

Fragments Speak: Reexamining the Rejected Pre-Du Yu Commentaries on the Zuozhuan¹

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Abstract:

As this paper shows, though considered largely philological or lexical in nature, early medieval (1st–7th c. CE) commentaries on the Zuozhuan 左傳 (ca. 4th c. BCE), an early Chinese historical narrative, not only bring to the fore ambiguities in the text itself, but also generate divergent literary scenarios and character judgments under-examined by modern Zuozhuan scholars. Commissioned by Tang Taizong’s 唐太宗 court (626–649 CE), the imperial compilers of the Zuozhuan zhengyi 左傳正義 (Corrected meaning of the Zuozhuan) adopted Du Yu’s 杜預 (222–284) commentary on the Zuozhuan and implicitly rejected Eastern Han (25–220 CE) commentaries. This article considers marginalized commentaries written before Du Yu’s time as particularly valuable because such earlier competing interpretations could destabilize—in our latter day perspective—the readings “fixed” by the early Tang authorization of Du Yu’s commentary.

Keywords: Zuozhuan | commentaries

Article:

Introduction

Since the early Tang (7th c. CE), few commentaries on the Zuozhuan 左傳 (compiled ca. 4th c. BCE) can rival the dominance of the Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie 春秋經傳集解 (Collected explanations of the Spring and Autumn Classic and [Zuo]zhuan),² hereafter the Jijie, by Western Jin (265–317 CE) scholar Du Yu 杜預 (222–284). Even James Legge (1815–1897), famed English translator of the Five Classics, largely adopted Du Yu’s explications when translating China’s most ancient historical narrative.³ However, as this article proposes, even though Du Yu’s commentary eclipsed Eastern Han to Wei (25–265) commentaries on the Zuozhuan, surviving fragments from pre-Du Yu days are essential to a critical understanding of the Zuo as a difficult text that not only requires unpacking, but have also generated multiple readings among its earliest commentators.⁴ Lines in the Zuozhuan rendered unproblematic in Du Yu’s ‘authoritative’ commentary become ambiguous when one also considers the divergent explications of pre-Du Yu commentators, such as the ones featured in this paper—Jia Kui 賈逵

(30–101), Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (d. 83), 馬融 (79–166), Fu Qian 服虔 (d. ca. 195), and Peng Wang 彭汪 (?–?, E. Han). With textual ambiguities foregrounded again, different narrative scenarios emerge, reversing character judgments at times, thus affecting the posthumous reputations of historical figures, a central preoccupation of exegetes of the Annals corpus.⁵

What are the goals of the commentator on the Zuo zhuan in early medieval (1st–7th c.) China? The Zuo zhuan was itself already held as valid exegesis (zhuan 傳) to the Annals, having won such a status after a protracted struggle beginning with Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–23 CE) in the late Western Han and continued in the early Eastern Han (25–220 CE). But as early commentaries on the Zuo zhuan show, its newfound status as exegesis did not obviate the need for this work itself to be further explicated and evaluated. Obscurities in the Zuo zhuan required the commentator to supply lexical glosses to resolve difficult and doubtful points in the text. So at the most elemental level, early medieval commentators simply rendered the Zuo more accessible and readable. These scholars accomplished this rudimentary goal to pursue the ultimate goal of demonstrating that the Zuo zhuan grasps the meaning of the Annals more properly and effectively than rival traditions, the Gongyang and Guliang zhuan, could. Zuo zhuan commentators may share these two broad goals, one technical and the other ideological, but differences between these scholars also distinguish them from each other.

As this paper shows, different proposals for the technical meaning of words or literal reference of phrases may sometimes reveal higher-order judgments—approval or disapproval of characters and actions—that commentators almost never explicitly say issued from their own judgment. The medium of the seemingly innocuous semantic gloss sometimes ends up pointing toward a particular implied judgment that may or may not contradict the one espoused by the Zuo zhuan, or more precisely, the one the Zuo zhuan claims the Annals has conveyed. Oftentimes it is difficult to determine whether these differences in judgment drove or resulted from the different lexical glosses proposed. In any case, taken together, early medieval Zuo zhuan commentaries present us with different choices and arguments on how to first understand the words, then to judge the characters and circumstances those words depict.

In selecting Du Yu's commentary as the definitive interpretation of the Zuo zhuan, early Tang scholars effectively limited the profusion of meanings, closing down alternatives in many cases. The early Tang rejection (during Tang Taizong's 太宗 reign, 626–649) of comments that conflict with Du Yu's comments reflects Tang editors' explicit agenda to make Du's explications and implicit judgments the "gold standard" in the interpretation of both the Annals and Zuo zhuan. This paper examines marginalized Eastern Han-Wei commentaries on the Zuo zhuan, and in light of their differences from Du Yu's comments, reexamines certain characters and scenarios in the Zuo.⁶

In this article, first I offer a brief history of Zuo zhuan scholarship in early medieval China, from the active production of commentaries in the Eastern Han to the Taizong court's exclusive endorsement of Du Yu's commentary. Next, I turn to the nature of early medieval commentaries on the Zuo zhuan, providing an overview of the scope, form, and subject matter of the usually brief entries.⁷ My first case studies give a sampling of the commentators' conflicting views on questions concerning personal identities, historical backgrounds, and character assessments in select Zuo zhuan episodes. In the more complex case studies, I delve into an extended analysis of commentaries on two longer Zuo zhuan passages which, rife with ambiguities, gave rise to contentious arguments among commentators. The article closes by reflecting on the paradox of the Zuo zhuan zhengyi's citation yet rejection of Han commentaries

in the Tang, exposing tensions between critical evaluations and outright elimination of voices that deviate from the officially recognized interpretations of Du Yu.

Authoritative vs. Marginalized Zuozhuan Commentaries

A brief history of early medieval scholarship on the Zuozhuan here will contextualize the marginalization of Eastern Han commentaries and the valorization of Du Yu's readings of words, scenes, and characters in the Zuozhuan. The earliest and only commentary on the Zuozhuan still extant from the Western Han is attributed to Liu Xin,⁸ the famous earliest advocate of this text, while all other extant commentaries date from the Eastern Han or later.⁹ It appears, judging from this pool of extant early commentaries and from historical accounts in the Hou Hanshu 後漢書, that commentaries on the Zuozhuan first proliferated in the Eastern Han. Some early Eastern Han advocates and opponents of the Zuozhuan—Han Xin 韓歆 (d. ca. 39), Fan Sheng 范升 (fl. 28), Chen Yuan 陳元 (fl. 28), and Li Yu 李育 (fl. 79)—gained fame from their court debates supporting or discrediting the text,¹⁰ but none of their works appear in the Classics section of the “Jingji zhi” 經籍志 (Treatise on Classics and other writings) of the Suishu 隋書.¹¹ In this bibliography, about 30 titles of commentarial works on the Zuozhuan are attributed to scholars alive in the Eastern Han and Wei periods, while no scholar of the Western Han is included.¹² Still visible today are fragments of Zuozhuan commentaries attributed to upwards of a dozen scholars from this period.¹³ Of these scholars, the more prominent ones in the historical record are Zheng Zhong, Jia Kui, Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166), Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), and Wang Su 王肅 (195–256), all figures who have full biographies, and/or have written memorials or essays incorporated into their life accounts.¹⁴

However, political or intellectual prominence fails to easily translate into productivity or longevity of writings, for the most influential commentator on the Zuozhuan in the Eastern Han, Fu Qian, fails to figure among this select group.¹⁵ In the Hou Hanshu group biographies of the scholars (“Rulin zhuan” 儒林傳), a cursory paragraph summarizes Fu Qian's life, even though he attained the position of Administrator (taishou 太守) of Jiujiang 九江.¹⁶ Tang compilers of the Jinshu 晉書 (compiled 646–648) record that the Eastern Jin court established Fu Qian's and Du Yu's commentaries on an equal footing in the official curriculum.¹⁷ Indeed, Fu Qian's extant corpus of commentarial fragments on the Zuozhuan far outstrips that of any other Eastern Han scholar's in size, notwithstanding those other scholars' greater political, social, or intellectual stature. Fu Qian's corpus consists of over 800 fragments in four full juan 卷 (fascicles),¹⁸ or approximately twice the quantity of fragments attributed to Jia Kui, who has the next highest number of fragments preserved. Fu Qian's scrupulous citation of the names of commentators shows commentators building upon each other's works during this early period of Zuozhuan commentaries.¹⁹ In other words, it appears that early Zuozhuan commentators formed a loose network of readers who consulted, evaluated, and at times argued with each other's comments, even though these scholars may not always properly acknowledge their source or debt to others.²⁰ The case studies examined later place the commentators' interpretive differences on the same Zuozhuan episodes in the context of such conversations held in writing.

Since the early Tang, many traditional and modern scholars have considered Du Yu's commentarial contribution as a watershed in the history of Zuozhuan scholarship. His commentary, the Jijie, became authoritative when Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) et al., under imperial auspices, endorsed the Zuozhuan and Du Yu's Jijie as official interpretations of the

Annals, integrating the three texts to form the Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi 春秋左傳正義 (compiled 639). Neither the Gongyang zhuan nor the Guliang zhuan, rival exegetical traditions, gained admission into the official Wujing zhengyi 五經正義 (Corrected meaning of the Five Classics) corpus,²¹ while other early medieval commentaries on the Zuozhuan were also shunted aside in favor of Du Yu's.

Kong Yingda's preface to the Zuozhuan zhengyi justifies the supremacy of Du Yu's commentary, downplaying the achievements of other early medieval commentators and subcommentators because they allowed Gongyang and Guliang interpretations to adulterate their scholarship.²² Kong evaluates the commentators before and since Du Yu in this way:

Of those who transmitted the Zuozhuan in the Former Han, there were Zhang Cang (d. 151 BCE), Jia Yi (201–169), Yin Xian (fl. 5 CE), and Liu Xin (46 BCE–23 CE). In the Later Han, there were those such as Zheng Zhong (d. 83 CE), Jia Kui (30–101), Fu Qian (d. ca. 195), and Xu Huiqing (fl. 28). Every one of them wrote glosses and explanations, yet they mixed in explanations from the Gongyang and Guliang [zhuan] to explicate the Zuozhuan. This is akin to putting a cap over a pair of shoes, crossing silk threads with hemp, driving a round peg into a square hole—how can any of them fit with each other? Du Yuankai [Yu] of the Jin period wrote the Zuoshi jijie. He exclusively uses the tradition of [Zuo] Qiuming to explicate the Classic [i.e. Annals] by Confucius. This is what is meant by the son responding to the mother, and mixing glue into the lacquer—even if someone had wished them to come apart, could he have done so? Today, if we were to evaluate the merits and demerits of these past classicists, Du Yu stands unsurpassed.²³ Consequently his commentary was transmitted from the Jin and [Liu] Song dynasties down to this day. Among those who wrote subcommentaries, there were Shen Wenhe (503–563), Su Kuan (?–?), and Liu Xuan (546–613). In this case, Shen's norms governing significance are passable, but his comments on the Classic [i.e. Annals] and [Zuo]zhuan are extremely sparse. Su does not adhere to the text at all. All he does is become sidetracked in attacking Jia [Kui] and Fu [Qian], causing later scholars to be fruitless in their assiduous studies. 其前漢傳左氏者，有張蒼、賈誼、尹咸、劉歆，後漢有鄭眾、賈逵、服虔、許惠卿之等，各為詁訓，然雜取公羊、穀梁以釋左氏，此乃以冠雙履，將絲綜麻，方鑿圓柄，其可入乎！晉世杜元凱又為左氏集解，專取丘明之傳，以釋孔氏之經，所謂子應乎母，以膠投漆，雖欲勿合，其可離乎！今校先儒優劣，杜為甲矣，故晉宋傳授，以至于今。其為義疏者，則有沈文何、蘇寬、劉炫。然沈氏於義例粗可，於經傳極疎。蘇氏則全不體本文，唯旁攻賈、服，使後之學者鑽仰無成²⁴

As Kong Yingda argues, Du Yu's faithful adherence to the interpretations of the Zuozhuan justifies his claim to authority ("He exclusively uses the tradition of [Zuo] Qiuming to explicate the Classic [i.e. Annals] by Confucius"). Space constraints prevent the full quotation of Kong Yingda's vitriol against Liu Xuan, an important subcommentator named in the passage.²⁵ Suffice to say that even though Kong grudgingly acknowledges Liu's achievements, using his subcommentaries as the foundation (ju yiwei ben 據以為本) for the Zuozhuan zhengyi, Kong also censures him for "correcting the errors of Du Yu in more than a hundred and fifty places" 規杜氏之失，凡一百五十餘條。²⁶ Evidently, Kong cannot tolerate this level of challenge to Du Yu. Kong's accolades for Du Yu, and conversely opprobrium for Liu Xuan, unsurprisingly accord with common expectations before the Song Dynasty (960–1279) that "commentary ought not to

contravene the Tradition” (zhu bupo zhuan 注不破傳), while “subcommentary ought not to contravene the commentary” (shu bupo zhu 疏不破注).²⁷ In the early Tang, not only Kong Yingda, but also official Tang historians such as Fang Xuanling (578–648) and Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 618–76) accentuated the influence of Du Yu’s commentary during the Six Dynasties.²⁸

My primary texts under study are a) the text of the Zuozhuan; b) fragmentary commentaries on it dated to the second and third centuries CE; c) Du Yu’s commentary, the Jijie, existing now also as a stand-alone published modern edition; and d) the Zuozhuan zhengyi.²⁹ Ma Guohan’s 馬國翰 (1794–1857) compendium, Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu 玉函山房輯佚書, contains a total of 19 partial juan of fragmented commentaries on the Zuozhuan from Han to Wei periods, including the pertinent text from the Annals and the Zuozhuan commented upon.³⁰ Ma Guohan extracts most of these fragments from the Zuozhuan zhengyi itself, and some from commentaries to the Shiji 史記 and other major works. Most of these restored commentaries fail to reach the length of a full juan, as they typically consist of no more than a handful of fragmented entries or a few pages of text. Even Fu Qian’s relatively extensive surviving corpus of four full juan pales in comparison to the 60 complete juan of the Zuozhuan zhengyi, comprised of the full texts of the Annals, Zuozhuan, Du Yu’s Jijie, glosses from Lu Deming’s 陸德明 (550–630) Jingdian shiwen 經典釋文, selections of early medieval subcommentaries, and the Zuozhuan zhengyi editors’ own subcommentary.³¹ Thus, even the largest corpus of extant fragments attributed to any one Eastern Han commentator (in this case, Fu Qian) occupies only a slim fraction of the imperial compendium compiled in the early Tang court. Paradoxically, while the editorial team of the Zuozhuan zhengyi champions Du Yu’s commentary, the Zhengyi today represents virtually our only source of pre-Du Yu commentaries, since the Zhengyi editors would cite them opportunistically to demonstrate why these interpretations are untenable whereas Du Yu’s are correct. Therefore, we cannot be certain whether the Tang editors may have truncated, misquoted, or misrepresented any of the Han-Wei commentaries cited in the Zhengyi. It is therefore hazardous to attribute any tendency, stance, or agenda to Eastern Han scholars whose commentaries have suffered losses, selection, and possible mis-citations by accident and editorial intentions alike. But despite the attrition of pre-Du Yu commentaries through time and their marginalization by the Zhengyi project, enough of them survived for us to observe their nature and their differences from Du Yu’s readings.

The Nature of Pre-Tang Commentaries on the Zuozhuan

Much space in extant Eastern Han Zuozhuan commentaries is devoted to the explication of narrative meanings that fail to directly address the embedded meanings of the Annals’ wording. In other words, while Zuozhuan commentators do often seek to uncover the concealed meanings of the Annals, scholars are also busy addressing problems in the Zuozhuan text itself. Below is a sampling of relatively commonplace comments that dominate the landscape of Zuozhuan commentary up to Du Yu’s times, demonstrating scholars’ efforts to clarify obscure narrative lines and embed character judgments, simultaneous acts that can influence each other. These textual specimens isolate the separate elements that appear together in commentaries on two major Zuozhuan episodes—the focus of extensive analysis later in this article.

1) Clarification of identities

Addressing an ambiguous line in the 11th year of Duke Wen 文公 (616 BCE) in the

Zuozhuan, Eastern Han commentators and Du Yu struggle to identify precisely who had died in a battle, as the following Zuozhuan passage leaves this issue unclear:

In the time of Duke Wu of Song, Sou Man attacked Song. The Minister of Instruction Huangfu led troops to resist them. With Er Ban as the chariot driver for Huangfu Chongshi, Gongzi Gusheng as the spearman on his right, and Minister of Crime Niufu in the same chariot, they defeated the Di at Changqiu and captured the Di leader Yuan Si. Huangfu and the two ministers/Huangfu's two sons died there [i.e. in battle].³² The Duke of Song therefore rewarded Er Ban with revenues collected at one of the city gates, allowing him to use the revenues as income, and called the gate the Er Gate.³³

宋武公之世，鄭瞞伐宋。司徒皇父帥師禦之。彤班御皇父充石，公子穀甥為右，司寇牛父駟乘，以敗狄于長丘，獲長狄緣斯。皇父之二子死焉，宋公於是門賞彤班，使食其征，謂之彤門。³⁴

The ambiguous line Huangfu zhi erzi si yan 皇父之二子死焉 inspires debate, as one cannot tell if “erzi” 二子 refers to the two ministers on Huangfu's chariot or to his two sons, or whether Huangfu himself died along with them. The Zuozhuan explicitly states neither the identities of the “erzi” nor the death of Huangfu. Jia Kui attempts to resolve these ambiguities in his comment: “Huangfu, Gusheng, and Niufu—all three men—died” 皇父與穀甥、牛父三子皆。³⁵ In Jia Kui's reading, this trio met their deaths in battle, though either he offers no further justification or the explanation is left out of the Zhengyi. Jia Kui's successors in the Eastern Han—Zheng Zhong and Ma Rong—disagree with Jia's determination, as they all claim that Huangfu never died in battle, as the Zhengyi cites:

Zheng Zhong thinks that Gusheng and Niufu these two died, but Huangfu did not die.

鄭眾以為穀甥、牛父二人死耳，皇父不死。³⁶

Ma Rong thinks that Huangfu's two sons followed their father in the army and that both of them were killed by the enemy. Because their names were unknown, the text says the “two sons” died, and that is why they were victorious over the Di. Had all three died, who could have killed Yuan Si?

馬融以為皇父之二子從父在軍，為敵所殺，名不見者，方道二子死，故得勝之。如今皆死，誰殺緣斯。³⁷

Whereas Zheng Zhong fails to explain, or the Zhengyi fails to cite, why his opinion (“Huangfu did not die”) differs from Jia Kui's concerning Huangfu's death,³⁸ Ma Rong gives his rationale as to why the “erzi” were Huangfu's unnamed sons (who “followed their father in the army”; “their names were unknown”). As Ma reasons, had “erzi” referred to the two ministers Gusheng and Niufu, the text would have named them as such. Furthermore, as Ma Rong extrapolates, Huangfu could not have died, for if he had, his enemy the Di leader Yuansi would not have died at his hands (“who could have killed Yuan Si?”). Continuing this debate, Fu Qian then questions Ma Rong's contention about the impossibility of Huangfu's death, arguing that Huangfu was not necessarily the one to have slain his enemy, since other soldiers could have easily done so as well:

Fu Qian says: The one who killed Yuan Si did not necessarily have to be one of the three [Huangfu, Gusheng, or Niufu]. The soldiers could have captured him too.
服虔云:殺緣斯者,未必三子之手,士卒獲之耳。³⁹

Aside from qualifying Ma Rong's point, Fu Qian stops short of (or is not cited as) explicitly pronouncing on the identity of "erzi" or Huangfu's death, although implicitly, Fu's countering of Ma suggests that he agrees with Jia Kui.⁴⁰

Du Yu ignores Zheng Zhong's, Ma Rong's, and Fu Qian's comments, electing to extend Jia Kui's original proposition instead, as Du says: "Huangfu, along with Gusheng and Niufu all died. Therefore Er Ban alone received rewards" 皇父與穀甥及牛父皆死,故彤班獨受賞。 Concurring with Jia Kui, Du Yu enlists another narrative detail—"Er Ban alone received rewards"—to further support the earliest verdict that only one out of the four men on the chariot survived to reap the reward. This is an excellent instance of a commentator drawing clues from elsewhere in the narrative to underline the plausibility of the scenario he adopts. As a matter of course, the Zuo zhuan zhengyi applauds Du Yu's explanation, endorsing Jia Kui's opinion while elaborating on Du's brief comment:

The text below says the Duke of Song "rewarded Er Ban with revenues collected at one of the city gates." [Er] Ban was rewarded for serving as Huangfu's chariot driver. The [other] three men were not rewarded, therefore one may suspect that they all died. Master Jia [Kui's] comment can be considered closest to the truth. Ma Rong's interpretation makes sense, according to the text [i.e. literal words] of the [Zuo]zhuan. But since only [Er] Ban received rewards, we know that [the other] three men all died. That is why Du [Yu] agreed with him [Jia Kui].

下言宋公「以門賞彤班」,班為皇父御而有賞。三子不見賞,疑皆死,賈君為近之。如馬之言,於傳文為順,但班獨受賞,知三子皆死,故杜亦同之。⁴¹

As is the custom with the subcommentators, they rephrase previous comments to establish their connections with each other, in this case using Du Yu's later observation about the sole survivor to validate Jia Kui's earlier position, such that a premise attributed to Jia ex post facto would appear shared by both scholars ("That is why Du [Yu] agreed with Jia [Kui]"). The writers of this subcommentary also scrupulously acknowledge the plausibility of Ma Rong's scenario, for as the Zhengyi concedes, a close reading of the Zuo zhuan would warrant Ma's conclusion that only the father survived to slay the enemy ("Ma Rong's interpretation makes sense, according to the text of the [Zuo]zhuan"). Yet, the editors of the Zhengyi ultimately reject Ma Rong to fully endorse Du Yu along with Jia Kui, while it remains debatable whether the Tang scholars genuinely appreciate Du's flawless logic or automatically defer to his authority, or both. As demonstrated above, while the comments primarily function to identify persons in the Zuo zhuan, such comments also generate multiple narrative scenarios, with early Tang scholars ultimately endorsing the scenario put forth by Du Yu, which highlights Er Ban's achievement as the sole survivor.

2) Provision of historical background

Another function of Eastern Han commentaries on the Zuo zhuan is to outline historical backgrounds, giving the reader a sense of the history leading up to a given event recorded in the narrative. Clarifying the chains of cause and effect, the commentator draws a thread through the events to mend the narrative arc broken up by the annalistic structure of the Zuo zhuan. The

following example shows Fu Qian performing exactly such a task: he provides an overview of the historical relations between Zheng 鄭, Hua 華, and Zhou 周, embroiled in conflict in the 24th year of Duke Xi 僖公 (636 BCE):

Zuozhuan:

During Zheng's occupation of Hua, the people of Hua received its commands. But once Zheng retreated, Hua again sided with Wei. Gongzi Shi of Zheng, and Xie Duyumi led troops to attack Hua. The king sent Bofu and Yousun Bo to go to Zheng to intercede on behalf of Hua. The Earl of Zheng resented that King Hui, upon his restoration to the capital [with Zheng's help], did not confer a goblet for Duke Li [of Zheng]. He also resented King Xiang for siding with Wei and Hua.⁴²

鄭之入滑也,滑人聽命。師還,又即衛。鄭公子士、洩堵俞彌帥師伐滑。王使伯服、游孫伯如鄭請滑。鄭伯怨惠王之入而不與厲公爵也,又怨襄王之與衛、滑也。⁴³

Fu Qian says: Hua is a statelet close to Zheng. For generations Hua had obeyed Zheng, but now it turned against Zheng. When the Zheng army attacked it, it received its commands. But later it appealed to the King, who took the side of Wei and Hua.⁴⁴

服虔曰:滑,小國,近鄭,世世服從,而更違叛,鄭師伐之,聽命,後自愬於王,王以與衛。⁴⁵

Through Fu Qian, the reader learns that Zheng, a minor hegemon, bristled at Hua's defection ("now it turned against Zheng") to Zhou for support ("it appealed to the King"), since Hua had long served Zheng as its vassal state ("For generations Hua had obeyed Zheng"). Owing to Fu Qian's commentary, the politics behind the switched allegiances, resulting in the line drawn between Zheng on one side, and Hua, Wei, Zhou on the other side, become clear now. Yet the Zuozhuan zhengyi fails to include Fu Qian's commentary above, found instead in a commentary on the Shiji.⁴⁶ As the only comment on this episode incorporated into the Zhengyi, Du Yu's commentary is less informative in comparison to Fu Qian's: "Zheng resented that the King assisted Wei to intercede on behalf of Hua" 怨王助衛為滑請. This comment highlights the source of Zheng's displeasure at the Zhou King, namely because he abetted Hua's 'treachery,' but Du stops short of providing a deeper history of the shifting alliances as Fu Qian has done. For reasons unknown, the Zuozhuan Zhengyi fails to cite commentary earlier than Du Yu's on this passage, illustrating once more the editors' allegiance to their chosen commentator.

3) Embedding of conflicting judgments

When conflicting character judgments among commentators present themselves, the Zuozhuan zhengyi typically backs Du Yu's judgment as sound, while rejecting his predecessors' views as unreasonable. In this case below, Du Yu and Fu Qian hold opposing judgments about Hua Ou of Song, a minister who made an official visit to Lu with his official entourage in the 15th year of Duke Wen (612 BCE):

Zuozhuan:

In the third month, Hua Ou of Song came to make a covenant with us. His officials all followed him here. The Annals says "Song Minister of War, grandson of the Hua clan" to honor him.⁴⁷ The duke [Duke Wen of Lu] was going to feast along with him, but Hua declined, saying, "[Hua] Du, the former servant of your Lordship, committed a crime against [i.e. murdered] Duke Shang of Song. His personal name is in the records of the

feudal lords. Charged as I am with his sacrifices, how would I dare to shame your lordship. Please allow me to receive your commands from one of your officers of the rank below that of a high minister.” The people of Lu considered him respectful and exact.⁴⁸

三月,宋華耦來盟,其官皆從之。書曰「宋司馬華孫」,貴之也。公與之宴。辭曰:「君之先臣督得罪於宋殤公,名在諸侯之策。臣承其祀,其敢辱君?請承命於亞旅。」魯人以為敏。⁴⁹

This Zuozhuan passage lauds Hua Ou through at least two methods: first, it explains that according to the scribal norms explained in the Zuozhuan,⁵⁰ the mention of his official title (“Minister of War”) and his lineage (“grandson of the Hua clan”) but not his personal name in the Annals accords esteem to Hua Ou for his official delegation. Secondly, as the Zuozhuan further narrates, his deferential speech as a self-proclaimed unworthy guest earned him a good appraisal from his hosts at Lu.⁵¹ Addressing the first instance, Du Yu supports the Zuozhuan’s reading of the Annals, saying:

Ancient meetings for making covenants must be complete in their ritual proceedings, generous in gifts and goods, and clear in the roles of the guest and host, so that rituals may be completed and respect engendered. Therefore the [Zuo]zhuan says, “When a minister travels, his 500 men follow.”⁵² In the era of the Spring and Autumn, most of the ritual proceedings could not be complete. But the grandson of the Hua clan was able to lead his subordinates to abide by ancient protocols—this is the means by which he accorded respect to affairs and to himself. Since he carried out his mission with gravity and his affairs with reverence, Lu was respected and rituals were performed sincerely. Therefore the Annals honors him and does not record his personal name.⁵³

古之盟會,必備儀,崇贄幣,賓主以成禮為敬。故傳曰:「卿行旅從」。春秋時率多不能備儀。華孫能率其屬以從古典,所以敬事而自重。使重而事敬則魯尊而禮篤,故貴而不名。⁵⁴

This commentary by Du Yu exemplifies his overarching interest in reading the Annals and the Zuozhuan as repositories of ritual knowledge from the Western Zhou, that is, before the “era of the Spring and Autumn,” when decline set in and “rituals could not be completed.”⁵⁵ In this example, since Hua Ou fully staffed his mission to Lu according to supposed ritual protocols, as the Zuozhuan’s interpretation of the Annals substantiates, Du Yu effusively praises the Song official’s compliance with ancient ritual formalities.

On occasion, the Zuozhuan zhengyi cites voices that contradict Du Yu, then marshals arguments against these opinions of Du’s predecessors. For example, while the Zuozhuan and Du Yu find much to commend Hua Ou, the Zhengyi cites Fu Qian’s criticism of Hua:

Fu Qian says: As a minister, Hua Ou was excessive and unregulated. Commanded by his lord to form relations and make a covenant [with Lu], he made his subordinate officials follow him, emptying their offices and leaving their stations abandoned. The people of Lu, unaware of his wrongdoing, revered and honored him instead.

服虔云:華耦為卿侈而不度,以君命脩好結盟,舉其官屬從之,空官廢職。魯人不知其非反尊貴之。⁵⁶

Here, Fu Qian denounces Hua Ou actions as “excessive and unregulated” because he recruited all his officials to accompany him on a diplomatic mission (“made his subordinate officials follow him”). As this judgment implies, Hua endangered his state when he left his branch of the government bereft of presiding personnel. As opposed to Du Yu, Fu Qian sees Hua Ou as breaking the rules of propriety in governance, for he encouraged his officials to prioritize foreign relations over domestic responsibilities, leaving their home state vulnerable to either external attacks or internal rebellions. Fu Qian rejects Lu people’s honoring of Hua as misguided, for they were oblivious to his violation of governing principles (“unaware of his wrongdoing”). Closer inspection of the Zuozhuan passage above reveals, however, that Fu Qian has technically confused the Annals’ approval of Hua’s large official delegation with the Lu leaders’ praise of his deferential speech. The Zuozhuan Zhengyi commentary distinguishes apart these two sources and subjects of evaluation.⁵⁷ Strictly speaking, according to the Zuozhuan’s explication, the Annals entry was written in such a way as to “honor him” (guizhi 貴之) specifically for the grandness of Hua’s official entourage. In the Zuozhuan narrative, the Lu people appraised him (Lu ren yiwei min 魯人以爲敏) only after his self-deprecating admission that he was the offspring of a ruler’s murderer.⁵⁸ Fu Qian’s reading illustrates his disagreement with the reason the Zuozhuan gives for why Hua Ou is honored,⁵⁹ whether by the Annals or by the Lu people. Here, Fu Qian shows himself to be not averse to contradicting with the Zuozhuan’s explicit or implicit judgment. In contrast, we see Du Yu supporting the Zuozhuan’s given reason by elaborating upon ancient ritual lore. It is this refusal to contravene the Zuozhuan that, as we have seen earlier, earned Du Yu unqualified praise from the Zuozhuan zhengyi.

After citing Fu Qian, the Zuozhuan zhengyi then cites another commentator’s refutation of Fu to overturn Fu’s criticism of Hua Ou so as to buttress Du Yu’s accolades for Hua. Below the Zhengyi cites Liu Xuan’s direct rebuttal (Liu Xuan you nan yun 劉炫又難云) of Fu Qian’s specific point regarding a state vacant of authorities:

“His [Hua Ou’s] officials all followed him” means none of the officials on the same diplomatic mission were missing, but there should be those who stayed behind to govern. How could it be that the entire court traveled,⁶⁰ giving occasion for one [i.e. Fu Qian] to blame him for emptying the offices? If one were to blame him for emptying the offices because his officials followed, and in “The Ceremonial of a Mission,”⁶¹ the [required] official subordinates were not [supposed to be] few, then could it be that the Duke of Zhou had vainly instituted these ritual protocols?
其官皆從，謂共聘之官無闕，當有留治政者，豈舉朝盡行而責其空官也？若以官從即責空官，〈聘禮〉官屬不少，豈周公妄制禮乎？⁶²

Here the Zhengyi cites Liu Xuan: ironically, the very commentator Kong Yingda rebukes in his preface to Zuozhuan zhengyi. But because in this particular instance, Liu Xuan’s position reinforces Du Yu’s, the Zhengyi editors happily cite Liu. Liu Xuan reasons that Hua Ou permitted many officials to travel abroad with him, but was never so imprudent as to have traveled with the “the entire court.” As Liu understands it, Hua Ou did not violate protocol, and in any case, the protocols governing interstate diplomacy in the Zhou dynasty were infallible for the reason that the Duke of Zhou had created them: this sage would have considered improper any mandate for all court officials to travel on the same mission. On this occasion, the Zhengyi unreservedly supports Liu Xuan’s comments because they directly refute Fu Qian’s disapproval

of Hua Ou. Fu Qian's difference with Du Yu compels the Zhengyi to cite supporters of Du's position in order to prove Fu wrong.⁶³

So far, I have shown that the majority of comments on the Zuozhuan from first- to third-century China are compact and explicative, and that these dominant characteristics do not preclude the possibility of reading the comments as implicit arguments over character judgments. In two case studies of controversial commentaries to follow, each set of commentaries comprises all three functions separately treated above: clarification of identities, provision of historical backgrounds, and embedding of different character judgments. Stepping into these controversies, Du Yu selectively adopts the interpretations of his predecessors, but diverges from their implied judgments on the historical characters in question. As expected, the Tang editors of the Zhengyi array a battery of arguments to support Du Yu's understanding while rebutting his predecessors point by point.

Split Understandings about a Ruler and an Insurgent

A comparison of Peng Wang's and Du Yu's comments on the following episode of the Zuozhuan shows Du Yu attributing ritual propriety to historical figures whom other commentators have judged more harshly. The narrative below concerns a vengeful ruler, Duke Zhuang of Qi 齊莊公, and a desperate eunuch loyal to a former heir apparent ousted by Duke Zhuang. Although Duke Zhuang was the legitimate heir, born of the principal wife, nonetheless the favored consort of his father, Duke Ling 靈公, successfully persuaded him to replace Duke Zhuang with her adopted son, Gongzi Ya 公子牙, as the new heir apparent.⁶⁴ Upon ascension to power, Duke Zhuang, convinced that one of Gongzi Ya's tutors, the eunuch Susha Wei 夙沙衛, had worked behind the scenes to remove him as the heir apparent, frightened Susha into fleeing to the city of Gaotang as his rebel base.⁶⁵ In the 19th year of Duke Xiang 襄公 (554 BCE), the Zuozhuan narrates the military confrontation between Duke Zhuang and Susha Wei thus:

Qing Feng of Qi laid siege to Gaotang, but could not defeat it. In winter, the eleventh month, the Marquis of Qi [Duke Zhuang] laid siege to it. Seeing [Susha] Wei on top of the city wall, he called out to him, so [Susha Wei] descended. [Duke Zhuang] asked [Susha/another defender of Gaotang] whether the city's defenses were well prepared there. He [Susha Wei/another defender of Gaotang] reported that they were unprepared. Duke Zhuang held up clasped hands [a gesture of courtesy], then Susha Wei/Qi troops mounted the wall. When Susha Wei heard that the Qi troops were about to attack along the wall,⁶⁶ he fed the people of Gaotang. Zhi Chuo, Gonglü Hui [Qi ministers] hung down ropes at night to bring in the soldiers.⁶⁷ They made mince meat out of [Susha] Wei in the army.⁶⁸

The extant commentaries on this passage up to Du Yu's time diverge on the following three points (see Appendix A):

- a) Why did Duke Zhuang call out to Susha Wei?
- b) Who was asked to report on the city's state of preparedness?
- c) Who "mounted the wall"?

Based entirely on Jia Kui's commentary,⁷⁰ Du Yu's also seeks to explain Duke Zhuang's oddly courteous behavior toward Susha Wei, the target of the duke's revenge:

Jia Kui/Du Yu: [Susha] Wei descended to speak with the Marquis of Qi. The Marquis of Qi thought the report of [Susha] Wei was made in sincerity, so he held up clasped hands, treating him according to ritual, for he wished to keep him alive. But [Susha] Wei intended to fight to the death, therefore he did not accept the courtesy of the Marquis of Qi and went back up the city wall.

賈逵/杜預:衛下與齊侯語。齊侯以衛告誠,揖而禮之,欲生之也。衛志於戰死,故不順齊侯之揖而還登城。⁷¹

Here, Jia Kui/Du Yu furnishes a rationale as to why Duke Zhuang would beckon to Susha Wei, inquire about his preparedness for the duke's own attack, then treat him in a ritually correct manner. Du Yu entirely accepts Jia Kui's explanation that the duke believed Susha to have delivered his report frankly (with "sincerity"), rewarding his candor by sparing his life ("he wished to keep him alive"). In Du's scenario, Susha Wei declined the duke's good graces, retreating back into his city in staunch opposition to his avenging enemy ("Wei had intended to fight to the death, therefore he did not accept the courtesy of the Marquis of Qi and went back up the city wall"). In Jia Kui's/Du Yu's interpretation, both Duke Zhuang and Susha maintained their sense of propriety during warfare, with the rebel remaining faithful as a liegeman to his dead former lord.⁷² This particular vignette of the duke conflicts with the Zuozhuan's largely unfavorable portrait of a cruel Duke Zhuang,⁷³ who murdered and exposed the corpse of his father's consort (an act the Zuozhuan narrator condemns) and gave his soldiers license to mince up Susha Wei.⁷⁴ As for Susha Wei, the Zuozhuan portrays him in several other places as a trusted military advisor for Duke Ling,⁷⁵ therefore the depiction of Susha's resolve to rebuff Duke Zhuang against all odds coincides with this image of the eunuch expressing undying loyalty to his former ruler.

However, Eastern Han commentators fail to form a consensus about Jia Kui's/Du Yu's assessment of the two characters—a merciful Duke Zhuang of Qi and a loyal Susha Wei. Peng Wang (zi Zhongbo 仲博) takes a dimmer view of both characters, seeing them as equally treacherous personalities, as his commentary demonstrates:

Fu Qian cites Peng Zhongbo, who says: The Marquis of Qi wanted to slay [Susha] Wei, so when he called out to him, and [Susha Wei] descended to speak with him, the duke indeed could have captured him. There would have been no point in holding up clasped hands and commanding him to mount the city wall. [Peng] Zhongbo thinks that when the Marquis of Qi called out to [Susha] Wei, he came down with shame. As for "asked him whether the city's defenses were well prepared there," it was a question for the person defending Gaotang for [Susha] Wei. Because [Susha] Wei was unkind and untrustworthy, the person now defending the city "reported that they were unprepared." The Marquis of Qi thought well of his words, so he held up clasped hands, then commanded his soldiers to mount the city wall. Fu Qian says this interpretation is near perfect.

服虔引彭仲博云:齊欲誅衛,呼而下與之言,固可取之,無為揖之復令登城。仲博以為齊侯號衛,衛慙而下。云「問守備焉」,問衛之守高唐者。衛無恩信,故今守者「以無備告。」齊侯善其言,故揖之乃命士卒登城。服虔謂此說近之。⁷⁶

Peng Wang sees the motive behind Duke Zhuang's calling to Susha Wei as the same one behind the duke's military campaign in the first place: to eliminate the eunuch, his object of revenge

(“The Marquis of Qi wanted to slay [Susha] Wei”). Hence Peng Wang finds it unlikely that Duke Zhuang would have decorously allowed his target to return unharmed (“There would have been no point in holding up clasped hands and commanding him to mount the city wall”). Secondly, Peng Wang introduces another figure into the narrative when he identifies the implied third-person subject of *yi wubei gao* 以無備告 as an anonymous guard (“the person defending Gaotang for [Susha] Wei”). Locating Peng’s basis for inserting this new subject is difficult, because nothing before or after this passage in the *Zuozhuan* implicates anyone in the exchange besides Duke Zhuang and Susha Wei. Peng also speculates that Susha Wei’s suspect character (he “was unkind and untrustworthy”) prompted one of his subordinates to work at cross purposes with him by betraying the true state of their military strength to the enemy (“reported that they were unprepared”). Nowhere else does the *Zuozhuan* pass judgment on Susha Wei’s moral character, positively or negatively. Peng, however, delivers a negative judgment about Susha Wei by interpolating his side relationship with the anonymous soldier/official into the scene at the city wall. Thirdly, Peng Wang differs markedly from Jia Kui/Du Yu in construing the implied subject of *naideng* 乃登 (mount the city wall) as the duke’s troops (*shizu* 士卒), instead of Susha Wei, who had just lowered himself from the wall. Fu Qian fails to find fault with Peng’s supply of these additional subjects—a treacherous city defender and the Qi troops mounting the wall—for according to the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, Fu fully endorses Peng’s reading (“says this interpretation is near perfect”). In contrast to Jia Kui’s/Du Yu’s understanding of the scenario as a dance of formalities between a cultivated ruler and a resolute warrior, Peng Wang understands it as a scene of intrigue, betrayal, and immediate aggression. What Jia Kui/Du Yu sees as sincere appreciation, Peng Wang sees as a set of calculated ploys to capture or betray the undesired persons. Most likely having picked from among his predecessors’ readings, Du Yu subscribes to the reading that shines the best light on the characters’ conduct.

As expected, the subcommentary in the *Zuozhuan zhengyi* underlines Du Yu’s interpretation as unassailable, arraying a series of points to demonstrate his rationality. Support for Jia Kui/Du Yu also means refutation of Peng Wang, as when the *Zhengyi* challenges his interpolation of another speaker, questions his imputation of the duke’s motives, and debunks his assumption about the military assault occurring immediately after the dialogue:

According to the sequence in the *Zuozhuan*, [Susha] Wei was on top of the city wall. “Called out to him, so he descended”—that was [Susha] Wei descending. “Asked him whether the city’s defenses were well prepared there”—that was a question for [Susha] Wei. Had the Marquis of Qi been asking other people, the text should have read “[Duke Zhuang] asked the one defending the city,” instead of “asked him whether the city’s defenses were well prepared.” Had the Marquis of Qi raised his clasped hands and commanded his soldiers to mount the city wall, and had the soldiers already done so at this moment, why would the text later say “Zhi Chuo, Gonglü Hui hung down ropes at night to bring in the soldiers”? If [Susha] Wei had descended the city wall, yet the Marquis of Qi did not immediately seize him, it might have been because there was something separating and blocking them from each other, therefore he could not be captured. Toward the end of Han, the dialogue between Cao Cao and Ma Chao, as well as the one between Xu Huang and Guan Yu were both exchanges between enemies, yet they could not capture each other. So why would anyone consider ancient people [acting this way] strange?

傳之次第,衛在城上,「號之,乃下」,是衛下也。「問守備焉」,問衛也。若其別

問餘人,當云「問其守者」,不得云「問守備」也。若齊侯揖之而命士卒登城,則士於此時已登矣,何故下文方曰「殖綽、工倮會夜縋納師也」?衛已下城,齊侯不即執取者,或有所隔礙,不得取之。漢末曹操與馬超對語,徐晃與關羽對語,皆讐敵交言而不能相取,亦何怪古之人乎?⁷⁷

In Peng Wang's understanding, Duke Zhuang directed the question "whether the city's defenses were well prepared there" 問守備焉 at another soldier/officer of Gaotang, rather than to Susha Wei himself. The Zhengyi, however, disagrees, contending that if that had been the case, then the text of the Zuo zhuan would have indicated the presence of a third party with language such as "asked the one defending the city" 問其守者. Peng Wang's reading of wen shou bei yan 問守備焉 is faulty, argues the subcommentary, for the line fails to contain the nominalizer zhe 者 to indicate the active agent. Next, questioning Peng's assumption that the duke could have immediately seized Susha Wei once he lowered himself from the wall, the Zhengyi offers counterexamples from history: rivals within earshot could still escape each other's pursuit ("Toward the end of Han, the dialogue between Cao Cao and Ma Chao, as well as the one between Xu Huang and Guan Yu were both exchanges between enemies, yet they could not capture each other"). The Zhengyi compilers further point out a logical lapse in Peng Wang's insertion of the duke's troops as the subject of naideng 乃登 ("then mounted the wall"), when as the Zuo zhuan narrates, the soldiers were able to scale the fortification only later, through the clandestine help of collaborators inside the wall roping them in.

As shown above, the Zhengyi writers take Peng Wang to task on a number of points, persuasively identifying his grammatically problematic readings, faulty assumptions, and breaches of logic, all in order to defeat his denigration of Duke Zhuang's and Susha Wei's character and to restore Jia Kui's/Du Yu's generous appraisal of these personages as honorable figures. Open to question is whether Du Yu himself also perceives these points of weakness in Peng Wang's/Fu Qian's commentary, leading him to reject these predecessors' reading and adopt Jia Kui's instead. Whichever the case may be, the Zhengyi proposes its own convincing interpretations to reinforce Du Yu's reading as the more acceptable one compared to the other competing reading. The scenario resulting from Du's reading dulls the acute hostilities between the vengeful ruler and agitated insurgent, now envisioned as figures of ritual forbearance and loyalty for the moment. The next case study navigates through more complex disagreements among the commentators, and traces a similar trajectory of Zhengyi editors repudiating Eastern Han comments in order to validate Du Yu's choices in reading and interpretation.

Divergent Judgments on a General and His Charioteer

The following Zuo zhuan passage, from the second year of Duke Xuan 宣公 (607 BCE), elicits responses attributed to as many as four early medieval commentators— Jia Kui, Zheng Zhong, an anonymous commentator (all cited by Fu Qian), and Du Yu. The episode centers on a battle spelling the defeat of Song at the hands of Zheng. While the Annals notes Zheng's victory over the Song army,⁷⁸ the Zuo zhuan gives a more extensive back-story accounting for Song's defeat. According to the Zuo zhuan, the defeat resulted from personal animosities flaring up the night before the battle between the Song general, Hua Yuan 華元, and his chariot driver, Yang Zhen 羊斟:

As battle [between Zheng and Song] was impending, Hua Yuan [of Song] slaughtered sheep to feed his soldiers, but did not give any to Yang Zhen,⁷⁹ his chariot driver. When the battle came on, Yang Zhen said, “In regard to the mutton of yesterday, you were the master; as for today’s affairs, I am the master.” Yang Zhen drove with him into the Zheng forces, therefore Song was defeated. The Gentleman said Yang Zhen “cannot be considered a human being. For his private resentment, he brought defeat on his state and destruction on its people. In this case, is there a greater crime than this? What the Odes call ‘people without conscience,’ that could well apply to Yang Zhen! He occasioned the death of the people to give vent to his private resentment.”⁸⁰ The Song people ransomed Hua Yuan from Zheng with a hundred chariots of war and four hundred patterned horses. When half the ransom had been sent, Hua Yuan escaped back to Song. Standing outside the gate, he announced himself before entering. When he saw Shu Zang, Shu Zang/Hua Yuan [Person A] said:⁸¹ “It was your horses that did so.” He [Person B] replied, saying: “It was not the horses, but the person/myself/people./.” Now that the reply/ransom was matched, he/I came in flight./.”⁸²

將戰,華元殺羊食士,其御羊斟不與。及戰,曰:「疇昔之羊,子為政;今日之事,我為政。」與入鄭師,故敗。君子謂羊斟「非人也,以其私憾,敗國殄民,於是刑孰大焉?詩所謂『人之無良』者,其羊斟之謂乎!殘民以逞。」宋人以兵車百乘、文馬百駟以贖華元于鄭。半入,華元逃歸。立于門外,告而入。見叔牂,曰:「子之馬然也。」⁸³ 對曰:「非馬也,其人也。/。」⁸⁴ 既合而來奔。/。」⁸⁵

I have chosen this incident because the comments on this passage stand out as the most diverse and controversial comments preserved from the Han to Wei period, as compared with those on other passages from the Zuo zhuan. Combing through nearly all available fragments of commentaries on the Zuo zhuan from this period,⁸⁶ I fail to find any other passage attracting commentaries with views running as wide a gamut as those found here. Due to the massive loss of commentaries,⁸⁷ as well as the selectivity of the Zuo zhuan zhengyi editorial team, the norm is to find comments representing no more than one or two different interpretations for every fragment preserved, therefore the comments examined below are extraordinary in the extent of their divergences.

This rare multiplicity of views, given the small proportion of Han-Wei commentaries cited in the Zuo zhuan zhengyi, raises the following questions: why have the Zhengyi editors chosen to cite as many as three other commentators, each with distinct interpretations, when normally, citing Du Yu’s interpretation, or at most one or two different ones, would have been sufficient for establishing Du’s ‘superior’ understanding? Have the Zhengyi compilers tacitly found something compelling, valid, or instructive, thus worthy of preservation, in the Eastern Han interpretations, even though the Tang scholars’ overall position explicitly favors Du Yu’s? While the variety of commentaries treated below is unique, it cannot enjoy comparison with a control group, because the Zuo zhuan zhengyi fails to preserve a comparable spectrum of opinions elsewhere that are as vexing and irreconcilable. But the observation remains that even the Tang authorities preserved the early debates in their multivocality, against their better interests to settle on a definitive reading or two and discard the rest.

Despite the commentators’ divergent interpretations of the Zuo zhuan passage cited above, it bears mention that the four commentators, at the minimum, do agree on these key items as follows:

- a) Hua Yuan denied food to Yang Zhen.
- b) Yang took his anger out on Hua Yuan by deliberately charging the Song horses into the arms of the Zheng army.
- c) Horses were used as ransom to obtain Hua Yuan's release from Zheng.
- d) Hua Yuan successfully escaped back to Song.

The four commentators disagree on many more details concerning the passage above, such as (see Appendix B):

- a) The identity of Shu Zang. Was he a gatekeeper? Or was he the same person as Yang Zhen?
- b) The identity of Person A, who initiated the dialogue beginning with the remark "It was your horses that did so." Was he a Song gatekeeper, or an anonymous citizen of Song called Shu Zang, or Hua Yuan?
- c) The referent of "your horses." Were they the horses that Yang Zhen charged into battle or those used to ransom Hua Yuan?
- d) The identity of Person B, who replied, "It was not the horses" Was he Hua Yuan or Shu Zang/Yang Zhen?
- e) The referent of qiren ye 其人也. Was he "the person," "myself," or "people"?
- f) The referent of "matched" (he 合) in the last line jihe er laiben 既合而來奔. Was it the "reply" given by Person B or the "ransom" exchanged for the release of Hua Yuan?
- g) The meaning of "came in flight" (laiben 來奔), the last two characters of the passage. Do they mean "I came in flight to Song," as spoken by Hua Yuan? Or "Yang Zhen came in flight to Lu," as written by a third-person narrator from the perspective of a scribe at Lu?⁸⁸
- h) Where the quotation of Person B ends. Is the line jihe er laiben 既合而來奔 still part of the quoted speech of Person B? Or has the text reverted back to third-person narration already?

At the heart of these questions is the controversy surrounding the moral and social character of Hua Yuan, while the figure of Yang Zhen poses less controversy since the Gentleman in the narrative already pronounces him a person devoid of humanity (feiren ye 非人也). The earliest Eastern Han commentator presented here, Jia Kui, reads the post-battle dialogue as a criticism of the general Hua Yuan. Identifying Shu Zang as another figure, Jia introduces a third voice referring to Song's defeat under Hua's command:

Shu Zang was a high officer guarding the gate of [a city of] Song.⁸⁹ Once Hua Yuan saw Shu Zang, [Shu] Zang said to Hua Yuan: "You were captured by Zheng because of your horses." Hua Yuan replied, saying: "It was not that the horses by themselves galloped [into the Zheng forces], but the person [driving them] who made them do so." He meant that Yang Zhen drove the horses into Zheng. "Ben" means to run. Hua Yuan meant that, now that the business of the Song people's ransom for me had been resolved [literally "matched"], I immediately came in flight [to Song].
 叔牂,宋守門大夫。華元既見叔牂,牂謂華元曰:「子見獲于鄭者,是由子之馬使然

也。」華元對曰：「非馬自奔也，其人為之也。」謂羊斟驅入鄭也。奔、走也。謂宋人贖我之事既和合，而我即來奔耳。⁹⁰

Seeing Shu Zang and Yang Zhen as two different people, Jia Kui identifies Shu Zang as “a high officer guarding the gate of [a city of] Song,” whom Hua Yuan encountered as he approached his home state. In Jia’s re-created scene, the guard forthwith referred to Hua Yuan’s captivity as the result of his failure to keep his “horses”—a metonym for troops—in line: “You were captured by Zheng because of your horses.” This reading underlines Hua Yuan’s incompetence as he humiliated his home state by both losing the battle and bringing about his own capture. According to Jia Kui’s reading of the next line, Hua Yuan countered this blunt criticism by deflecting his responsibility to Yang Zhen, as this “person” delivered Hua Yuan straight into the arms of his captors. Here, Jia Kui identifies Person B as Hua Yuan, who retorted, the problem was not with “the horses,” but with Yang Zhen “the person.” In Jia’s interpretation here, Hua Yuans’ reply then resembles more an emotional retaliation than a rational defense of his failure, for after all, even if the blame should fall mostly on Yang Zhen, the general should still be responsible for his subordinate’s actions. Jia Kui’s reading makes Hua Yuan out to be a figure who rebuffed others’ mockery of him, mirroring the Hua Yuan who, in the episode to follow immediately in the *Zuo*zhuan, also irrepressibly entered into a verbal match with critics ridiculing him. The text narrating this subsequent episode runs thus:

When Song was repairing the wall of its capital, Hua Yuan was the superintendent of the work. As he was going on a round of inspection, the builders sang,

“With goggle eyes and belly vast,
The armor-coats abandoned, he’s back at last.
The whiskers long, the whiskers long,
The armor-coats abandoned, he’s back at last.”

Hua Yuan made his carriage rider say to them: “Bulls still have skins. Rhinoceroses and wild bulls still are many. What is so great about abandoning the armor-coats?” The work man said, “There may be skins, but what about the red varnish for them?” Hua Yuan said, “Let’s go away! Those men have many mouths, while ours are few.”⁹¹

宋城，華元為植，巡功，城者謳曰：「睥其目，蟠其腹，棄甲而復。于思于思，棄甲復來。」使其驂乘謂之曰：「牛則有皮，犀兕尚多，棄甲則那？」役人曰：「從有其皮，丹漆若何？」華元曰：「去之！夫其口眾我寡。」⁹²

Considering the two episodes together—both featuring the general’s reaction to criticism—the reader receives the impression of Hua Yuan as a chided person expressing his vexations at his critics with sharpness but without acrimony.⁹³ Particularly in this passage, Hua reveals self-awareness of his inadequacy, outnumbered and outwitted by the men he had authority over (“Those men have many mouths, while ours are few”),⁹⁴ yet unwilling to back down without a retort. This characterization of the proud and sensitive general conforms with the image of the reactive Hua Yuan responding to the gatekeeper’s reproach constructed earlier in Jia Kui’s commentary. As for the final line—*jihe er laiben* 既合而來奔—in the earlier episode, Jia places the phrase within Hua Yuan’s quoted speech explaining how he came to appear at the border: “Hua Yuan meant that, having resolved the business of my ransom, I immediately came in flight [to Song].” This reading presents a non-sequitur to the forgoing spirited exchange between the gatekeeper and Hua Yuan, for Hua’s utterance merely provides narrative closure to the episode,

instead of further exhibiting his impulsive response to grating criticism. In short, Jia Kui's construal of the ambiguous dialogue creates the perception of a Hua Yuan who vocally reacts when his pride is stung, even while knowing that he is in no position to counter the charge against him.

The second commentator examined here, Zheng Zhong, departs from Jia Kui primarily in bringing Yang Zhen back into the narrative as a speaker in the post-battle dialogue and in treating it as a sequel to Hua Yuan's and his charioteer's personal feud:

Shu Zang is none other than Yang Zhen.⁹⁵ Shu Zang was able to return before Hua Yuan. When Hua Yuan saw Shu Zang, [Shu] Zang immediately insulted him, saying: "We raced into the Zheng forces because your horses did so, not I."⁹⁶ Hua Yuan replied, saying: "It was not the horses, but [you] the person."⁹⁷ Hua Yuan meant that it was you who drove them. After Shu Zang exchanged ["matched"] words with Hua Yuan,⁹⁸ he immediately came in flight to Lu.

叔牂即羊斟也,在先得歸。華元見叔牂,牂即誣之曰:「奔入鄭軍者,子之馬然也,非我也。」華元對曰:「非馬也,其人也。」言是女(汝)驅之耳。叔牂既與華元合語而即來奔魯。⁹⁹

Zheng Zhong identifies the first speaker to be Yang Zhen, instead of a Song gatekeeper, as Jia Kui has proposed earlier. In Zheng's reading, the charioteer met his commander after the battle, provoking him with the charge " 'your horses did so, not I,' " in a display of continued insolence toward Hua ("insulted him"). This reading highlights Yang's petulance, as he pushed the blame on to the horses, claiming no responsibility for the disastrous defeat. According to Zheng's reading, Hua Yuan angrily retorted, actually it was " '[you] the person' " 其人也 who caused the defeat ("Hua Yuan meant that it was you who drove them"). As for the final line in the Zuozhuan passage—*jihe er laiben* 既合而來奔—Zheng Zhong takes "he" to mean "exchanged words" (*heyu* 合語) and "laiben" to mean "came in flight to Lu." These glosses pose significant differences from the earlier reading of Jia Kui, as Zheng Zhong reads the line as belonging to the voice of a third-person narrator, rather than to the direct quotation of Hua Yuan.

Reading the dialogue as one exchanged between the cheeky charioteer and his snubbed general, Zheng Zhong depicts a subordinate who still had the gall to throw blame in his superior's face, even after intentionally bringing about Song's defeat. This line of interpretation points to a charioteer still seething with resentment at his commander for refusing him meat prior to the battle. Furthermore, Zheng Zhong's placement of the final line in a third-person voice indicates Yang Zhen's flight to Lu after his last outburst at Hua Yuan, suggesting that Yang realized his defiance and lack of self-control might land him in trouble. In this scenario, Yang Zhen essentially waited for the moment he could have his last word before fleeing for cover. Zheng Zhong's reconstruction of this scenario doubly underscores the spitefulness of an unrepentant Yang. Dovetailing with the Gentleman's judgment of Yang as someone "without conscience," Zheng's reading strengthens the portrait of Yang Zhen as a willful subordinate who held a lasting grudge against his superior.

Advanced by an anonymous commentator,¹⁰⁰ the third reading is the most strikingly different from all the rest. In his reading, Yang Zhen drops out completely from view, with his role in the battle's defeat no longer attracting attention. Instead, this commentator reads the dialogue as revolving entirely around the ransom of Hua Yuan, the only target of scrutiny this time:

Shu Zang is a person from Song. He saw that Song used horses to ransom Hua Yuan. Referring to the fact that [Hua] Yuan returned on account of the ransom, Shu Zang said to [Hua] Yuan: “You were able to return presumably because of the ransom in horses.” Hua Yuan said, “It was not the horses, but [my] people.” He meant here that I returned, not owing to the horse ransom, but to human affairs [i.e. diplomacy], and with the business of the ransom resolved [literally “matched”], I immediately came in flight [to Song].

叔牂宋人,見宋以馬贖華元,謂元以贖得歸,謂元曰:「子之得來,當以馬贖故然。」華元曰:「非馬也,其人也。」言己不由馬贖,自以人事來耳,贖事既合,而我即來奔。¹⁰¹

Unlike Jia Kui and Zheng Zhong, this unknown commentator identifies the first speaker, who said “It was your horses that did so,” as simply a citizen of Song named Shu Zang (“a person from Song”). In this scenario, the “horses” refer not to Yang Zhen’s charge, but to the legion of horses (“four hundred patterned horses”) Song gifted Zheng to secure the release of Hua Yuan from hostage. In this instance, a Song citizen criticizes Hua Yuan for incurring a great expense, as he drained away a large number of horses, adding to those lost in battle. Next, the commentator attributes the line “It was not the horses, but [my] people” to a Hua Yuan who rejects the imputation that his ineptitude cost the state enormously. According to this anonymous scholar, Hua Yuan snapped back, saying, the diplomatic skills of “[my] people” brought him home, not bribery using horses (“He meant here that I returned, not owing to the horse ransom, but to human affairs [i.e. diplomacy]”). But in this scenario, unclear are the implications the anonymous commentator may have drawn from Hua Yuan’s retort. In his view, was Hua Yuan commending the state of Zheng for responding to human persuasion rather than the lure of the full ransom amount? Or was Hua giving credit to his fellow Song compatriots for accomplishing a diplomatic mission? Or did he, irked by the Song citizen’s critique, utter something to distract his interlocutor from the topic of the financial toll he exacted? Whatever the case may be, the anonymous commentator’s reading highlights, on the one hand, the importance of Hua Yuan to his home state, and on the other hand, his people’s discontent with his failure to meet their expectations. As with Jia Kui above, the anonymous commentator also reads the final line as belonging to Hua Yuan’s explanation for his return. Taken together, in the anonymous commentator’s reading, while the Hua Yuan-Yang Zhen hostility did not carry over to post-battle events, the critique deepens over Hua Yuan, not Yang Zhen, as a liability to his state.

As mentioned earlier, the above three interpretations were citations by Fu Qian (in turn as cited by the Zuozhuan zhengyi). Absent of extant commentary attributed to Fu, both on the Zuozhuan passage itself and on the Han interpretations, it is difficult to ascertain whether Fu Qian himself endorses the interpretations he cites.¹⁰² As the Zuozhuan zhengyi points out, as opposed to Du Yu, all three Han commentators agree that Shu Zang provoked Hua Yuan with “It was your horses that did so.”¹⁰³ Supposing the Zuozhuan zhengyi had not truncated any of Fu Qian’s commentary, then the absence of Fu’s response to his predecessors might suggest his neutrality or, at most, tacit agreement with them on this point.

Du Yu’s interpretation, the last one examined here, also brings the figure of Yang Zhen back into the picture as Zheng Zhong’s does, but casts a different light on the relationship between Hua Yuan and his subordinate. In contrast to the forgoing commentators, Du Yu reads the dialogue as a moment of reconciliation between the feuding pair:

Hua Yuan announced himself at the Song gate, then and only then did he enter, speaking with care. Shu Zang is Yang Zhen. Since he was humble and low in status, he was able to return first [i.e. ahead of Hua Yuan]. When Hua Yuan saw him, Hua comforted him.¹⁰⁴ Shu Zang knew that what he said earlier [“In regard to the mutton of yesterday, you were the master; as for today’s affairs, I am the master”] was manifest enough, therefore he dared not deny his crime.¹⁰⁵ Having finished his words, Shu Zang subsequently fled to Lu. “He” means to reply.

告宋城門而後入,言不苟。叔牂、羊斟也。卑賤得先歸,華元見而慰之。叔牂知前言以(已)顯,故不敢讓罪。叔牂言畢,遂奔魯,「合」猶答也。¹⁰⁶

Adopting Zheng Zhong’s comment, Du Yu also merges Shu Zang and Yang Zhen into the same person, but unlike all his predecessors, Du thinks Hua Yuan initiated the dialogue when he said “It was your horses that did so.” Moreover, as opposed to Zheng Zhong’s reading of this line as the charioteer’s further provocation at his superior, Du Yu reads it as Hua Yuan’s consolation of his subordinate. In Du Yu’s reading, Hua sought to reconcile with Yang (“When Hua Yuan saw him, Hua comforted him”), delicately shifting the blame from Yang Zhen to the horses. In other words, Du sees Hua Yuan as a merciful leader ready to forgive his subordinate’s faults and relieve him of guilt over the army’s defeat. In turn, according to Du’s interpretation, Yang Zhen admitted to his wrongdoing (he “dared not deny his crime”). Du’s reading turns Yang Zhen into a contrite person shamed into accepting responsibility for gravely embarrassing his state. Du’s interpretation of the last line *jihe er laiben* 既合而來奔 follows Zheng Zhong’s, for Du Yu also construes the line as stating Yang Zhen’s flight from possible prosecution (“Having finished his words, Shu Zang [a.k.a. Yang Zhen] subsequently fled to Lu”). In brief, Du Yu follows in the footsteps of Zheng Zhong (and not the other two commentators) in two respects: first, identifying Yang Zhen as Shu Zang, the two commentators extend Yang’s and Hua’s interaction into the post-battle episode, and secondly, both scholars consider Yang Zhen a self-aware fugitive. However, the similarities end there, for in Du Yu’s reading, the relationship between Hua and Yang healed, whereas in Zheng Zhong’s understanding, their relations remained fraught.

Contradicting Zheng Zhong’s understanding of the superior-subordinate relationship, Du Yu’s ‘generous’ reading is also mostly dissonant with Zuozhuan’s characterization of Hua Yuan and Yang Zhen as problematic people, as least as they appear in the second year of Duke Xuan.¹⁰⁷ If Hua Yuan engaged in brisk repartees with his ridiculers while the Gentleman excoriated Yang Zhen for his inhumane behavior, then it is intriguing that Du Yu would radically re-characterize the two figures as mutually forgiving, instead of defiant and proud.

Du Yu’s re-vision of the narrative episode salvages the damaged historical reputations of Hua Yuan and Yang Zhen. Rehabilitating the impaired image of Hua Yuan as a leader, Du presents him as reaching out to Yang Zhen in a conciliatory gesture, while Yang for his part submitted to Hua’s beneficent influence, restoring good relations with his superior before absconding himself. In Du’s vision, the leader’s ability to forgive instead of meting out harsh punishment, coupled with the subordinate’s capacity to admit to wrongdoing, prevents their relationship from being further strained. Thus whereas previous commentators read the dialogue as an extended critique of Hua Yuan and/or Yuan Zhen, Du Yu reconstructs the episode into a moment of salvation for both characters. Du Yu’s interpretation subdues the inflamed passions in the Hua Yuan-Yang Zhen conflict, watering down their feisty exchange. Most post-Tang scholars reading these earliest commentaries on this Zuozhuan episode subscribe to this particular reading of Du Yu.¹⁰⁸

The Zuozhuan zhengyi subcommentary fleshes out Du Yu's position on the Hua Yuan-Yang Zhen episode, justifying Du's choices the same way it has justified his reading of the Duke Zhuang-Susha Wei episode discussed earlier. First the Zhengyi editors expand upon Du Yu's comments, filling the gaps in Du's expression of his intended meaning:

Shu Zang was humble and lower in status, therefore he was able to return first. When Hua Yuan saw him, Hua comforted him,¹⁰⁹ saying, "It was your horses who by themselves went racing into the Zheng forces. It was not your crime."¹¹⁰ Shu Zang knew what he had said earlier ["In regard to the mutton of yesterday, you were the master; as for today's affairs, I am the master"] was manifest enough, therefore he dared not conceal [his guilt], so he replied to [Hua] Yuan, saying, "It was not horses, but the person [i.e. I myself]." He was saying that he himself did so. Once Shu Zang replied to Hua Yuan, he at once came in flight to Lu.

叔牂卑賤,故得先歸,華元見而安慰之曰:「往奔入鄭軍者,子之馬自然,非子之罪。」叔牂自知前言已顯,不敢隱諱,乃對元曰:「非馬也,其人也。」言是已為之。叔牂既答華元而即來奔魯耳。¹¹¹

Whereas Du Yu's commentary only says, "When Hua Yuan saw him, Hua comforted him," the subcommentary says the lines *feima ye, qiren ye* 非馬也,其人也 in the Zuozhuan capture Du's certainty that Hua exculpated Yang from blame: "It was not your crime." The Zhengyi editors also support Du Yu's construal of *qiren ye* 其人也 as Yang Zhen's reciprocation of his general's amnesty for him, through admission of his responsibility: "He was saying that he himself did so." The subcommentary's elaboration of Du Yu's briefer comments demonstrates the Tang editors' agreement with his portrayal of Hua as a magnanimous general inducing contrition in his subordinate, while implicitly rejecting the Han commentators' portrayal of a failed leader.

Further down in the subcommentary, the Tang scholars then supply compelling reasons, on linguistic grounds, for accepting Du Yu's interpretation as the correct one. In this instance, the Zhengyi editors focus on the proper understanding of specific terms used in the Zuozhuan:

The three interpretations recorded by Fu Qian all take "It was your horses that did so" to be Shu Zang's speech, and the line below "replied, saying" to be the words of Hua Yuan. . . . Du thinks because the text of the Zuozhuan says "saw Shu Zang," followed immediately by "said," then what follows "said" ought to be Hua Yuan's speech and cannot be Shu Zang's words. Moreover, to consider Hua Yuan as having a verbal exchange with a person of lower rank yet stating that he "replied, saying [to a superior]," and to describe his return to his home state with the words "came in flight"—all of this fails to comply with [the use of] language [elsewhere, i.e. such terms as *duiyue* and *laiben*]. . . . Du Yu adopts Zheng Zhong's interpretation that "came in flight" meant fleeing to Lu.

服虔載三說皆以「子之馬然」為叔牂之語,「對曰」以不(下)為華元之辭。 . . . 杜以傳文「見叔牂」而即言「曰」,則「曰」下皆當為華元之語,不得為叔牂之辭。且以華元與賤人交語而稱「對曰」,謂歸國而「來奔」,皆於文不順。 . . . 采鄭氏「來奔」為奔魯耳。¹¹²

As the subcommentary notes here, grammatically speaking, Hua Yuan should occupy the implicit third-person subject position of the line “saw Shu Zang and said” 見叔牂,曰, since Hua is also the subject of the immediately preceding lines—“Hua Yuan escaped back to Song. Standing outside the gate, he announced himself before entering” 華元逃歸。立于門外,告而入。 In other words, according to the Zhengyi editors’ representation of Du’s reasoning, the first person who spoke, marked by “said” (yue 曰), must be the same person who previously completed the actions “escaped and returned” 逃歸, “stood” 立, “announced” 告, and “entered” 入。 However, as one may note, the switching of implied subjects from line to line, or even verb to verb, occurs extremely frequently in the Zuo zhuan, hence while the rule of consistent implied subjects might generally hold as the Zhengyi editors point out, exceptions also abound especially in a text so compressed in expression as the Zuo zhuan.¹¹³ Next, as the subcommentary correctly points out, in early Chinese texts, the phrase duiyue 對曰 (replied, saying) usually designates a social inferior answering his superior, hence in the dialogue, Yang Zhen the charioteer should be the one responding to his interlocutor, Hua Yang the general. Interestingly, Han commentators on this passage either have lost sight of or disregarded this common sense of duiyue in what is regarded a pre-Qin text, for unlike Du Yu, they all take Hua Yuan to have spoken the lines following duiyue.

Thirdly, the Zhengyi editors take issue with Jia Kui’s and the anonymous commentator’s interpretation of the phrase laiben 來奔 (came in flight) as referring to Hua Yuan’s escape back to Song, his home state. Readers familiar with the scribal patterns of the Annals would invariably understand the phrase laiben as “came in flight to Lu” in the text. Written from the perspective of the scribe in the state of Lu, this phrase refers to nobles of foreign states who fled there for protection or asylum. But the usage of laiben in the Zuo zhuan narrative may present some difficulty for the reader, since the question is whether or not the Zuo zhuan compiler consciously followed the scribal norm in the Annals. This issue relates to the textual history of the Zuo zhuan, which lies beyond the scope of this paper, as scholars today have yet to reach a consensus about which portions, if any, of this historical narrative was composed with the Annals in mind.¹¹⁴ Be that as it may, laiben as it appears in other places in the Zuo zhuan text primarily occurs in third-person narration to echo or corroborate the official record in the Annals; seldom if ever does this expression appear in the quoted speech of a historical figure describing his own actions, though Jia Kui and the anonymous commentator fully accept this scenario. On this score, Du Yu selectively follows one Han commentator’s (Zheng Zhong’s) reading of laiben as a scribal convention registering Yang Zhen’s flight to the home state of the scribe, Lu (thus the gloss: “‘came in flight’ meant fleeing to Lu”). The Tang editors support Du Yu’s choice in this matter, since, as they explain, Hua Yuan’s successful return to Song would contradict his flight to Lu; therefore Yang Zhen should be taken as the deserter.

In the cases examined above, the subcommentators have taken up the analysis of grammar and terminology in the Zuo zhuan to buttress the validity of Du Yu’s interpretations. While we may never know if Du Yu followed the very thought processes the Zhengyi editors claim he had, the Zhengyi’s arguments effectively privilege Du’s reading on firm lexical grounds. By extension, these Tang scholar-officials dismiss the Eastern Han interpretations as untenable because they have failed to consider the specialized usages of language specific both to the Annals corpus and to ancient texts. As a result of these ‘failures,’ to summarize, each commentator places a different emphasis on the characters’ portraits: Jia Kui highlights Hua Yuan as a failed but defensive leader; Zheng Zhong throws into relief Yang Zhen’s impertinence

toward his superior; and the anonymous commentator characterizes Hua Yuan the inept commander as a disappointing burden to his people. Only Du Yu presents the quarrelling military men as capable of restoring harmony. Dutifully, the editors of the Tang official compendium marshal language-based evidence to support Du Yu's rehabilitation of the shattered image of the estranged army chief and his officer.

Conclusion: The paradox of preservation

The sets of commentaries presented thus far represent the widest range of extant interpretations on any given Zuo zhuan passage preserved from the Eastern Han period, as juxtaposed with Du Yu's commentary and the Zuo zhuan zhengyi's subcommentaries. Still, the sample size of these commentaries is far too small for one to generalize about the critical positions distinctive to each commentator. Although we can now appreciate the differences among the commentators' readings, matching them to a philosophical or ideological position espoused by each scholar presents another challenge. In fact, modern studies on Han to Tang commentarial traditions (albeit a rich and extensive field) largely restrict themselves to the study of commentarial methodologies and organizational structures,¹¹⁵ as some scholars have openly admitted to the difficulties of gaining any firm footholds when seeking to understand 'thought contents' of a more conceptual or doctrinal nature underlying the vast patchwork of glosses, citations, annotations, and textual critical notes in early medieval commentaries.¹¹⁶ Thereupon, this article likewise makes no attempt to generalize about a world of thought pieced together from fragmented comments, nor does it proffer definitive conclusions about the intellectual, moral, or political reasons as to why Du Yu's commentary 'won the day' while commentaries preceding him withered away, for this would require a massive, comprehensive study as well as extremely skillful extrapolations from the bare bones of commentaries. The broad point to be made, nevertheless, is that Du Yu's commentary endured longer and survived more completely than any other competitor, partly because the early Tang official compilers of the Zuo zhuan zhengyi argued energetically and laboriously on his behalf to ensure his commentary's authority, a prime objective of the imperial project in producing definitive editions of the Classics and their commentaries.

Still, the fragments of commentaries from the pre-Du Yu period, though marginalized, offer valuable alternative spaces outside of the dichotomy of agreement or disagreement with Du Yu created by the Tang authorization of his commentary. Beginning with Qing-dynasty "Han learning" scholars, and perhaps continuing among modern academics interested in the Zuo zhuan as well, the resuscitation of attention to the Zuo zhuan commentators before Du Yu's time should encourage reconsideration of the literary and ethical implications of their readings. As far as the Zuo zhuan episodes above are concerned, had the Han commentaries on them not survived, many subtle aspects of the historical dramas, such as Hua Ou's obsequiousness, the Qi duke's desperation to capture the traitor (Susha Wei), the complexity of possible internal betrayals (by Susha's guard), the slighted charioteer's (Yang Zhen's) embers of anger, and the Song citizens' mockery of their failed general (Hua Yuan), would not have stood out as clearly to readers as they do now under the magnifying-glass of these Han commentators. Whereas Du Yu proposes reconciliation between the characters, these Han commentators acknowledge the acrimoniousness of the personal discord underlying their clipped dialogues, laying open the rancor staining the characters' moral reputations. In contrast, early Tang editors endorse Du Yu's scenarios of the repairing of ruptured relationships—between ruler and insurgent, leader and

subordinate—as the soundest readings, ostensibly on philological grounds, but also for the circular reason that Du Yu’s commentary has already been selected as authoritative and hence must be defended.

Yet, while the Tang editors treat Du Yu’s readings as consistently superior, these same editors also adumbrate, perhaps unwittingly, the possible value of the ‘rejected’ Han-period readings, by virtue of their very preservation in the Zhengyi through citation. Perhaps too, for the biased but conscientious Tang editors, contentious divergences in interpretation, not to mention the stubborn ambiguities in the Zuozhuan passage making final determinations impossible, justified the preservation of the earlier comments as grounds on which future scholars might stake their own interpretive claims.

Notes

1. This article grew out of papers delivered on these occasions: the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies in January 2014, an invited lecture at National Taiwan University in May 2014, and the Early Medieval China Young Scholars International Conference in Renmin University, Beijing, in August 2014. The present author would like to thank my discussants, Professor Nathaniel Isaacson, Professor Song Shuping 宋淑萍, and Professor Tong Ling 童嶺, as well as others in the audience for their stimulating comments and insightful critique. I would like to express special gratitude to the article’s reviewers, without whose comments the article would not have attained the level of quality readers see here. All inadequacies of the article remain mine.
2. The “Spring and Autumn Classic” is better known in English translation as the Spring and Autumn Annals, hereafter the Annals for short. Modern monographs on Du Yu’s commentaries include: Ye Zhengxin 葉政欣, *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan Du zhu shili 春秋左氏傳杜注釋例* (Taipei: Jiabin shuini gongsi, 1966) and his *Du Yu ji qi Chunqiu Zuoshi xue 杜預及其春秋左氏學* (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1989).
3. James Legge, trans., *The Ch’un Ts’ew with the Tso Chuen: Second Edition, with Minor Text Corrections and a Concordance Table*, vol. 5 of *The Chinese Classics: with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes* (1895; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960). Legge’s overwhelming reliance on Du Yu’s commentary is critiqued in: Shan Zhouyao 單周堯, “Xungu yu fanyi—Liyage yingyi Zuozhuan guankui” 訓詁與翻譯—理雅各英譯《左傳》管窺, in *Zuozhuan xue lunji 左傳學論集* (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 2000), 131–56.
4. Modern works devoted to the organization and annotation of these fragments include: Cheng Nanzhou 程南州, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Jia Kui zhu yu Du Yu zhu zhi bijiao yanjiu 春秋左傳賈逵注與杜預注之比較研究* (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1982); and his *Donghan shidai zhi Chunqiu Zuoshi xue 東漢時代之春秋左氏學* (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2011).
5. Traditional Chinese scholarship on the Annals corpus, or Chunqiu xue 春秋學, refers to the study of the Annals, along with its exegetical traditions, the Zuozhuan, Gongyang zhuan 公羊傳, and Guliang zhuan 穀梁傳.
6. 6 Other English-language studies of traditional commentaries on the Classics include (from earliest to latest): Barry B. Blakeley, “Notes on the Reliability and Objectivity of the Tu Yu Commentary on the Tso Chuan,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

101, no.2 (1981): 207–12; Michael Nylan, “A Modest Proposal, Illustrated by the Original ‘Great Plan’ and Han Readings,” *Cina*, no. 21, XXXth European Conference of Chinese Studies Proceedings (1988): 251–64; John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Steven Jay Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching As Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003) and his “The Earliest Extant Commentary on Lunyu: Lunyu Zheng shi zhu,” *T’oung Pao*, 2d ser., 83, fasc. 4/5 (1997): 260–99; Joachim Gentz, “Close(d) Reading of the Chunqiu: Strategies of Producing Meaning in the Gongyang zhuan,” *Transactions of the International Conference of Eastern Studies*, no. 52 (2007): 27–40; Andrew Plaks, “Zheng Xuan’s Commentary on the Zhouli,” in Benjamin A. Elman and Martin Kern, eds., *Statecraft and Classical Learning: The Rituals of Zhou in East Asian History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 155–78; Michael Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu, a “Confucian” Heritage and the Chunqiu Fanlu* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Bruce Rusk, *Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012); and Newell Ann Van Auken, *The Commentarial Transformation of the Chunqiu* (Albany: State University of New York Press, forthcoming).

7. Commentaries on Chinese traditional fiction and on the Shijing have received treatment in the present journal: Andrew H. Plaks, “The Chongzhen Commentary on the Jin Ping Mei: Gems Amidst the Dross,” *CLEAR* 8 (July 1986): 19–30. Martin W. Huang, “Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese Xiaoshuo Commentary,” *CLEAR* 16 (December 1994): 41–67. Olivia Milburn, “‘The Broken Trap’: Reading and Interpreting Shijing Mao 104 during the Imperial Era,” *CLEAR* 32 (December 2010): 53–72. Other studies on the Zuozhuan use commentaries for annotations but do not focus on the commentaries themselves: Stephen Durrant, “Smoothing Edges and Filling Gaps: Tso Chuan and the ‘General Reader,’” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112, no. 1 (1992): 36–41. David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001). Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period (722–453 B.C.E.)* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002). Wai-ye Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007). Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, trans., *Zuo Tradition/Zuozhuan: Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).
8. In Ma Guohan 馬國翰 (1794–1857), comp., *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu* (2) 玉函山房輯佚書(二), vol.47 of *Shandong wenxian jicheng* (first edition) 山東文獻集成(第一輯) (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2006), 423–6. In this compilation, Liu Xin’s work is entitled *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan zhangju* 春秋左氏傳章句.

9. We know that the Hanshu 漢書 (compiled 54–60, and sometime before 92) contains references to scholars commenting on the Zuozhuan in the Western Han as well, but textual evidence of these commentaries probably never existed or has not survived. Ban Gu 班固, Hanshu 漢書 (1962; reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 88.3620. As retrospective accounts, these historical accounts may have worked to create traceable lineages of scholars studying a particular text. For a study of this phenomenon in early China, see Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, “Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions through Exemplary Figures in Early China,” *T’oung Pao*, 2d ser., 89, fasc. 1/3 (2003): 59–99.
10. For Han Xin’s support of the Zuozhuan, see Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445), Hou Hanshu 後漢書 (Taipei: Hongshi chubanshe, 1978), 36.1228. For Fan Sheng and Chen Yuan, see *ibid.*, 36.1226–34. For Li Yu, see *ibid.*, 79B.2582.
11. Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643), Suishu 隋書 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 32.903–48.
12. The combined titles of works on the Gongyang zhuan and Guliang zhuan are about twice this number. See Wei, Suishu, 32.928–32.
13. As featured in compilations of fragmented commentaries (jiben 輯本), the scholars are: Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (d. 83), Xu Shu 許淑 (fl. 28), Jia Kui (30–101), Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166), Yan Du 延篤 (d. 167), Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), He Xiu 何休 (129–182), Fu Qian (d. ca. 195), Ying Rong 穎容 (d. ca. late 190s), Peng Wang (?–?), Wang Su 王肅 (195–256), Sun Yu 孫毓 (fl. 217), Dong Yu 董遇 (d. early 230s), and Ji Kang 稽康 (223–263). Ma, *Yuhan shanfang*, 47.3–4. See also Gu Feng 古風, comp., vols. 15–17 of *Jingxue jiyi wenxian huibian 經學輯佚文獻彙編* (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2010). For a more detailed account of the references to Zuozhuan scholars in the standard histories, along with notes on the state of preservation of the scholars’ commentaries, see Cheng, *Donghan shidai*, 28–32.
14. For Zheng Zhong, see Fan, Hou Hanshu, 36.1224–6. For Jia Kui, see *ibid.*, 36.1234–41. For Ma Rong, see *ibid.*, 60A. For Zheng Xuan, see *ibid.*, 35.1207–12. For Wang Su, see Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–297), *Sanguozhi 三國志* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 13.414–20.
15. Xu Shen 許慎 (d. ca. 120 CE) also commented on the Zuozhuan in his now fragmented *Wujing yiyi 五經異義*, however, his biography is extremely short in the Hou Hanshu. Fan, Hou Hanshu, 79B.2588.
16. *Ibid.*, 79B.2583. English official title follows translation in Rafe de Crespigny, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23–220AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1239.
17. As recorded in the Jinshu biography of Xun Song 荀崧 (263?–329?), in his memorial to the first emperor of the Eastern Jin (317–420), Yuandi 元帝 (r. 317–322), Xun wrote: “At the time he [Yuandi] was repairing the academies, he reduced the number of Academicians’ posts. He appointed one Academician each for . . . the Du [Yu] and Fu [Qian] commentaries on the Zuozhuan of the Annals. . .” 時方修學校,簡省博士,置. . .春秋左傳杜氏服氏. . . 博士各一人. Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578–648), *Jinshu* (1974; reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 75.1976–7.
18. According to Ma Guohan, these fragments belong to one of Fu Qian’s full commentaries,

entitled *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan jieyi* 春秋左氏傳解詁. Ma, Yuhuan shanfang, 477–553. The four juan include the pertinent text in the Annals and Zuozhuan addressed by Fu’s comments.

19. Further corroborating these relationships, some modern studies trace each surviving comment to an earlier one by a predecessor, clarifying the lines of adoption and innovation. See Cheng, Donghan shidai, 61–4; 174–94; 440–50.
20. To Qing scholars who are attempting to revive Han learning (Hanxue 漢學) and Han commentaries, Du Yu is especially egregious in this regard. For example, Liu Wenqi 劉文淇 (1789–1854) denounces Du Yu for systematically “plagiarizing” (chaoxi 勦襲) Jia Kui’s and Fu Qian’s comments on the Zuozhuan. Liu Wenqi, “Yu Shen Xiaowan xiansheng shu” 與沈小宛先生書, in *Qingxi jiuwu wenji* 青溪舊屋文集 (Macau: Puban shulou 蒲坂書樓, 1883), 3.8b–9a.
21. The Five Classics in this canon are the *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義, *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義, *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, and the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義. The *Wujing zhengyi* was promulgated in 653. Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 372.
22. While Kong Yingda engages in the polemics of championing Du Yu and criticizing Six Dynasties commentators, as some studies have revealed, the movement of “supporting Du” (shen Du 申杜) hardly began with Kong and the editors. Scholars who “supported Du” include Shen Wenhe 沈文何 (503–563) of the Liang dynasty and Su Kuan 蘇寬 (?–?) of one or more of the quickly succeeding northern dynasties (unclear which one(s)). Both scholars took to shen Du as one of their main purposes for writing their subcommentaries on the Zuozhuan. Jiao Guimei 焦桂美, *Nanbei chao jingxue shi* 南北朝經學史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 272–4; 371–2.
23. Italics mine.
24. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), ed., *Chongkan Songben Zuozhuan zhushu fu jiaokan ji* 重刊宋本左傳注疏附校勘記, vol. 6 of *Chongkan Songben Shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokan ji* 重刊宋本十三經注疏附校勘記 (Jiangxi Nanchang fu xue 江西南昌府學 1815 carving; reprint, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1955), 2b–3a.3.
25. For Kong Yingda’s criticism of Liu Xuan, see Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 3a–b.4.
26. Ibid.
27. On a handful of occasions Kong Yingda did point out Du Yu’s possible errors, but compared to Kong’s criticisms of other commentators, these examples are extremely rare and far milder in tone. An Min 安敏, *Kong Yingda Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi yanjiu* 孔穎達春秋左傳正義研究 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2009), 104–6.
28. See Fang, *Jinshu*, 34.1031–2; Li Yanshou 李延壽 (7th c.), ed., *Nanshi* 南史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 71.1739; and Li’s *Beishi* 北史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 81.2709. The *Nanshi* and *Beishi* were compiled in 630–50. The adulation of Du Yu fails to last forever, as his detractors, particularly Qing scholars of the Qianlong 乾隆 (1736–1796) and Jiaqing 嘉慶 (1796–1821) reigns, consistently attack Du Yu to defend Eastern Han commentators.

29. The text of these works cited in this paper is Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 1955. The other major editions I consult are: Du Yu 杜預, *Zuozhuan* (*Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie*) 左傳 (春秋經傳集解) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007); Takezoe Kōkō 竹添光鴻, *Zuoshi huijian* 左氏會箋 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2008); and Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (xiuding ben) 春秋左傳注 (修訂本) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005). In Ruan Yuan's "Preface to the collation notes for the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhushu*," he says that the base text of the *Zuozhuan* which the Han-Wei commentators use often vary from the one Du Yu uses. See Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 1b.20. According to one study, in Dunhuang, there were found 33 incomplete manuscripts of the *Zuozhuan*, some without commentary, the vast majority of which are copies with Du Yu's commentary, two of which are the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, and none of which contains the full commentaries of Han scholars. Huang Jianning 黃建寧 and Liu Zhisheng 劉志生, "Zuozhuan Du zhu Dunhuang canjuan yanjiu" 《左傳》杜注敦煌殘卷研究, *Journal of Sichuan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 四川師範大學學報(社會科學版) 32, no. 2 (2005): 55–61.
30. Ma, Yuhuan shanfang, 423–570. For recent efforts to collate other Qing scholars' collections of commentarial fragments on the Thirteen Classics aside from Ma Guohan's collection, see the 22-volume compendium: Gu, *Jingxue jiyi*, 2010.
31. Granted, the inclusion of the full texts of the *Annals* and *Zuozhuan* also accounts for the bulk of the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, whereas the collection of fragments only contains partial texts of both.
32. I have placed the slash there to indicate the divergent readings of commentators.
33. Translation completed in consultation with Legge, Ch'un T'sew, 258. At the time of this article's final submission, the newest translation was not available yet: Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 2016.
34. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.3a–b.329.
35. *Ibid.*, 19B.3a.329. Liu Wenqi cites Wang Yinzi's 王引之 (1766–1834) etymological evidence for reading the preposition "of" (zhi 之) as the conjunction "and" (yu 與), such that *Huangfu zhi erzi* means "Huangfu and the two men." Liu Wenqi, *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhuan jiuzhu shuzheng* 春秋左氏傳舊注疏證 (Taipei: Minglun chubanshe, 1971), 543.
36. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.3a.329.
37. *Ibid.*, 19B.3a–b.329.
38. Liu Wenqi grants that Zheng Zhong's difference of opinion may have resulted from his usage of a recension of the *Zuozhuan* that is different from the one Jia Kui and Fu Qian used (*huo suoju zhuanwen yu Jia Fu yi* 或所据傳文與賈、服異). Liu, *Jiuzhu shuzheng*, 543.
39. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.3b.329.
40. Liu Wenqi directly conflates Jia Kui's and Fu Qian's opinions as one: "Fu's explanation is also the same as Jia's." Liu, *Jiuzhu shuzheng*, 543.
41. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.3b.329.
42. Translation completed in consultation with Legge, Ch'un T'sew, 192.
43. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 15.17b–18a.255.
44. According to Liu Wenqi, Fu Qian reads the line *yu wei hua* 與衛、滑 as follows: "That is to say the king took Hua to belong to Wei" 謂王以滑屬衛也. Liu, *Jiuzhu shuzheng*, 377.

45. Fu Qian is cited by Pei Yin 裴駟 (fl. 425) in his *Shiji jijie* 史記集解. Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 4.153; Takigawa Kametarō 瀧川龜太郎, *Shiji huizhu kaozheng* 史記會注考證 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1997), 4.71.75.
46. See note above.
47. The Annals entry reads: “In the third month, the Song Minister of War, grandson of the Hua clan, came to make a covenant with us [Lu]” 三月,宋司馬華孫來盟. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.18a.336.
48. Translation adapted from Legge, Ch’un T’sew, 270–1.
49. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.19a–20b.337.
50. In the 25th year of Duke Zhuang 莊公 (669 BCE), the *Zuozhuan* states this scribal rule: “Because the Annals commends him, his personal name is not recorded” 嘉之,故不名. *Ibid*, 10.7a.174.
51. Elsewhere within the *Zuozhuan*, the only other reference to Hua Ou’s official performance involves criticism of his late arrival to a joint campaign with other states to rescue Zheng from an attack by Chu. *Ibid*, 19A.22a.321.
52. Du Yu’s gloss for *lü* 旅 is “500 men,” in the fourth year of Duke Ding 定公 (506 BCE). *Ibid*, 54.14b.946.
53. Du Yu, however, later qualifies this positive appraisal of Hua Ou, deploring his public exposure of his ancestor’s depravity: “To broadcast one’s ancestor’s crime for no reason, this is disrespectful. To say ‘the people of Lu considered him respectful’ illustrates that this is something the Gentleman disapproves of” 無故揚其先祖之罪,是不敏,「魯人以為敏」,明君子所不與也. *Ibid*, 19B.20b.337. 54 *Ibid*, 19B.19a–20b.337.
55. Du Yu’s “Preface” to his *Jijie* forwards the notion that the authorship of the Annals and the *Zuozhuan* was based on the desire to preserve institutional models established by Duke of Zhou in Western Zhou. *Ibid*, 1.9b.10–12b.11.
56. *Ibid*, 19B.20a.337.
57. *Ibid*, 19B.20a.337.
58. These two situations certainly build on each other to construct a positive image for Hua Ou, but Fu Qian’s confusion of the Annals’ and Lu people’s appraisals prompts Liu Wenqi to dismiss Fu for his “shallow learning” (*qianxue* 淺學) because his interpretation “seems to deviate from the meaning of the [Zuo]zhuan” (*si yu zhuanyi guaige* 似與傳義乖隔). Liu, *Jiuzhu shuzheng*, 568.
59. Gu Donggao 顧棟高 (1679–1759) similarly rejects the *Zuozhuan*’s explanation. Gu further points out Hua Ou’s unsavory ulterior motives for flattering Lu: because he was complicit in plotting a regicide that indeed transpired the following year, he was sent to Lu ahead of the regicide to preempt Lu from joining in any punitive campaign by other feudal lords against Song. Gu Donggao, *Chunqiu dashi biao* 春秋大事表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), 24.1863. Takezoe also analyzes the history of good Song-Lu relations as being based on the Huas’ multi-generational goodwill policy of bribing Lu in exchange for its legitimization of the usurping Hua clan. Takezoe, *Zuoshi huijian*, 774–5.
60. Liu Wenqi points out that this is Liu Xuan’s misreading of Fu Qian, who has never claimed that the entire court accompanied him. Liu, *Jiuzhu shuzheng*, 568.
61. Liu Xuan is referring to this chapter of the *Yili* 儀禮 from which the *Zuozhuan* zhengyi later quotes. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.19b.337. The translation of chapter title

- follows John Steele, *The I-Li or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (London: Probsthain & Co., 1917), 189.
62. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 19B.20a.337.
 63. Though not exactly replicating Fu Qian's reasoning, later commentators who also dissent from Du Yu and the Zhengyi editors regarding the propriety of Hua Ou's entourage include Dan Zhu 啖助 (724–770), Liu Chang 劉敞 (1019–1068), Sun Jue 孫覺 (1028–1090), Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148), Hao Jing 郝敬 (1558–1639), and Chen Shengqin 陳省欽 (?–? Qing). For the various reasons furnished, see Chen Pan 陳槃, *Zuoshi Chunqiu yili bian 左氏春秋義例辨* (1947; reprint Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 221–2. Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682) also disagrees with Du Yu, but otherwise gives no reason for his disagreement. Gu Yanwu, Xu Deming 徐德明, et al., *Zuozhuan Dujie buzheng 左傳杜解補正* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 48. Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936), offering a reason different from that of Du Yu, approves of Hua Ou for his skillful handling of the embarrassing situation of representing Song even though he was the descendant of someone who committed regicide. Zhang Taiyan, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan du 春秋左傳讀* (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1984), 347.
 64. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 34.4b.585–5a.586.
 65. *Ibid.*, 34.5a–b.586.
 66. Gloss of fu 傅 by Yang Bojun. Yang, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, 1051. Legge translates it simply as “coming [to the siege].” Legge, Ch'un T'sew, 484.
 67. Gonglü is a surname, according to Yang Bojun. Yang, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, 1051.
 68. Slashes (/) mine to indicate commentators' disagreement. Translation adapted from Legge, Ch'un T'sew, 484.
 69. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 34.7b–8a.587.
 70. The Zhengyi says: “Du Yu's comments here are all adopted from Jia Kui's explanation” 杜於此注皆用賈逵之說. *Ibid.*, 34.7b.587.
 71. *Ibid.*
 72. For example, when Duke Zhuang of Qi himself later died, a group of his followers committed suicide to express their loyalty in the 25th year of Duke Xiang. *Ibid.*, 36.5a–b.619.
 73. All too common in the *Zuozhuan*, this type of conflict between chivalry and ruthlessness in the same person, at different moments or with the former serving the latter in the same moment, receives central attention in Li, *Readability of the Past*, 2007. For the *Zuozhuan* text pertaining to Duke Zhuang of Qi's career, with modern commentary, see Fang Chaohui 方朝暉, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan renwu pu 春秋左傳人物譜* (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 2001), 2.462–75.
 74. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 34.5a–b.586.
 75. In the second year of Duke Xiang, Susha Wei received a foreign bribe on behalf of Duke Ling of Qi. *Ibid.*, 29.5b.498. In the 17th year, the duke sent Susha to inveigle a prisoner of war. *Ibid.*, 33.6b.574. In the 18th year, Susha advised the duke to stay on defense instead of opening an attack. *Ibid.*, 33.12a.577.
 76. *Ibid.*, 34.7b–8a.587.
 77. *Ibid.*, 34.8a.587.
 78. The Annals says, “In the second year [of Duke Xuan], in spring, in the royal second month [according to the Zhou royal calendar], on the renzi day, Hua Yuan of Song,

leading his army, and Gongzi Guisheng of Zheng, leading his army, fought at Daji. The Song army was roundly defeated. [Zheng] captured Hua Yuan of Song” 二年,春,王二月,壬子,宋華元帥師及鄭公子歸生帥師,戰于大棘。宋師敗績,獲宋華元。 Ibid, 21.5b.362. The Gongyang zhuan is silent on this entry, while He Xiu’s comment proposes that the double appearance of Song 宋 in this Annals entry condemns Hua Yuan for humiliating not only himself but also his domain. Ruan Yuan, ed., Chongkan Songben Gongyang zhushu fu jiaokan ji, in vol. 7 of Shisanjing zhushu, 15.6a.189. The Guliang zhuan, in contrast, approves Hua Yuan for the allegiance his people showed him. Ruan Yuan, ed., Chongkan Songben Guliang zhushu fu jiaokan ji, in ibid, 12.3a–b.116.

79. This story about Hua Yuan’s chariot driver is repeated in these extant early Chinese sources: the Huainanzi 淮南子, Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋, Shiji, Shuoyuan 說苑, and Hanshu. Liu An 劉安, Liu Wendian 劉文典, et al., Huainanzi (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 10.335. Lü Buwei 呂不韋 and Xu Weiyu 許維遹, eds., Lüshi Chunqiu jishi 呂氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 16.420–1. Sima, Shiji, 38.1629; 70.2297 (in Suoyin 索隱 comment). Ban, Hanshu, 20.919. Xiang 劉向 and Lu Yuanjun 盧元駿, eds., Shuoyuan (Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1988), 5.147. On the issue of whether zhen 斟 is part of a name or not, the Huainanzi and Shiji treat zhen as the object “broth” (geng 羹), whereas the Lüshi chunqiu, and Hanshu treat zhen as Yang Zhen’s personal name. The Shuoyuan account repeats the Zuo zhuan text verbatim, and therefore fails to give a reading of the term zhen. Perhaps these early divergences have led to the development of two camps of scholars from early to modern China: one takes zhen as a common noun; the other takes zhen as a proper name. Moreover, because yang 羊 in the Zuo passage functions first as an object of “slaughtered,” and later as the chariot driver’s surname, the characters yang and zhen easily lead to confusion among scholars. Later commentators who treat zhen as “broth” include: Ma Zonglian 馬宗璉 (?–1802), Qian Daxin 錢大昕 (1728–1804), Duan Yucan 段玉裁 (1735–1815), and Hong Jiangji 洪亮吉 (1746–1809). Qian and Duan, in particular, maintain that the two instances in the Gentleman’s comment naming Yang Zhen are later interpolations. But majority opinion treats Yang Zhen as a name, from Jia Kui’s, Zheng Zhong’s, Du Yu’s, and Kong Yingda’s commentaries examined in this paper (my translation follows their treatment), to later imperial and modern commentators such as Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–81), Wang Kunsheng 王崑繩 (1648–1710), Li Fusun 李富孫 (1764–1843), Wang Yinzhi, Liu Wenqi, Takezoe Kōkō, Yang Bojun, and Wang Shumin 王叔岷 (1914–2008). References follow the order of mention above: Ma Zonglian, Chunqiu Zuozhuan buzhu 春秋左傳補注, in vol. 1 of Song Zhiying 宋志英, et al., Zuozhuan yanjiu wenxian jikan 左傳研究文獻輯刊 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2012), 2.2a.303. Qian Daxin, Shijia zhai yangxin lu 十駕齋養新錄, in vol. 376 of Sibubeiyao 四部備要 (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 2.12a–b. Duan Yucan, Shuowen jiezi zhu 說文解字注, in vol. 1 of Lu Ren 魯仁, ed., Zhongguo gudai gongju shu congbian 中國古代工具書叢編 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1999), 14A.34a.722. Hong Liangji and Li Jiemin 李解民, eds., Chunqiu Zuozhuan gu 春秋左傳詁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 10.395–6. Lü Zuqian and Chen Yue 陳鉞, eds., Donglai boyi 東萊博議 (Tainan: Zhengyan

chubanshe, 1972), 24.244. Wang Kunsheng, *Zuozhuan ping* 左傳評 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 1979), 4.4b. Li Fusun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan yiwen shi* 春秋左傳異文釋, in vol. 6 of *Song, Zuozhuan yanjiu*, 4.18.212. Wang Yinzhi, *Jingyi shuwen* 經義述聞, in vol. 5 of *Qingren zhushu shisanjing fu Jingyi shuwen* 清人注疏十三經附經義述聞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 23.354–5. Liu, *Jiuzhu shuzheng*, 616–7. Takezoe, *Zuoshi huijian*, 818. Yang, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, 652. Wang Shumin, *Zuozhuan kaojiao* 左傳考校 (Taipei: Zhongyan yuan wenzhe suo choubei chu, 1998), 103.

80. Takezoe says the insertion of these judgments by the Gentleman and the Odes “lightens” Hua Yuan’s crime in losing the battle. Takezoe, *Zuoshi huijian*, 818.
81. In his translation, Burton Watson accepts Du Yu’s identification of Shu Zang as the same person as Yang Zhen, while acknowledging that “other interpretations have been offered, among them that Shu-tsang is the name of a gatekeeper of the Sung city gate.” Burton Watson, *The Tso Chuan: Selections from China’s Oldest Narrative History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 74, fn. 3.
82. Because multiple points of ambiguity are present in the text above, I use slashes (/) to denote the different readings which the Eastern Han commentators and Du Yu have proposed. Translation adapted from Legge, *Ch’un Ts’ew*, 289.
83. At the end of this line, Yang Bojun places a question mark, so that the line reads “Was it your horses that did so?” 子之馬然也? Treating this as a rhetorical question spoken by Hua Yuan, Yang Bojun adopts Yang Shuda’s 楊樹達 (1885–1956) interpretation of the line as a cloaked reprimand (*wan qici yi jie zhi* 婉其詞以詰之), rather than a sincere statement (*zhichen yu* 直陳語) as Du Yu takes it to be. Strongly disagreeing with Du Yu, Yang Shuda is incredulous that Hua Yuan could have been as dim-witted (*yu* 愚) as to not know that Yang Zhen had “sold himself out” (*mai ji* 賣己), nor as dissembling (*wei* 偽) as to comfort the traitor. Yang Shuda, *Jiwei dushu ji* 積微讀書記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju), 41–1.
84. Legge, Watson, and Yang Bojun all adopt Du Yu’s ending of the quote here. Legge, *Ch’un Ts’ew*, 289. Watson, *Tso Chuan*, 74. Yang, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, 653.
85. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 21.7a–b.363. I use the slash “/” to indicate where commentators diverge as to whether the quoted speech stops after the sentence ending with the phrase *qiren ye* 其人也 or after the one ending with *er laiben* 而來奔.
86. These are the fragments collected in Ma, *Yuhan shanfang*, 423–570.
87. For this history of losses, see the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 preface to the *Zuozhuan zhengyi*. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 3a.2.
88. *Laiben* 來奔 often appears as a compound word in the *Annals* and the *Zuozhuan* (as further explicated later), as is the case here in this *Zuo* passage as well. When the two characters are considered separately, it seems unproblematic that *ben* 奔 here means “ran” or “fled.” The *Hanyu da cidian*’s 漢語大詞典 first two definitions for *ben* are straightforward: “run” 急走, 跑 and “flee in defeat, escape” 敗逃, 逃亡. *Hanyu da cidian bianji weiyuan hui* 漢語大詞典編輯委員會, et al., *Hanyu da cidian* (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1994), 2.1516. These definitions do not appear in the extensive list of definitions for *lai* 來 in the *Hanyu da cidian*. Definition no. 3 for *lai* is simply “from there to here . . . as opposed to ‘depart’ or ‘go’” 由彼及此 . . . 與 ‘去’、‘往’ 相對.

However, definition no. 4 for lai is “return, come back” 回來,返來. Hanyu, 1.1296. In this sense, if Hua Yuan, who had just returned to his home state of Song, was the one saying “laiben,” then the term could be understood as “returned in flight.” But if laiben describes Yang Zhen’s action from the perspective of Lu, and therefore means “came in flight [arriving here, the state of Lu],” then the term could not be understood as “returned in flight,” because Yang Zhen had never been to Lu (as far as we know from extant sources), and, as some commentators understand it, he fled to the ‘foreign’ state of Lu, not back to his home state of Song. Because the commentators examined here do not uniformly take the Lu perspective as obligatory in understanding laiben, they have construed the term laiben and possibly even the individual characters lai and ben differently, depending on whom they think is the speaker.

89. Of all the commentators cited thus far, only Hong Liangji supports this identification by Jia Kui. Hong, *Zuozhuan gu*, 396.
90. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 21.7b–8a.363.
91. Translation adapted from Legge, Ch’un Ts’ew, 289–90.
92. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 21.8a.363–9a.364.
93. A pingdian critic, Wang Kunsheng reads Hua Yuan’s interaction with the wall builders as validation of him as a praiseworthy character, as opposed to Yang Zhen, whose crime is far greater in Wang’s view. Wang, *Zuozhuan ping*, 4.4b.
94. This reading is informed by Zhang Taiyan’s lexical discussion of the character fu 夫 (in fu qi kouzhong wogua 夫其口眾我寡) not as a tonal particle marking the beginning of the sentence, but as the loan word fu 扶, which pinpoints Hua Yuan’s need for assistance while feeling outnumbered. See: Zhang, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan du*, 366. For other proposals on how to construe this six-character line, see Ruan Yuan’s collation notes. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 21.3b.372.
95. Du Yu, Lü Zuqian, Wang Kunsheng, Qian Daxin, Duan Yucai all support this equation of Shu Zang with someone surnamed Yang who was Hua Yuan’s benighted charioteer. Ruan, *Zuozhuan zhushu* 21.7b.363. Lü, *Donglai boyi*, 24.244. Wang, *Zuozhuan ping*, 4.4b. Echoed by Duan Yucai, Qian Daxin forwards the claim that if Yang is treated as a ming 名 (personal name) instead of a surname, then Shu Zang would be a zi 字 (courtesy name) linking him to Yang. Qian, *Shijia yangxin*, 2.12a–b. Duan, *Shuowen*, 14A.34a.722. But Hong Liangji proposes that Yang 羊 is a shi 氏 (clan lineage name), therefore “there is no reason for matching the zi 字 with the shi 氏.” Hong, *Zuozhuan gu*, 396.
96. Hong Liangji points out that since Yang Zhen already stated earlier “as for today’s affairs [i.e. charioteering], I am the master,” he would not be saying now that the horses were in Hua Yuan’s charge. Hong, *Zuozhuan gu*, 396.
97. Shen Qinhan 沈欽韓 (1775–1831) is virtually the only one of the commentators surveyed who agrees with Zheng Zhong on the first speaker being Yang Zhen, and the second speaker being Hua Yuan. Shen, *Chunqiu Zuoshi buzhu 春秋左氏補注*, in vol. 3 of *Xu Jingjie Chunqiu lei huibian 續經解春秋類彙編* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1986), 5.8b.2535.
98. Zheng Zhong’s is the earliest extant interpretation of he 合 in this passage as heyu 合語 “exchanged words.” Kong Yingda, et al. gloss he 合 thus: “He is to gather phrases together, therefore [Du Yu] says ‘he is to reply’” 合是聚合言語,故云合猶答也. Ruan,

- Zuozhuan zhushu, 21.8a.363. Takezoe corroborates this etymology by citing from dictionaries of ancient characters. See Takezoe, Zuoshi huijian, 819.
99. Ruan, Zuozhuan zhushu, 21.8a.363.
100. Indicated as “Yet another interpretation” (you yishuo 又一說) in the Zuozhuan zhengyi. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Li Yide 李貽德 (1783–1832) says Fu cited all of them because “intuitively, they all make sense.” Li Yide, Chunqiu Zuozhuan Jia Fu zhu jishu 春秋左傳賈服注輯述, in vol. 3 of Xu Jingjie, 765.9.2b.2866.
103. Ruan, Zuozhuan zhushu, 21.7b–8a.363.
104. Takezoe accepts Du’s interpretation here, saying that Hua Yuan did so because he was afflicted with self-regret at not having offered mutton to his charioteer, a “close intimate.” Takezoe, Zuoshi huijian, 819.
105. Here, however, Takezoe disagrees with Du, saying that Yang Zhen’s words at this moment are still filled with “resentment.” Ibid.
106. Ruan, Zuozhuan zhushu, 21.7b.363.
107. I say “mostly,” because the Zuozhuan does implicitly favor Hua Yuan by incorporating the minor but suggestive detail about his fastidious adherence to protocol (“Standing outside the gate, he announced himself before entering”) to emphasize his sense of decorum. As a fugitive escaping from bondage by an enemy state, he did not rush through the gate in a harried state, but stopped to give his respects to the proper authorities, thus earning Du Yu’s approbation in his comment to this line, that Hua was “speaking with care” 言不苟 (literally “his speech was not slovenly”). Ibid, 21.7b.363. This interpretation mirrors Du’s comment on the dialogue between Duke Zhuang of Qi and the rebel Susha Wei, as Du construes the tension between them as punctuated by displays of formal propriety.
108. Lü Zuqian also follows Du Yu in taking Hua Yuan to be “comforting and sympathizing with” his wayward charioteer. Lü, Donglai boyi, 24.244. Takezoe basically follows Du Yu’s reading of a Hua Yuan filled with “self-regret.” Takezoe, Zuoshi huijian, 819. Only Liu Shouzheng 劉壽曾 (1838–1882), Liu Wenqi’s grandson, maintains that the citation of various interpretations is sufficient, just as Fu Qian had done, if no consensus could be reached among the commentators. Liu, Jiuzhu shuzheng, 618.
109. Italics mine in this passage, to indicate the Zhengyi’s quotation or close paraphrase of Du Yu’s comments.
110. Hong Liangji disputes this reading, saying that since Yang Zhen already said he would take charge of the horses, Hua Yuan would not have turned around to utter these words to “cover up” Yang’s responsibility. Hong, Zuozhuan gu, 10.396.
111. Ruan, Zuozhuan zhushu, 23.7b.363.
112. Ibid, 21.7b–8a.363.
113. An example of the silent switching of implied subjects is readily found in the opening of the Hua Yuan-Yang Zhen episode. See *ibid*, 21.7a.363.
114. Beginning with Liu Xin (46 BCE–23 CE), arguments about the Zuozhuan have centered on whether it functions as exegesis to the Annals or not. See his “Letter to the Academicians” in Ban, Hanshu, 36.1968–71.

115. In the case of Zuo zhuan commentaries, this widely adopted choice in scholarly approach and subject matter is evidenced by works such as Cheng, Donghan shidai, 2011; Zhang Baosan 張寶三, Wujing zhengyi yanjiu 五經正義研究 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010); An, Kong Yingda, 2009.
116. On the other hand, discursive essays—such as prefaces, postfaces, and memorials—yield richer contents for the study of the commentators’ positions vis-à-vis their predecessors’ and contemporaries’ than perhaps line-by-line commentaries. But as this study focuses on the significance of commentarial fragments, full discursive works are not treated here.

Appendices

Appendix A: Commentators on the Duke Zhuang of Ai vs. Susha Wei Conflict (*Zuo zhuan*, Duke Xiang, 19th year)

Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101 CE) / Du Yu 杜預 (222–284 CE)	Peng Wang 彭汪 (?–?) / Fu Qian 服虔 (d. ca. 195)
a) Says Susha Wei descended the wall to speak with Duke Zhuang.	a) Says Duke Zhuang called out to Susha Wei to capture and slay him, and Susha came down with shame.
b) Says Susha Wei made the report about the city’s unpreparedness in sincerity, so the duke let Susha go.	b) Says a city defender made the report about the city’s unpreparedness to betray Susha Wei.
c) Says Susha Wei still wanted to resist the duke, so Susha climbed over the wall to return inside the city.	c) Says the duke commanded his soldiers to attack by mounting the wall immediately.

Appendix B: Commentators on the Hua Yuan vs. Yang Zhen Conflict (*Zuo zhuan*, Duke Xuan, 2nd year)

Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101 CE)	Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (d. 83 CE)	Anonymous commentator	Du Yu 杜預 (222–284 CE)
a) Identifies Shu Zang as a Song official.	a) Identifies Shu Zang to be Yang Zhen.	a) Identifies Shu Zang as a person from Song.	a) Identifies Shu Zang to be Yang Zhen.
b) Says the gatekeeper initiated the dialogue, saying to Hua Yuan, “ ‘It was your horses that did so.’ ”	b) Says Yang Zhen initiated the dialogue, saying to Hua Yuan, “ ‘It was your horses that did so.’ ”	b) Says a person from Song initiated the dialogue, saying to Hua Yuan, “ ‘It was the horses that did so.’ ”	b) Says Hua Yuan initiated the dialogue, saying to Yang Zhen, “ ‘It was your horses that did so.’ ”
c) Takes Shu Zang to mean, “ ‘You were captured by Zheng because of your horses.’ ”	c) Takes Yang Zhen to mean, in self-defense, “ ‘We raced into the Zheng forces because your horses did so, not I.’ ”	c) Takes the Song person to mean, “ ‘You were able to return because of the ransom in horses.’ ”	c) Takes Hua Yuan to mean, “ ‘It was not your fault that we were defeated, but the horses’ fault.’ ”
d) Takes Hua Yuan to mean, “ ‘No, it was not the horses, but Yang Zhen the person who rode them into the Zheng forces.’ ”	d) Takes Hua Yuan to mean, “ ‘No, it was not the horses, but you . . . who drove them.’ ”	d) Takes Hua Yuan to mean, “ ‘I returned, not owing to the horse ransom, but to human affairs [i.e. diplomacy].’ ”	d) Takes Yang Zhen to mean, “ ‘No, it was not the horses’ fault, but my own fault.’ ”
e) Reads qiren ye 其人也 as referring to “ ‘the person.’ ”	e) Reads qiren ye 其人也 as referring to “ ‘you.’ ”	e) Reads qiren ye 其人也 as referring to “ ‘my people.’ ”	e) Reads qiren ye 其人也 as referring to “ ‘I myself.’ ”
f) Takes he 合 as “ ‘matched’ ” in “ ‘ransom was matched.’ ”	f) Takes he 合 as “ ‘matched’ ” in “ ‘reply was matched.’ ”	f) Takes he 合 as “ ‘matched’ ” in “ ‘ransom was matched.’ ”	f) Takes he 合 as “ ‘matched’ ” in “ ‘reply was matched.’ ”
g) Takes laiben 來奔 as “ ‘I came in flight to Song.’ ”	g) Takes laiben 來奔 as “ ‘Yang Zhen came in flight to Lu.’ ”	g) Takes laiben 來奔 as “ ‘I came in flight to Song.’ ”	g) Takes laiben 來奔 as “ ‘Yang Zhen came in flight to Lu.’ ”
h) Takes jihe er laiben 既合而來奔 as belonging to Hua Yuan’s speech.	h) Takes jihe er laiben 既合而來奔 as belonging to third-person narration.	h) Takes jihe er laiben 既合而來奔 as belonging to Hua Yuan’s speech.	h) Takes jihe er laiben 既合而來奔 as belonging to third-person narration.

