

The *Rong Cheng shi* 容成氏 Version of the 'Nine Provinces': Some Parallels with Transmitted Texts¹

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1. Introduction

The *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is the largest text among the so-called Shanghai Museum manuscripts on bamboo slips (*Shang bo cang jian* 上博藏簡) considered to be of Chu 楚 provenance² and dated to the mid through the late fourth century BC. Since the slips were looted from a Chu tomb, precise place and date of this find are unknown.³ It is, however, commonly accepted that the manuscripts originate from a Chu aristocratic tomb closed shortly before the Chu court was obliged to leave the capital at Ying 郢 (Hubei area) in 278 BC.⁴

¹ I am truly grateful to Yuri Pines for having alerted my attention to this manuscript and for his valuable remarks, and to Wolfgang Behr, Maria Khayutina and Marina Kravtsova for their comments concerning different aspects of this study. My special thanks to John Moffett for corrections of my English. All mistakes found in this paper are my own responsibility. I would also like to thank EASTM's anonymous referees for reading and commenting on this paper.

² The Chu kingdom occupied a considerable area around the middle reaches of the Yangzi River. For overviews of Chu culture, one that differed in many aspects from that of the kingdoms located to the north in the Yellow River basin, see Lawton, ed. (1991); Cook and Major, eds. (1999), reviewed by Thote (2001-2002).

³ The manuscripts were purchased by the Shanghai Museum in 1994 in Hongkong. They were most likely looted shortly before.

⁴ Ying 郢 was the Chu capital from about 690 BC though 278 BC when it was occupied by Qin 秦, the kingdom that eventually absorbed all the ancient Chinese

The *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is published in the second volume (2002) of the *Shanghai guji chubanshe* edition of the manuscripts, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (Chu Bamboo Strips of the Warring States Period from the Shanghai Museum), chief-editor Ma Chengyuan 馬承源.⁵ Large-scale coloured photographs of numbered slips of the *Rong Cheng shi* are provided on pp. 91-146, with a transcription and commentary by Li Ling 李零 on pp. 247-293. Li Ling's sequence of slips and comments are reproduced and elaborated on by Qiu Dexiu 邱德修.⁶ Different transcriptions of some characters and also different sequences of some slips have been proposed by other Chinese scholars, for instance, in a series of papers concerned with the second volume of the Shanghai Museum manuscripts published in the framework of the 'Bamboo & Silk (Jianbo)' network.⁷ In particular, a rearranged sequence of slips by Chen Jian 陳劍 seems to have gained scholarly support.⁸

One of the reasons for the high degree of scholarly interest in the *Rong Cheng shi* is an account of the 'Nine Provinces' (*Jiu zhou* 九州) found in slips 24-27,⁹ as is pointed out in the preface to the text in the *Shanghai guji chubanshe* edition.¹⁰ The present paper is concerned with this particular passage. No doubts have been raised about the order of these four slips, but Chen Jian proposes a correction in the sequence of a group of slips dealing with Yu, the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty (15-35A): 23+15+24-30+16-21+31-32+22+33-34-35A. A slight correction of Chen Jian's arrangement of this part of the manuscript is proposed by Bai Yulan 白於藍: 21-22-31-33-34-32-35A.¹¹ Another attempt to rearrange of this group of slips is made by Chen Ligui 陳麗桂 (15-23-31-16-22-32-35A).¹²

kingdoms and founded the Qin empire (222-206 BC). The precise location of Ying is unknown. Two possible locations are proposed in relevant literature – Jinancheng 紀南城 and the Chu Huangcheng 楚皇城, see Blakely (1999), pp. 10-13.

⁵ Ma Chengyuan, the Director of the Shanghai Museum, passed away in 2004, shortly after the publication of the third volume.

⁶ Qiu Dexiu (2003).

⁷ <http://www.jianbo.org/admin3/more.asp?langmu=31&fw=title&gj=>.

⁸ Chen Jian 陳劍 (09.01.2003, Bamboo & Silk) reproduced in Chen Jian (2004). For a brief survey of the proposed sequences of the *Rong Cheng shi* slips, see Pines (2005), p. 263, footnote 50; see also Pines (2010), p. 3, footnote 6. For a commented translation of the *Rong Cheng shi*, according to Chen Jian's sequence, see Pines (2010).

⁹ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), pp. 268-271; Qiu Dexiu (2003), pp. 403-435, see also pp. 738-740.

¹⁰ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 249.

¹¹ Bai Yulan (2003), pp. 301-302.

¹² Chen Ligui (2004).

1.1 The Title of the Manuscript

The title of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is written on the back of its last extant slip (53rd) as the 訟城氏 *Song cheng di* and is generally considered to stand for the name of a sage 容成氏 *Rong Cheng shi* (Mister Rong Cheng).¹³ The earliest reference to Rong Cheng shi is found in the philosophical treatise *Zhuang zi* 莊子 (Master Zhuang, forth-third centuries BC), where he is mentioned twice, both times in the sections apparently not written by himself, but by his followers.¹⁴

The first entry is in the tenth chapter *Qu qie* 祛篋 (Rifling trunks), *Wai pian* 外篇 (Outside Chapters) section,¹⁵ where Rong Cheng shi heads the list of twelve sage rulers of remote antiquity. Like this passage, the manuscript begins with a list of sage rulers of antiquity, some names occurring in both texts, a strong argument in favour of the interpretation of the manuscript's title. Each name of a sage ruler consists of two characters plus the generic term *shi* 氏 (Mister), designated in the opening section of the manuscript by a homophonic character *shi* 是.¹⁶ Unfortunately the first slip of the manuscript is no longer available. The second slip starts with the second half of a name of a sage that can be reconstructed from the *Qu qie* passage as [Jun] Lu [尊] 盧氏 and further contains seven complete names. Four of these names, half of the surviving names, are found in the *Qu qie* list—Jun Lu 尊盧氏, He Xu 赫胥氏, Xuan Yuan 軒轅氏 and Shen Nong 神農氏. Li Ling estimates the original total number of sages referred to in the *Rong Cheng shi* to be twenty-one, and suggests that the list, similarly to the *Qu qie* passage, was headed by Song Cheng shi 訟城是 = Rong Cheng shi 容成氏, whose name serves as the title of the manuscript. In the *Qu qie*, the list of sage rulers is followed by a description of the harmonious and simple life of remote antiquity, one that is parallel with paragraph 80 of the *Dao de jing* 道德經 (Classic of *Dao* and *De*, compiled about the second half of the third century BC). This passage is, however, not found in the *Rong Cheng shi*. Different numbers of the ancient sage rulers are mentioned in later texts, all of them sharing

¹³ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 250. A few more slips are missing after slip 53, *ibid.* p. 293, see also Pines (2005), p. 263, footnote 51.

¹⁴ Roth (1993), pp. 56-57.

¹⁵ *Zhuang zi jishi* 莊子集釋, p. 357; Chen Guying 陳鼓應 (1983), p. 262; Legge, trans. (1959 [repr. 1885]), pp. 335-336; Giles, trans. (1926 [repr. 1889]), p. 116; Pozdneeva, trans. (1994 [repr. 1967]), p. 181; Watson, trans. (1968), p. 112; Legge, Giles, Pozdneeva, and Watson read the name as Yong Cheng shi; Liou, trans., (1969), p. 90; Graham, trans. (1991 [repr. 1981]), p. 209; Mair, trans., (1994), p. 88; Malyavin, trans. (2002 [rev. of 1995]), pp. 123-124.

¹⁶ In the title of the manuscript the character is *di* 氏.

some common names with those found in the *Qu qie* and the *Rong Cheng shi*.¹⁷

The second occurrence of Rong Cheng shi is found in the twenty-fifth chapter *Ze Yang* 則陽 of the *Za pian* 雜篇 (Mixed Chapters) section,¹⁸ where a sagely statement by Rong Cheng shi is cited, one that allowed Rong Cheng to be considered in later texts as an inventor of the calendar.¹⁹

Another argument in favour of the interpretation of the manuscript's title is that a similarly entitled manuscript on bamboo slips – *Rong Cheng zi* 容成子 (Master Rong Cheng) of 14 *pian* (bound rolls of bamboo slips), now lost, is listed in the *Zhu zi* 諸子 (All the Masters) section, *Yin yang jia* 陰陽家 (*Ying yang* school) sub-section of the bibliographical chapter *Yi wen zhi* 藝文志 of the first dynastic history *Han shu* 漢書 (History of the [Former] Han [Dynasty], 206 BC-AD 8) by Ban Gu 班固 (AD 32-92).²⁰ Another text containing the name of Rong Cheng in its title is listed in the *Fang ji* 方技 (Techniques) section, *Fang zhong* 房中 (Inside the Chamber) sub-section, *Rong Cheng yin dao* 容成陰道 (*Yin dao* of Rong Cheng) of 26 *juan* (silk scrolls).²¹

¹⁷ For a list of these texts and citations from them, see Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), pp. 250-251.

¹⁸ *Zhuang zi jishi*, p. 885; Chen Guying 陳鼓應 (1983), p. 674; Legge, trans., (1959 [repr. 1885]), p. 558; Giles, trans. (1926 [repr. 1889]), p. 338; Pozdneeva, trans. (1994 [repr. 1967]), p. 300; Watson, trans. (1968), p. 283; Liou, trans. (1969), p. 208; Mair, trans. (1994), p. 257; Malyavin, trans. (2002 [rev. of 1995]), p. 248.

¹⁹ Here Rong Cheng shi is certainly a single person, allowing the translation of *shi* in his name, and in the names of the sage rulers in the *Qu qie* as 'Mister', rather than 'house' as, for instance, Graham does. For a discussion of confusion in the usage of kinship terminology in sinological literature, see Pines (2005-2006), pp. 165-174. In particular, he notes that in early texts *xing* 性 (clan name) and *shi* 氏 (branch, lineage, or, more narrowly, its head) are clearly distinguished, so that a noble could possess two or more *shi*, but just one *xing*. This distinction disappears by the late Warring States period, *ibid.*, pp. 166-167, footnote 19. To an impressive list of references of related studies may be added Kryukov (1966, 1972), who translates *shi* as 'clan patronymic name', differing from the kin name *xing*.

²⁰ *Han shu* 漢書, p. 1733. The bibliography relies on the lost bibliography *Qi lue* 七略 by Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca 46 BC -AD 23).

²¹ *Han shu*, p. 1778.

2. The 'Nine Provinces' in Transmitted Sources

According to Chinese cultural tradition, the system of the 'Nine Provinces' was established by the legendary emperor Yu 禹, or Yu the Great 大禹, for representing the 'civilised' world—the territories in the basins of the Yellow and the Yangzi Rivers occupied by Chinese civilisation.

The emperor Yu is one of the key personages of Chinese cultural tradition. It was he who finally succeeded in draining the waters of the Flood that brought chaos into the terrestrial world.²² Having overcome the Flood, Yu accomplished the following regulations of terrestrial space—first he demarcated the 'Nine Provinces', then delineated (literally 'paved'—*dao* 導) 'the system of communications' (nine land itineraries and nine river itineraries within the 'Nine Provinces'), and finally established a complementary terrestrial division of the 'Five Concentric Zones' (*Wu fu* 五服), the latter representing the whole world. In other words, Yu is attributed with the restoration of order in terrestrial space. These regulative actions are featured in the *Yu gong* 禹貢 (Yu's [System] of Tribute, c. fifth-third centuries BC) chapter of the *Shang shu/Shu jing* 尚書/書經 (Book of Documents).²³ This *locus classicus* of Yu's deeds gives primary attention to the nonary terrestrial divisions, the 'provinces', and the sets of itineraries whose description occupies most of the text.

No ancient maps of the 'Nine Provinces' have survived (if they ever existed),²⁴ the earliest extant cartographic representations of the 'Nine Provinces', often comprising the itineraries, dating from the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279 AD).²⁵

²² See a series of papers concerned with the description of the flood in Chinese classical texts published in *T'oung Pao*—Boltz (1981); Mathieu (1992); Birrell (1997), and a recent survey study by Lewis (2006).

²³ *Shang shu zheng yi* 尚書正義, *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 ed., pp. 6/1a-19b; Legge, trans. (1865), pp. 92-151; Couvreur, trans. (1971 [repr. of 1897]), pp. 61-89; Karlgren, trans. (1950), pp. 12-18; (1948), glosses 1352-96. For the dating of the *Yu gong*, see Qu Wanli (1964).

²⁴ At least in some cases there is good evidence to believe that there were no maps, later lost, accompanying ancient texts. Instead, the spatial layouts of the texts combined the properties of a map or spatial scheme and its description, thus making separate maps superfluous, but requiring special practices of using these texts. I have advanced this hypothesis with respect to the *Shan hai jing* 山海經 (Itineraries of Mountains and Seas, compiled about the first century BC), see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2003b), pp. 168-186, and especially *ibid.* (2007), pp. 217-294.

²⁵ The Southern Song maps are either engraved on stone or block-printed. For examples see Cao Wanru 曹婉如 et al. (1999 [repr. of 1990]), Yan Ping et al. (1998). Although these maps date from about one and a half millennia later than

Beginning from the Warring States period (475-222 BC), the conception of the 'Nine Provinces' becomes the basic model of territorial division in the Chinese tradition of representing space. Indeed, accounts of the 'Nine Provinces' providing the names of each 'province' and its location occur in a series of transmitted texts dating from the Warring States and the Former Han periods.

The transmitted accounts of the 'Nine Provinces' are as follows:

- the *Yu gong*,²⁶

the entire text of the *Yu gong* is reproduced with minor changes in the *Xia benji* 夏本紀 (Basic Annals of the Xia Dynasty) chapter of the *Shi ji* 史記 (The Great Scribe's Records) by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145-c. 87 BC), and the *Dili zhi* 地理志 (Treatise on Terrestrial Organisation) chapter of the *Han shu* 漢書 (History of the [Former] Han [Dynasty]) by Ban Gu 班固, in both cases accompanied by introductions;²⁷

- the *You shi lan* 有始覽 (Observations on the Beginning) chapter of the *Lü shi chun qiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mister Lü's Spring and Autumn [Annals], compiled by 239 BC);²⁸
- the *Shi di* 釋地 (About the Earth) chapter of the *Er ya* 爾雅 dictionary (c. second century BC);²⁹

the *Yu gong*, they are still the product of a continuous Chinese tradition of representing terrestrial space and, therefore, an important research aid for the 'Nine Provinces'. Chinese cartographical tradition differs markedly from modern Western cartography not only in the code of representation, but also in its goals and functions, as one can see from comparison of Chinese maps of the 'Nine Provinces' with their representations in Western physical maps. I make some general observations on the distinctive features of Chinese cartography in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2003a), pp. 38-43, and use two Song maps for investigating the transmitted accounts of the 'Nine Provinces' in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), Maps 1-2 on pp. 619-620, vis-à-vis a Western map of the 'Nine Provinces', *ibid.*, Map 3 on p. 621.

²⁶ For the description of the 'Nine Provinces' in the *Yu gong*, see *Shang shu zheng yi*, pp. 6.1b-12b; Legge, trans. (1865), pp. 94-127; Couvreur, trans. (1897 [1971]), pp. 62-80; Karlgren 1950, pp. 12-17 (§§ 2-19).

²⁷ *Shi ji*, pp. 52-78, for the 'Nine Provinces', see pp. 52-66, for the introduction by Sima Qian, see p. 51; *Han shu*, pp. 1524-1538, for the 'Nine Provinces', see pp. 1524-1532, for the introduction by Ban Gu, see p. 1523.

²⁸ *Lü shi chun qiu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 2a; Wilhelm, trans. (1928), pp. 158-159; Kamenarovic, trans. (1998), pp. 192-193; Knoblock and Riegel, trans. 2000, p. 280 (§ 13/1.4); Tkachenko, trans. (2001), pp. 181-182. For discussion of the dating problems of the *Lü shi chun qiu*, see contributions to the Warring States Project: www.umass.edu/wsp/conferences/aas/2003/aspects/index.html.

²⁹ *Erya Guo zhu* 爾雅郭注, *Sibu beiyao* ed., pp. 6/1a-2a.

reproduced with a difference in the name of one 'province' in the *Bian wu* 辨物 (Distinguishing Beings and Things) chapter of the *Shuo yuan* 說苑 (Abundance of Elucidations) by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BC);

- the *Zhi fang shi* 職方氏 (Official in Charge of the [Four] Cardinal Directions) chapter of the *Zhou li* 周禮 (Zhou Rituals, the compilation includes texts of the fifth-third century BC);³⁰

the text is similar to the sixty-second chapter of the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 (Lost Zhou Documents, includes texts that date from the fourth-second centuries BC), possibly borrowed from it;³¹

- the *Di xing xun* 地形訓 (Treatise on Terrestrial Shape) chapter of the *Huainan zi* 淮南子 (Masters from Huainan, compiled by 139 BC).³²

From the point of view of the names of the 'provinces', and also the way their locations are given, these descriptions constitute two clearly demarcated groups:

I. The *Yu gong*, the *You shi lan*, the *Shi di* and the *Zhi fang shi* share the same nucleus of names (the entire sets differ from each other in one or two positions, 12 names in total appear in this set;³³ locations are given with respect to landmarks (rivers, sea and mountains) in the *Yu gong*, and in a mixed way in the other texts of the group, such as with respect to rivers, according to cardinal directions, and using rivers as objects of cardinal orientation.³⁴

The difference in the names of the 'provinces' between the sets the Chinese commentarial tradition can be explained by referring each set to subsequent periods of Chinese history:³⁵

³⁰ *Zhouli Zheng zhu* 周禮鄭注, *Sibu beiyao* ed., pp. 6a-8b; Biot, trans. (1969 [repr. of 1851]), pp. 277-279.

³¹ For the survey of the complex problem of dating of such heterogeneous compilation as the *Yi Zhou shu*, see Shaughnessy (1993), pp. 229-231. Core chapters were composed probably by a single hand about the end of the fourth or beginning of the third century BC; the sixty-second chapter does not belong to them. Final redaction of the text including some apparently Former Han entries most likely took place about the first half of the first century BC.

³² *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解, pp. 130-131; Major, trans. (1993), pp. 141-147; see also Major (1984), pp. 133-145; Le Blanc and Mathieu, trans. (2003), pp. 161-162; Major et al. (2010), pp. 154-155 (§4.1), see also pp. 150-152.

³³ See Table 6 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), p. 616.

³⁴ See Tables 1-4 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), pp. 608-611.

³⁵ All the texts, as one can see from the list, are composed considerably later than the represented period.

<i>Yu gong</i> 禹貢	Yu's reign and the Xia 夏 dynasty he founded
<i>Shi di</i> 釋地	Shang-Yin 商殷 dynasty (c. 1600-c. 1050 BC)
<i>Zhi fang shi</i> 職方氏	Western Zhou 西周 (c. 1050-771 BC)
<i>You shi lan</i> 有始覽	Springs and Autumns period 春秋 (770-475 BC) ³⁶

II. The names given in the *Di xing xun* have little in common with those of the first group; locations are given exclusively with respect to the eight cardinal directions and the centre.³⁷

In the mid 1930s, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Tong Shuye 童書業 tried to find a compromise between the *Di xing xun* and the *Yu gong* traditions of the 'Nine Provinces' by distinguishing the so-called 'Small Nine Provinces' (*Xiao jiu zhou* 小九州), 'Large Nine Continents' (*Da jiu zhou* 大九州), and 'Middle Nine Continents' (*Zhong jiu zhou* 中九州) theories.³⁸ These allowed them to make the two radically different sets of names compatible by referring them to different hierarchical levels of territorial division, the *Di xing xun* set being a division of a larger scale than those of the first group. Their argument has, however, certain inconsistencies, as shown half a century later by John S. Major, who, nevertheless, does not completely exclude the proposed hypothesis.³⁹ No satisfactory explanation of the radical difference between the sets of 'provinces' has been found so far. Rather than looking for compromises, Major is more interested in the formal differences between the 'Nine Provinces' in the *Di xing xun* and in the *Yu gong* group, specifically with regard to names and locations.⁴⁰ His attention is, however, focused on the former text. Since Major's primary concern is the *Di xing xun*, he does not examine the differences between the texts of the first group in detail, and also does not take into account all of them, in particular, the *Shi di*.⁴¹ A survey of this group of descriptions of the 'Nine Provinces' was made by Gu Jiegang just prior to his

³⁶ In the account of the 'Nine Provinces' in the *You shi lan* each 'province' corresponds to a principality of the Springs and Autumns period. See Table 2 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), p. 609.

³⁷ See Table 5 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), p. 614.

³⁸ Gu Jiegang and Tong Shuye (1936).

³⁹ For his critique of Gu Jiegang's theory see Major (1984), pp. 161-162.

⁴⁰ See especially the comparative table in Major (1984), pp. 138-139.

⁴¹ Major (1984), pp. 133-145.

study mentioned above.⁴² However, comparison of these descriptions occupies a rather modest place in his study, and is mostly limited to differences in the names of 'provinces'. Instead his attention is focused on seeking the origins of 'provinces' as a territorial system in administrative units and divisions that really existed in ancient China, and on establishing links between specific 'provinces' and real landmarks, lands, or units of administrative division.

Developing the approach outlined by Major, I have scrutinised the transmitted accounts of the 'Nine Provinces', paying primary attention to their formal attributes rather than exploring their real topography, in particular:

- varying names of 'provinces' between the accounts with respect to their placement in the provided lists of 'provinces' (and not their real topographical provenance);
- types of given locations of 'provinces', variations of these locations and specific means of locating them (and not real locations of 'provinces');
- the structure of phrases where names and locations are provided.

Such a formal approach allows one to see conceptual aspects of the accounts of the 'Nine Provinces' – how they serve as a means of conveying spatial representation, and eventually to outline typological relationships between these accounts.⁴³

Due to the find of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript, the 'Nine Provinces' are currently the focus of scholarly attention once again. This manuscript version of the 'Nine Provinces' throws new light on the transmitted versions and requires their reconsideration.

It should also be noted that although the system of itineraries described in the *Yu gong* is closely related to the 'Nine Provinces', the itineraries are accorded much less attention in literature than the former.⁴⁴ I have briefly discussed the system of nine land itineraries, where each itinerary is marked by mountains, in relation to the typologically similar itineraries of the *Shan hai jing* 山海經 (Itineraries of Mountains and Seas, compiled about the first century BC), and Ken E. Brashier has explored it recently in the context of interaction with mountain spirits.⁴⁵ The nine

⁴² Gu Jiegang (1933), pp. 11-29; see also the summary of this study by Wang Yong 王庸 (1998 [repr. of 1938]), pp. 11-16, esp. pp. 12-13.

⁴³ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2006) and (2009), pp. 602-629.

⁴⁴ Studies of the 'Nine Provinces' will be surveyed below.

⁴⁵ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (1995), pp. 77-78, Fig. 10 on p. 100 shows a schematic representation of the itineraries; see also some remarks on it in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2003b), pp. 153-154; Brashier (2001-2002), pp. 177-178. Having drawn

river itineraries of the *Yu gong* have interesting similarities with the description of the 'Nine Provinces' in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript, enhancing the importance of this new source.

3. Studies of the *Rong Cheng shi* Description of the 'Nine Provinces' and Perspectives of the Present Examination

The particular significance of the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the 'Nine Provinces' is that it is markedly different from all the transmitted versions – in the structure of their description, in the type of given locations, and most especially in the names of the 'provinces'. In addition, the majority of other toponyms mentioned in relation to these 'provinces' are rivers located in the basins of the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers. Moreover, what makes the *Rong Cheng shi* version of central importance is that the 'Nine Provinces' described here are attributed to the emperor Yu. Therefore, we are dealing here with a version of Yu's 'provinces' parallel to that featured in the officially recognised and carefully transmitted *Yu gong*.

The peak of scholarly interest in the 'Nine Provinces' of the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript are 2003-2004, the two years following its publication in 2002. The entire set of 'provinces' is discussed by Chen Wei 陳偉 (2003), Li Ling (2003, pp. 190-192), Su Jianzhou 蘇建洲 (29.03.2003 Bamboo & Silk developed on some 'provinces' in Su Jianzhou 2003, pp. 139-142, §§ 36, 37, 39-41, 45) and Yan Changgui 晏昌貴 (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk), reproduced in Yan Changgui (2004a). Selected 'provinces' are featured by Shen Jianhua 沈建華 (2004), who compares their names with occurrences in inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze vessels, Zhu Yu-anqing 朱淵清 (07.08.2003 Bamboo & Silk; 2004) and Yi Desheng 易德生 (05.02.2006, 27.03.2006 Bamboo & Silk). Different remarks on the passage describing the 'Nine Provinces', in particular identification of single characters and parallels with transmitted texts, are also made by the other participants of the 'Bamboo & Silk' network, especially by Chen Jian (09.01.2003), reproduced in Chen Jian (2004), Liu Lexian 劉樂賢 (13.01.2003), Xu Quansheng 許全胜 (14.01.2003) and Yuan Shixuan 願世鉉 (20.02.2003). Finally, some scholars discuss closely related aspects of Yu's deeds relying on a wide range of transmitted texts, see Cheng Yuanmin 程元敏 (2004) and Yan Changgui (2004b).

Chinese scholars pursue three major goals. The most important is to determine the topographical background of the newly discovered version of the 'Nine Provinces'. Special efforts are made to identify the toponyms that occur in the manuscript, most especially the 'provinces', approximat-

the same conclusion – the sets of mountains represent itineraries – Brashier proposes slightly differing schematic representations.

ing their locations on the earth's surface, and, if possible, finding correspondences between the *Rong Cheng shi* with the transmitted accounts of the 'provinces'. In particular, Su Jianzhou in his short Bamboo & Silk publication provides a useful survey table showing parallels between the *Rong Cheng shi* 'provinces', transmitted 'provinces', natural landmarks and principalities.⁴⁶ The second goal is to find parallels to the *Rong Cheng shi* description of the 'provinces' in other ancient texts, and the third is to date the description and place it within the context of Chinese history.

I propose to examine the *Rong Cheng shi* description of the 'Nine Provinces' from a different perspective, as a certain kind of terrestrial representation, applying the same formal method used in my study of the transmitted accounts of the 'Nine Provinces'. I propose to determine how the terrestrial surface is conceived of, and represented according to, this manuscript. Rather than discussing in detail real locations of landmarks related to the 'provinces', I explore these landmarks as *markers* of the terrestrial representation studied. In particular, I examine how these landmarks are used as means of locating the 'provinces', and whether they occur in relation to 'provinces' in the transmitted accounts of the 'Nine Provinces'. Then I compare the types of given location in the *Rong Cheng shi* with those found in the transmitted versions. I pay special attention to the structure of location formulas in the *Rong Cheng shi* that allow one to spot structurally similar occurrences in other ancient texts, and, eventually, cases of similar types of terrestrial representation. The aim is to determine what spatial concepts are conveyed through the *Rong Cheng shi* account of the 'Nine Provinces', and what typologically similar concepts are found in other ancient Chinese texts. Such an evaluation of this text could facilitate understanding of its place with respect to the transmitted versions, while also throwing some new light on the latter.⁴⁷

3.1 Structure of the *Rong Cheng shi* Description of the "Nine Provinces"

The *Rong Cheng shi* description of the 'Nine Provinces' structured by units of description is given below. The transcription of characters takes into consideration a few corrections and suggestions by other scholars with respect to the initial transcription by Li Ling (the contentious characters are marked by an asterix).

⁴⁶ Su Jianzhou 蘇建洲 (29.03.2003 Bamboo & Silk).

⁴⁷ I presented some preliminary insights into the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the 'Nine Provinces' from the proposed perspective at the seventeenth Conference of the Warring States Project (17-18.09.2003, Leiden, <http://www.umass.edu/wsp/conferences/wswg/17/index.html>) and provided a summary in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), pp. 629-636.

Table 1. *Rong Cheng shi* description of the ‘Nine Provinces’

Nr. of §§	Structural units of description (a pair of ‘provinces’ of a single ‘province’)	relative locations
1.	<p>壘 (=禹) 親執粉 (= 耒 Li Ling, Qiu Dexiu; = 畚 Chen Jian et al.)* 記 (= 耜);</p> <p>目 (= 以) 波 (= 陂) 明者 (= 都) 之澤;</p> <p>決九河之滌 (= 阻 Li Ling et al.; = 泄 Xu Quansheng)**</p> <p>於是虜 (= 乎) 夾州, 滄 (= 涂) 州 劄 (= 始) 可 𠄎 (= 處 Li Ling et al./ = 居 Xu Quansheng, Qiu Dexiu).</p> <p>Yu personally held the plough handle (Li Ling)/bamboo or wicker scoop (Chen Jian) and the ploughshare;</p> <p>In order to dike the Mingdu Marsh;</p> <p>[and] released the blockage (Li Ling et al.)/leak (Xu Quansheng) of the Nine He [rivers];</p> <p>Thereupon Jia ‘province’ [and] Tu (=Xu) ‘province’ first became habitable.</p>	<p>East 1</p> <p>2 <i>zhou</i></p>
2.	<p>壘 (=禹) 迴 (=通) 淮與沂 (= 沂);</p> <p>東 啟 (= 注)⁴⁸ 之 溲 (= 海);</p> <p>於是虜 (= 乎) 競州, 簞 (= 莒) 州 劄 (= 始) 可 𠄎 (= 處 Li Ling et al./ = 居 Xu Quansheng, Qiu Dexiu)。</p> <p>也。</p> <p>Yu made communicate the Huai and the Yi [rivers];</p> <p>Made them pour eastward into the Sea;</p> <p>Thereupon Jing1 ‘province’ [and] Fu (=Ju) ‘province’ first became habitable.</p>	<p>East 2</p> <p>2 <i>zhou</i></p>
3.	<p>壘 (=禹) 乃 迴 (=通) 蕞與湯 (= 易);</p> <p>東 啟 (= 注) 之 溲 (= 海);</p> <p>於是虜 (= 乎) 葦 (Li Ling, Chen Jian; = 藕 – Chen Wei, Yan Changgui, Zhu Yuanqing) *** 州 劄 (= 始) 可 𠄎 (= 處 Li Ling et al./ = 居 Xu Quansheng, Qiu Dexiu)。</p> <p>也。</p> <p>Yu then made communicate the Lou and the Yi1 [rivers];</p> <p>Made them pour eastward into the Sea;</p>	<p>North</p> <p>1 <i>zhou</i></p>

⁴⁸ For the reasons of identification of 啟 with 注, see Qiu Dexiu (2003), p. 412.

	Thereupon Luo (Li Ling, Chen Jian; = Ou – Chen Wei, Yan Changgui, Zhu Yuanqing) ‘province’ first became habitable.	
4.	<p>壘 (=禹)乃迴(=通)三江、五沽 (= 湖) ; 東啟 (= 注) 之海 (= 海) ; 於是虜 (= 乎) 畱 (= 荆) 州, 鄒 (= 揚) 州 可 𠄎 (= 處 Li Ling et al./ = 居 Xu Quansheng, Qiu Dexiu) 。</p> <p>也。</p> <p>Yu then made communicate the Three Jiang [rivers] and the Five Lakes; Made them pour eastward into the Sea; Thereupon Jing ‘province’ [and] Yang ‘province’ first became habitable.</p>	<p>South</p> <p>2 zhou</p>
5.	<p>壘 (=禹) 乃迴 (=通) 沔 (=伊)、洛, 并里 (= 灑)、干 (= 澗); 東啟 (= 注) 之河 ; 於是於虜 (= 乎) 斂 (= 敘) 州 可 𠄎 (= 處 Li Ling et al./ = 居 Xu Quansheng, Qiu Dexiu) 。</p> <p>也。</p> <p>Yu then made communicate the Yi2 [and] the Luo [rivers], connected [to the latter a pair of parallel rivers,] Chan [and] Jian; Made them pour eastward into the Yellow River; Thereupon Xu1 ‘province’ first became habitable.</p>	<p>Centre</p> <p>1 zhou</p>
6.	<p>壘 (=禹) 乃迴 (=通) 經 (= 涇) 與渭 ; 北啟 (= 注) 之河 ; 于是乎虜 (= 且) 州 可 𠄎 (= 處 Li Ling et al./ = 居 Xu Quansheng, Qiu Dexiu) 也 。</p> <p>Yu then made communicate the Jing and the Wei Rivers; Made them pour northward into the Yellow River; Thereupon Ju1? ‘province’ first became habitable.</p>	<p>West</p> <p>1 zhou</p>

Before we discuss the structure and the content of the passage, some elucidation of contentious characters is necessary:

* 粉 *fen* designates one of the tools used by Yu in his labours. Li Ling supposes that it could have been mistakenly written instead of 杓 *li*,

which in its turn was close in reading to 耒 *lei*.⁴⁹ He then concludes that 粉 stands for 耒 (plough handles, wooden part of the plough). Indeed, in texts dating from the late Warring States through the early Han period 耒 often forms a pair with the next character—耜 *si* (ploughshare, iron part of a plough). In particular, such an occurrence providing an interesting parallel to the first phrase of the discussed passage is found in the *Yueling* 月令 (Monthly Ordinances) chapter of the *Li ji* 禮記 (Records on Ritual), in the description of ritual ploughing in the first month *Mengchun* 孟春: *Tian zi qin zai lei si* 天子親載耒耜 (The Son of Heaven personally launched into action the plough handle and the ploughshare).⁵⁰

However, Chen Jian⁵¹ in his transcription suggests with a question mark that 粉 rather stands for 畚 *ben* (bamboo or wicker scoop, dustpan). The latter point of view is shared by the majority of interested scholars. In particular, Liu Lexian, Su Jianzhou and Yuan Shixuan provide arguments in its favour. Liu Lexian and Su Jianzhou build their arguments on references to agricultural instruments personally used by Yu in transmitted texts.⁵² Yuan Shixuan points out the possibility of using 粉 and 畚 as loan characters.⁵³ Yan Changgui, Chen Wei, and Zhu Yuanqing accept these arguments and use 畚 in their citations of the *Rong Cheng shi*.⁵⁴

** 滌 Li Ling supposes that this character may possibly be read as 阻 *zu* (blockage), but provides no special reason for his interpretation.⁵⁵ Xu Quansheng suggests that it might be a mistakenly written 滌 *xie* (clean, clear out), which should be read as 泄 *xie* (let out, discharge, release, leak).⁵⁶ Su Jianzhou transcribes it as 滌 *jie* that stands for 結 *jie* (node, congeal,

⁴⁹ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 268.

⁵⁰ *Li ji* 禮記, *Sibu beiyao* 5/3a; Legge, trans. (1885), p. 254-255 (§13).

⁵¹ Chen Jian (09.01.2003 Bamboo & Silk), reproduced in Chen Jian (2004), p. 329.

⁵² Liu Lexian 劉樂賢 (13.01.2003 Bamboo & Silk), § 2; Su Jianzhou (2003), pp. 137-138, § 33. Liu and Su refer to *Zhuang zi*, *Han Fei zi* 韓非子, *Huainan zi* 淮南子 and its citation in the *Taiping yu lan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Inspected Antology of the Taiping Era), also occurrences of 畚 in *Guo yu* 國語 (Speeches of the Kingdoms), chap. *Zhou yu zhong* 周語中, and its definition in the *Guang ya* 廣雅 dictionary, chap. *Shi qi* 釋器.

⁵³ Yuan Shixuan 願世鉉 (20.02.2003 Bamboo & Silk), last paragraph.

⁵⁴ Yan Changgui 晏昌貴 (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk), footnote 1; reproduced with slight revisions in Yan Changgui (2004a), p. 506; Chen Wei 陳偉 (2003, p. 42), Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清 (07.08.2003 Bamboo & Silk), footnote 8.

⁵⁵ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 269.

⁵⁶ Xu Quansheng 許全胜 (14.01.2003 Bamboo & Silk), § 5.

forge, cement), that is close in its meaning to 阻.⁵⁷ The majority of scholars support the tentative transcription of Li Ling. Qiu Dexiu looks for phonetic similarities between the element 柞 *zuo* (oak) and 阻.⁵⁸ Yan Changgui points out that the element 柞 can be read as 迮 *zuo* (narrow), which regionally makes 窄 *zhai* (narrow), and, therefore, most likely means 阻. He concludes, however, that this is an unclear character and its identification with 阻 is a working hypothesis.⁵⁹

*** This character will be elucidated in the discussion of this ‘province’ below.

The description consists of six formulaic passages, the beginning of each passage marked by the name of the mythical emperor Yu 禹. The first passage is slightly different from the following five.

Three of them are concerned with a pair of ‘provinces’ (§§ 1, 2 and 4), and three with single ‘provinces’ (§§ 3, 5 and 6), in total nine ‘provinces’. Such coupling of ‘provinces’ is never found in the transmitted versions, where each ‘province’ is treated separately. The passages from the second through the sixth have the following three-fold structure:

In the first phrase the water landmarks that Yu ‘made communicate’ (*tong* 通) between each other are enumerated.⁶⁰ Pairs of water landmarks are given in §§ 2, 3, 4, and 6, and four of them are found in § 5. The second phrase indicates where their waters were afterwards directed, in §§ 2, 3 4 into the sea, and in §§ 5 and 6 into the Yellow River. Finally, the third phrase provides the names of ‘provinces’ that resulted from this procedure.

The first passage, like all the others, begins with name Yu. It is also similar to all the others in its last (fourth) phrase, where the names of ‘provinces’ that resulted from Yu’s regulating actions are given, but the preceding phrases are different. The first phrase is a sort of introduction to the entire description: “Yu personally held the plough handle (Li Ling, Qiu Dexiu); =bamboo or wicker scoop (Chen Jian et al.) and the ploughshare”. The second and the third phrases, in contrast to the other passages, describe two different regulating actions by Yu – ‘diking’ *bo* 波 (= 陂) and ‘releasing’ *jue* 决 water flow.

⁵⁷ Su Jianzhou (29.03.2003 Bamboo & Silk), § 1. Arguments in favour of this supposition are developed in Su Jianzhou (2003), pp. 138-139, § 35.

⁵⁸ Qiu Dexiu (2003), p. 407.

⁵⁹ Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk), footnote 2; (2004a), p. 506.

⁶⁰ Especially helpful for grasping the meaning of 通 in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is its usage as a mathematical term, in particular, in the *Jiuzhang suanshu* 九章算術 (Computational Procedures of Nine Categories) and its commentaries by Liu Hui 劉徽 (c. third century AD), with the meaning ‘to connect, communicate, link up; faire communiquer’. For detailed elucidation on the usage of this term in this text, see Chemla and Guo Shuchun, trans. (2004), pp. 994-998.

3.2 Names of the *Rong Cheng shi* 'Provinces'

Jing 荆 and Yang 陽 (§ 4): Only two of the names of 'provinces' enumerated in the *Rong Cheng shi* are found in transmitted versions, and the names occur in the manuscript together – Jing 荆 and Yang 陽 (§ 4). Jing is found in all the accounts of the first group of texts, Yang in the *Di xing xun*. As far as the latter is concerned, a 'province' name similar in its graphic form and reading to 陽 (the characters differ only in the radical) is found in the accounts of the first group – 揚 in the *Yu gong*, the *You shi lan* and the *Zhi fang shi*, and 楊 in the *Shi di*. Jing and Yang 'provinces' are defined in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript by the Three Jiang [rivers] (San jiang 三江) and Five Lakes (Wu hu 五湖). The Three Jiang can be found in the *Yu gong* among the landmarks of 揚 'province', but the Five Lakes are not mentioned in this text. Both the Three Jiang and the Five Lakes refer to 揚 'province' in the *Zhi fang shi*:

其川三江·其浸五湖。
Its rivers are the Three Jiang,
Its irrigation sources are the Five Lakes.

It seems, therefore, most likely that 陽 'province' of the *Rong Cheng shi* corresponds to 揚/楊 in the accounts of the first group of transmitted texts. It also seems likely that clear differentiation between these characters in transmitted versions was made in order to stress the difference between the sets of 'province' names in the two groups of accounts.

Taking into consideration the southern (Chu) provenance of the manuscript, it is noteworthy that both Jing and Yang 'provinces' of the *Rong Cheng shi* are southern 'provinces' in the transmitted lists. Both landmarks defining these 'provinces' in the *Rong Cheng shi* – the Three Jiang and the Five Lakes – are related to Yang 'province' in the transmitted lists, while neither is mentioned with respect to Jing.⁶¹ It is then especially interesting that, according to correspondences between 'provinces' and kingdoms provided, for instance, in the *You shi lan*,⁶² Yang 'province' corresponds to the Yue kingdom, and Jing 'province' to the Chu kingdom. The association in the *Rong Cheng shi*, a text of Chu provenance, of Jing (= Chu) with the territories usually attributed to Yang (= Yue) may be regarded as a political statement that the Chu territories extended far to the south and included the Yue territories.

As far as the other seven 'provinces' are concerned, the landmarks mentioned in relation to them allow one to approximate their real locations (see Map 1 that shows approximate locations of the 'provinces' on a

⁶¹ In the *Yu gong* and the *Zhi fang shi*, Jing 'province' is related to the Jiang River, paired with the Han 漢, and also to the Nine Jiang in the *Yu gong*.

⁶² See Table 2 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), p. 609.

modern physical map of China), and in some cases even to establish more or less plausible correspondences with the first group of the transmitted sets of the ‘Nine Provinces’.

Xu1 敘 ‘province’ (§ 5) is the only case akin to that of Jing and Yang ‘provinces’ in having a similarity with the ‘provinces’ occurring in the transmitted sets. There are two sound reasons for establishing not only its correspondence with Yu 豫 ‘province’, but also for considering its identification with it as highly plausible. These reasons are pointed out by all scholars discussing the *Rong Cheng shi* set of ‘provinces’. Firstly, according to the fifteenth entry in the *Shi yan* 釋言 chapter of the *Er ya*, Yu is glossed as Xu1: 豫，隴，敘也。Secondly, the four rivers related to Xu1 in the *Rong Cheng shi*, provided that we accept proposed identifications of the last two of them, are very similar to the initial passage of the description of Yu ‘province’ in the *Yu gong*:

Yu gong:
伊，洛，灋，澗；
既入于河。
The Yi2, Luo, Chan, Jian Rivers
[are made] to go into the He River.

Rong Cheng shi:
禹乃通
伊，洛，并里 (= 灋)，干 (= 澗)；
東注之河。
Yu then made communicate the Yi2 [and] the Luo [rivers],
connected [to the latter a pair of parallel rivers,] Chan
[and] Jian;
Made them pour eastward into the Yellow River.

The Yi2 伊 River is the southern confluence of the Luo 洛, while Chan 灋 and Jian 澗 are its northern confluences. The three latter rivers are of special importance in Chinese cultural tradition as it is in this region that one of the Zhou capitals that marked the centre of terrestrial space was founded.⁶³

⁶³ The foundation of Chengzhou 成周/Luoyi 洛邑 on the northern bank of the Luo 洛 River (precise location not yet determined) as the new (or restored) Centre is described in the *Shao gao* 召誥 (Proclamation of Shao [gong]) and *Luo gao* 洛誥 (Proclamation in Luo) chapters of the *Shang shu/Shu jing*, see Legge, trans. (1865), pp. 420-452; Couvreur, trans. (1971 [repr. of 1897]), pp. 269-281; Karlgren, trans. (1950), pp. 47-57. The emphasis here is laid on choosing the right place by means of divination. Both chapters are traditionally attributed to the reign of King Cheng 成王 (1042/35-1006 BC), but date from considerably later,

It is noteworthy that the definition of Xu1 'province' in the *Rong Cheng shi*, though being similar to the description of Yu 'province' in the *Yu gong*, has little in common with the waterways of Yu 'province' as they are given in the *Zhi fang shi*:

其川榮雒 (= 洛),⁶⁴

其浸波滌。

Its rivers are Rong and Luo,

Its irrigation sources are Bo and Zha.

Ju1? 虞 (=且) 'province' (§ 6) is defined by the Jing 經 (= 涇) and Wei 渭 Rivers. Wei is the western confluence of the Yellow River, Jing flows into Wei from the north. Both of these rivers occur in rather similar descriptions of Yong 雍 'province' in the *Yu gong* and the *Zhi fang shi*:

Yu gong:

涇屬渭汭。

The Jing River [became] attached to the nook of the Wei River.

Zhi fang shi:

其川涇汭。

其浸渭洛。

though still remaining the earliest references to this event found in classical texts. (For the dating of the *gao 誥* chapters of the *Shang shu/Shu jing*, see Vogelsang (2002), pp. 138-209). A simplified version of the foundation of Chengzhou/Luoyi is provided in the *Zhou benji* 周本紀 chapter of the *Shi ji*, see *Shi ji*, p. 133; Chavannes (1967 [repr. of 1895]) vol. 1, p. 247; Vyatkin and Taskin, *Syima Tsyanyan'* [Sima Qian], vol. 1, pp. 190-191; Nienhauser, ed. (1994), pp. 65-66 (§133). Chengzhou/Luoyi is defined here as the 'Centre of Underheaven' (*Tianxia zhi zhong* 天下之中). In the *Guo yu*, in the opening section of the *Zheng yu* 鄭語 chapter (not earlier than 314 BC), an account of Western Zhou principalities is provided (*Guo yu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 16/1a; Taskin, trans. (1987), pp. 238-243 (§209)) which surround Chengzhou/Luoyi as the Centre. For a discussion of the textual tradition related to Luoyi in comparison to relevant archeological finds, see Nickel (2005), pp. 85-102. For a map showing locations of Luoyi from the Eastern Zhou till the present, see Shatzman Steinhardt (1999 [repr. of 1990]), p. 22.

⁶⁴ There are two rivers named Luo on Chinese territory. The Luo 洛 mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi* is the southern confluence of the Yellow River, and it can also be written as 雒. The second Luo (洛) is the northern confluence of the Wei 渭 River.

Its rivers are the Jing and Rui,⁶⁵

Its irrigation sources are Wei and Luo.⁶⁶

Li Ling, Chen Wei and Yan Changgui associate the name of this ‘province’ with the Ju3 沮 River, the western confluence of the Luo River.⁶⁷ Ju3 River is mentioned in the *Yu gong* in the description of Yong ‘province’ (Karlgrén, § 18), and further in delineation of the eighth river route corresponding to the Wei River (Karlgrén, § 28), but is not found in the *Zhi fang shi*. Ju Jianzhou points to characters in Chu bamboo manuscripts similar to 慶, in particular to a Guodian case and its phonetic difference from Yong 雍,⁶⁸ but there is no doubt that the area covered by 慶 ‘province’ corresponds to that of Yong ‘province’ from the transmitted accounts.⁶⁹

Especially interesting for the set of ‘provinces’ of southern provenance is its *northern extension* through the ‘province’ described in the third paragraph (§ 3). Li Ling, followed by Chen Jian, Su Jianzhou and Qiu Dexiu, transcribe its name as **Luo** 𣎵.⁷⁰ He points out the similarity of the writing of this character in bamboo slips (𣎵) with 𣎵 井 Bing,⁷¹ the name of a northern ‘province’ in the *Zhi fang shi*. Since both are formed by duplication, he supposes that this could lead to the mixing up of these two characters. Shen Jianhua supports this supposition with examples from inscriptions on oracle bones and bronzes.⁷² Chen Wei, followed by Yan Changgui and Zhu Yuanqing, read it as **Ou** 藕. He discusses similar characters in the Baoshan 包 山 bamboo slips and bamboo tablets in relation to the content of a bamboo box these tablets are related to—6 sticks

⁶⁵ Here the character 汭 *rui* is a river name (now the name of a confluence of the Jing 涇 River) and not a “nook”, as in the preceding citation from the *Yu gong* (渭 汭—the nook of the Wei River).

⁶⁶ This Luo River is the confluence of Wei.

⁶⁷ Arguments by Li Ling (see Ma Chengyuan, ed. 2002, p. 271) are extensively elaborated by Qiu Dexiu (2003), pp. 432-434; Chen Wei (2003), pp. 46-47, Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); (2004a), p. 505.

⁶⁸ Su Jianzhou (2003), p. 142, § 45.

⁶⁹ I do not provide references to specific studies in the discussion of the ‘provinces’ Jing, Yang, Xu1 and Ju1?, as there is a consensus in the transcription of their names, approximate location and association with ‘provinces’ from transmitted accounts.

⁷⁰ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 270; Chen Jian (09.01.2003, Bamboo & Silk), reproduced in Chen Jian (2004), p. 329; Su Jianzhou (29.03.2003 Bamboo & Silk), §5, (2003), pp. 140-141, § 41; Qiu Dexiu (2003), p. 417.

⁷¹ These two examples of manuscript characters are from the *Rong Cheng shi*.

⁷² Shen Jianhua 沈建華 (2004), pp. 330-332, § 3.

of underground lotus stems or rhizomes (ou 藕).⁷³ Having evaluated a broad range of interpretations of these cases, he advances the supposition that 𠄎 should be read as 藕 and is similar in meaning to 耦 *ou* (pair, couple; mate, spouse, to couple) which is, in its turn, is similar to 并 *bing* (side by side; combine, incorporate).⁷⁴ Su Jianzhou, however, draws another conclusion from the Baoshan bamboo slips. He associates **Luo** 𣎵 with another northern ‘province’ from the transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’ that is not found in the *Yu gong*, but appears in the *You shi lan*, *Zhi fang shi* and *Shi di* – You 幽 ‘province’.⁷⁵ However, none of the waterways mentioned in transmitted accounts in relation to You ‘province’ appears in the *Rong Cheng shi*, which serves as an argument against this identification.

Luo/Ou ‘province’ is defined by the Lou 葑 and Yi1 易 Rivers. Neither occurs in the *Yu gong*. The Yi1 River is mentioned in the *Zhi fang shi*, in the description of waterways of Bing 并 ‘province’ located in the ‘true North’ (zheng bei 正北), and is not found in any other transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’:

其川虜池嘔夷。

其浸淶易。

Its rivers are Hutuo and Ouyi.

Its irrigation sources are the Lai and Yi1.

Lou is the only river among those occurring in the *Rong Cheng shi* description of ‘provinces’ not mentioned in any of the transmitted accounts of them. Different suggestions have been advanced on its identification.

Li Ling, followed by Qiu Dexiu, identifies Lou with the Kou 漉 River, also referred to as the Ouyi 嘔夷 River, and mentioned under this name among the waterways of Bing ‘province’.⁷⁶ Chen Wei identifies Lou with another river of the Bing ‘province’ set of waterways – Lai 淶.⁷⁷

Yan Changgui identifies Lou 葑 with the Lou1 River 漉 (the characters, indeed, differ only in radicals – ‘grass’ and ‘water’, respectively) mentioned in the *Shan hai jing* (Itineraries of Mountains and Seas), in the de-

⁷³ I am grateful for this translation to Georges Métaillé who called my attention to the incorrect translation of this character as “lotus root” in many dictionaries.

⁷⁴ Chen Wei (2003), pp. 44-45; Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); (2004a), p. 505; Zhu Yuanqing (07.08.2003 Bamboo & Silk).

⁷⁵ Su Jianzhou (29.03.2003 Bamboo & Silk), §5, (2003), pp. 140-141, § 41. I discuss differences between the ‘province’ sets in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2006), (2009) pp. 602-627.

⁷⁶ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 270; Qiu Dexiu (2003), pp. 414-415.

⁷⁷ Chen Wei (2003), p. 44.

scription of the thirty-fourth mountain (Taixi 太戲) of the *Bei ci san jing* 北次三經 (Third Itinerary of the Northern [Mountains]):⁷⁸

又北三百里曰泰戲之山...
 摩沱之水出焉，
 而東流注于澗水...
 A further 300 *li* to the North there is Taixi Mountain...
 The Hutuo1 River comes out of it,
 and flows East, pouring into the Lou1 River...

Hao Yixing 郝懿行 in his commented edition of the text, *Shan hai jing jianshu* 山海經箋疏, first published in 1809 and then reprinted in the *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 series, pays considerable attention to these two rivers.⁷⁹ He primarily relies on the occurrences of the Hutuo1 River under a slightly differing name Hutuo 摩池 in the *Di li zhi* chapter (Treatise on Terrestrial Organisation) of the *Han shu* (History of the [Former] Han [Dynasty]), and also as Hu1tuo1 呼沱 in the *Jun guo zhi* 郡國志 (Treaties on Commanderies and Kingdoms) chapter of the *Hou han shu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han Dynasty [AD 25-220]).⁸⁰

The occurrence of Lou1 in relation to the Hutuo1 River matches the location of the Yi1 River in Bing ‘province’, where Hutuo is mentioned, and, therefore, provides some argument in favour of the proposed identification of the Lou 夔 River with Lou1 澗 of the *Bei ci san jing*. However, as pointed out by Yan Changgui, indications that the Hutuo River is a tributary of the Lou1 River are nowhere in evidence in the *Di li zhi* chapter of the *Han shu*, where multiple references to the Hutuo River are found. Neither is Lou1 mentioned in the other references to the Hutuo1 River in the *Shan hai jing*.

Yet, even with only the Yi1 River as an incontestable means to locate Luo/Ou ‘province’, its identification with the territory of Bing ‘province’ – ‘true North’, according to the *Zhi fang shi*, is a curious characteristic for a set of ‘provinces’ of southern (Chu) provenance. It is especially interesting since the far northern territories Bing occur in the *Zhi fang shi*, and are not found in the other transmitted accounts of the ‘Nine Provinces’. One would have expected from a set of ‘provinces’ of southern provenance an extension in a southerly direction rather than to the north.

⁷⁸ Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); (2004a), p. 505. *Shan hai jing jianshu* 山海經箋疏, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 3/19a-b. For the system of itineraries of the *Shanhai jing*, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2003a,b). For a list of translations of this text, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2003a), p. 62, footnote 4.

⁷⁹ *Shan hai jing jianshu*, 3/19a-b.

⁸⁰ “Treatises” by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (c. AD 240-c. 306), other parts by Fan Ye 范曄 (AD 398-446), first combined by Liu Zhao 劉昭 (fl. 502-520).

Finally, there are two problematic pairs of ‘provinces’, **Jing1 競 and Fu 籒 =Ju 莒 (§ 2) and Jia 夾 and Tu 塗 (§ 1)**. These cannot be clearly identified with any of the ‘provinces’ of the transmitted sets (though some have been proposed). The major complicating factor here is that they occur in pairs, and it is not clear which landmark refers to a particular ‘province’.

Rivers mentioned in relation to Jing1 and Ju are Huai 淮 and Yi 沂 (=沂). Yi is the northern confluence of Si 泗, and Si is the northern confluence of Huai. Both occur in the *Yu gong* and in the *Zhi fang shi*, but are associated with different ‘provinces’, Xu 徐 and Qing 青, respectively. Both are located in the east, but Xu is not found in the set of ‘provinces’ of the *Zhi fang shi*, and the description of Qing ‘province’ in the *Yu gong* does not contain the Huai and Yi rivers:

Yu gong (Xu):

淮沂其乂。

The Huai and Yi rivers, they [became] ordered.

Zhi fang shi (Qing):

其川淮泗，

其浸沂沭。

Its rivers are Huai [and] Si,

Its irrigation sources are Yi [and] Shu.

The location of Fu 籒 ‘province’ is simplified by the fact that this place name appears as a self-reference in Spring and Autumn inscriptions on bronze vessels of Ju principality 莒國, which was located in the Shandong Peninsula, in the basin of the Yi River.⁸¹ Yi Desheng identifies Fu (Ju) with Xu ‘province’, but seems to be the only one to do so.⁸² Li Ling suggests that Jing1 ‘province’ corresponds to Qing ‘province’ of the *Zhi fang shi/You shi lan* or Ying 營 ‘province’ mentioned in the *Shi di* instead of Qing.⁸³ Chen Wei, Su Jianzhou, Qiu Dexiu and Yi Desheng support this suggestion.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 269; Su Jianzhou (2003), p. 140, § 40; Chen Wei (2003), p. 43; Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); (2004a), p. 504; Shen Jianhua (2004), pp. 328-330, § 2. Ju 莒 principality was conquered by Chu in 431 BC.

⁸² Yi Desheng 易德生 (05.02.2006, 27.03.2006 Bamboo & Silk).

⁸³ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 269.

⁸⁴ Chen Wei (2003), p. 43; Su Jianzhou (29.03.2003 Bamboo & Silk), § 4; (2003), p. 140, § 39; Qiu Dexiu (2003), p. 413; Yi Desheng (05.02.2006, Bamboo & Silk).

The case of the pair Jia 夾 and Tu 塗 is even more complicated. They are mentioned in the first, atypical paragraph of the text. Their landmarks are the Mingzhu 明者 (= *du* 都) Marsh, and the Nine He 九河 Rivers. The Nine He are mentioned in the *Yu gong* in the description of Yan 兗 ‘province’ (*Jiu he ji dao* 九河既道), but are not in the *Zhi fang shi* (here only the He/Yellow River is mentioned). Mingdu is a marsh that is supposed to have been written in various ways in different texts.⁸⁵ In particular, one of its identifications, Mengzhu 孟豬, is found in the description of Yu ‘province’ in the *Yu gong*, and another identification, Wangzhu 望諸, occurs in the description of Qing 青 ‘province’ in the *Zhi fang shi*. Finally, Mengzhu 孟諸 is found in the passage of the *Jian ai (zhong)* (Equal Appreciation, Part 2) chapter of the *Mo zi* (Master Mo), where it is related to the East (*dong fang* 東方), one of the four cardinal directions described here, and is associated with Ji 冀 ‘province’, the only ‘province’ occurring in this passage. Since two of these identifications are related to the East, and one to Yu ‘province’ related to the centre, this raises doubts about some of the identifications, and does not allow one to use Mingdu as a clear indication of location. One can only suggest that it most likely refers to the East.

Chen Wei, Shen Jianhua, Su Jianzhou, Qiu Dexiu and Zhu Yuanqing, following Li Ling, identify Jia with Yan ‘province’ from the transmitted accounts.⁸⁶ Yan Changgui identifies Jia 夾 ‘province’ with Ji 冀 on the basis of the literal meaning of 夾 (to press from both sides, to place in between), taking into consideration that, according to the *You shi lan* and the *Shi di*, it is located “between two He rivers” (*liang he zhi jian* 兩河之間), and “inside the He River” (*he nei* 河內) in the *Zhi fang shi*.⁸⁷ However, according to the *Yu gong*, *You shi lan* and *Shi di* Yan ‘province’ is also squeezed between two rivers—He and Ji 濟,⁸⁸ so this argument is not sufficient.

Finally, all these scholars as well as Chen Jian identify Tu ‘province’ with Xu 徐 ‘province’ found in the *Yu gong*, and also in the *You shi lan* and the *Shi di*. One of their arguments is the relation of Tu to the name of Tushan 塗山 (the place of Yu’s marriage, located in Shandong).⁸⁹ This,

⁸⁵ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 269; Qiu Dexiu (2003), p. 404; Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); (2004a), pp. 503-504.

⁸⁶ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 269; Chen Wei (2003), pp. 42-43; Su Jianzhou (2003), p. 139, § 36; Qiu Dexiu (2003), pp. 408-409; Zhu Yuanqing (07.08.2003 Bamboo & Silk), § 4; (2004). Shen Jianhua supports this identification with examples from inscriptions on oracle bones and bronzes (2004), pp. 328-330, § 2.

⁸⁷ Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); (2004a), p. 504.

⁸⁸ See Tables 1-3 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), pp. 608-610.

⁸⁹ Ma Chengyuan, ed. (2002), p. 269; Chen Jian (09.01.2003, Bamboo & Silk), reproduced in Chen Jian (2004), p. 336; Chen Wei (2003), p. 43; Su Jianzhou

however, somewhat contradicts the correspondence of Xu ‘province’ through the rivers Huai and Yi to the pair Jing1 and Ju, discussed above.

In sum, the location of these two pairs of ‘provinces’ can be roughly allocated to the East of the described region, but their association with specific ‘provinces’ from transmitted accounts is questionable. The East, according to the *Rong Cheng shi*, is an area ‘crowded’ with ‘provinces’, and in this respect the *Rong Cheng shi* is similar to the transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’.⁹⁰

3.3 Type of Given Locations of ‘Provinces’ in the *Rong Cheng shi*

The ‘provinces’ of the *Rong Cheng shi* are located exclusively by means of water landmarks. In the majority of cases these are rivers. Location by means of landmarks, also mostly rivers, is a characteristic of the first group of the transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’.⁹¹ Here the landmarks either serve as border markers, e.g.:

河濟惟兗。

[Between] the He (Yellow) and the Ji rivers: Yan ‘province’ (*Yu gong*);

河濟之間爲兗州。

Between the He (Yellow) and the Ji rivers there is Yan ‘province’ (*You shi lan*);

or as border markers combined with objects of reference for cardinal orientation, e.g.:

河南曰豫州。

[The territory] to the South of the He (Yellow) River is called Yu ‘province’

(*Shi di*; *Zhi fang shi*).

The role of landmarks in the *Rong Cheng shi* is considerably different. Here they are the key waterways and reservoirs that are apparently found inside the territories of the ‘provinces’ (like a system of blood vessels), and that have determined the shaping of these territories as a result of their regulation by Yu. The regulated landmarks, for instance a group of inter-connecting rivers, provide some guidelines within the ‘provinces’ that enable one to demarcate some surrounding territory and thus approximate their location (see Map 1).

(2003), p. 139, § 37; Qiu Dexiu (2003), p. 409; Yan Changgui (06.04.2003 Bamboo & Silk); Zhu Yuanqing (07.08.2003 Bamboo & Silk), § 5; (2004).

⁹⁰ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), p. 625.

⁹¹ See Tables 1-4 in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), pp. 608-611.

3.4 Waterways of the *Rong Cheng shi*

Given locations of ‘provinces’ in the transmitted accounts and the *Rong Cheng shi* differ not only in their principles and structure, but also to a considerable extent in their landmarks. Indeed, the rivers mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi*, and those occurring as location markers in the transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’ are rather different. Thus, such rivers as Han 漢, Ji 濟, Si 泗, Heishui 黑水 (the Black River), references to the Yellow River as the Western He (Xi He 西河) and the Two He (Liang He 兩河) found in the transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’ never appear in the *Rong Cheng shi*. Here, the He (Yellow) River, as a location marker, appears only as the Three He, and then simply as He when it is the destination of river courses. Jiang 江 is only mentioned as the Three Jiang. The Nine He and the Three Jiang, in their turn, are not found in the definitions of locations in the transmitted accounts of ‘provinces’. The only common landmark is, therefore, the Huai 淮 River.

At the same time, as I have shown above, all the rivers and other water landmarks mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi*, with the exception of one (the Lou River), are found in descriptions of ‘provinces’ following definitions of their locations in the *Yu gong* and the *Zhi fang shi*. In many cases, even the way these landmarks are mentioned bears a striking resemblance to one or both of these texts (e.g. Xu1 敘 ‘province’).

The passages relating to a ‘province’ or a pair of ‘provinces’ in the *Rong Cheng shi* are much shorter than the descriptions of ‘provinces’ in the *Yu gong* and the *Zhi fang shi*, but are typologically similar to them. The only difference is that in the *Yu gong* and the *Zhi fang shi* definitions of locations of the ‘provinces’ precede their descriptions and are clearly demarcated from the former. In the *Rong Cheng shi* the two are compressed together.

4. Spatial Concepts behind the *Rong Cheng shi* Version of the ‘Nine Provinces’

Now, having examined the formal aspects of the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the ‘Nine Provinces’, let us focus on the character of regulating actions described in the text. Three interrelated spatial concepts can be distinguished in relation to the *Rong Cheng shi*:

- 1° Draining floodwaters by the emperor Yu related to tillage;
- 2° Paving river routes by the emperor Yu;
- 3° ‘provinces’ as pieces of habitable land amidst the floodwaters.

The two former concepts are related to Yu’s landscape regulating actions, as they are described in the *Shang shu/Shu jing*:

(1) draining floodwaters for tillage (chapter *Yi [Hou] Ji* 益稷/*Gao Yao mo* 皋陶謨, § 9 in Karlgren's division, follows description of the Flood):⁹²

[Arrangement of forested highlands]

予乘四載，
隨山刊木，
暨益奏庶鮮食。

I (= Yu) having mounted my four (kinds of) conveyances,
moved along the mountains [as orientation marks and]
cut down trees (or made cuts [as signs] on trees)
[in order to blaze paths through forested highlands].
[Due to these measures] together with Yi (forester) intro-
duced to the masses fresh (= venison, fowl, fish, etc. ob-
tained by hunting and fishing, here apparently venison
and fowl) food.

[Establishing the system of waterways, arrangement of lowlands]

予決九川，距四海。
濬畎澮，距川。
暨稷播，奏庶難食鮮食。

I (= Yu) opened nine river flows and led [them] into the
four seas,
deepened channels and canals and led [them] into rivers.
[Due to these measures] together with [Hou] Ji (Agricul-
turer) distributed [seeds into the soil⁹³ and] introduced to
the masses hard-won (= cultivated grain obtained by hard
agricultural work) food and fresh (= venison, fowl, fish,
etc. obtained by hunting and fishing, here apparently fish)
food.

⁹² *Shang shu zheng yi, Sibü beiyao* ed., 5/1a-b. The translation below relies on the translations Legge, trans. (1865), pp. 77-78; Couvreur, trans. (1971 [repr. of 1897]), pp. 49-50; Karlgren, trans. (1950), pp. 9-10, but is not identical with any of them. The resulted translation is to a considerable extent inspired by the interpretation of this passage by Artemy M. Karapetians during his classical Chinese lessons I was privileged to attend during my university and post-graduate studies (1980-1985).

⁹³ According to the Chinese technique of sowing (*bo* 播), the seeds are not distributed by throwing them around, but each seed is put into soil separately and well ordered.

[Results of these regulative actions]

懋 (= 貿) 遷有無化 (= 貨?) 居。
 烝民乃粒。
 萬邦作乂。

[These resulted in] bartering and transferring (or diligent transferring) present [products to where they were] absent, disposing of stores (changing dwelling places).⁹⁴
 The multiple people then received cultivated grain.
 10000 'states/countries/polities' became ordered.

(2) paving the communication routes – nine land itineraries marked by mountains and nine river itineraries (*Yu gong*, §§ 20-21 and 22-29, respectively, in Karlgren's division).

It should be noted that many of the rivers occurring in the *Rong Cheng shi* (with the exception of northern rivers Lou and Yi1) are also found in the descriptions of the river routes in the *Yu gong*. The destination of each river is given in the *Rong Cheng shi* in quite a similar way to how it is done in the *Yu gong* and also in the descriptions of rivers in the *Shan hai jing*:

Yu gong:
 東入于海。
 Goes East into the Sea.

Rong Cheng shi:
 東注之海。
 Made them pour eastward into the Sea.

Shan hai jing:
 東流注于海。
 Flows East, pours into the Sea.

The idea of the land itineraries and of the river itineraries is also implied in the passage on draining cited above.

(3) The idea of a 'province' as a piece of habitable land amidst waters originates from *Er ya*, *Shi shu* 釋水 chapter, § 2, but here the character *zhou* 洲 appears with the 'water' radical with the meaning of 'river island':⁹⁵

⁹⁴ This phrase can be understood in different ways due to the different possibilities for interpreting the characters *mao* 懋 "diligent"; = *mao* 貿 "trade", the character *hua* 化 "change, dissolve, melt"; = *huo* 貨 "wares", and the character *ju* 居 "to dwell, reside; to store, hoard".

⁹⁵ *Er ya Guo zhu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 7/10a.

水中可居者曰洲。

A habitable [place] amidst water is called 'river islet'.

This idea is developed with respect to 'provinces' as a set of pieces of habitable land that emerged from the floodwaters in a natural way in the definition of *zhou* 州 in the *Shuo wen* (Explaining Graphs, c. first century AD) dictionary:⁹⁶

水中可居者曰州。

水周繞其旁。

從重川。

昔堯遭洪水。

民居水中高土。

故曰九州。

A habitable [place] amidst water is called 'province'.

Water encircles and surrounds its sides.

[The character] originates from the duplication of the sign 'river'.

Formerly Yao encountered the Flood.

People lived on pieces of high land amidst waters.

Therefore [they] are called the 'Nine Provinces'.

The same idea is developed about the same time by Ban Gu in the opening section of the *Di li zhi* chapter of the *Han shu* with respect to the 12 'provinces'.⁹⁷

This natural emergence, according to these texts, contradicts the version of the *Shang shu/Shu jing*. In the *Rong Cheng shi* this contradiction is avoided by crediting the event to Yu's regulating interference.

4.1 Draining for Tillage, According to the *Rong Cheng shi* and Transmitted Texts

The concept of draining related to tillage, in the *Shu jing/Shang shu* is, however, described separately from the regulations of terrestrial space by Yu described in the *Yu gong* (the 'Nine Provinces', the systems of itineraries and the 'Five Concentric Zones'). The draining and tillage concept can sometimes be traced in the description of the 'provinces' and the river itineraries, but it is never formulated explicitly. The passage on draining and tillage is preceded by a phrase also found at the beginning of the *Yu gong*:

⁹⁶ *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 說文解字注, p. 569.

⁹⁷ *Han shu*, p. 1523.

隨山刊木
 [Yu] moved along the mountains [as orientation marks
 and] cut down trees
 (or made cuts [as signs] on trees) [in order to blaze
 paths through forested highlands].

The similar beginning of the *Yu gong* and the draining and tillage passage in the *Gao Yao mo2* allows one to suppose that the draining and tillage concept may be an alternative version of Yu's 'world-making' actions, if compared to that presented in the *Yu gong*. In any case, according to the *Shang shu/Shu jing*, draining and tillage are marginal with respect to the deeds of Yu described in the *Yu gong*.

The *Rong Cheng shi* account of the 'Nine Provinces', laying emphasis on the draining and tillage concept, calls attention to this concept, one much neglected in comparison to those described in the *Yu gong*. Of special interest here are striking parallels between draining and tillage according to the *Rong Cheng shi*, and references to it found in the *Zhuang zi*, ch. 33 *Tian xia* 天下 (*Za pian* 雜篇), presented as a citation from the *Mo zi* 墨子. The *Rong Cheng shi* provides, in effect, the missing details allowing a better comprehension of this difficult passage:⁹⁸

墨子稱道曰：
 昔禹之濬洪水，
 決江河而通四夷九州也。
 名川三百，
 支川三千，
 小者無數。
 禹親自操耒耜而九雜天下之川...
 Mozi, praising [his] teaching, said:
 "In ancient times when Yu was draining off the Flood-
 waters,⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *Zhuang zi jishi*, p. 1077; Chen Guying 陳鼓應 (1983), p. 863; Legge, trans. (1959 [repr. of 1885]), pp. 659-660; Giles, trans. (1926 [repr. of 1889]), pp. 441-442; Pozdneeva, trans. (1994 [repr. of 1967]), p. 357; Watson, trans. (1968), p. 366; Liou, trans. (1969), p. 90; Graham, trans. (1991 [repr. of 1981]), p. 276; Mair, trans. (1994), p. 337; Malyavin, trans. (2002 [rev. of 1995]), p. 307.

⁹⁹ A similar phrase is found in the *Hong fan* 洪範 (The Great Model) chapter of the *Shang shu/Shu jing*, but it refers to Yu's father, Gun 鯀, who was first appointed by Yao to fight the Flood: ... Xi Gun yin hong shui 昔鯀堙洪水 "...in ancient times Gun dammed up Floodwaters", see *Shang shu zheng yi*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 12/2a; Legge, trans. (1865), p. 323 (§3); Couvreur, trans. (1971 [repr. of 1897]), p. 195 (§3); Karlgren, trans. (1950), pp. 28-29 (§3); see also a study focused on *Hong fan* by Nylan (1992), p. 112. The same idea is developed in the concluding chapter of the *Shan hai jing*: *Gun qie di zhi xi rang yi yin hong shui* 鯀竊帝之息壤

[he] released the Jiang and He [rivers] and made communicate [via waterways the territories of] the barbarians of the four [cardinal directions] and the 'Nine Provinces'.

The [number of resulted] famous rivers is 300;

The [number of their] tributaries is 3000;

Small [rivers] are numberless.

Yu himself personally operated the sack/basket [for collecting soil] and ploughshare and [thus within] the 'Nine [Provinces]' interlaced the rivers of the Under-heaven ... "

Four similar aspects can be distinguished between the *Rong Cheng shi* and the *Zhuang zi* passage:

- A. Yu personally taking into his hands agricultural tools;
- B. A system of waterway of different levels;
- C. Linking up waterways into a system of communicating vessels (*tong* 通);
- D. Releasing water flows (*jue* 決).

All these aspects are also present in the *Yi [Hou] Ji/Gao Yao mo2* passage, but the way they are expressed (apart from the releasing (*jue* 決) water flows) is different. A reference to communicating waterways of three different levels, quite similar to that of the cited passage of the *Zhuang zi*, is found in the *You shi lan* chapter of the *Lü shi chun qiu* (Mister Lü's Spring and Autumn [Annals]).¹⁰⁰ Similar references to Yu's personally taking in his hands agricultural tools for draining are found in the philosophical treatises of the third century BC, the *Han Fei zi* 韓非子 (Master

以堙洪水 "Gun has stolen alluvial [?] soil belonging to the Emperor in order to dam up the Flood" (*Shan hai jing jianshu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed. 18/8b, see its commented translation in Mathieu, trans. (1983), vol.1, p. 651-652). Gun's method failed and he was executed. Yu did the opposite and succeeded – he released excessive waters. In the citation from *Mo zi*, instead of 堙 *yin* (to dike, to block up; mound, blockage) appears *yin* 灑 with the 'water' radical, which means 'to spread, to blot [as ink]'. However, taking into consideration facultative usage of radicals, the phrase attributed to Mozi is not very clear.

¹⁰⁰ *Lü shi chun qiu*, *Sibu beiyao* ed., 3a; Wilhelm, trans. (1928), p. 159; Kamenarovich, trans. (1998), p. 195; Knoblock and Riegel, trans. (2000), p. 281 (§§ 13/1.9-10); Tkachenko, trans. (2001), p. 182. This passage, however, considerably changed, can be traced in the *Di xing xun* chapter of the *Huainan zi*, see *Huainan honglie jijie*, p. 132; Major (1993), pp. 147-150 (Section II); Le Blanc and Mathieu, trans. (2003), pp. 163-164; Major et al. (2010), pp. 155 (§ 4.2).

Han Fei), chapter *Wu du* 五蠹 (Five Vermins)¹⁰¹ and the *Huainan zi*, chapter *Yao lue* 要略 (An Overview of the Essentials).¹⁰² In sum, the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript highlights parallels between these texts that deserve a detailed study.

Finally, the order of describing the ‘provinces’ in the *Rong Cheng shi* perfectly corresponds to the sequence of draining lands – first the ‘provinces’ that have access to the coast, then the central ‘province’, and, finally, the western ‘province’ (see the order of ‘provinces’ in Map 1).¹⁰³ In comparison, the *Yu gong* sequence can be characterised as a ‘round tour’ that, however, also starts from the provinces that have access to the coast, and, therefore, is also to some extent influenced by the idea of draining.¹⁰⁴

5. Conclusions

In sum, the version of the ‘Nine Provinces’ in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is a compressed fusion of at least three spatial concepts distinguished more or less clearly in transmitted texts. This eclectic character enables the *Rong Cheng shi* to serve as a link between the general concept of some habitable pieces of land amidst floodwaters, as found in the *Shun dian/Yao dian*¹ 舜典/堯典, § 11; *Yi [Hou] Ji/Gao Yao mo*², § 9 (according to Karlgren), and the association of the ‘provinces’ with these pieces of land in Han dynasty texts.

The *Rong Cheng shi* version of the ‘Nine Provinces’ has apparent similarities with the first group of their transmitted accounts, especially with their descriptions in the *Yu gong* and the *Zhi fang shi*, but differs markedly from both texts in the names of the ‘provinces’, in the type of their locations and in the structure of their descriptions.

This allows one to draw the conclusion that the transmitted accounts of the ‘Nine Provinces’ are, in effect, different versions of the same conception of the ‘Nine Provinces’ established by Yu, and that the association of these accounts in Chinese historiographical and commentarial tradition with different periods of Chinese history is a means to avoid the contradictions between the accounts.

This conclusion is of special importance for the interpretation of the *Di xing xun* (*Huainan zi*) version. Now, after the discovery of the *Rong Cheng shi*, the difference of the *Di xing xun* account of ‘provinces’ in their names and the type of given locations from the *Yu gong* group of accounts cannot be regarded as a sufficient argument to suppose that the *Di*

¹⁰¹ *Han Fei zi jishi* 韓非子集釋, p. 1041; Liao, trans. (1959), p. 277; Watson, trans. (1964), pp. 97-98.

¹⁰² *Huainan honglie jijie*, p. 709; Major et al. (2010), p. 864.

¹⁰³ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), pp. 635-636.

¹⁰⁴ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann (2009), pp. 624- 627.

xing xun refers to a higher level of territorial division than the *Yu gong* and related texts. Indeed, the radically different *Rong Cheng shi* account of 'provinces' apparently maps the same territory as the 'provinces' of the *Yu gong* group.

Finally, the issue of agriculture needs to be explored, based on the references to draining and agricultural tools in the discussed group of texts. Of special interest here is the laying of special emphasis on the draining aspect in sources of southern provenance, that is, originating from regions of rice agriculture highly dependant on irrigation and drainage systems, and the marginalisation of this concept in the officially recognised version of Yu's deeds – *the Shang shu/Shu jing*.

Note to Map 1:

Location of the *Rong Cheng shi* 'provinces' on an early Western map showing the *Yu gong* 'provinces' (Brion de la Tour, Louis, 1778 [reproduced from Abbé Grosier (Jean-Baptiste Gabriel Alexandre), *Histoire générale de la Chine*, v. 5, Paris: Pierres & Clausier, 1778]). This map clearly shows waterways that are mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi*, allowing us to locate its 'provinces'. The results highlight correspondences between the *Rong Cheng shi* and the *Yu gong* sets of 'provinces'.

Map 1. 'Nine Provinces' of the Yu gong by Brion de la Tour (1778).

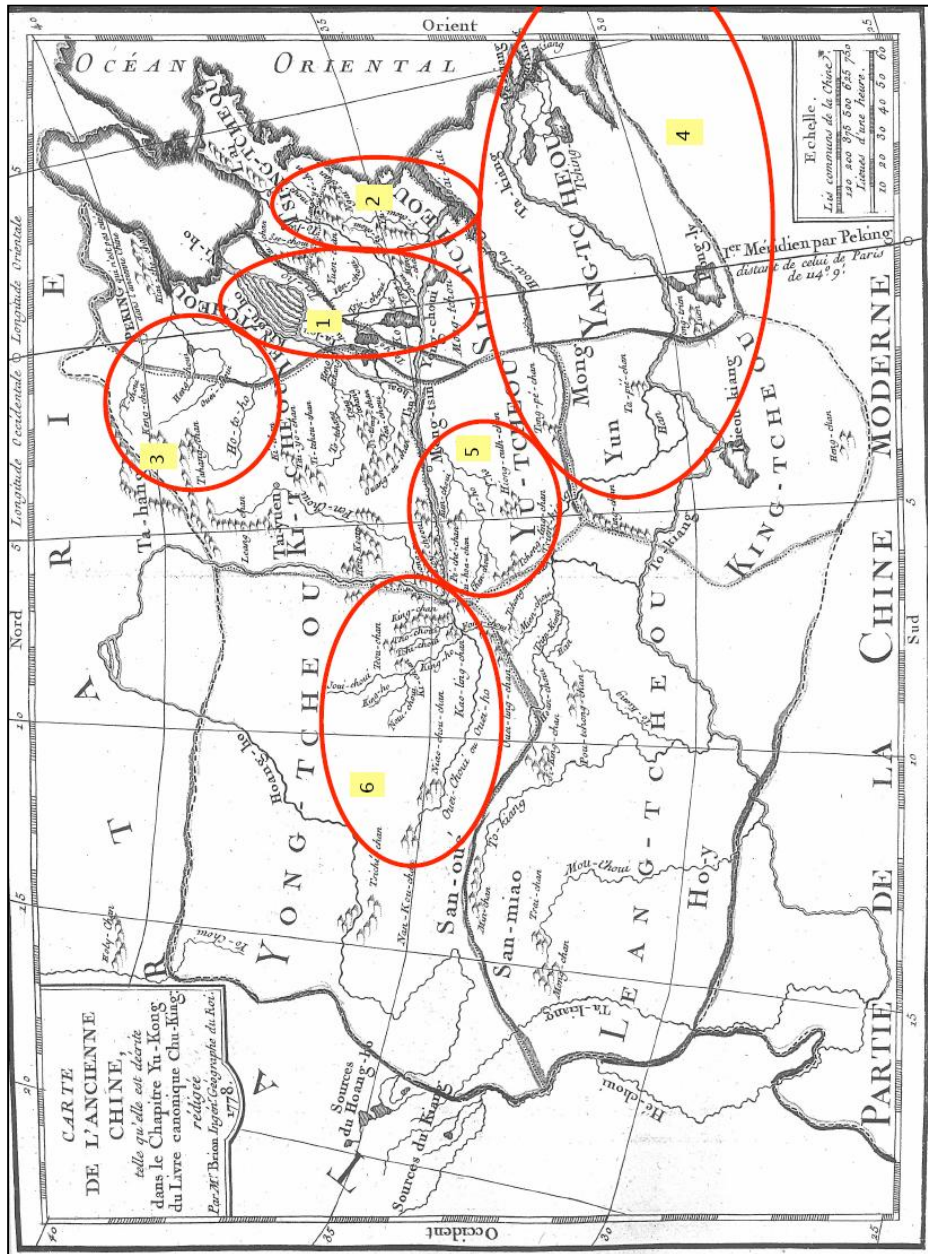


Table 2. Fusion of three spatial concepts in the *Rong Cheng shi*

SPATIAL CONCEPTS found in the <i>Rong Cheng shi</i>	PARALLELS IN TRANSMITTED TEXTS
1° <u>Draining floodwaters</u> by the emperor Yu through establishing a system of waterways of different levels; direct relation to <u>tillage</u>	<p>- ch. <i>Yi [Hou] Ji / Gao Yao mo2</i> 皋陶謨 (<i>Shang shu/Shu jing</i> 尚書/書經), § 9 according to Karlgren);</p> <p>- <i>Zhuang zi</i> 莊子, ch. 33 <i>Tian xia</i> 天下 (<i>Za pian</i> 雜篇), citation of a lost passage from the <i>Mo zi</i> 墨子;</p> <p>the citation is partially repeated (without indication of the source) in the <i>Han Fei zi</i> 韓非子 (ch. <i>Wu du</i> 五蠹), the <i>Huainan zi</i> 淮南子 (ch. <i>Lüe yao</i> 略要);</p> <p>a similar system of waterways is mentioned in ch. <i>You shi lan</i> 有始覽 of the <i>Lü shi chun qiu</i> 呂氏春秋</p>
2° <u>Paving river routes</u> by the emperor Yu;	<p>- the system of communications given after the description of the 'Nine Provinces' in the <i>Yu gong</i> 禹貢 (<i>Shu jing</i>): nine land routes marked by mountains and nine river routes (§§ 20-21 and 22-29 respectively, according to Karlgren);</p> <p>- river ways of delivering tribute (given at the end of description of each 'province' in the <i>Yu gong</i>)</p>
3° 'provinces' as <u>pieces of habitable land amidst the floodwaters.</u>	<p>- the idea of pieces of habitable land amidst the floodwaters is found in the <i>Yao dian1</i> 堯典, § 11; <i>Gao Yao mo2</i>, § 9 (<i>Shu jing</i>), according to Karlgren, but it is not related to 'provinces' here;</p> <p>- definition of 'river islet' (<i>zhou</i> 洲) in the <i>Er ya</i> 爾雅, ch. <i>Shi shui</i> 釋水;</p> <p>- definition of 'province' (<i>zhou</i> 州) in the <i>Shuo wen</i> 說文 dictionary;</p> <p>- the opening section of the <i>Di li zhi</i> 地理志 treatise of the <i>Han shu</i> 漢書</p>

Table 3. Waterways of the *Rong Cheng shi* ‘Nine Provinces’ in Pinyin transcription and transcription in Brion’s maps

§	<i>Rong Cheng shi</i> ‘provinces’ (zhou 州)	Waterways – indicators of location of the ‘provinces’	Transcription of waterways in Brion’s map
1.	Jia 夾 Tu 塗 (= 涂)	Mingdu Marsh 明者 (= 都) 之澤	Mong-tchou
		Nine He Rivers 九河	Kieou-ho
2.	Jing 競 Fu (=Ju) 簞 (= 莒)	Huai River 淮	Hoai-ho, Hoai-hai
		Yi River 沂 (= 沂)	Y-choui [1]
3.	Luo 蓀/Ou 藕	Lou River 蓀	no such river in the map, possibly related to the Hutuo River (虜池 / 虜沱 呼沱) = Ho-to-ho in the map
		Yi River 湯 (= 易)	Y-choui[2]
4.	Jing 荆 (= 荆) Yang 揚 (= 揚)	Three Jiang Rivers 三江	Three Kiang rivers in the Mouth of the Yangzi River
		Five Lakes 五沽 (= 湖)	Tching-tsé (one of the five names of this lake, Taihu 太湖 in modern maps)
5.	Xu 敔 (= 敔)	Yi River 沔 (= 伊)	Y-ho
		Luo River 洛	Lo-ho
		Chan River 里 (= 灑)	Chen-choui
		Jian Rivers 干 (= 澗)	Kien-choui
6.	Ju? 虞 (= 且)	Jing River 經 (= 涇)	King-ho
		Wei River 渭	Ouei-choui/Ouei-ho

Table 4. Names of the *Yu gong* ‘Nine Provinces’ in Pinyin transcription and transcription in Brion’s maps

N°	Names of the <i>Yu gong</i> ‘provinces’ and their transcription in Pinyin	Transcriptions of ‘provinces’ names in Brion’s map
1.	Ji zhou 冀州	Ki-tcheou
2.	Yan zhou 兗州	Yen-tcheou
3.	Qing zhou 青州	Tsing-tcheou
4.	Xu zhou 徐州	Siu-tcheou
5.	Yang zhou 揚州	Yang-tcheou
6.	Jing zhou 荊州	King-tcheou
7.	Yu zhou 豫州	Yu-tcheou
8.	Liang zhou 梁州	Leang-tcheou
9.	Yong zhou 雍州	Yong-tcheou

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