun Yirang: *Zhouli Zhengyi*, pp. 1376-1377 [*Chun Guan Zongbo*].

It is therefore quite possible that the title of pastor would have been seen as appropriate to a hegemon, but if they were referred to in this fashion, it has not been transmitted.

6. iii.) Because of his care and concern for his people the ruler is considered their saviour.

As with the first two points, there are no stories that suggest that any of the hegemons were considered as saviours by their subjects.

6. iv.) Because of his care and concern for his people the ruler is considered a lover of his capital city and its people.

The most famous example of a hegemon expressing his concern for his people was Lord Mu of Qin making a covenant after the disastrous defeat of his forces at Huaiying by Jin.¹³³ Concern of a different kind was expressed by both King Helü of Wu and King Goujian of Yue, who made considerable efforts to beautify their capitals, making major changes to the infrastructure of these cities.¹³⁴

6. v.) Because of his care and concern for his people the ruler is considered to be the possessor of the love of his people as his best bodyguard and as the surest foundation of his kingdom.

Lord Huan's close and generally good relationship with his subjects was cemented by presents of grain in difficult times and amnesties for criminals, as well as progresses around his state.¹³⁵ The importance that was given to this relationship was indicated by the occasion on which he was explicitly told by Guan Zhong that he should regard his people as his greatest support and source of help, rather than the abstract

¹³³ See Qu Wanli: *Shi Jing Shiyi*, pp. 94-95 [Mao 131: *Qin Feng: Huang Niao*].

¹³⁴ See Yuan Kuan, Wu Ping: *Yue Jue Shu*, pp. 9-19 [*Ji Wu Di*], 57-65 [*Ji Di*].

¹³⁵ See Xu Deping: *Jin Louzi Jiaozhu*, p. 255 [*Za Ji Pian*], and Yang Bojun: *Liezi Jishi*, p. 102 [*Tang Wen*].

deity “Heaven.”¹³⁶ Lord Mu of Qin’s treatment of his subjects who ate his horse was a striking example of a ruler’s affection for his people. By means of a present of piment when they might have expected him to be furious, he bound his people to him, and this loyalty would bring him a great reward.¹³⁷ The various versions of this tale are considered in Chapter Two. The hegemons all laid claim to the love of their people,¹³⁸ and made reference to their devotion to their populace and state.¹³⁹

7) A good ruler should also be a lover of peace and harmony.

Lord Huan of Qi was accounted a pacifier after his efforts to restore harmony within the Zhou royal family, and preserve the Central States from the depredations of the Rong and the Di peoples.¹⁴⁰ Lord Wen of Jin could be described as having been a lover of peace and harmony when, after his great victory at the battle of Chengpu, he wept to know that Ziyu had survived, for as long as he lived, the state of Jin was not safe from attack.¹⁴¹ Lord Wen of Jin was also credited with restoring order in the Zhou royal domain, following the rebellion by Prince Shudai.¹⁴² Again, on a number of occasions he chose peaceful rather than violent means of attaining his ambitions. Thus, when attacking the rebellious city of Yuan, he chose to leave rather than take the city by force, which prompted both Yuan and a number of other cities to surrender to his rule.¹⁴³ Lord Mu of Qin was credited with restoring order in Jin by the installation of

¹³⁶ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 73 [*Jian Ben*].

¹³⁷ See for example the version of this story in Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 8:13a-14a [*Ai Shi*].

¹³⁸ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, pp. 180-181 [*Zhong Kuang*].

¹³⁹ See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizhu: *Guo Yu*, p. 634 [*Yue Yu Shang*].

¹⁴⁰ See Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 455 [*Zhi Wu*], p. 507 [*Shi Wu*].

¹⁴¹ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 7:255.

¹⁴² See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 432 [Xi 25]

¹⁴³ This was a popular story, found in many versions, see for example Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 435-6 [Xi 25], and Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 663

Lord Wen following the difficult reigns of Lords Hui and Huai.¹⁴⁴ The other hegemon were not ever described as lovers of peace and harmony.

8) A ruler should be of good appearance.

None of the tales of the hegemon, nor any of the historical accounts, give any detailed description of what any of the hegemon looked like.¹⁴⁵ However, it would be fair to say that there was a general lack of physical description in pre-Han texts, and so this omission is by no means unique.¹⁴⁶ It was perhaps more important that rulers acted appropriately than that they were of good appearance. On the other hand, this may reflect the fact that from a very early date contact between the populace, even of the capital, and the ruler was kept to the very minimum, and hence an association of good looks, charisma, and royal power seems to have been lacking.

9) A good ruler should be endowed with good advisors and minister-officials.

[*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang*].

¹⁴⁴ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 412-414 [Xi 24].

¹⁴⁵ The one physical detail consistently mentioned was Lord Wen of Jin's 'double ribs.' The precise anatomical nature of this condition is not clear, but it is mentioned in the *Zuo Zhuan*, and many other texts; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 407 [Xi 23], and Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 159 [*Gu Xiang*]. In some texts, King Goujian of Yue was also accorded unusual physical features: a long neck and a mouth like a bird; see Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 171 [*Gu Xiang*]. In contemporary paintings and other art works which included representations of the hegemon, any physical peculiarity was left out in favour of a highly stereotyped depiction, rendering them indistinguishable from any other ruler of the period. See Wu: *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 311; Shanghai Bowuguan: *Shanghai Bowuguan Zang Qingtong Qi*, Plate 95; *Shanghai Bowuguan Zang Qingtong Qi Fuce*, pp. 100-101, and Wang Shilun: *Zhejiang Chutu Tongjing Xuanji*, Plates 9-10, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ When details of physical appearance were given, they tended to be unusual; see for example Li Disheng: *Xunzi Jishi*, p. 74 [*Fei Xiang*]. It has been argued that this lack of description, which is not unique to ancient Chinese literature, was to allow the imagination of the readers full reign. See Jones: *Kings, Beasts and Heroes*, p. 75.

In the *Guanzi*, hegemon-rulers were described collecting suitable men to act as their advisors, in contrast to bad kings, who would expend the same effort assembling women.¹⁴⁷ That the hegemons, in their capacity of rulers of great states, acted as regulators and unifiers was also stressed.¹⁴⁸ In tales which discussed the great ministers employed by hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period, it was made clear that being endowed with good advisors and minister-officials was seen as a vital part of their successful government.¹⁴⁹ Lord Huan of Qi owed his hegemony to Guan Zhong, and he had to forgive an attempted assassination in order to employ him. Lord Wen of Jin relied on his advisors in exile, and continued that reliance after his installation in Jin.¹⁵⁰ King Zhuang of Chu was said to have been profoundly disturbed when he was unable to obtain good advisors.¹⁵¹ Even in extremely dangerous situations, such as when King Goujian was cornered at Kuaiji, he was still busy recruiting able ministers, and in this case he acquired the assistance of the Grandee Zhong.¹⁵²

10) A ruler sees and hears everything, often through his agents.

The hegemons were also said to have gone to considerable lengths to be aware of the state of things in their nation, though they seem not to have been the subject of tales in which they used others to keep them informed. Lord Huan of Qi was said to have gone about in plain-clothes in order to maintain a link with the people of his

¹⁴⁷ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 113 [*Shu Yan*]. See also Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 4:148.

¹⁴⁸ See Yan Changyao: *Guanzi Jiaoshi*, p. 214 [*Ba Yan*].

¹⁴⁹ For example, Lord Huan was said to have gone to great lengths to gather able men into his administration; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 15:15a [*Xia Xian*], and Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, pp. 187-188 [*Zun Xian*]. Likewise, Sunshu Ao's premiership was important for King Zhuang of Chu's hegemony. See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 2:11a-11b [*Qing Yu*], and Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 1:5.

¹⁵⁰ See *Shi Ji*, 39:1664.

¹⁵¹ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 6:213-214.

¹⁵² See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 631 [*Yue Yu Shang*].

state,¹⁵³ and indeed he was generally described as having attempted to live up to the old adage that good government was achieved by consulting the ordinary people.¹⁵⁴ Lord Mu of Qin was said to have instituted the collection of folk-songs,¹⁵⁵ which in those days was perceived as a means for rulers to become aware of the state of the nation.¹⁵⁶ In the case of King Goujian of Yue, he was said to have encouraged all and sundry to criticize him.¹⁵⁷

11) The ruler should ensure that the citizens go about their several tasks.

There are no stories that specifically describe the hegemon as having directly assisted their subjects in their tasks. However, they created policies and legislation that facilitated the lives of the people living under their rule.

12) The ruler derives his kingship from some kind of deity.

A certain ambivalence appeared when the relationship of the hegemon to a supreme deity was considered. The Zhou kings were in possession of the Mandate of Heaven, and the extension of this mandate to their feudal lords in particular was a matter of some concern. Thus in the *Zuo Zhuan*, the encroachment of the hegemon on royal prerogatives was considered, and the possibility of the feudal lords (and in particular the hegemon) eventually taking over as kings in their own right was considered.¹⁵⁸ A

¹⁵³ See Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 786 [*Wai Chu Shuo You Shang*]. Lord Huan was also said to have encouraged Guan Zhong to act as his eyes and ears; see Wang Liqi: *Yantie Lun Jiaozhu*, p. 131 [*Ci Fu*].

¹⁵⁴ See Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 3:100-101.

¹⁵⁵ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 6:10b [*Yin Chu*].

¹⁵⁶ See Chou: *The Wooden-tongued Bell*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 18 [*Jun Dao*].

¹⁵⁸ In the Spring and Autumn period, when the collapse of the Zhou dynasty was envisioned, in so far as it was considered at all, it was believed that one of the feudal lords would form a new monarchy on presumably much the same lines as the old. It was

suitably reverential attitude towards the supernatural powers was however seen as an important aspect of Lord Wen of Jin's hegemony, and crucial for his victory at Chengpu.¹⁵⁹ Lord Mu of Qin was the subject of an interesting story, in which he dreamt of Shangdi, in one version of which his virtue was said to have impressed this deity so much that "Shangdi gave him nineteen years."¹⁶⁰ In another version of this story, Shangdi mandated him to resolve the civil disturbances in Jin.¹⁶¹

Thus, taken as a group again, the hegemon fulfilled many of the characteristics necessary to be seen as good rulers. This can be seen in Table 2. Of the twelve points, the hegemon fulfilled nine, the exceptions being points three, eight, and eleven. Thus Lord Huan of Qi fulfilled seven points, Lord Wen of Jin fulfilled six, Lord Mu of Qin fulfilled eight, King Zhuang of Chu fulfilled four, King Helü of Wu fulfilled four, and King Goujian of Yue fulfilled five. Thus while Lord Huan of Qi was the most heroic of the hegemon, Lord Mu of Qin would seem to have been the hegemon who was the most satisfactory as a ruler.

	Lord Huan of Qi	Lord Wen of Jin	Lord Mu of Qin	King Zhuang of Chu	King Helü of Wu	King Goujian of Yue
1	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	✓	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x
4.i.	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x

this mind-set that resulted in Lord Wen of Jin's reaction to a particularly favourable divination prior to the battle of Chengpu. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 431 [Xi 25].

¹⁵⁹ See Chao Fulin: "Chunqiu Shiqi de Guishen Guannian ji qi Shehui Yingxiang," pp. 33-34.

¹⁶⁰ See Beijing Daxue Lishixi "Lun Heng" Zhushi Xiaozu: *Lun Heng Zhushi*, p. 97 [*Wu Xing*], p. 345 [*Fu Xu*].

¹⁶¹ See *Han Shu*, 5A:1196.

	Lord Huan of Qi	Lord Wen of Jin	Lord Mu of Qin	King Zhuang of Chu	King Helü of Wu	King Goujian of Yue
4.ii.	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
4.iii.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.iv.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.i.	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x
5.ii.	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
5.iii.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.iv.	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
5.v.	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.vi.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.vii.	✓	x	x	✓	x	x
6.i.	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.ii.	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.iii.	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.iv.	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓
6.v.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x
8	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	x	✓	x	x	✓
11	x	x	x	x	x	x
12	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
Total	7	6	8	4	4	5

Table 2

Virtually all the tales dealing with their lives show them either in a heroic aspect, or as great rulers, or both. As appointment as a hegemon was uncertain, non-hereditary, and made on the basis of individual personal qualifications, it was possible for a succession of feudal lords and kings of Spring and Autumn period China to hold this title, and shoulder the weight of popular perception of the hegemony, without doing violence to the general view of either role. It is unclear to what extent the tales of the lives of the hegemon are fictional. The fact that so many fit into the patterns laid out for the hero-ruler should be a cause for concern, but should not lead to these stories being dismissed out of hand. However, it is impossible to come to a true understanding of the historical importance of the hegemon, or their hold over the popular imagination, without considering the patterns into which accounts of their lives fall. Writers from the Spring and Autumn period through to the end of the Han dynasty (whether consciously or not) saw them as hero-rulers in the classical Indo-European style, and thus shaped the way in which they have been seen ever since.

“However fascinating and electric, heroes were dangerous people to have around in a quiet, peaceful, law-abiding country.”

Iain Pedrs: *The Gentleman and the Hero*.

Chapter 5

The Hegemons in Context

When the hegemons were grouped together in accounts of their deeds in ancient literature, it served to gloss over or conceal the differences between their cultural environments, and the very different circumstances in which they lived and reigned. However, they did have certain overriding similarities which have by and large not received the attention that they deserve. The charisma that made them among the most famous rulers of their day has to be taken on trust; the reasons why some of the stories about their deeds merited dozens of versions spread over many centuries are not always obvious to later generations. Changes in these popular tales show that many were adapted for later audiences, or possibly reattributed from other less famous historical or mythical characters. However in the case of some of the apparently more dull tales one can only assume that the powers that made the hegemons such forceful figures in antiquity had a cultural context that has been lost with the passage of time.

The factual basis of many of the tales of the lives of the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period is uncertain. Even the most fundamental facts about the hegemons are surrounded with a certain mystery; they were born, but the dates of birth are not known for any of the hegemons;¹ they married and begat children, though in many cases

¹ Although precise dates of birth are not known for any of the hegemons, Lord Huan of Qi succeeded his brother Lord Xiang (r. 697-686 BC), therefore he must have been born before 697 BC; see *Shi Ji*, 32:1484. Lord Mu of Qin was preceded to the title by his two older brothers, Lords Xuan (r. 675-664 BC) and Cheng (r. 663-660 BC). Lord Mu must therefore have been born before 675 BC; see *Shi Ji*, 5:184-185. King Helü of Wu was preceded to the throne by two of his uncles and a first cousin, Kings Yuji (r. 547-531 BC), Yumei (r. 530-527 BC) and Liao (r. 526-513 BC). King Helü must therefore

the identities of these wives and children are not known,² they died,³ and were generally among the longest lived rulers of their states in the Spring and Autumn period.

However, such facts as are known, and the importance of the hegemon as ruler who fired the imagination of story-tellers, meant that an interesting comparison can be drawn between their lives and those of other rulers from the same states.

The Hegemons, Their Predecessors and Their Heirs

The hegemon has often been compared with each other, set apart from the other feudal lords of their times, but interesting comparisons are still to be made with other rulers who reigned in the same states as the hegemon, but outlived them. Consideration of these men show that such feudal lords and kings had considerable similarities with the hegemon. Ruling for a long time, in the cut-throat atmosphere of Spring and Autumn period courts, required many of the same skills as those which raised some rulers to the hegemony. Possession of these skills also often aided their holders to die of old age rather than at the hands of an assassin, though it would prove scant protection against rapacious family members. These successful rulers would create their own legends; in the case of predecessors to a hegemon, they would be credited with laying the foundations for their successor's brilliant achievements; in the case of successors, they would claim to be following in the footsteps of their great ancestor.⁴

have been at least thirty-three years old when he came to the throne.

² See Chang: *Art, Myth and Ritual*, pp. 29-31. The quality of reporting of the hegemon's children and wives varied greatly. The importance of these relationships can be seen from instances such as the vital role played by the marriage alliances between Jin and Qin in the interactions between these two states during the Spring and Autumn period.

³ Despite suggestions to the contrary, discussed in Chapter Two, the only hegemon who was known not to have died of natural causes was King Helü of Wu, who died of a wound to the foot received in battle against the state of Yue. Since he survived the injury by some time, it would seem likely that he died of some form of infection, rather than a mortal injury. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1596 [Ding 14].

⁴ See Ma Su: *Yi Shi*, 57:33a.

Quantitatively and qualitatively the reigns of the hegemonies did not differ greatly from those of other successful rulers in these states. However, in spite of these rulers living for a long time, and reigning successfully over their states, they were not said to be hegemonies. At most they were said to have participated, as a forerunner or follower, in the legend of the hegemonies. Nevertheless, understanding the success of other rulers from the same states gives continuity and context to the story of the hegemonies. Each of the hegemonies was a member of a ruling family that had produced other important historical figures during the Spring and Autumn period, and other great rulers.

The Spring and Autumn period was a time of high mortality among rulers and members of ruling families,⁵ due to the endless wars and civil conflicts of the age, in addition to coups d'état and assassinations, so it is striking that the hegemonies lived as long as they did. Three of the hegemonies were the third longest lived rulers of their states during the Spring and Autumn period: Lord Huan of Qi's tenure of the title was exceeded by Lord Zhuang (r. 794-731 BC) who ruled for sixty-four years and Lord Jing (r. 547-490 BC) who reigned for fifty-eight years;⁶ Lord Mu of Qin was exceeded by Lord Wen (r. 765-716 BC) who ruled for fifty years, and by Lord Jing (r. 576-537 BC) who reigned for forty years.⁷ King Helü of Wu was also believed to be the third longest lived of the reigning monarchs of the state of Wu during the Spring and Autumn period,

⁵ Studies have been made of the mortality among rulers of the Spring and Autumn period, concentrating on those who did not die a natural death; see Jiang Yinlou: "Chunqiu Shidai de Fengqi," pp. 225-227. During the two and a half centuries of the Spring and Autumn period, a ruling lord was reported as having been murdered on average every five to six years, in all forty-one. Broken down by state: Wei, 2; Song, 4; Qi, 7; Jin, 5; Chen, 2; Zheng, 3; Chu, 3; Ju, 2; Wu, 2; Bi, 1; Cai, 2; Xu, 1; Lu, 5; Qin, 1; Cao, 1. In the same period there were sixty-nine recorded rebellions or civil wars that resulted in a change of government, another problem that the hegemonies were able to manipulate in their favour. However, many members of ruling families who did not succeed to the title were also killed, dying at the hands of jealous, envious, rightly nervous or paranoid relatives, in battle, or as a result of the practice of fratricide.

⁶ Lord Zhuang of Qi was Lord Huan's grandfather, Lord Jing his great-great-grandson.

⁷ Lord Wen of Qin was Lord Mu's great-great-grandfather, Lord Jing his great-great-grandson.

though in his case the paucity of records from his state make it impossible to be certain.⁸ He reigned for nineteen years, and was exceeded by his grandfather King Shoumeng (r. 585-561 BC) who ruled for twenty-five years, and his son King Fucha (r. 495-473 BC) who reigned for twenty-three years.⁹

The other hegemon was not so long-lived. King Zhuang of Chu, who ruled for twenty-three years, was the fifth longest-lived of the rulers of Chu during the relevant period.¹⁰ Of King Goujian of Yue, it is known that he reigned for thirty-one years, however so little is known about his predecessors and successors, and much of that is contradictory, that it is not really possible to put the length of his reign into context.¹¹ However, it is clear that Lord Wen of Jin, the second hegemon, was unusual among the successful rulers of the Spring and Autumn period in that he achieved such great and lasting fame when he ruled for so short a time, only eight years.¹²

In the case of the rulers of Qi who outlived Lord Huan, virtually nothing is known of Lord Zhuang, beyond the great length of his reign, and his status as a loyal

⁸ The confused state of the king-list of the state of Wu means that the duration of the reign of most kings of Wu is not known. See Zhang He: *Wu Yue Wenhua*, p. 14.

⁹ King Shoumeng was King Helü's grandfather, King Fucha his son.

¹⁰ King Wu of Chu was King Zhuang's great-great-grandfather, King Cheng his grandfather, King Zhao his great-grandson, King Gong his son.

¹¹ He was said to have been exceeded by King Wu (r. 740-690 BC): fifty-one years, King Cheng (r. 671-626 BC): forty-six years, King Zhao (r. 515-489 BC): twenty-seven years, and King Gong (r. 590-560 BC): thirty-one years; see Chen Mengjia: *Liuguo Jinian*, p. 98.

¹² Lord Wen of Jin's reign was exceeded by eleven other rulers of the state of Jin: that is Lord Ding (r. 511-475 BC): thirty-seven years; Lord Wen (r. 780-746 BC): thirty-five years; Lord Min (r. 706-679 BC): twenty-eight years; Lords Xian (r. 676-651 BC) and Ping (r. 557-532 BC): twenty-six years each; Lord Jing (r. 599-581 BC): nineteen years; Lord Xiao (r. 739-724): sixteen years; Lord Dao (r. 572-558 BC): fifteen years; Lords Hui (r. 650-637 BC), Ling (r. 620-607 BC), and Qing (r. 525-512 BC): fourteen years each.

supporter of King Ping (r. 770-720 BC).¹³ Lord Jing, on the other hand, featured prominently in the *Yanzi Chunqiu*, a text whose authorship was traditionally ascribed to his Prime Minister Yan Ying,¹⁴ as well as in a large number of historical and more fictional tales.¹⁵ As with Lord Huan, Lord Jing succeeded his older half-brother, after he was murdered. Lord Jing held a number of important covenants and led a number of successful military campaigns, such as that against Lu, in 501-500 BC, and Jin in 494 BC.¹⁶ Lord Jing was credited with a particular wish to follow the illustrious example of his great-great-grandfather, Lord Huan, and return the hegemony to Qi.¹⁷ However, Lord Jing's death would leave Qi vulnerable to attacks from Wu, a state which attempted to use its military might to impose upon the Central States.¹⁸

Lord Wen of Jin, who achieved an exceptional amount in a comparatively short reign, can be compared to some of the other rulers of his state. The three longest serving feudal lords of the state of Jin were Lords Ding, Wen (1) and Min.¹⁹ Lord Ding of Jin's reign was marked by campaigns to stem the rising power of the ministerial families; thus in the twenty-third year of his rule he led the troops of Jin against the Fan and

¹³ See *Shi Ji*, 32:1482.

¹⁴ The text of the *Yanzi Chunqiu* is believed to have been compiled by Yanzi's disciples prior to 400 BC, and thus within a century of his death; see Durrant: "Yan tzu ch'un ch'iu," p. 486.

¹⁵ See for example the tales in Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 19:5b-6a [*Gao Yi*], Chen Qiyu: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 659 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang*], Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozhu*, pp. 274-276 [*Shan Shuo*].

¹⁶ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1357 [Zhao 13], 1432 [Zhao 22], 1465 [Zhao 25], 1561 [Ding 7].

¹⁷ See for example Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁸ See Wang Gesen, Tang Zhiqing: *Qi Guo Shi*, p. 236.

¹⁹ Lord Ding was Lord Wen's seven times great-grandson, Lord Wen (1) was his great-great-uncle, Lord Min was his fourth cousin.

Zhonghang clans.²⁰ The most famous event of his rule however was probably his meeting with King Fucha of Wu at Huangchi,²¹ where two kinds of power may be said to have clashed. King Fucha represented temporal power; he had just defeated the troops of Qi who lacked leadership after the death of Lord Jing, while Lord Ding represented moral authority, for like his ancestors, Lord Ding held the office of Master of Covenants.²² As it turned out, much of the historical significance of this meeting lay in the subsequent decline of the two main parties: the military might which it seemed that King Fucha could command, turned out, under attack from Yue, to be less than previously believed;²³ Lord Ding of Jin was the last ruler of Jin to preside over a covenant, his authority having been destroyed by the creation of new power-structures.²⁴

The first Lord Wen of Jin, who had the personal name Chou, was to be of great importance as a model for the career of his name-sake, for he had ousted his uncle who had usurped the title,²⁵ he was a loyal supporter of the Zhou house,²⁶ the subject of the *Wen Hou zhi Ming* (Charge to Marquis Wen) which was recorded in the *Shang Shu*, and which formed the model for the ceremony in which King Xiang made Lord Wen of Jin

²⁰ See *Shi Ji*, 39:1685. The rise of these aggressive ministerial clans finally came to a head with the rebellion of the Zhao, Wei and Han families against the authority of Lord Chu of Jin, Lord Ding's son.

²¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1676-1677 [Ai 13].

²² See Rosen: "Changing Conceptions of the Hegemon in Pre-Chin China," p. 106.

²³ See Yu Zonghan: "Wu Shi Ru Ying zhi Zhan Youguan Wenti Tanta," p. 117.

²⁴ See Rosen: "Changing Conceptions of the Hegemon in Pre-Chin China," p. 111.

²⁵ Lord Wen's uncle, Shangshu ruled for three years before being deposed by his nephew; see *Shi Ji*, 39:1637.

²⁶ Chou, Lord Wen of Jin, played an important part in the installation of King Ping; see Li: *Eastern Zhou and Qin Civilizations*, pp. 37-38. Successive rulers of Jin were conspicuously loyal to the Zhou, and were very proud of their blood-relationship with the Zhou royal family; see Weld: *Covenant in Jin's Walled Cities*, p. 14.

hegemon.²⁷ It was also believed by many commentators on the *Zuo Zhuan* that when Hu Yan advised Chonger, Lord Wen of Jin, to “continue the work of Wen,”²⁸ he was making reference to the achievements of this illustrious predecessor.²⁹ Lord Min of Jin was ultimately a much less successful ruler, falling victim to the rapacity of his cousin, Lord Wu of Quwo, who killed him and presented his treasure to King Li of Zhou (r. 681-677 BC). This gift convinced King Li to appoint Lord Wu of Quwo Marquis of Jin, and rank him among the feudal lords. This event was the only one of his twenty-eight year rule to merit inclusion in the *Shi Ji*.³⁰ The *Zuo Zhuan* simply recorded that:

The king sent the Duke of Guo to charge the Earl of Quwo as the Marquis of Jin with one army.³¹

Lord Min’s longevity suggests exceptional skills in government and warfare, given the constant attacks on successive generations of his immediate family by members of the Quwo lineage, which claimed among others the lives of his great-grandfather, grandfather, brother, and nephew.³²

Comparing the rulership of Lord Mu of Qin with the two longer reigning lords of Qin, Lords Wen and Jing, there are quite striking similarities. As with his descendant, Lord Wen of Qin was credited with governmental changes; he was said to have been

²⁷ See Qu Wanli: *Shang Shu Shiyi*, pp. 144-146 [*Wen Hou zhi Ming*]. The account of this charge can be compared with that of the second Lord Wen of Jin; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 463-465 [Xi 28]. The similarities between the ceremonies were so great that Sima Qian confused the two; see *Shi Ji*, 39:1667. The gifts made to Chonger, Lord Wen of Jin, were slightly more elaborate than those made to his predecessor.

²⁸ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 431 [Xi 25].

²⁹ See Yang Bojun’s commentary on this phrase.

³⁰ See *Shi Ji*, 39:1640.

³¹ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 203 [Zhuang 16].

³² For an account of the viciousness of the fighting between these two branches of the ruling family; see Weld: *Covenant in Jin’s Walled Cities*, p. 131.

responsible for instituting the keeping of official records, as well as promulgating new laws.³³ Again like Lord Mu of Qin, he was said to have made significant territorial gains, defeating the Rong and seizing their lands.³⁴ Apart from this expansion in territory, which laid the foundations for the subsequent greatness, his most lasting achievement was the creation of a new capital for the state of Qin, at Xianyang, having obtained a favourable crack in the divination on building a city on this spot.³⁵ The rule of Lord Jing of Qin was characterized by hostilities with the state of Jin. This enmity had only been temporarily in abeyance during the rule of Lord Wen of Jin, who largely owed his title to Lord Mu of Qin.³⁶ Lord Jing maintained a close relationship with the government of Chu, and made common cause with them against the state of Jin.³⁷ However, bronzes dating from his reign clearly indicated an increasing rapprochement with the culture of the Central States at this time, with their references to “receiving the Mandate of Heaven.”³⁸

Consideration of King Zhuang of Chu, in the context of the longer ruling monarchs of the state of Chu, shows again that those rulers who received the title of hegemon had a great deal in common with the experiences of other successful and long-lived rulers of the same state. King Zhuang was far from being the most obviously successful monarch of his state, and much of his power and authority derived from the

³³ See Peng Yousheng: *Qin Shi*, p. 16.

³⁴ See Lin Jianming: *Qinguo Fazhanshi*, pp. 10-11.

³⁵ See *Shi Ji*, 5:179.

³⁶ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 412 [Xi 24]. For a discussion of this point; see Peng Yousheng: *Qin Shi*, p. 39.

³⁷ The state of Qin only fought twice against Chu in the Spring and Autumn period, both times during the reign of Lord Mu, once when Chu had occupied Ruo, a tributary state of Qin's and once at the battle of Chengpu. After Lord Mu's death, Qin and Chu regularly covenanted together, natural allies since both were concerned about the expansion of Jin. See Lin Jianming: *Qin Shi Gao*, pp. 116-117.

³⁸ See Liang Weixian: “Qin de Minzu yu Wenhua ji Zhongguo Fengjian Zhuanzhi Zhuyi de Xingcheng,” p. 88.

enormous territorial gains of his predecessors, beginning with King Wu,³⁹ the longest lived of all the kings of Chu. King Wu's expansion of the state of Chu at the expense of its neighbours was relentless,⁴⁰ he died after a reign of fifty-one years on campaign against the state of Sui.⁴¹ In the case of the second longest-lived monarch, King Cheng of Chu, it is noticeable that his reign began very auspiciously:

When he was first established, he spread virtue and sowed kindness, and re-established the old good relationship with the feudal lords. He sent a messenger with offerings to the Son of Heaven, and the Son of Heaven gave him a gift of sacrificial meat,⁴² saying: "Pacify the rebellion of the Yi and Yue in the south and do not invade the Central States."⁴³

At the height of his powers, King Cheng destroyed the states of Ying and Huang,⁴⁴ killed Lord Xiang of Song in the battle of Hong, and feasted the Honourable Chonger on his travels.⁴⁵ Later on, the Chu army (admittedly present in a reduced size) was defeated at the battle of Chengpu,⁴⁶ and King Cheng fell out with his son and designated Heir Apparent, who forced him to commit suicide.

³⁹ See He Guanyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, p. 10.

⁴⁰ See He Guanyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, p. 84.

⁴¹ See *Shi Ji*, 40:1695.

⁴² For a discussion of the role presentation of meat played in maintaining links between the Zhou king and his feudal lords; see Toyota Hisashi: "Shū Tenshi to Bun, Bu no So no Shiyo ni tsuite," p. 9.

⁴³ *Shi Ji*, 40:1697.

⁴⁴ See Wu Yongzhang: "Liang Hu Diqu Gudai Yueren Yizong Tongshu," p. 82.

⁴⁵ This famous banquet saw the Honourable Chonger complimenting King Cheng on the wealth and importance of the state of Chu. His gratitude for King Cheng's generosity towards him would be recompensed in his conduct at Chengpu; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 409-411 [Xi 23], 458 [Xi 28].

⁴⁶ King Cheng had quarrelled with General Ziyu, who was in charge of the Chu forces in the campaign against Song that precipitated the conflict, and had reduced the number of troops under his command; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 457 [Xi 28].

As for the third longest-lived king of Chu, King Zhao was no stranger to controversy from his birth. His mother, a member of the ruling family of Qin, had originally been intended as the bride for Prince Jian of Chu, King Ping's son. King Ping took his son's bride for himself, an event which led to Wu Zixu leaving Chu and throwing in his lot with the state of Wu.⁴⁷ The reign of King Zhao of Chu was marked by hostilities with Wu, King Helü's troops were said to have entered the capital and in the most extreme versions of this story Wu Zixu was said to have whipped King Ping's body three hundred times.⁴⁸ King Zhao was thus forced to move his capital from Ying to Ruo.⁴⁹ In spite of the difficulties with Wu, Chu continued to expand its territories aggressively at this time, conquering the states of Tang, Dun and Hu.⁵⁰

King Helü of Wu, like his grandfather, King Shoumeng, was an exceptionally able ruler. King Shoumeng was of great importance in the short history of the state of Wu; it was he who first brought it to international prominence, attending covenants in the Central States,⁵¹ and gave himself the title of king.⁵² It would seem that he was the monarch credited with creating the foundations of the hegemony of his grandson. The reign of King Fucha however, showed a rapid decline from the power and prestige of his father's rule. Having succeeded his father after his death in battle against the forces of King Goujian in 496 BC, King Fucha began his reign with the campaigns against Yue, as described in Chapter Three. This was followed by an attempt to impose himself on the

⁴⁷ See for example the version of this story given in the Biography of Wu Zixu in the *Shi Ji*, 66:2171-2172.

⁴⁸ This was to prove one of the most popular stories about Wu Zixu; see for example *Shi Ji* 66:2176.

⁴⁹ See He Guangyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, p. 12.

⁵⁰ See Chen Pan: *Chunqiu Dashibiao Lieguo Juexing ji Cunmiebiao Zhuanyi*, pp. 246, 404-406, 457-459, and He Guangyue: *Chu Mieguo Kao*, p. 86.

⁵¹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 974 [Xiang 10].

⁵² See *Shi Ji*, 31:1448.

political stage in the Central States,⁵³ as a result of which he led his troops north in an ultimately successful campaign against the state of Qi. However, these new ambitions brought him into direct conflict with the then ruler of Jin, Lord Ding. It was King Fucha's attempt to overawe Jin, his prolonged disputes at the meeting at Huangchi over precedence,⁵⁴ that gave Yue the opportunity for the first invasion of Wu in the campaign that eventually led to its destruction, in 473 BC.

The high profile of the hegemons, since the renowned of their achievements placed them far above the other rulers of their states, has served to obscure the similarities between these individuals and the other successful rulers of the same states. Without successful rulers, who expanded their states by conquest, and governed efficiently, without the infrastructure to support their ambitions, the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period would never have achieved the fame that they did. Likewise, without the interest of their descendants, and a wish to understand and emulate their great ancestors, many regional traditions about the hegemons would have been lost. The precedents provided by the hegemons were used to advise, admonish and encourage their descendants; the hegemony was a prize for which many rulers in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period were exhorted to strive.

Rival Claimants to the Hegemony

⁵³ It has been suggested that King Helü of Wu's successful campaigns against Chu, which led to the loss of the capital, gave people an overblown idea of the capabilities of Wu's troops. Believing his forces to be invincible, King Fucha, a less able ruler than his father, was led into commitments that he could not honour. See Yu Zonghan: "Wu Shi Ru Ying zhi Zhan Youguan Wenti Tanta," p. 117.

⁵⁴ King Fucha of Wu claimed precedence at this meeting on the grounds that within the Zhou royal family, he was the senior. (The rulers of Wu claimed descent from Tai Bo, King Wen of Zhou's oldest uncle, while the marquises of Jin were said to be descended from Tang Shuwu, one of King Wu's younger sons). The rulers of Jin claimed precedence on the grounds of their status within the Central States, as "hegemons." See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 1676-1677 [Ai 13].

The hegemon considered in this thesis were not unique among the feudal lords of their time, except in the impact that they and their companions had on the imagination of subsequent generations. A number of other Spring and Autumn and Warring States rulers openly attempted to gain for themselves the title of hegemon, indeed their attempts only ended with the unification of China.⁵⁵ Yet others engaged in the sort of activities that had gained the hegemony for some rulers of their time; they upheld the royal house, subdued the barbarians, fought against Chu, but without being granted, or subsequently being perceived as having attained, the title. The wish of some rulers during the Eastern Zhou period to attain the hegemony would lead them onto dangerous ground. However other rulers of the time would engage in the kind of activities that had raised a contemporary to the hegemony, indeed they would occasionally be described as having become hegemon, without endangering themselves or the security of their states.

These unsuccessful, or generally unrecognised, claimants of the hegemony provide an interesting contrast to those rulers whose claim to the title was undisputed. These men did many of the same things as the undisputed hegemon, and yet in some way they fell short of the ideal. Their determination to succeed indicates the great authority and prestige with which this extraordinary Zhou title was invested during the Spring and Autumn period.

The most famous of the claimants or pretenders to the hegemony was probably Lord Xiang of Song, noted for his attempts to obtain this title after the death of Lord Huan of Qi when the post was left vacant for around twelve years,⁵⁶ attempts which

⁵⁵ However the word *ba* (hegemon) continued to appear in titles in use in later years, such as for example the title Hegemon King of Western Chu claimed by Xiang Yu; see *Shi Ji*, 7:317.

⁵⁶ Lord Huan of Qi died in 644 BC, and Lord Wen of Jin was appointed hegemon by King Xiang in 632 BC, after his victory at the battle of Chengpu; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 463 [Xi 28].

eventually led him to a final fatal battle against the state of Chu at Hong.⁵⁷ Lord Xiang of Song's claim to be considered among the five hegemonies of the Spring and Autumn dynasty was entertained by some scholars in antiquity; most notably his claim was discussed in the *Bai Hu Tong*, in which a brief summing-up of his most famous deeds ended with the words "thus we know that he was a hegemon."⁵⁸ Lord Xiang of Song was clearly a feudal lord respected and admired by his peers; it was to his court that Lord Huan of Qi sent his Heir, Zhao, the future Lord Xiao of Qi (r. 642-633 BC), to live.⁵⁹ In addition, after the death of Lord Huan, it is known that Lord Xiang presided over a number of covenants, in an attempt to take over the role of arbiter of affairs in the Central States.⁶⁰ However, he lacked the military strength that would enable him to compel obedience to the terms of the covenant when agreed, and he failed utterly to defeat Chu in battle. It was the events of the battle of Hong which provided the most popular tale of the reign of Lord Xiang, in which he refused three times to attack the Chu forces, since his quixotic code of chivalry and gentlemanliness⁶¹ would not allow him to drum his troops forward until the enemies troops had finished their preparations and were drawn up in full battle array.⁶²

⁵⁷ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 397 [Xi 22]. Hong was within the borders of Song; see Tan Qixiang (ed.): *Zhongguo Lishi Dituji*, Maps 24-25.

⁵⁸ Chen Li: *Bai Hu Tong Shuzheng*, p. 65 [Hao].

⁵⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 374 [Xi 17]. According to the *Zuo Zhuan*, the Duke of Song led two coalitions of the feudal lords to establish Lord Xiao on his father's death; see pp. 377-378 [Xi 18].

⁶⁰ See *Shi Ji*, 38:1626. For a discussion of the covenants held under the auspices of Lord Xiang; see Wei Juxian: "Wu Ba Kao," pp. 563-564.

⁶¹ Given that these events occurred at a period of great tension between Chu and the Central States, when Chu was generally considered a barbaric country, for Lord Xiang to behave in this fashion created a "heightened perception of his magnanimity or folly." See Lee: "The Idea of Authority in the *Shi Ji*," p. 350.

⁶² The earliest account of this battle is found in the *Zuo Zhuan*; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 397-399 [Xi 22]. Further historical accounts are to be found in the *Gongyang Zhuan* and *Shi Ji*; see Chen Li: *Gongyang Yishu*, 34:1b-3a [Xi 22] and *Shi Ji*, 38:1626 respectively. The same story was recounted with very minimal changes by a number of other writers; see for example Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p.

The disastrous defeat of Song by Chu resulted, among other things, in the death of Lord Xiang himself.⁶³ Although later generations would transform him into a nonpareil of chivalry, early accounts of his deeds stressed the doomed nature of his enterprise,⁶⁴ the evil portents that attended it,⁶⁵ and the distress caused to his people by his pursuit of military glory.⁶⁶ Lord Xiang's attempt to win the hegemony indicates an interesting tension between his ambitions and his character, lacking in the stories of those who were generally ranked among the hegemonies of the Spring and Autumn period. In order to improve his chances of becoming hegemon, Lord Xiang would have had to defeat Chu in battle, since military might was a prerequisite for being granted the title. However, his personal code of conduct would not allow him to behave in a way that would have made that victory certain. The undisputed hegemonies were portrayed in historical texts as ruthless where their own interests were concerned, but as a result of their success the more unpleasant aspects of their characters were often ignored or excused in later texts.

Lord Xiang's attempt to gain the hegemony would end in his own death. Other rulers of the Spring and Autumn period would be able to conduct themselves in such a way as to qualify in some eyes for the title of hegemon without disaster. Lord Dao of Jin (r. 572-558 BC) was credited with "restoring the hegemony" by his reforms of the

658 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang*].

⁶³ Lord Xiang of Song was said to have died some months after the battle, of a wound in his thigh received at Hong; see *Shi Ji*, 38:1627.

⁶⁴ The Marshal Ziyu of Song, also known as the Honourable Muiyi, was described in the *Zuo Zhuan* as having said that if the worst that happened from Lord Xiang of Song's attempts at attaining the hegemony was that he died, he would be lucky. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 382 [Xi 19]. This story was also given in the *Shi Ji*, 38:1626.

⁶⁵ The ill omens of meteors falling in Song, birds flying upside down and epidemic disease breaking out, are described in a number of texts; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 368 [Xi 16]; *Shi Ji*, 38:1627; Wang Liqi: *Fengsu Tongyi Jiaozhu*, p. 19 [*Huang Ba*].

⁶⁶ See for example Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 397 [Xi 22].

government of Jin, thus harking back to the role that internal reform was said to have had in raising Lord Wen to the hegemony:

When promoted [the senior officials] did not forget their duties, officials did not change the constant principles, titles did not exceed the virtue [of those on whom they were bestowed], officials of the second class did not take precedence over officials of the first rank, the lower ranking officials did not seek to impose upon the officials of the second class, the people did not speak slander...⁶⁷

The same ruler was said in the *Guo Yu* to have brought the Rong into submission, and to have made them participate in a blood covenant for the first time.⁶⁸ He was also said to have rescued the state of Song from attack by Chu, though he seems to have achieved this without doing battle.⁶⁹ Unlike his great-great-grandfather, Lord Wen, who had done battle with Chu, when the forces of Jin met the Chu army at Mijue in 572 BC, the Chu army simply turned back. Lord Dao of Jin was also credited with hosting a number of covenants; in an echo of Lord Huan of Qi, he was said to have met the feudal lords nine times.⁷⁰ Lord Dao, as with other feudal lords of the state of Jin,⁷¹ was occasionally accorded the title of “hegemon” in ancient texts, but in some way he lacked the qualities that had brought his ancestor, Lord Wen, to such prominence. The account of his life given in the *Shi Ji* emphasised (though without drawing particularly explicit comparison) the similarities between Lord Dao and Lord Wen of Jin: neither had

⁶⁷ Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 908-911 [Cheng 18]. Lord Dao’s governmental reforms were also mentioned in the *Shi Ji*, 39:1682.

⁶⁸ Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 436 [Jin Yu 7].

⁶⁹ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 913 [Cheng 18].

⁷⁰ The use of this phrase as a standard epithet for Lord Huan of Qi is discussed in Chapter One. For its application to Lord Dao; see *Shi Ji*, 39:1682.

⁷¹ For example, occasionally Lord Xiang of Jin was said to have participated in the hegemony of his father, Lord Wen of Jin; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 1232 [Zhao 3] and Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, p. 458 [Jin Yu 8]. Likewise in the Du Yu commentary to the *Zuo Zhuan*, a reference to the “five lords who were masters of the feudal lords,” was interpreted as referring to the hegemony of Lords Wen, Xiang, Ling, Cheng and Jing of Jin. See Du Yu: *Chunqiu Jing Zhuan Jijie*, 24:12a [Zhao 20].

been expected to succeed to the title,⁷² both had been sustained when out of power by loyal retainers,⁷³ both underwent similar rituals when called to the throne,⁷⁴ both when in power attempted to attract the wise and able to their governments. Be that as it may, Lord Dao failed to attract the same interest, and tales of his life would never be as popular as those dealing with his predecessor.⁷⁵ He drew upon the posthumous fame of Lord Wen of Jin, without significantly adding to it in his own right.

Another example of this kind of rulership, from the Warring States period, was Juliang, Lord Xiao of Qin (r. 361-338 BC),⁷⁶ who was described in the *Shi Ji* as having been appointed hegemon by the Son of Heaven, as a result of which he sent the Honourable Shao of Qin to meet the feudal lords at Fengze on his behalf, and to lead them to pay court to the Zhou king.⁷⁷ According to the *Zhanguo Ce*, he was responsible

⁷² See *Shi Ji*, 39:1669-1681. Lord Dao was descended from Lord Wen of Jin's Heir, Huan, Lord Xiang (r. 627-621 BC). When Lord Xiang died, his son was still a minor, and so a regency was established until his heir, Yigao, Lord Ling (r. 620-607 BC) was grown up. Lord Ling was in turn succeeded by his uncle, Heitun, Lord Cheng (r. 606-600 BC), who was succeeded by his son, Ju, Lord Jing (r. 599-581 BC), and then grandson, Shouman, Lord Li (r. 580-573 BC). Lord Li was murdered in a coup, and so his third cousin once removed, the Honourable Zhou, succeeded as Lord Dao.

⁷³ See *Shi Ji*, 39:1682.

⁷⁴ Lord Wen of Jin was installed after a covenant with the grandees of his state was performed at Xun, then he went to Quwo and held court at the temple of his grandfather, Lord Wu, prior to going to the capital. Whether in conscious imitation or not, when Lord Dao was installed, he held a covenant at Qingyuan, then he went to Quwo to hold court at the temple of Lord Wu, after which he went to the capital. See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 413 [Xi 24], 907 [Cheng 18]. For a discussion of these events; see Li Mengcun, Chang Jincang: *Jinguo Shi Gangyao*, p. 95.

⁷⁵ Nevertheless, stories of his life and reign appear in a number of texts; see for example Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, p. 5-6, Wang Liqi: *Fengsu Tongyi Jiaozhu*, p. 245 [*Shi Fan*].

⁷⁶ Lord Xiao of Qin was a direct descendant in the fourteenth generation from Lord Mu of Qin. Unusually, Lord Xiao's date of birth has been preserved; he was born in the first month, on Kangyin day, in the fourth year of his father's reign; see *Shi Ji*, 5:201. This equates to the 6th December 382 BC; see Xu Xiqi: *Xi Zhou (Gonghe) zhi Xi Han Li Pu*, p. 921.

⁷⁷ See *Shi Ji* 5:203.

for instituting government reforms at the instigation of Shang Yang that enriched and empowered his state to the point where it was without equal among the surviving feudal lords.⁷⁸ As with other hegemon, Lord Xiao was credited with great reforms of the government of his state, and in this case, he was explicitly said to have been consciously imitating his great ancestor, Lord Mu of Qin:

Lord Xiao sent down a command to the state: "In past times Lord Mu came from between Qi and Yong, he cultivated his virtue, and enacted martial power, to the east he settled the chaos of Jin, and made the Yellow River his border, to the west he was hegemon over the Rong and the Di peoples, he opened up one thousand *li* of land, the Son of Heaven made him a hegemon, the feudal lords all congratulated him, and he opened up a tradition for later generations, and was extremely enlightened and brilliant. When we come to the disorder under Lords Li, Zao, Jian and Chuzi,⁷⁹ it caused distress within the state, so they had no time to spend on international affairs, the three Jins attacked and occupied the territory of our former rulers in Hexi, the feudal lords treated Qin as worthless; no shame is greater than this. When Lord Xian was established, he brought the border regions under control by force, he moved the capital to Yueyang, besides which he wished to attack to the east and restore the ancient lands of Lord Mu, and repair the government and commands of Lord Mu. I have thought about the intentions of our former ruler, and it constantly pains my heart. If visiting experts and ministers are able to come up with new plans to strengthen Qin I will make them honoured officials, and divide up land to give to them."⁸⁰

As with Lord Dao of Jin, Lord Xiao of Qin enacted the sort of policies that had brought his ancestor such lasting fame, but without the same success.⁸¹ Other rulers

⁷⁸ See Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 215 [*Cai Ze Jian Zhu yu Zhao*].

⁷⁹ Lord Li (or Ligong) (r. 476-443 BC) and Lord Zao of Qin (r. 442-429 BC) were Lord Xiao's great-great-grandfather, and great-grandfather respectively. Nothing in the *Shi Ji* makes it clear why these ancestors were considered so disastrous by their descendant. Indeed Lord Li made significant territorial gains; see *Shi Ji*, 5:199. Lords Jian (r. 414-400 BC) and Chuzi of Qin (r. 386-385 BC) were Lord Xiao's third cousin three times removed, and third cousin once removed respectively, in a younger branch of the family. Again, there seems to be no particular reason for resentment, except that Lord Chuzi, a small child, had to be murdered in order to clear the way for Lord Xiao's father, Lord Xian of Qin (r. 384-362 BC) to seize the title. See *Shi Ji*, 5:200.

⁸⁰ *Shi Ji*, 5:202.

⁸¹ Nevertheless, stories of Lord Xiao's reign can be found in a number of texts; see for example Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 11:16a-16b [*Chang Jian*], 22:4a-5b [*Wu Yi*],

from Qin during the Warring States period, would be encouraged or admonished with the suggestion that hegemony awaited them, if they would only seize their opportunities.⁸²

The saddest fate of any of the Warring States aspirants to the title of hegemon awaited King Kang of Song (r. 360-313 BC). According to the earliest account of these events, which is found in the *Shi Ji*, during his reign a sparrow gave birth to a hawk, an event which he ordered a diviner to make a divination about. The diviner told him that it was an omen that he would be “hegemon over the empire.” According to this text, the failure of this prophecy to come about drove King Kang to insanity, and resulted in the destruction of his state, when his appalled peers found his behaviour impossible to tolerate any longer.⁸³ From this version of the tale, it was clear that King Kang of Song had been a very effective ruler, who as with many hegemon and aspirants to hegemony, had not been expected to rule; he had in fact launched a coup d’etat which deposed his older brother Ticheng, and established himself initially as Lord Yan of Song, and then created himself king. King Kang of Song was recorded in the *Shi Ji* as having been a great ruler, who expanded his state enormously at the expense of the states of Qi, Wei and Chu, whose armies eventually defeated his, killed him, and partitioned his state in three.⁸⁴ The same story appeared in a number of ancient texts, such as the *Zhanguo Ce* and *Xin Xu*.⁸⁵ All versions of this tale are very closely related, and emphasise the moral disintegration suffered by King Kang at the failure of his ambitions. However, it would

Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 249 [*Jian Jie Shi Chen*].

⁸² See for example Fan Sui’s persuasion of Lord Zhao of Qin; see Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 186 [*Fan Sui Zhi Qin*].

⁸³ See *Shi Ji*, 38:1632.

⁸⁴ See Yang Kuan: *Zhanguo Shi*, pp. 374, 390.

⁸⁵ See Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 1157 [*Song Kang Wang zhi Shi You Jue Sheng Qi*], and Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, p. 68-69. The *Xin Xu*, like the *Zhanguo Ce*, was a compilation arranged by Liu Xiang; see Tsien: “Chan kuo ts’e,” p. 5, and Knechtges: “Hsin hsü,” p. 154. References to these events are also found in texts such as the *Lüshi Chunqiu*; see Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 7:13b [*Jin Sai*], 18:18a-18b [*Yin Ci*].

seem more likely that his military successes were a source of greater irritation than his personal behaviour, but insanity accompanied by debauchery with wine and women made a better story.

As with other successful rulers from the same states, the rival claimants to the hegemony provide an interesting contrast with the undisputed hegemons. The rival claimants undertook many of the same deeds, in some cases to the point where their claims were considered seriously in ancient texts. However, the stories about their lives lacked the heroic overtones added to the biographies of the hegemons, and so tales about them were significantly less engaging, and less popular.

The Hegemons of the Spring and Autumn Period as Literary Figures

In Chapters One to Four, the development of stories of the lives of the hegemons from the Warring States to the end of the Han dynasty was considered. In the rest of this chapter, the continued impact on tales of the hegemons on literary creativity in China during the imperial period will be considered. The hegemons were to have a special place in literature on the Spring and Autumn period. Their deeds were not unique among the feudal lords and kings of their day, for as described above, other rulers held covenants,⁸⁶ which they were strong enough to force others to attend, and fought against the might of the nomadic peoples and nations that did not form part of the Central States, such as Chu, which were held to be a threat to the security of the Central States. There were other rulers as well who ruled states as strong as those of the hegemons, notably other earlier and later rulers of the states of Qi, Jin, Qin, Chu, Wu and Yue. The hegemons were strong rulers, but they were not the only strong rulers of the period. However, it is clear that from a very early stage, the legends about their lives held a particularly enduring place in the public imagination.

⁸⁶ For example, a succession of rulers of the state of Jin presided over covenants, and held the title of *mengzhu*, as described in Chapter One. This did not mean, however, that they were hegemons. See Rosen: "Changing Conceptions of the Hegemon in Pre-Chin China," pp. 105-106.

From the beginning of the literary text in China, the hegemon served as an important source of inspiration. Lord Huan of Qi received a whole section of the *Guo Yu* to himself (the *Qi Yu* or Sayings of Qi), as well as making a strong appearance in the *Zuo Zhuan*. His life and deeds also formed the bulk of the material for the *Guanzi*, a text whose authorship was traditionally attributed to his Prime Minister Guan Zhong.⁸⁷ In the chapter on the “Hereditary House of Qi” of the *Shi Ji*, Lord Huan’s deeds form a significant proportion of the whole, quite apart from those of his exploits which were recounted in other chapters, such as for example his being held hostage by Cao Mo,⁸⁸ an account of which appeared in the Biographies of Assassins chapter.⁸⁹ That is quite apart from the numerous tales of his life scattered throughout literature of the Warring States and Han period.

Lord Wen of Jin was nearly as well served as Lord Huan in ancient Chinese literature. The *Zuo Zhuan* was a text strongly associated with the state of Jin,⁹⁰ and so it was to be expected that his deeds would be well represented therein.⁹¹ Apart from that, the sections dealing with events in the state of Jin form the biggest single section in the *Guo Yu*. Of the nine chapters on the state of Jin, one complete chapter dealt with the

⁸⁷ The *Guanzi* was in fact a text compiled from a variety of sources, and a number of different hands; see Rickett: “Kuan tzu,” pp. 247-248.

⁸⁸ See Zhao Yi: *Gaiyu Congkao*, p. 46, for a discussion of the name variants for this character.

⁸⁹ See *Shi Ji*, 86:2515-2516.

⁹⁰ See Karlgren: “On the Nature and Authenticity of the Tso Chuan,” pp. 64-65. The assertion that grammatical analysis can demonstrate the association of this text with the state of Jin has been challenged, on the grounds that the *Zuo Zhuan* is a received text, and comparison between excavated and received versions of the same texts has shown significant variation. However, when the *Zuo Zhuan* is broken into its constituent parts it can be seen that the events of the state of Jin form a very significant part of this text; see Dan Zhouyao: “Gao Benhan *Zuo Zhuan* Zuozhe Fei Lu Guoren Shuo Zhiyi,” pp. 213, 229-231.

⁹¹ The *Zuo Zhuan* seems to have been a primary source for many of the most popular tales of Lord Wen of Jin’s life, such as for example the tale of Jie Zhi Tui, or the training of his people; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 417-419 [Xi 24], 447 [Xi 27].

events of the reign of Lord Wen.⁹² In the *Shi Ji*, the chapter on the Hereditary House of Jin contains a significant number of stories of the life and reign of Lord Wen. Like Lord Huan and all the other hegemon, numerous tales of the life of Lord Wen are to be found in texts of the relevant period.

Lord Mu of Qin had the distinction of being associated with two texts in canonical works of ancient China. This literary distinction is unique among the hegemon. First, his speech to his subjects when the Qin forces had been defeated at Xiao (in 627 BC) by the forces of Jin: the *Qin Shi* (Oath of Qin) was included in the *Shang Shu*.⁹³ Likewise, the plaint: *Huang Niao*, composed by his people when three members of the Ziche lineage were executed as human sacrifices as part of his obsequies was incorporated into the *Shi Jing*.⁹⁴ The deeds of Lord Mu of Qin were also well recorded in the *Zuo Zhuan*, since Qin was linked to Jin by numerous marriage alliances during the Spring and Autumn period. However the two states were also often at war with each other. Also, Lord Mu of Qin's deeds form a significant part of the Basic Annals of Qin in the *Shi Ji*.

King Zhuang of Chu was an exception in the strong association of the hegemon with the literature of the Warring States and Han periods. Only a handful of stories about the events of his reign were mentioned in the *Zuo Zhuan*, or deemed worthy of inclusion in the Hereditary House of Chu chapter in the *Shi Ji*. Tales of his reign were correspondingly rare in other ancient texts.

King Helü of Wu's life and reign was described in the *Shi Ji* chapter on the Hereditary House of Wu. In addition to that, with King Goujian of Yue, the enmity between the states of Wu and Yue was the subject of two late Han texts, the *Yue Jue*

⁹² See Shanghai Shifan Daxue Guji Zhenglizu: *Guo Yu*, pp. 337-392 [*Jin Yu* 4].

⁹³ See Qu Wanli: *Shang Shu Shiyi*, pp. 146-148 [*Qin Shi*].

⁹⁴ See Qu Wanli: *Shi Jing Shiyi*, pp. 94-95 [Mao 131: *Qin Feng: Huang Niao*].

Shu and the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*.⁹⁵ These two texts have an important role to play in the understanding of the culture of the Yangtze delta at the end of the Spring and Autumn period. The events of the life of King Goujian of Yue also figured in the two chapters of the *Yue Yu* (Sayings of Yue) in the *Guo Yu*, and also in the *Shi Ji* chapter on the Hereditary House of Yue.

However, other Spring and Autumn rulers figured prominently in the literature of the period. To have one's deeds described or eulogised in written texts was helpful for one's posthumous fame, but was not in itself a guarantee of immortality. For example, recent studies of the *Heguanzi* have served to show that this text was originally ascribed to the teacher of General Pang Xuan, but interest in his deeds died so completely after the unification of China that the text virtually vanished.⁹⁶ The stories about the hegemonies of the Spring and Autumn period avoided this eclipse. Interest in their deeds was sustained, occasionally undergoing a temporary waning, throughout the Imperial period.

Tales of the lives of the hegemonies appeared from the very earliest times over a great geographical area.⁹⁷ This indicates that there was considerable and sustained interest in their deeds beyond the borders of the states in which they lived, long before the unification of China. Stories about the hegemonies had a market beyond the places where they had once lived, they were internationally renowned, not just locally famous. The stories about events in their lives also appeared in a wide variety of texts; they were not only recounted in historical works, but were discussed in works from a number of philosophical schools, ranging from the *Mozi* to the *Huainanzi*, and in collections of stories like the *Shuo Yuan*. As for poetry, mention of their deeds featured in such diverse texts as the *Chu Ci* and in the works of the Jian'an poets. The hegemonies were able to

⁹⁵ The *Wu Yue Chunqiu* was almost entirely derived from other texts; see Lagerwey: "Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu," p. 473. The *Yue Yue Shu* however, is an important historical source; see Schussler/Loewe: "Yüeh chüeh shu," p. 491.

⁹⁶ See Graham: "A Neglected Pre-Han Philosophical Text: *Ho-kuan tzu*," pp. 505-506.

⁹⁷ See Hu Shi: "Shuo 'Shi,'" p. 1.

achieve this literary eminence through the fact that they were already famous before their first appearance in ancient texts, therefore people could be expected to be familiar with the main tales about their lives, and could be interested in hearing more. Stories of their lives were ideal for use as entertainment, but they could also profitably be used to make moral judgements. The events of the lives of the hegemon were presumably first made famous through circulating oral traditions, but their lasting fame was secured by the careful preservation of popular stories about them in the literary texts in which they figured.

Tales about the hegemon have continued to inspire literary creation right up to the present day, in a wide variety of fields: poetry, drama, novels, short stories and so on. The way in which later writers were inspired by the ancient tales of the lives of the hegemon is a subject worthy of research in its own right. However, an overview, focussing on some of the most important periods of development for each literary genre, will indicate the way in which a number of the stories about the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period continued to develop after the end of the Han dynasty. It will also serve to highlight their importance in inspiring some of the greatest figures of Chinese literature. It would be impossible to give a comprehensive account of the way in which the tales of the hegemon inspired literary creation, but a short survey may serve to highlight some interesting aspects of the way these stories developed from the end of the Han dynasty to the end of the Imperial era.

The Hegemon in Prose

At the end of the Han dynasty, classical scholarship suffered from a considerable eclipse, and interest in the great figures of the past such as the hegemon, who had been lauded in ancient texts, underwent a marked decline. However there was clearly some residual interest in these individuals which continued to wax and wane throughout the Imperial Period.⁹⁸ From the end of the Han dynasty onwards, versions of stories of the

⁹⁸ See Nylan: *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, pp. 52-53.

lives of the hegemon continued to appear in 'philosophical' texts,⁹⁹ closely modelled on those of the various Warring States schools. Some of these should be considered as forged texts, ascribed to famous figures of antiquity in order to capitalize on their renown, others were merely making use of venerable models from antiquity.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, works were written in an attempt to continue the tradition of the state annals. Since the texts that these writers took as models featured the deeds of the hegemon prominently, tales of the hegemon and their companions and advisors also figured largely in texts of this genre.

A number of philosophical works have survived which mention the hegemon, for example the *Jinlouzi*, a text compiled by Xiao Yi, Emperor Yuan of the Liang dynasty, which featured many stories which are not included in earlier texts. The importance of this work lies in the fact that tales included in it may date from a considerably earlier period; Emperor Yuan was an erudite scholar,¹⁰¹ and his library of one hundred and forty thousand volumes was destroyed in AD 554 by the invading forces of Wèi.¹⁰² This text included new versions of such famous stories as the attack by Lord Huan of Qi on Guzhu.¹⁰³ Another example of this genre is the *Liuzi*,¹⁰⁴ a text compiled by Liu Xie (c. AD 465-522), most famous as the author of the *Wen Xin Diao Long* (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons). The *Liuzi* included a discussion

⁹⁹ Philosophical here refers to a literary genre, composed of discussions between a master and his disciples, or a series of moral tales grouped together by a master, on a wide variety of subjects including statecraft, public and private behaviour and so on.

¹⁰⁰ See for example Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tongkao*, p. 1010-1111.

¹⁰¹ Yao Silian: *Liang Shu*, 5:135.

¹⁰² See Xu Deping: *Jinlouzi Jiaozhu*, p. i.

¹⁰³ See Xu Deping: *Jinlouzi Jiaozhu*, p. 224 [*Zhi Guai*].

¹⁰⁴ Also known as the *Liuzi Xinlun*.

of the differences between the hegemonies, closely related to the version given in the *Mozi*.¹⁰⁵

One of the most famous examples of annalistic writing during the imperial period is the *Chu Shi Taowu* (The Taowu History of the state of Chu) written by the Yuan dynasty scholar and recluse Wu Yan (AD 1268-1312), in an attempt to replace the lost annals of the state of Chu, the *Taowu*.¹⁰⁶ The *Chu Shi Taowu*, which only included stories of the life of King Zhuang of Chu, recorded all the most famous stories of his reign, presented out of chronological order. The author was clearly well acquainted with a wide variety of ancient texts which contained stories about King Zhuang of Chu. Thus in the account of King Zhuang's failure to participate in the government for the first three years of his reign, the remonstrator was named as Shi Qing, and the story resembled closely the version given in the *Xin Xu*.¹⁰⁷ The wording of the story of King Zhuang of Chu asking about the weight of the Zhou dings in this text was virtually identical with that of the *Zuo Zhuan*.¹⁰⁸ The *Chu Shi Taowu* also included a version of the tale of King Zhuang of Chu's anonymous wife breaking off a tassel from the hat of the man who assaulted her; in this case the man who misbehaved was said to have redeemed himself in battle against Jin.¹⁰⁹ This means that the author was harking back to the earlier versions of this story, before it was updated. The author was basing his account of these events on the version contained in the *Shuo Yuan*, which correctly identified Jin as King Zhuang of Chu's main adversary.¹¹⁰ The *Chu Shi Taowu* is of

¹⁰⁵ To compare the two versions; see Sun Yirang: *Mozi Xianggu*, pp. 68-69 [*Qian Ai*], and Yang Mingzhao: *Liuzi Jiaozhu*, pp. 59-60 [*Cong Hua*].

¹⁰⁶ See Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 624, and Rao Zongyi: "Jing-Chu Wenhua," p. 273.

¹⁰⁷ See Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:29-30, and Wu Guan: *Chu Shi Taowu*, p. 3 [*Yinju*].

¹⁰⁸ See Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 669-672 [Xuan 3], and Wu Guan: *Chu Shi Taowu*, pp. 6-7 [*Wen Ding*].

¹⁰⁹ Wu Guan: *Chu Shi Taowu*, p. 9 [*Jue Ying*].

¹¹⁰ See Xiang Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 126 [*Fu En*].

particular interest and importance given the paucity of stories about King Zhuang of Chu in antiquity; eventually his status as a hegemon led to a gradual accretion of stories in which he figured.

A similar work, the *Jin Wen Chunqiu* (The Spring and Autumn of Lord Wen of Jin),¹¹¹ was also ascribed to Wu Yan. It was said to have been written in an attempt to reconstruct the lost annals of the state of Jin, the *Sheng*, although the reason for the name change is not clear. However, the *Jin Wen Chunqiu* recounted the most famous and popular stories of Lord Wen of Jin's reign, again out of chronological order. This text included the story of Wen of Jin's scouts encountering the large serpent that blocked the way,¹¹² Lord Wen's training of his people, and his investiture as hegemon by King Xiang of Zhou,¹¹³ and the burning of Chu's grain after the battle of Chengpu.¹¹⁴ Wu Yan prided himself on his fidelity to pre-Han texts in his work,¹¹⁵ but clearly could not resist including some of the more dramatic later stories.

From the end of the Han dynasty stories of the hegemon appeared in a number of collections of short stories.¹¹⁶ Indeed some new stories about the hegemon, never

¹¹¹ See Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 625.

¹¹² Chen Xuanyin: *Jin Wen Chunqiu*, p. 4 [*Da She Ju Dao*]. This story was popular from the Han dynasty onwards, for these earlier versions; see Jia Yi: *Jiazi Xin Shu*, pp. 68-9 [*Chunqiu*], Liu Xiang: *Xin Xu*, 2:22 [*Za Shi*], Wang Liqi: *Fengsu Tongyi Jiaozhu*, p. 421 [*Guaishen*].

¹¹³ See Chen Xuanyin: *Jin Wen Chunqiu*, pp. 9 [*Yong Min*], 11-12 [*Xiang Wang Yi Ming*] respectively. These stories are both closely based upon the versions given in the *Zuo Zhuan*; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 447 [Xi 27], 463-465 [Xi 28].

¹¹⁴ See Chen Xuanyin: *Jin Wen Chunqiu*, p. 13 [*Shao Chu Jun*]. The earliest version in which the Jin troops burnt Chu's baggage train rather than feasting on it is found in *Shi Ji*, 39:1668.

¹¹⁵ See Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 624.

¹¹⁶ Tales based on historical events were so popular with Chinese writers that the literary critic, Hu Yinglin, gave them their own group (*bian shu*, or quarrelling rats) in his quadripartite division. The other groups were *tan hu* (talking about tigers) for

previously recorded, were first written down in a fully developed version during the Age of Disunion. One such tale, as described in Chapter Two, was that of Lord Mu of Qin's daughter, Nongyu, who summoned a hen-phoenix by playing her flute.¹¹⁷ Likewise, there was the strange story of the ghost of King Helü's granddaughter, whose name was variously given as Yu or Ziyu, who had not been allowed to marry the man that she loved.¹¹⁸ New stories continued to be developed long after the end of the Han dynasty; the story of the loyal wife Lady Ji of Fan insisting that King Zhuang of Chu should have sex with other women was first recorded in the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907).¹¹⁹ Over time, however, stories about these figures from an increasingly remote past became rarer, as new individuals rose to prominence. Thus, in a large collection like the *Shi Shuo Xin Yu* (New Tales of the World), traditionally ascribed to the nephew of the founder of the (Nan Chao) Song dynasty, Liu Yiqing (AD 403-444),¹²⁰ hardly any of the stories of the events of the Jin dynasty included made reference to the precedents offered by the hegemon.¹²¹ This is perhaps indicative of the decline of interest in these ancient figures during the Age of Disunion, when violent social changes called into question the certainties of Han orthodoxy.

The comprehensive Ming dynasty collection of stories entitled the *Chunqiu Biedian* (Alternative Records of the Spring and Autumn Period), by the reclusive Confucian scholar Xue Yuji, featured many of the most famous stories of the hegemon, closely based upon the *Zuo Zhuan*, and other pre-Han texts. The version of the story of

exaggerated stories, *diao long* (carving dragons) for elaborate tales, and *men chong* (squashing fleas) for stories to help pass the time. For a discussion of Hu's literary theories; see Wu: "From *Xiaoshuo* to Fiction," p. 351.

¹¹⁷ See for example the Jin dynasty text by Huang Fu: *Diwang Shiji*, p. 38 and Zhang Bangji: *Shier Xiaominglu Shiji*, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ See for example Gan Bao: *Sou Shen Ji*, pp. 38-39 [Ziyu, Han Zhong].

¹¹⁹ See Yu Zhigu, Yuan Huazhong: *Zhu Gong Jiushi Yizhu*, p. 55.

¹²⁰ See Mather: *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, p. xviii for a consideration of this attribution.

¹²¹ See for example Liu Yiqing: *Shi Shuo Xin Yu*, 1a:22b [*Yan Yu*], 2b:32a [*Gui Jian*], 3b:7b-8a [*Pai Diao*].

Lord Huan of Qi being held hostage by Cao Mo, to force him to return land seized from the state of Lu was closely based upon the account of these events given in the *Gongyang Zhuan*.¹²² The story of Lord Huan of Qi being concerned at the extravagance of dress affected by the people in his state included in this text followed the account of these events given in the *Han Feizi*.¹²³ The *Chunqiu Biedian* also included the popular stories of Lord Mu of Qin losing his horse, and Lord Wen of Jin's troops burning Chu's baggage train after his victory at Chengpu.¹²⁴ Of the stories of King Zhuang of Chu, this text included Lady Ji of Fan securing the Prime Ministership for Sunshu Ao, and the breaking of the tassel off the drunken courtier.¹²⁵ King Goujian was described training his troops.¹²⁶ Again, fidelity to the most ancient texts was occasionally sacrificed in the interests of a good story.

In the twentieth century, Lu Xun, whose interest in the history of fiction in China resulted in his history of Chinese vernacular literature, the *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shi Lue* (Outline of the History of Chinese Fiction), was inspired by the legend of the famous swordsmiths Gan Jiang and Mo Ye's son, Chi Bi, to write his own version of this ancient tale.¹²⁷ This story, known from at least the end of the Han dynasty, had fallen out

¹²² See Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 2:1a. For the account of these events in the *Gongyang Zhuan*; see Chen Li: *Gongyang Yishu*, 21:8a-11b [Zhuang 13].

¹²³ See Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 663 [*Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang*] for the earliest known version of this story. It would seem to have been the source for the Ming dynasty version; see Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 2:6b-7a.

¹²⁴ See Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 3:11b, 4:8a-8b respectively. The story of Lord Mu of Qin losing his horse seems to have followed the version given in the *Shuo Yuan*; see Xiao Zonglu: *Shuo Yuan Jiaozheng*, p. 125 [*Fu En*]. The story of Lord Wen of Jin burning Chu's grain was a popular tale, first seen in the *Shi Ji*, 39:1668.

¹²⁵ See Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 5:4b-5a, 5:10b-11a respectively. In the story of the broken tassel, the guilty courtier was said to have redeemed himself in battle against Wu. This version is therefore related to that given in the *Han Shi Waizhuan*; see Xu Weiyu: *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi*, 7:256-257.

¹²⁶ See Xue Yuji: *Chunqiu Biedian*, 15:6b-7a. The earliest version of this story was found in the *Han Feizi*; see Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, p. 550 [*Nei Chu Shuo Shang*].

¹²⁷ See Lu Xun: *Gushi Xinbian*, pp. 93-122 [*Zhu Jian*].

of favour, in contrast to the tales of the lives of Gan Jiang and Mo Ye, and the swords of the same name that they had made for King Helü of Wu, which had proved perennially popular.¹²⁸

The earliest fully developed novels and novellas that feature the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period were closely associated with the art of story-telling, and as such could be said to be more closely related to drama than to written literature.¹²⁹ However, given the uncertainties over the nature of ancient story-telling, this genre of works have been included in the prose section. The earliest text based upon a version from a known story-telling tradition to survive was the full-length treatment¹³⁰ of the Wu Zixu legend found in the caves at Dunhuang,¹³¹ which represents the earliest known complete synthesis of the various stories found in ancient texts.¹³² This text was also crucial for understanding the development of Wu Zixu's story in the Tang dynasty, particularly the increased prominence given to the character of the girl by the river who killed herself lest she give him away.¹³³ Apart from that important development, this

¹²⁸ For an account of the way Lu Xun's story related to earlier versions of this tale; see Lanciotti: "Sword Casting and Related Legends in China: The Transformation of Ch'ih Pi's Legend," p. 321.

¹²⁹ See Nienhauser: *The Indiana Companion to Chinese Literature*, pp. 829-830, for an account of the literature from Dunhuang (Dunhuang *wenxue*), and its relationship to the *zhuan bian* (turning transformation (scrolls) story-telling techniques. See also Idema: *Chinese Vernacular Fiction*, p. xiv, and Mair: *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*, pp. 2-12.

¹³⁰ It has been suggested that this work and others of the same ilk were produced by eager fans of this particular genre of story-telling. See: Nienhauser: *The Indiana Companion to Chinese Literature*, p. 830. It is also possible that, as in Europe, expert story-tellers supplemented their incomes by dictating their most popular tales, for distribution to a literate audience unable to hear the master in performance. See Harvey: "Oral Composition and the Performance of Novels of Chivalry in Spain," p. 98.

¹³¹ See Wang Zhongmin, Wang Qingshu, Xiang Da, Zhou Yiliang, Qi Gong, Zeng Yigong: *Dunhuang Bianwen Ji*, pp. 1-28 [Wu Zixu *Bianwen*].

¹³² See Johnson: "Epic and History in Early China," p. 268, and Durrant: *The Cloudy Mirror*, p. 74.

¹³³ In the earliest accounts of these events, the character that Wu Zixu met at the river, who rowed him across, was a fisherman; see for example *Shi Ji*, 66:2173. In the Han

version stated that the Qin girl that King Ping of Chu married was the daughter of Lord Mu of Qin.¹³⁴ The story ended with Wu Zixu's ghost appearing to King Fucha of Wu in a dream, and warning him of the imminent destruction of his state.¹³⁵

The *Wu Zixu Bianwen* was not the only text found at Dunhuang which made reference to the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period. There was also a copy of the *Sou Shen Ji* (Tales of Searching for Spirits) by Gan Bao (fl. AD 320), which included the story of King Zhuang of Chu's wife breaking off the tassel.¹³⁶ Another text found in the caves was the *Yanzi Fu*, which described a conversation between Yanzi and the King of Liang.¹³⁷ This text is of particular importance, because it is in parts identical in wording with the *Gailu*, a military school text excavated at Zhangjiashan, which described a conversation between King Helü of Wu (Gailu) and Wu Zixu (Shen Xu).¹³⁸

Naturally, as befitted men of such great historical importance, the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period appeared tangentially in a number of classical novels of the Ming and Qing. However, they were also the subject of a classic of Chinese historical fiction, the *Xin Lieguo Zhi* (New Records of the Various Kingdoms), by the

dynasty, Wu Zixu was said to have met a girl washing silks by the side of a river, who refused to give him away. The earliest example of this seems to be that given in the *Qin Cao*; see Cai Yong: *Qin Cao*, p. 25. Perhaps to a later audience the change to a female character provided piquancy.

¹³⁴ This would have made the bride about a century old. Lord Mu of Qin was presumably one of the few rulers of that state that the Tang public could have been expected to be familiar with, and that was why his name was given here.

¹³⁵ See Wang Zhongmin, Wang Qingshu, Xiang Da, Zhou Yiliang, Qi Gong, Zeng Yigong: *Dunhuang Bianwen Ji*, p. 28 [*Wu Zixu Bianwen*].

¹³⁶ See Wang Zhongmin, Wang Qingshu, Xiang Da, Zhou Yiliang, Qi Gong, Zeng Yigong: *Dunhuang Bianwen Ji*, p. 887 [*Shou Shen Ji*].

¹³⁷ See Wang Zhongmin, Wang Qingshu, Xiang Da, Zhou Yiliang, Qi Gong, Zeng Yigong: *Dunhuang Bianwen Ji*, pp. 244-245 [*Yanzi Fu*].

¹³⁸ See Zhangjiashan Ershiqihao Hanmu Zhujian Zhengli Xiaozu: *Zhangjiashan Hanmu Zhujian*, p. 275 [*Gailu Shiwen Zhushi*].

prolific and talented author Feng Menglong (AD 1574-1646). This novel, which covered a time span from the beginning of the Eastern Zhou to the unification of China, included virtually all the most popular stories about the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period, interspersed with poems about the characters portrayed.¹³⁹ Although, as with so many authors who developed stories about historical figures, Feng Menglong prided himself on his fidelity to the ancient texts, some of the versions given of popular stories in this novel were distinctively new. For example, in the account of Lord Huan of Qi's demise, when he previously questioned Guan Zhong about suitable replacements, all candidates, Xi Peng, Baoshu Ya, Yi Ya, Shu Diao and the Honourable Kaifang of Wei were dismissed as unsuitable. This version therefore represents an amalgamation of what had once been two separate stories about qualification for high office. Guan Zhong's criticism of Xi Peng and Baoshu Ya was a less popular tale found in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*,¹⁴⁰ which had been grafted on to the story of Lord Huan's dreadful demise.¹⁴¹

Feng Menglong's novel was also interesting for some of the asides, and folk etymology provided, which was unique in accounts of the lives of the hegemon. These asides tended to tie up loose ends, or clarify issues. Thus, Xi Shi was said to have come from a mountainous area of Yue where almost all the families belonged to the Shi clan, and the clan members were distinguished according to which village they lived in, the east or the west.¹⁴² Similarly, the unusual name of Lord Mu of Qin's daughter Nongyu

¹³⁹ See for example the Ran Weng poems on Lord Huan of Qi seeing the Yuer after his attack on Guzhu, and on the subject of King Zhuang of Chu's wife breaking off the tassel. Likewise the poems by Bao Zhao and Jiang Zong on Lord Mu of Qin's daughter flying off with the phoenix. See Feng Menglong: *Xin Lieguo Zhi*, pp. 321, 531, 588.

¹⁴⁰ See Xu Weiyu: *Lüshi Chunqiu Jishi*, 1:16b-17a [*Gui Gong*].

¹⁴¹ The earliest version of Guan Zhong warning Lord Huan against Yi Ya, Shu Diao and the Honourable Kaifang of Wei was found in the Han Feizi; see Chen Qiyou: *Han Feizi Jishi*, pp. 194-195 [*Shi Guo*].

¹⁴² Feng Menglong: *Xin Lieguo Zhi*, p. 982.

was explained as having been due to someone presenting her father with a special jade at around the time of her birth.¹⁴³

Novelizations of events of the Spring and Autumn period include Nan Gongbo's *Xi Shi*, which described how Xi Shi was sent to Wu, and how after Yue's victory, she left with Fan Li, and went to Tao with him. This novelization was therefore heavily based on the tale of Fan Li's fate as it appeared in the *Shi Ji* and *Liexian Zhuan*,¹⁴⁴ but with the addition of the female character. Another novelization, this time of the story of Wu Zixu, was undertaken by Fei Junliang (AD 1881-1952). It was based upon the *Xin Lieguo Zhi*, but within the tradition of Yangzhou storytelling.¹⁴⁵ However this melodramatic novelization¹⁴⁶ only described Wu Zixu's life up until Wu's conquest of Chu, and sack of the Chu royal tombs at the capital Ying, and thus ended on a triumphal note, with Wu Zixu spectacularly avenging his father and older brother's untimely deaths.

Tales of the lives of the hegemon also appeared in works in other literary genres. In antiquity, the hegemon were frequently cited in political discourse, as practical examples of rulership. Perhaps due to this, their lives and deeds were frequently referred to in memorials. This specialized literary response to these stories, later preserved within official histories, seems to be derived from the rhetorical speeches and letters such as Yan Ying's exhortations to Lord Jing of Qi preserved in the *Yanzi*

¹⁴³ Feng Menglong: *Xin Lieguo Zhi*, p. 527.

¹⁴⁴ See *Shi Ji*, 69:3257, and Liu Xiang: *Liexian Zhuan*, p. 21 [Fan Li].

¹⁴⁵ See Fei Junliang: *Wu Zixu*, p. 496.

¹⁴⁶ When the girl washing silks by the river killed herself, this version stated that Wu Zixu used his finger to write a short inscription in his own blood upon a stone slab: "You were washing silks when I came and begged. I have eaten my fill, and you have been drowned. In ten years time, I will repay your virtue with ten thousand pieces of gold." See Fei Junliang: *Wu Zixu*, p. 171.

Chunqiu,¹⁴⁷ or the persuasions of the *Zhanguo Ce*.¹⁴⁸ References to the hegemons appeared in memorials to the throne in the *Han Shu*, *Hou Han Shu*, and *San Guo Zhi*.¹⁴⁹ In these texts, as might be expected, the deeds of Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin figured most prominently,¹⁵⁰ but after the *San Guo Zhi*, the hegemons were no longer used as examples in this genre of written text, as the models of the Han dynasty had fallen into disrepute and new precedents for use in political discourse had been developed.

The hegemons also made their contributions to other forms of prose literature. One of the more unlikely was the cookbook named in honour of Lord Huan of Qi's famous chef, Yi Ya,¹⁵¹ compiled by Han Yi.¹⁵² Such unusual tributes indicate the degree to which not just the names of the hegemons, but also their companions, had remained part of common discourse in China in the Imperial Period.

The Hegemons in Poetry

¹⁴⁷ See for example Wu Zeyu: *Yanzi Chunqiu Jishi*, pp. 59-60, 154-156.

¹⁴⁸ See for example Liu Xiang: *Zhanguo Ce*, p. 186 [Fan Sui *Zhi Qin*].

¹⁴⁹ In the *San Guo Zhi*, references to Lord Huan of Qi mentioned his covenants, the respect in which he was held by Confucius, his successes after his initial humiliations. References to Lord Wen of Jin described his loyalty to the throne and compared him to Gaozu. References to King Goujian of Yue concentrated on his recovery from his defeat by Wu. The other three hegemons were not mentioned, and all references to the hegemony were positive. See Chen Shou: *San Guo Zhi*, 5:165, 10:310, 14:453, 22:631, 38:973, 40:992.

¹⁵⁰ Lords Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin were the only two of the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period universally agreed upon; see Wei Juxian: "Wu Ba Kao," pp. 557-559.

¹⁵¹ See Han Yi: *Yi Ya Yiyi*.

¹⁵² There seems to be some confusion over when Han Yi lived. Some say he lived during the Yuan dynasty; see Zhang Xincheng: *Wei Shu Tong Kao*, p. 1110. Other accounts say he lived during the Ming dynasty; see Zhang Weizhi, Shen Qiwei, Liu Dezhong: *Zhongguo Lidai Renming Dacidian*, p. 2280.

The hegemony figured in poetry from the very earliest times. As mentioned above, Lord Mu of Qin figured in the *Shi Jing*, his funeral being commemorated by the ode entitled *Huang Niao*. The hegemony and their attendant familiars also figured in the famous early anthology, the *Chu Ci*, an important indication of the geographical spread of their stories far beyond the borders of the states that they ruled.¹⁵³ The hegemony continued to figure in poetry after the end of the Han dynasty, as some of the events of their lives and reigns became standard motifs in various poetic genres, as can be seen from the *Wen Xuan* (Anthology of Refined Literature).¹⁵⁴ All the hegemony were mentioned in the poetry of the Age of Disunion, but trends were already established in this period that would develop fully later. Poetry recounting the deeds of Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin disappeared; it would seem that mention of their lives was seen as more appropriate in philosophical or political discourse. King Zhuang of Chu figured in one very interesting and unusual poem of the Jin dynasty, the *Chu Ji Tan* (The Lament of the Chu Lady) by Shi Chong (AD 249-300), a rare example of Chu being considered as exotic, rich and powerful in the literature of the period.¹⁵⁵ Throughout the Spring and Autumn period there was copious evidence of the fascination of the Central States with the remote, vastly wealthy and exotic state of Chu.¹⁵⁶ By the end of the Han dynasty however, this role had largely been usurped by the states of Wu and Yue, particularly the latter. This trend can be traced into the poetry of the Tang dynasty and beyond.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ See for example Tang Bingzheng, Li Daming, Li Cheng, Xiong Liangzhi: *Chu Ci Jinzhu*, pp. 63 [*Li Sao*], 110 [*Tian Wen*], 163 [*Jiu Zhang: Xi Wang Ri*].

¹⁵⁴ See for example Li Shan, Lü Tingji, Liu Liang, Zhang Xian, Lü Xiang, Li Zhouhan: *Liu Chen Zhu Wen Xuan*, pp. 226 [*Guo Pu: Jiang Fu*], 250 [*Bao Mingyuan: Wu He Fu*].

¹⁵⁵ See Lu Qinli: *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan Bei Chao Shi*, p. 642.

¹⁵⁶ See for example Lord Wen of Jin's famous comment to King Cheng of Chu; Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, pp. 408-409 [Xi 23].

¹⁵⁷ See for example Meng Haoran's poem, *Yu Cui Ershiyi You Jinghu Qi Bao Jia San Gong*; see Xu Peng: *Meng Haoran Ji Jiaozhu*, p. 108. In this context it is interesting that a number of Tang dynasty poems made reference to reading the *Yue Jue Shu*; see for example Sun Qingshan: *Gao Shi Ji Jiaozhu*, p. 211 [*Song Cui Gongcao fu Yue*].

During the Age of Disunion, certain themes derived from events in the lives of the hegemons came to be particularly popular as subjects for poetry. Two of the most important themes were the wars between Wu and Yue and the daughter of Lord Mu of Qin who summoned a phoenix by playing her flute.¹⁵⁸ During the Tang dynasty, themes drawn from these tales would inspire some of China's greatest poets to produce some of their most famous verse. Poems on subjects drawn from the conflicts between the states of Wu and Yue tended to follow particular themes. There were poems that described the rags to riches life of Xi Shi; found washing silks beside a stream she was raised to become King Fucha's favourite, such as the *Xi Shi Yong* (Song of Xi Shi) by Wang Wei (AD 701-761):

Since beauty is valued by the world, how could Xi Shi remain obscure for long?
In the morning a girl by the Yue stream, in the evening a concubine in the Wu
palace.
In her days of poverty, how could she stand out from the crowd? Now that she is
rich they are aware of her fine qualities.
Summoning people to perfume her, she does not put on her silk clothes herself.
The lord's favourite, she became ever more arrogant, the lord's emotions were
turned upside-down.
Of those who once washed silk with her, none now would be able to ride in the
same chariot.
To her neighbour it is known that such a charming frown is truly rare.¹⁵⁹

A similar treatment of this theme was popular in plays based on the life of Xi Shi, many of them referring to her past as a humble washerwoman in their titles. Other poets were moved to write poems on the destruction of Wu by Yue, focussing on the passage of time since these deeds had taken place, and the destruction that had overtaken the sites of events of such great historical and romantic significance. This kind of poem would seem to be related to the sight-seeing commemorative poem, where the poet

¹⁵⁸ During this time, an important detail was added to the story of Lord Mu's daughter flying off with the phoenix: that she had disappeared into a purple cloud. The earliest example of this development seems to be in the poem *Xiao Shi Qu*, by the Chen dynasty poet Jiang Zong. See Lu Qinli: *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan Bei Chao Shi*, p. 2571.

¹⁵⁹ Chen Tiemin: *Wang Wei Ji Jiaozhu*, p. 306. This poem was written prior to AD 753.

described a visit to a site of special historical interest.¹⁶⁰ Li Bai (AD 701-762) wrote a number of poems of this type, such as the *Su Tai Lan Gu* (Elegy to the Suzhou Terrace):

In the old garden, on the overgrown terrace, the willows grow anew,
The caltrop song is sung in spring because spring has come.
Now only the moon on the West River
Once shone on the person in the King of Wu's palace.¹⁶¹

Other poets referred more vaguely to Xi Shi's beauty, and to their disappointment that such loveliness seemed to have disappeared from the earth.¹⁶² Poems inspired by Nongyu, Lord Mu of Qin's daughter, remained strikingly close to the story as it first appeared in texts at the beginning of the Age of Disunion.¹⁶³ They described her magical talents with the flute, and the strange fate that overtook her when she and her flute master summoned two phoenixes with their playing.

The Tang dynasty poet, Hu Zeng (fl. AD 867), wrote poetry virtually exclusively on historical subjects, and a number described places or events closely associated with

¹⁶⁰ See for example Liu Changqing: *Liu Suizhou Shi Ji*, p. 108 [*Deng Wu Gucheng Ge*].

¹⁶¹ Wang Qi: *Li Taibai Quan Ji*, p. 1030 [*Su Tai Lan Gu*]. The melancholy note introduced by the mention of the time which had passed since the great deeds of the wars between Wu and Yue, and the great changes wrought upon both Wu and Yue by that time, was a recurring theme of Li Bai's poetry. See the comparable poem on Yue Wang Qi: *Li Taibai Quan Ji*, p. 1184 [*Yue Zhong Lan Gu*] where the poet, having described the brilliance of the Yue capital when the conquering troops returned home after King Goujian's great victory, went on to describe the neglected ruins of the once-great city. For a comparison between these two elegies; see Lu: *Five Lectures on Chinese Poetry*, p. 77.

¹⁶² See for example Yuan Zhen's poem *Chun Ci*; Yuan Zhen: *Yuan Zhen Ji*, p. 233. This was the theme of Bai Juyi's poem *Nishang Yuyi Ge*, where the lines run: "The Wu lady, Xiaoyu, flew off into the mist, the Yue beauty, Xi Shi, crumbled into the dust." See Bai Juyi: *Bai Juyi Ji*, p. 460. Xiaoyu was better known as King Fucha of Wu's daughter Ziyu, whose story was particularly popular during the Tang dynasty; see Kao: "Aspects of Derivation in Chinese Narrative," p. 22.

¹⁶³ The earliest version of this tale seems to be that found in the Jin dynasty text *Di Wang Shiji*; see Huang Fu: *Di Wang Shiji*, p. 38.

the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period. These poems ranged unusually widely over tales of the hegemon and their associates,¹⁶⁴ and did not just describe the beauty of Xi Shi. Among other unusual subjects, Hu Zeng wrote on Lord Huan of Qi and Guan Zhong upbraiding King Cheng of Chu for failing to present tribute to the Zhou king,¹⁶⁵ and the *Gan Jiang* sword made for King Helü of Wu turning into a dragon and flying off.¹⁶⁶ More conventionally, he wrote a number of poems inspired by the enmity between Wu and Yue.¹⁶⁷

Most of the poetry written on subjects related to the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period was very tenuously connected with ancient textual material. Although a number of poets who wrote verse inspired by these stories were clearly very well acquainted with Han and pre-Han texts, as evidenced by other writings,¹⁶⁸ poetic expression tended to result in allusive references, clearly based upon the assumption that a literate audience would be so well-acquainted with the basic stories that the poet had only to mention Xi Shi's "flower-like face,"¹⁶⁹ to call up a whole host of images for the reader.

¹⁶⁴ Hu Zeng was however not the only Tang poet to try to include the less common tales of the lives of the hegemon in their verse. See for example Chen Zi'ang: *Chen Zi'ang Ji*, p. 239 [*Zuo You Lu*], for a poem which mentioned Lord Mu of Qin's lost horse, and the broken tassel at King Zhuang of Chu's party.

¹⁶⁵ This poem was based upon an incident described in the *Zuo Zhuan*; see Yang Bojun: *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu*, p. 288 [Xi 4].

¹⁶⁶ Hu Zeng: *Yong Shi Shi*, pp. 12 [Shaoling], 17 [Yanping Jin].

¹⁶⁷ Hu Zeng: *Yong Shi Shi*, pp. 18 [Kuaji Shan], 19 [Gusu Tai] and [Wu Jiang], 20 [Wu Hu].

¹⁶⁸ See for example the essays written by Liu Zongyuan: *Liu Zongyuan Ji*, pp. 99 [Jin Wen Gong Wen Shou Yuan Yi], 1299 [Hu Yan], 1306 [Huai Ying], 1327 [Wu Yuan]. Liu also wrote poems on subjects which included stories about the hegemon; see Liu Zongyuan: *Liu Zongyuan Ji*, p. 1165 [*Deng Yangzhou Chenglou Ji Zhang Dingfeng Lian Sizhou*].

¹⁶⁹ This reference occurred in a number of poems; see for example Yuan Zhen: *Yuan Zhen Ji*, p. 166 [*Du You*], and Song Yiwen: *Quan Tang Shi*, 51:619 [*Huan Sha Bian Zeng Lu Shang Ren*].

The Hegemons in Drama

Until very recently, the various types of entertaining performances available to Chinese audiences were not clearly categorized. An entertainment quarter might feature such diverse entertainers as story-tellers, balladeers, puppeteers, fortune-tellers, singers, acrobats, actors, singing girls and musicians jostling for custom.¹⁷⁰ The earliest examples of tales of the hegemons of the Spring and Autumn period being adapted for appearance in Chinese drama (taken in its fullest sense) are such texts as the Tang dynasty *Wu Zixu Bianwen* (The Transformation Story of Wu Zixu), found in the caves at Dunhuang.

As was the case in poetry, the conflicts between Wu and Yue would prove a fertile source of inspiration. During the Yuan dynasty (AD 1271-1368), the golden age of Chinese drama,¹⁷¹ a number of plays were written on these themes. Of the *Zaju* play: *Tao Zhu Gong Fan Li Gui Hu* (Fan Li, Lord Zhu of Tao, returns to the Lakes) by Zhao Mingdao, a playwright of the beginning of the Yuan dynasty, only four acts survive.¹⁷² These describe how Fan Li left Yue after its victory over the state of Wu, setting aside his quest for fame and fortune, and took Xi Shi with him. The title refers to the two traditional stories of Fan Li's fate: that Fan Li escaped King Goujian's vengeance by sailing out on the lakes of the Yangtze delta,¹⁷³ and that he escaped to live out his life in the state of Tao.¹⁷⁴ Other Yuan dynasty plays on themes drawn from the conflict between Wu and Yue include the play *Wu Yuan Chui Xiao* (Wu Yuan Plays the Flute)¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ See Dolby: *A History of Chinese Drama*, p. 14.

¹⁷¹ See Mote: "Chinese Society under Mongol Rule, 12-15-1368," p. 640.

¹⁷² See Wang Jisi: *Quan Yuan Xiqu*, Vol. 2, p. 553.

¹⁷³ For a discussion of the version in which Fan Li just sailed off into the mists and was never seen again; see Wei Juxian: "Fan Li Shiji Kao," pp. 571-576.

¹⁷⁴ This version of the tale of Fan Li's fate was first found in the *Shi Ji*, 69:3257; see also Liu Xiang: *Liexian Zhuan*, p. 21 [Fan Li].

¹⁷⁵ This play was also known under the title *Shui Zhuan Zhu*, *Wu Yuan Chui Xiao* (Zhuan Zhu is persuaded and Wu Yuan plays his flute); see Ma Lian: *Lu Gui Bu Xin Jiaozhu*, p. 46. According to the *Shi Ji*, 86:2516, Wu Zixu introduced Zhuan Zhu to the

by Li Shoujing, which described the personal traumas encountered by King Helü of Wu's two greatest supporters, Zhuan Zhu and Wu Zixu in his campaign to succeed to the throne. Zhuan Zhu ended up dying for his lord, Wu Zixu had to accept the guilt caused by being responsible for the death of other innocent people who helped him to escape from Chu.¹⁷⁶ Zhou Zongbin's play: *Jiao Nü Bing* (Teaching the Lady Soldiers) described Sun Wu training the ladies of King Helü of Wu's harem to fight.¹⁷⁷ The plays *Bao Shi Tou Jiang* (Throwing Herself into the Yangtze Holding a Stone) by Wu Changling, *Huan Hua Nü Bao Shi Tou Jiang* (The Girl who Washed the Silk Gauze Throws Herself into the Yangtze Holding a Stone)¹⁷⁸ by Cao Diting,¹⁷⁹ and the anonymous play, the *Huan Sha Nü* (The Girl who Washed Silk), were all dramatic treatments of the same events. When Wu Zixu escaped from Chu, he had to beg for food from a girl washing silks at the riverside, who killed herself lest she should inadvertently betray him to his enemies. The use of the term *huan sha* in the titles of these plays is ambiguous, since traditionally in poetry the activity of washing silk gauze was particularly associated with Xi Shi; she was said to have been discovered washing silks in a stream in Yue.¹⁸⁰

During the Yuan dynasty other plays were written on themes drawn from the history of the Spring and Autumn period, though they were not nearly so numerous. For example there was a dramatic treatment of the story of Jie Zhi Tui: *Jin Wen Gong Huo*

future King Helü of Wu.

¹⁷⁶ See Zang Jinshu: *Yuan Qu Xuan*, pp. 647-667.

¹⁷⁷ See Zhu Quan: *Taihe Zhengyin Pu*, p. 61. This play was also known as *Sun Wu Jiao Nü Bing* (Sun Wu teaches the Lady Soldiers). The story used in this play came from the *Shi Ji*, 65:2161-2162.

¹⁷⁸ *Huan hua* (washing flowers) is a mistake for *huan sha* (washing silks); see Wang Jisi: *Quan Yuan Xiqu*, Vol. 3, p. 457.

¹⁷⁹ These plays are no longer extant; see Ma Lian: *Lu Gui Bu Xin Jiaozhu*, p. 69.

¹⁸⁰ Both versions are known to have coexisted from the Tang dynasty onwards. Where the term *huan sha nü* is used without further details, it is impossible to know which of the two figures is being referred to.

Shao Jie Zi Tui (Lord Wen of Jin Burns Jie Zi Tui), by Di Junhou, the only surviving play by this particular mid-Yuan dynasty playwright.¹⁸¹ This play followed the more dramatic line of tales about Jie Zhi Tui, when the Honourable Chonger starved in exile he cut a lump out of his thigh to feed him, Jie Zhi Tui's mother agreed to go into exile with him and a follower hung the *Long She Ge* on the door of the Jin palace, and Lord Wen of Jin fired the forest to get him to come out. The play ended with lyrical descriptions of the flames that confront the doomed man:

Red stars fly up, scattering as they come closer, the flames dart upwards,
through the forest trees, the blazing fire bars the mountain path.¹⁸²

This last comment would seem to hark back to the tradition recorded in several Age of Disunion texts, that when the forest in which Jie Zhi Tui had hidden was fired, a white crow flew off, out of the flames, and Jie's body was discovered untouched by the flames.¹⁸³ Likewise, the playwright Bai Renfu, inspired by the story of King Zhuang of Chu's wife breaking off the tassel of the man who assaulted her, wrote the play *Jue Ying Hui* (The Broken Tassel Meeting).¹⁸⁴

In the Ming dynasty (AD 1368-1644), more plays would be written on subjects derived from the lives of the hegemony. Thus Zhu Quan (1378-1448), a son of the founder of the Ming dynasty and the King of Ning,¹⁸⁵ wrote a number of plays on

¹⁸¹ Di Junhou was a native of Shanxi province, hence perhaps his interest in this story; see Wang Jisi: *Quan Yuan Xiqu*, Vol. 3, p. 282.

¹⁸² Wang Jisi: *Quan Yuan Xiqu*, Vol. 3, p. 299.

¹⁸³ See Wang Jia: *Shi Yi Ji*, p. 296 [Lu Xi Gong, 3], and Shen Yue: *You Zhong Ji*, p. 396 [*Si Yan*].

¹⁸⁴ See Ma Lian: *Lu Gui Bu Xin Jiaozhu*, p. 22. This play is now lost. According to Feng Menglong: *Xin Lieguo Zhi*, p. 588, the term "Broken Tassel Meeting" was commonly used to refer to this occasion.

¹⁸⁵ Goodrich: *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, pp. 305-306. Zhu Quan was a noted scholar who wrote on a number of subjects including divination and chess, and was the author of twelve plays, only two of which survive.

historical subjects, including one entitled *Jiu He Zhuhou* (Bringing Together the Feudal Lords Nine Times) on the career of Lord Huan of Qi.¹⁸⁶ Another Ming dynasty drama revolved around Fan Li leaving Yue with Xi Shi, the *Wu Hu Ji* (The Tale of the Five Lakes), by Wang Daokun (*jinsi* 1547).¹⁸⁷ The first major example of the Kunju or Kunshan style of drama, a type developed in the Suzhou area, was a play about Xi Shi, the *Huan Sha Ji* (Washing the Silks),¹⁸⁸ by Liang Chenyu (c.1520-c.1593). This play, produced in around 1579, created an enormous vogue for this style of drama, which was to enjoy unrivalled popularity for nearly three hundred years.¹⁸⁹ It began with Fan Li coming across the beautiful Xi Shi while she was washing the silk, and ended with two fishermen describing how they had seen Fan Li and Xi Shi sailing into the unknown the day before.¹⁹⁰ Along the way there was a comprehensive account of the conflict between Wu and Yue, interspersed with lyrical passages in which Xi Shi bewailed the terrible fate of her country. The drama ended on a note of contemporary pride:

Now Liang's tale is all told,
And the account of Goujian crushing Gusu has been laid out.
Since the great Ming dynasty has now united us all,
How can one speak of a modern Wu and Yue?¹⁹¹

In considering how the tales of the hegemony developed after the end of the Han dynasty, the most striking fact is that they continued to change, and thus retained much of their popularity. Many writers must have been aware that the tales on which they based their novels, plays or poems were not mentioned in any ancient text, or had been

¹⁸⁶ See Ma Lian: *Lu Gui Bu Xin Jiaozhu*, p. 175.

¹⁸⁷ See Chen Wannai: *Quan Ming Zaju*, pp. 2891-2900.

¹⁸⁸ For a discussion of the development of this style of drama, and Liang Chenyu's place in this development; see Nienhauser: *The Indiana Companion to Chinese Literature*, pp. 354, 559. See also Chen Sulan: *Huan Sha Ji Yanjiu*, pp. 15-18.

¹⁸⁹ See Dolby: *A History of Chinese Drama*, p. 92.

¹⁹⁰ See Mao Jin: *Liu Shi Zhong Qu*, pp. 1-161 [*Huan Sha Ji*].

¹⁹¹ Mao Jin: *Liu Shi Zhong Qu*, p. 161 [*Huan Sha Ji*].

changed out of all recognition, and they chose to draw upon the more lurid, later stories. It was however the continued fluidity of stories about the hegemon, combined with their lasting fame as the great rulers of antiquity, that led to their enduring popularity, which has lasted to the present day. It has been justly said that a good story never dies.

Conclusion

Tales of the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period hold a particular place in Chinese literary history. From the very beginning of the written text in China, tales about the lives of these men were recorded. Stories about them have figured in historical, political and philosophical works, in poetry and in fiction. Analysis of these stories can provide an important insight into the oral transmission of these tales before they were transcribed, and the manner in which these early texts were first written down. At the same time, tales about the hegemon were not static. Developments and alterations in these stories, and the invention of completely new tales, above and beyond the changes which are a result of oral transmission, indicate the way in which the stories about the hegemon were adapted to retain their hold on the public imagination, which was unmatched by any other ruler of their day and age. This fluidity, and the way that each generation was able to reinterpret the same tales in new popular mediums, were significant factors in the perennial popularity of these stories.

In ancient China the oral and written tradition coexisted in a mutually dependent and complementary way. Written texts such as the *Chunqiu* recorded the events of each year in a very concise way; they recounted facts important to the contemporary political situation, and as such formed the bare bones of history. Orally transmitted tales served to underpin the written text: where historical events had been recorded so briefly that they would have been practically incomprehensible without further information, the oral tradition explained, giving context, detail and motivation to otherwise meaningless events. The written text thus provided a factual basis and validity for the stories of the hegemon, while the orally transmitted tales made the events described interesting and relevant, through the details given. Many other ancient cultures, such as the Classical civilizations of the Mediterranean, had both written literature and oral traditions, but they lacked this kind of clear distinction between the functions of the two forms.

In practical terms, orally transmitted tales recounted prior to the development of modern accurate recording methods were profoundly ephemeral. They were performed,

and each performance of the story was unique, tailored to suit the interests and attention-span of the audience and reflecting local concerns. Research on ancient and modern story-telling indicates that the performer maintains a grasp of the essence of the story, which is the same in all versions, but the details would always have been adapted to suit the circumstances of the performance. However, the tales of the hegemons, even though the texts in which they are found can be shown to have been profoundly influenced by oral transmission, cannot be used to recreate the performance. There is too little evidence of the way in which these stories were performed in antiquity to be able to understand the original relationship between the performer and the audience, the tale and those to whom it was told. One striking characteristic of the tales of the hegemons was that although they were popular over a vast geographical area, and retold for many centuries, they have generally failed to pick up the regional differences that have often been thought to be necessary to appeal to an audience far removed in both time and place from the original events. This must be seen as testimony to the accuracy with which the storytellers of ancient China recounted their tales, and perhaps as indicative of the esteem in which the careful preservation of telling detail was held.

The fact that most of the stories of the hegemons underwent a considerable period of oral transmission was perhaps responsible for much of the dramatic and emotional impact of these tales. These stories described the hegemons moving from one critical situation to the next, sometimes responding promptly and appropriately, at other times failing to appreciate the demands of the moment. This dramatic element is lacking in most of the historical records of the hegemons, but remains an integral part of the later stories developed about them. The choice of particular historical figures as suitable protagonists for development in story-telling is a mysterious process. As with other genuine historical figures whose biographies were transformed in popular tales and literature, the lives of the hegemons were evidently seen as having a certain intrinsic dramatic potential, which appealed to story-tellers in the centuries that followed their deaths. However, in the process of becoming the main characters in these stories, the drama and emotional impact of the chief events of their lives were gradually enhanced.

The relationship between the later versions of the stories about the lives of the hegemony, and orally transmitted versions remains unclear. It is impossible to know to what extent interrelated texts were created by the authors reading other versions, rather than by hearing a particular version recited, and subsequently transcribing it. The well-recorded ability of experienced story-tellers to reproduce tales with only minor variations from one retelling to the next results in considerable ambiguity about the precise relationship between textual differences. Only where a misreading of a text has been preserved is it possible to make a definite statement about interrelationship. Research on other cultures where orally transmitted stories were performed at the same time as they were recorded in texts indicates that story-tellers made considerable efforts to remain informed of new textual versions of their most popular stories, developments from which they incorporated into their own tales. Likewise the literate heard new versions of old stories and wrote them down to preserve them. It would therefore seem likely that surviving ancient Chinese texts were informed by both the written and the oral traditions.

In both the oral and written literature of the Warring States and Han dynasty the hegemony were frequently portrayed as being either heroic figures, or as good rulers. In folk-lore and myth, the hero and the king are conflicting figures. Research on the respective roles of the hero and the king indicate that the first is anarchic, the second conservative. The hero is the more charismatic figure, who breaks into a settled society, disrupting the long-established norms by which its people have lived, often for purely selfish ends. The hero may win lasting fame, and achieve great deeds, but they will be bought at considerable cost to society. Heroic figures undergo staggering reversals of fortune, being alternately despised and honoured. The king, in contrast, is a respectable figure, bound by the rules established by his predecessors. The success of his reign is judged by the way in which he preserves his state and the people he rules from the depredations of others, his religious faith, the generosity and mercy he displays towards his people, his concern for others rather than himself, his unselfish virtues. The king is not required to be charismatic, his role is to preserve a successful model of statecraft rather than to disrupt it. The king and the hero are profoundly conflicting figures,

however, tales of the hegemons show them displaying first the characteristics of one, then the other.

During their lifetimes, the primary duties of the hegemons were as sovereign rulers of their own states, whether as feudal lords within the bounds of the Zhou confederacy or as kings outside it, charged with protecting and serving their people. As rulers within their own states, their responsibilities included the promulgation of legislation, and conducting the state religious festivals, hunts and sacrifices, which were necessary for the temporal and spiritual security of the lands they held. In times of war, they led their troops into battle. The Spring and Autumn period was an age of considerable and sustained violence, and the rulers of the time were required to show great skill in statecraft if they wished to preserve the territorial integrity of their states. As rulers of large states, of significant importance within the Chinese world, the hegemons were expected to demonstrate conservative virtues, such as stability, generosity towards their subjects, and devotion to duty. The tales of the hegemons that stress these aspects of their lives show them in their capacity as rulers, enacting the solid and sober qualities expected of good feudal lords or kings.

The hegemons however also behaved in a heroic fashion. It is striking that many of the deeds necessary to be accounted a hero are associated with the beginning and end of a reign. It was therefore possible for the most heroic of the hegemons to endure considerable difficulties and hardships before being established in their hereditary titles, and have the ends of their reigns marked by further severe problems, while displaying the much more conservative qualities of the good ruler in between. The vicissitudes endured by the hegemons would have a profound impact on the way that their lives were described by the philosophers and writers of ancient China. While all the hegemons came from the most privileged backgrounds, some had undergone periods of great danger during their lives, endured serious privations, and had on occasion suffered the loss of the respect and obedience of their subjects. Yet the hegemons were able to rise above their difficulties, and all were numbered among the most powerful men of their time. The hegemons as individuals were not immune from tricks of fate, in spite of their titles and

position, and any arrogance or inattention to duty was severely punished. It was this fallibility that earned them their status as heroes. During their generally long and successful reigns, the hegemon governed in a way more associated with the good king. However, the fact that the hegemon was accorded many of the characteristics of the Indo-European hero is of considerable importance, since it indicates something of the way in which their deeds were perceived in the centuries immediately following their deaths.

Up until the end of the Han dynasty, the hegemon was regularly portrayed in stories about their lives either as good kings or as heroes. Lord Huan of Qi, the first hegemon, and the first to be seen as embodying the principles of supporting the king and suppressing barbarians, was perceived as the most heroic of all the hegemon. The account of his time in exile, followed by a triumphal return to the state of Qi, followed by the story of his miserable death, were closely related to the Indo-European heroic model. It can be demonstrated that stories about Lord Huan were altered in antiquity in order to bring them more closely into line with this stereotype. Lord Wen of Jin, who returned to his state after almost a quarter of a century in exile, became the second hegemon after he assisted the king in his battles with his brother Prince Shudai, and defeated the forces of the state of Chu at Chengpu. The portrayal of the second hegemon in ancient texts also leaned predominantly towards the heroic. Lord Mu of Qin, however, was the hegemon who most closely accorded with the model of the good king. Many of the stories of his reign dealt with his compassion for his subjects, and the religious faith that sustained his rule. These three hegemon all originated from within the Zhou confederacy, while King Zhuang of Chu, King Helü of Wu and King Goujian of Yue, with a cultural background outside the confederacy, and often in conflict with it, were less adaptable to these ancient stereotypes. The appointment to the hegemony, however, invested all of them with some of the spiritual authority of the Zhou king, the holder of the 'Mandate of Heaven.' There are numerous stories about the rulers of the Spring and Autumn period, who like all aristocrats and monarchs possessed a certain fascination due to their great wealth and authority, but the hegemon was set apart

from other rulers of the day by the special place they had secured in the public imagination from their appointment to this extraordinary Zhou title.

The hegemonies are not unique among rulers in that stories about their lives were adapted and changed to bring them closer to these two important stereotypes. Many other historical figures from around the world have had their biographies altered in a similar way. The hegemonies however were not just rulers or heroes, they also fulfilled an important historical function. In the Spring and Autumn period, when royal power was imploding, the institution of the hegemony provided a certain much-needed stability to the political scene. The hegemonies used their own military might, and the remaining spiritual authority of the Zhou kings, to bridge a time of great social and political change. The hegemonies were often said to have been deeply respectful of the authority of the Zhou king, but they also used their armies to impose their will upon their neighbours. This was usually described in ancient texts as ‘supporting the Zhou king and suppressing the barbarians.’ In this way, the hegemonies provided an alternative power-structure which could co-exist with the residual respect for the Zhou kings; their military might was respected by their contemporaries, but officially they derived their authority from the monarch. Tales of the lives of the two undisputed hegemonies, Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin, emphasised that they owed not just their title as hegemonies, but also their status as feudal lords, to the Zhou king.

The six hegemonies discussed in detail in this thesis were not the only important feudal lords or monarchs of the Spring and Autumn period. Nor were they the only rulers to have been considered as hegemonies in antiquity. They had a certain amount in common with other important rulers, and the other so-called hegemonies. Nevertheless it is noticeable that the hegemonies considered in this thesis, as they were described in ancient Chinese texts, had a great deal more in common with each other, than with the other rulers of their states, or with their contemporary feudal lords and monarchs inside and outside the Zhou confederacy. That this should be true is a sign of the degree to which the hegemonies took on the attributes of the stereotyped hero and the good ruler. However the representation of the hegemonies in ancient Chinese texts was also closely

related to the presentation of other historical figures from around the world who provided a source of authority and stability at a time of great political upheaval. Fulfilling the function of arbiter between old and new power structures has often served to polarize public opinion, and has frequently resulted in the demonization of the person accomplishing this difficult task. Perhaps the most striking feature of this aspect of the hegemony is that many writers in ancient China felt able to present the deeds of the hegemon in a positive light.

Research on the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period has usually focussed on their historical importance. The hegemon was among the most important feudal lords and monarchs of their time, and they were to have great influence on the course of Chinese history, prior to the unification. They ruled great states, which were to be of crucial importance during the Warring States period, and their descendants would admire their examples, and follow the precedents that they had set. The territorial gains, and the developments in government policy undertaken during the Spring and Autumn period in the hegemonal states would be credited with setting them on the path to future dominance in the Warring States period. This aspect of the hegemon's legacy has been the subject of much research.

However the hegemon was also a fictional figure; their original historical importance giving rise to many popular stories. It is clear that throughout the Imperial period, the hegemon was in fact better known for the fictional tales of their lives, than for many of their historical deeds. The hegemon was so famous that good stories about other figures would be reattributed to them, to secure an audience. Although they were historical figures, subsequent generations seemed to find no difficulty in accepting the stories in which they saw spirits and met with giant serpents, since magical deeds were only to be expected of such great men. This lack of any sense of incongruity has caused considerable problems for those who have searched ancient texts for historical facts, who have struggled to separate any kernel of truth from the mass of later extrapolations and reinterpretations of these stories. The vast majority of studies of the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period have focussed on them as historical figures,

and have perhaps overestimated the amount of historical information to be teased out of the stories of their lives. However, merely to dismiss many of the stories of the lives of the hegemon as purely fictional would also be a distortion. This thesis is, so far as I am aware, the first attempt at providing a systematic analysis of forces shaping the tales of the lives of the hegemon.

The relationship between history and literature in the tales about the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period was a dynamic one. In addition to the tensions between the roles of the good king and the hero, there was a tension between historical facts, and the presentation of the hegemon as suitable protagonists for popular stories. Too much historical detail would have rendered the hegemon unsympathetic and alienating, while too little would have divorced them from reality. Understanding the stereotypes of the good king and the hero provide indications of why stories about the hegemon changed in particular ways, and why some stories were to prove perennially popular, while other tales recorded in historical texts were to remain obscure. In this, the hegemon resemble other historical figures whose biographies have been fictionalized; the fact that certain events in the life of a famous figure have been largely excluded from the popular consciousness is not necessarily due to the paucity of sources, or the antiquity of the story.

As a result, the hegemon cannot be understood purely as historical figures. An appreciation of the literary forces at work in shaping the tales of the lives of the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period gives these stories a new focus. The hegemon belong to an exclusive group of genuine historical figures: those who are more famous as fictional characters than for the historical events in which they took part. The real words and emotions of the living men who would come to be considered as the hegemon of the Spring and Autumn period, together with those of their companions, advisors, friends and enemies, have passed into oblivion. However the stories of their lives have proved to have a life of their own.

Glossary

ba 霸

Bai Hu Tong 白虎通

Bai Renfu 白仁甫

Baili Xi 百里奚

Baishe 白蛇

Bao Shi Tou Jiang 抱石投江

Bao Shuya 鮑叔牙

Bi'er (Shan) 卑耳(山)

Bo Xi 伯嚭

Bu Gou 不苟

Cai, Lady Ji of 蔡姬

Caiqiu 蔡丘

Cao 曹

Cao Cao 曹操 (later known as Wei Wudi)

Cao Diting 曹楛亭

Cao Gui 曹劌 (also known as Cao Mei, and Cao Mo)

Cao Mei 曹沫 (also known as Cao Gui and Cao Mo)

Cao Mo 曹沫 (also known as Cao Gui, and Cao Mei)

Cao Zhi 曹植

Chang Zhi Wu 常之巫 (also known as Yong Wu)

Chen 陳

Cheng Gong Jia 成公賈

Chengpu 城濮

Chi Bi 赤鼻

Chou 仇

Chu 楚

Chu Ci 楚辭

Chu Ji Tan 楚姬嘆

Chu, King Cheng of 楚成王
Chu, King Gong of 楚共王
Chu, King Ping of 楚平王
Chu, King Wen of 楚文王
Chu, King Wu of 楚武王
Chu, King Zhao of 楚昭王
Chu, King Zhuang of 楚莊王
Chu, Prince Jian of 楚王子建
Chu Shi Taowu 楚史橈杙
Chunqiu 春秋
Chunqiu Biedian 春秋別典
Chunyu Kun 淳于髡

Da Sheng 達生

Daxia 大夏

Dao Zhi Pian 盜跖篇

Di 狄/翟

Di Junhou 狄君厚

Dian Xie 顛頡

ding 鼎

Dingzu Shan 鼎足山

Dongguo Chui 東郭垂 (also known as Dongguo Ya and Dongguo You)

Dongguo Ya 東郭牙 (also known as Dongguo Chui and Dongguo You)

Dongguo You 東郭郵 (also known as Dongguo Chui and Dongguo Ya)

Dou 斗

Du Shan 獨山

Du Yu 杜預

dui zhao 對照

Dun 頓

Dunhuang 敦煌

Fan 樊

Fan, Lady Ji of 樊姬

Fan Li 范蠡

fangbo 方伯

Fei Junliang 費駿良

Fen 汾

Feng Huzi 風湖子

Feng Menglong 馮夢龍

Fengsu Tongyi 風俗通義

Fengze 逢澤

Fu En 復恩

Fujiao 夫椒

Fuxi 伏羲

Gailu 蓋廬

Gan Bao 干寶

Gan Jiang 干將

Gao Yan 高偃

ge 歌

Ge 葛

Gongyang Zhuan 公羊傳

Gusu 姑蘇

Guzhu 孤竹

Guan Zhong 管仲

Guanzi 管子

Gui 媯

Guo 虢

Guo Yu 國語

Han 漢

Hán 韓

Han Feizi 韓非子

Han, Emperor Gaozu of 漢高祖
Han, Emperor Wu of 漢武帝
han shi 寒食
Han Shi Waizhuan 韓詩外傳
Han Shu 漢書
Han Xuandi 漢宣帝
Han Yi 韓奕
Han Ying 韓嬰
Hanyuan 韓原
Han Yuandi 漢元帝
Hangzhou 杭州
He Bo 河伯
Hebei 河北
Heguanzi 鶴冠子
Hexi 河西
Hong 泓
Hou Han Shu 後漢書
Hu 胡
Hu Yan 狐偃 (also known as Jiu Fan)
Hu Zeng 胡曾
Huai 淮
Huai Ying 懷嬴
Huainanzi 淮南子
Huainan 淮南
Huan Hua Nü Bao Shi Tou Jiang 浣華女抱石投江
huan sha 浣紗
Huan Sha Ji 浣紗記
Huan Sha Nü 浣紗女
Huang 黃
Huang Niao 黃鳥
Huangchi 黃池

Huangzi Gaoao 皇子告敖

Hubei 湖北

Ji Ran 計然

Jizi 季子

Jiazi Xin Shu 賈子新書

Jian Ai Xia 兼愛下

Jian Ai Zhong 兼愛中

Jian'an 建安

Jiantu 踐土

Jiangsu 江蘇

Jiao Nü Bing 教女兵

Jie 桀

Jie Li 介立

Jie Zhi Tui 介之推 (also known as Jie Zi Tui)

Jie Zi Tui 介子推 (also known as Jie Zhi Tui)

Jin, Emperor Wu of 晉武帝

Jin, the Honourable Chonger of 晉公子重耳 (later known as Lord Wen of Jin)

Jin, King Ling of 晉靈王

Jin, Lady Ji of 晉姬

Jin, Lord Dao of 晉悼公

Jin, Lord Ding of 晉定公

Jin, Lord Hui of 晉惠公

Jin, Lord Min of 晉潛侯

Jin, Lord Wen of 晉文公

Jin, Lord Wen (1) of 晉文侯

Jin, Lord Wu of 晉武公

Jin, Lord Xian of 晉獻公

Jinlouzi 金樓子

jinshi 進士

Jin Wen Chunqiu 晉文春秋

Jin Wen Gong Huo Shao Jie Zi Tui 晉文公火燒介子推

jing 經

Jing (shan) 莖 (山)

Jing Yu 精諭

Jiu He Zhuhou 九合諸侯

Jiu he zhuhou, yi kuang Tianxia 九合諸侯一匡天下

Jiu Huai 九懷

Jiu Fan 舅犯 (also known as Hu Yan)

Ju 莒

jueju 絕句

Jue Ying Hui 絕纓會

junzi 君子

Ke 柯

Kuaiji 會稽

Kuang Heng 匡衡

Kunju 昆劇

Kunshan 昆山

Lan 蘭

Langye 琅琊

li 里

Li Bai 李白

Li Ji 禮記

Li Li 李離

Lirong, Lady Ji of 麗戎姬

Li Shouqing 李壽卿

Liao 廖

Liang 梁

Liang Chenyu 梁辰魚

Liang Yuandi 梁元帝 (see also Xiao Yi)

Lienü Zhuan 列女傳
Liexian Zhuan 列仙傳
Linzi 臨淄
Liu An 劉安
Liusha 流沙
Liu Xi 劉熙
Liu Xiang 劉向
Liu Xie 劉挾
Liu Yiqing 劉義慶
Long Shan 龍山
Long She Ge 龍蛇歌
Lu 魯
Lu Xun 魯迅
Luan Wuzi 欒武子
Luhun 陸渾
Lun Heng 論衡
Luo Genze 羅根澤
Luoyang 洛陽
Lü 呂
Lüshi Chunqiu 呂氏春秋

mengzhu 盟主
Mi 羊
Mi 密
Mijue 靡角
Ming 明
Modu 冒頓
Mo Ye 莫耶
Mozi 墨子
mu 牧

Nan Chao 南朝
Nan Gongbo 南宮搏
Nei Chu Shuo Shang 內儲說上
Ning 寧
Niu 牛
Noma Fumichika 野間文史
Nongyu 弄玉
Nü Shui 女水

Ou Yezi 歐冶子

Pan Chong 潘崇
Panying Jian 磐郢劍
Pang Xuan 龐煊
Pingyuan 平原

qi 氣

Qi 齊

Qi (shan) 岐 (山)

Qi, the Heir Apparent Zhao of 齊太子昭

Qi, the Honourable Jiu of 齊公子糾

Qi, King Wei of 齊威王

Qi, Lord Huan of 齊桓公

Qi, Lord Jing of 齊景公

Qi, Lord Xiang of 齊襄公

Qi, Lord Xiao of 齊孝公

Qi, Lord Zhuang of 齊莊公

Qi Yu 齊語

Qiangji 羌忌

Qin 秦

Qin Cao 琴操

Qin, Heir Apparent Ying of 秦太子瑩 (later Lord Kang of Qin)

Qin, Lord Cheng of 秦成公

Qin, Lord Chuizi of 秦出子公

Qin, Lord Jian of 秦簡公

Qin, Lord Jing of 秦景公

Qin, Lord Kang of 秦康公

Qin, Lord Li of 秦厲公

Qin, Lord Mu of 秦穆 / 繆公

Qin, Lord Wen of 秦文公

Qin, Lord Xiao of 秦孝公

Qin, Lord Xuan of 秦宣公

Qin, Lord Zao of 秦躁公

Qin, King Zhaoxiang of 秦昭襄王

Qin Shi 秦誓

Qing 清

Qingji 慶忌

qingli 清理

Quliang 渠梁

Quwo 曲沃

Qu Yuan 屈原

Quan Mou 權謀

Ren Fang 任昉

Renhao 任好

Renwu 任戊

Rong 戎

Ru 儒

Ruan Yu 阮瑀

Ruo 郟

San Guo Zhi 三國志

san liang 三良
San Liang Shi 三良詩
Shandong 山東
Shan Rong 山戎
Shanxi 山西
Shanyu 單于
Shang 商
Shangdi 上帝
Shang Shu 尚書
Shang Yang 商鞅
Shaoling 召陵
Shen Xu 申胥
Shen Yin 沈尹
Sheng 乘
Shengxie jian 勝邪劍
shi 詩
Shi 施
Shi Chong 石崇
Shi Guo 十過
Shi Ji 史記
Shi Jing 詩經
Shi Qing 士慶
Shi Shuo Xin Yu 世說新語
Shizi 尸子
Shu Diao 豎刁 / 刁
Shu Jing 書經
Shu 舒
Shu Yi Ji 述異記
Shuo Yuan 說苑
Si 泗
Sikong Jizi 司空季子

Sima Qian 司馬遷

Song 宋

Song, King Kang of 宋康王 (see also Lord Yan of Song)

Song, Lord Xiang of 宋襄公

Song, Lord Yan of 宋偃公 (also known as King Kang of Song)

Sou Shen Ji 搜神記

Su Cong 蘇從

Su Tai Lan Gu 蘇臺覽古

Sui 隨

Sun Shu 孫叔 (see also Sun Shuao)

Sun Shuao 孫叔敖 (see also Sun Shu)

Sun Wu 孫武

Suzhou 蘇州

Tang 唐

Tang, Empress Wu of 唐武后

Tao 陶

Taowu 檣杵

Tao Zhu Gong Fan Li Gui Hu 陶朱公范蠡歸湖

Ticheng 剔成

Tian 天

tian ming 天命

tianzi 天子

ting zheng 聽政

Wang Can 王粲

Wang Chong 王充

Wang Daokun 汪道昆

Wang, Lady Ji of 王姬

Wang Mu 王繆

Wangsun Man 王孫滿

Wang Wei 王維
Wei 衛
Wèi 魏
Wei, the Honourable Kaifang of 衛公子開方
Wei, Lady Ji of 衛姬
Wei Wudi 魏武帝 (also known as Cao Cao)
Wei Wuzi 魏武子
Weiyi 委蛇
Wen Hou zhi Ming 文侯之命
Wen Xin Diao Long 文心雕龍
Wen Xuan 文選
Wen Yi 文義
Wen Zhong 文種
wu 物
Wu 吳
Wu Changling 吳昌齡
Wu Ju 伍舉
Wu, the Heir Apparent Zhonglei of 吳太子終纍
Wu Hu Ji 五湖記
Wu, King Fucha of 吳王夫差
Wu, King Helü of 吳王闔閭 (previously known as Prince Guang of Wu)
Wu, King Liao of 吳王僚
Wu, King Shoumeng of 吳王壽夢
Wu, King Yumei of 吳王餘昧
Wu, Prince Guang of 吳王子光 (later known as King Helü of Wu)
Wu, Prince Qingji of 吳王子慶忌
Wu Yan 吾衍
Wu Yu 吳語
Wu Yuan 伍員 (also known as Wu Zixu)
Wu Yuan Chui Xiao 伍員吹簫
Wu Yue Chunqiu 吳越春秋

Wu Zishang 吳子尚
Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (also known as Wu Yuan)
Wu Zixu Bianwen 伍子胥變文

Xi 僖
Xi Peng 隰朋
Xi Shi 西施
Xi Shi Yong 西施詠
Xia 夏
Xiangang 夏港
Xianming Zhuan 賢明傳
Xianyang 咸陽
Xiao 峭
Xiaobai 小白 (see also Lord Huan of Qi)
Xiao Cheng 小成
xiaoshuo 小說
Xiao Wen 小問
Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (see also Liang Yuandi)
Xin Lieguo Zhi 新列國志
Xin Shu 新書
Xin Xu 新序
Xionger (Shan) 熊耳(山)
Xiongnu 匈奴
Xu 徐
Xue Yuji 薛虞畿
Xunzi 荀子

Yan 偃
Yan Ying 晏嬰
yang 陽
Yang Bojun 楊伯峻

Yangxia 陽夏
Yangzhou 揚州
Yanling 鄴陵
Yantie Lun 鹽鐵論
Yanxi 奄息
Yanzi Chunqiu 晏子春秋
Yao Li 要離
Yi Ya 易牙
yin 陰
Ying 郢
Ying, Lady Xu of 徐嬴
Ying Shao 應劭
Yiwu 夷吾 (see also Lord Hui of Jin)
Yong 庸
Yong Sai 壅塞
Yong Shi Shi 詠史詩
Yong Wu 雍巫 (also known as Chang Zhi Wu)
You Yu 由余
Yu 玉
Yu Qiuzi 虞丘子
Yuan 原
Yuan Ding 元鼎
Yuchang jian 魚腸劍
Yue 越
Yue Jue Shu 越絕書
Yue, King Goujian of 越王勾踐
Yue, King Yunchang of 越王允常
Yueyang 櫟陽
Yue Yu Shang 越語上
Yuer 俞兒
Yun 郢

Yunmeng 雲夢

Zaju 雜劇

Zhang Xuecheng 張學誠

Zhangjiashan 張家山

Zhanguo Ce 戰國策

Zhanlu jian 湛盧劍

Zhao 趙

Zhao Cui 趙衰

Zhao Mingdao 趙明道

Zhao Ye 趙曄

Zheji 柘稽

Zhejiang 浙江

Zhenhu 鍼虎

Zheng 鄭

Zheng, Lord Wen of 鄭文公

zhi guai 志怪

Zhi Jie 知接

Zhi Shi 知實

Zhong 種

Zhong Yan 重言

Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shi Lue 中國小說史略

Zhonghang 中行

Zhou 周

Zhòu 紂

Zhou, King Cheng of 周成王

Zhou, King Ding of 周定王

Zhou, King Li of 周厲王

Zhou, King Ping of 周平王

Zhou, King Wen of 周文王

Zhou, King Wu of 周武王

Zhou, King Xiang of 周襄王

Zhou, King Yuan of 周元王

Zhou Li 周禮

Zhou Zongbin 周仲彬

Zhulü jian 屬鏤劍

Zhu Quan 朱權

Zhu Shu Jinian 竹書記年

zhuan 傳

Zhuan She Zhu 縛設諸

Zhuan Zhu 縛/專諸

Zhuangzi 莊子

Zi 子

Zi Fan 子犯

Zi Yu 子玉

Ziche 子車

Ziyu 紫玉

Zun Gui 尊貴

Zun Jia 尊嘉

Zuo Qiuming 左丘明

Zuo Zhuan 左傳

Bibliography

Abbreviations

AM Asia Major.

AO Acta Orientalia.

BMFEA Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities.

BSOAS Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.

CLEAR Chinese Literature, Essays, Articles and Reviews.

CSJC *Congshu Jicheng* 叢書集成

HJAS Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.

JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society.

JAS Journal of Asian Studies.

JESHO Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.

JOS Journal of the Oriental Society.

MS Monumenta Serica.

OE Oriens Extremus.

SBBY *Sibu Beiyao* 四部備要

SKQS *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書

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