Nominal Things

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Bronzes in the Making of Medieval China

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Introduction

The Conundrum of the Chalice

> The chalice is not a chalice. Where is the chalice? Where is the chalice?
>
> Confucius, *Analects* 6.25[1]

The conundrum of the chalice (*gu*) is a classical Chinese formulation of a universal problem. What do you do when words deceive? Language radically extends the boundaries of perception. It conveys the voices of the dead and the distant, and its capacity for description and abstraction allows us to know things that we cannot see. But its wondrous ability to extend experience is coupled with an inherent uncertainty. Language focuses attention on some aspects of experience at the expense of others. Its generalizations mask the phenomenal nuances of being. It obfuscates. It misleads. And it lies. How can one endeavor to see through the veil of language to the world beyond? The first step is the recognition of the problem itself—the realization that chalice and "chalice" are two things rather than one. Posing the conundrum forces recognition of a distinction between the world as is and the world as said. Once the name is distinguished from the thing so named, it becomes possible to interrogate their correspondence. The status of this correspondence between name and thing constitutes one of the core concerns of classical Chinese thought.

The conundrum gestures, further, to the mutual imbrication of language, ethics, and art-making in premodern China. Within the framework of Confucian ethics, the chalice was not simply a quotidian thing, but a powerful ritual implement that organized relations among human beings. To designate the

chalice was to direct the making of an otherwise unremarkable cup toward a particular end; to think, that is, of the social world that its making would produce, and in thinking of this world, to give moral significance to the work of making. Contemplating the denotation of things with names was thus inseparable from contemplating the morality of art. Here, and in the pages that follow, "art" refers to all material implements deployed in the practice of the "six arts" (*liu yi*) celebrated in normative Confucian representations and reenactments of classical antiquity: ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics, and by extension all material practices that Confucian scholars understood to be implicated in the classics.[2]

Most historical commentaries on the *Analects* read the conundrum as a metaphor for the ethical implications of names. As the eleventh-century Neo-Confucian Cheng Yi (1033–1107) purportedly commented, in reference to the passage: "If a ruler abandons the Way of the ruler, he is not a ruler. If a minister abandons the duties of the minister, there is no minister."[3] One classical response, attributed to the fourth-century exegete Fang Ning, and reiterated down through the centuries, plays on the Chinese homophony of human (*ren*) and humane (*ren*). "If a person is not *ren* (humane), they are not *ren* (human)."[4] As a conceptual structure, the conundrum of the chalice provides a template for deriving terms of social identity from normative categories of social action. Neither bloodline, nor appointment, makes you what you are. You earn your status, rather, by performing the duties that accord with your place in a social hierarchy. As Confucius remarked elsewhere in his teachings: "A ruler rules, a minister ministers. A father fathers, and a son is a son" (*jun jun chen chen fu fu zi zi*).[5]

But the conundrum also speaks literally to a practical problem that gained urgency as successive regimes attempted to use the Confucian classics as the blueprint for building an ethical polity. That problem was pernicious in its simplicity. The classics were replete with names: the dulcet names of birds and beasts and flowers in the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*); the legendary names of ancient states and rulers in the *Revered Documents* (*Shangshu*); and, most importantly, the myriad names of vestments and offertory vessels and archery equipment and carriages and insignia that filled the Three Ritual Classics (*San li*). Through their nominative intricacy, this final category of ritual names traced the finely attenuated structures whereby the house of Zhou, the last of the great dynasties of antiquity, had purportedly ordered all under Heaven. And yet by the time the teachings of Confucius and his followers were being collated and canonized in the Han court at the turn of the first century BCE, the *things* to which these words referred had been lost.[6] After five hundred years of warfare and turmoil between the decline of the Zhou and the rise of the Han, no one had a complete picture of which ritual implements accorded with which names in the classics.[7] How, then, was one to reactivate the power

of Zhou rites? Would giving Zhou names to new things suffice? Or did one have to reconstruct the things to which those names once referred? And if so, how? Resolving that quandary became one of the central problems of classical exegesis.

So the chalice was more than an allegory. Its salience as a metaphor stemmed from the literal problem that it inscribed.[8]

This book investigates the exegetical tradecraft of making names into things. The tools of this craft were artistic—brushes, paper, woodblocks, and rubbings. Its designs were scholastic, premised on complex and learned explications of the ritual liturgies preserved in the Confucian classics. Because these liturgies were organized around the deployment of specific objects in time and space, the exegetical work of explaining the meaning of the words in these liturgies was simultaneously a matter of visualizing the forms of the things those words denoted. The choices that the anonymous artisans in the workshops of medieval Chinese courts made about when and what to weave, throw, sculpt, and stitch were predicated upon pictures drawn and dimensions supplied by classically educated officials appointed by the emperor to oversee the management of the annual, seasonal, and daily rites that structured courtly life and instantiated imperial authority.[9] Ritual was a bureaucratic endeavor, and it was everywhere. It included everything from vastly expensive, multiday sacrifices to Heaven and Earth to the fine variations in color and pattern that distinguished the liveries of ranked officials. The hierarchy of the imperial state was enormously complex, and all of its complexity was visually manifested in the garments officials and soldiers wore, the implements they carried, the insignia on their banners, the ornamentation on their chariots, and the vessels holding their offerings to their ancestors.

The vast majority of this art is lost to us. Echoes survive in tomb murals and burial goods. The relationships between these fragmentary, chance survivals and the formally authorized matter of the imperial state are difficult to determine—normative expectations and actual practice regularly diverged.

But what we do have, remarkably, are many of the designs upon which these objects were based: the pictures that scholars drew of the hundreds of different robes, hats, vessels, and vehicles named in the ritual classics. The prodigious exegete Zheng Xuan (127–200 CE) is the earliest recorded scholar to have produced a substantial corpus of such illustrations.[10] Zheng straddled the fault lines of earlier debates over the meaning and content of the classics, and his work became paradigmatic for the generations of classical scholars that followed. The pictures that Zheng and his successors produced tell us a great deal about the interpretive mechanisms they devised to flesh out the laconic skeleton of the ritual text into a loquacious body of actual practice.[11] This body of visual evidence also reveals that a dramatic transformation in the making of names occurred in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

This transformation shook the foundations of state authority, and underwrote many of the wider changes in classical hermeneutics and scholarly praxis for which that era—the Northern Song (960–1127)—is remembered.

The change was driven by a small coterie of antiquarians working largely outside the auspices of the imperial court and its state-sponsored scholarly projects. Taking advantage of the relative stability of the era and the expanding availability of reprographic media like woodblock printing and rubbing, these scholars began to make and circulate impressions of the inscriptions cast into the bodies of ancient bronze ritual vessels. Although they were not entirely sure of the date of the vessels when they began, most of the vessels that initially attracted their attention had been cast during the Western Zhou dynasty (ca. 1045–771 BCE), a period during which the casting of long, commemorative inscriptions on ritual bronzes had flourished. As early as the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), scholars had consulted the inscriptions on ancient bronzes to understand the historical development of the Chinese script. But the new generation of Song epigraphers understood themselves to be doing something different from their Han forebears. Whereas earlier paleographers had treated the inscriptions simply as disembodied examples of writing divorced from the material objects into which they were inscribed, Song epigraphers read the inscriptions in dialogue with the physical vessels on which those inscriptions had been found. As they did this, they made what was, for them, a striking observation: the bronzes were self-naming. In other words, the inscription on each vessel frequently named the typological category to which the vessel bearing that inscription belonged: "This *ding* (cauldron) was cast by . . ." "This *gui* (tureen) was cast to honor . . ." And so forth.

These names were not unfamiliar, by and large, to the scholars who found them on the bronzes. Once they had deciphered the archaic logographs that had been used to inscribe the names, they recognized that they belonged to the family of ritual names passed down in the Three Ritual Classics and other canonical works. The presence of these names in the inscriptions was not surprising in and of itself. Contemporaneous writers often referred by name to the place or the object upon which they were inscribing their words, and they had been doing so for centuries. What was surprising were the designs of the vessels so named. The long line of ritual exegetes who followed Zheng Xuan had produced a substantial corpus of illustrations of the names in the classical canon. This corpus had been collated and revised in the mid-tenth century by the court scholar Nie Chongyi (active mid-tenth century) and canonized by Taizu (r. 960–976), the founding emperor of the Song. The eleventh-century scholars who undertook the study of ancient bronzes were intimately familiar with Nie's illustrations; Taizu's son and successor Taizong had ordered them reproduced on the walls of the main lecture hall of the State Academy (*Guoxue*), one of the most prestigious institutes of learning in Song China.[12]

What the Song epigraphers discovered was that the actual self-named objects in their hands looked very different from the identically named objects in the court's canonical illustrations. In addition to basic discrepancies in shape and décor, the ancient bronzes presented a host of other problems of classification. They failed to demonstrate the variety of formal subcategories represented under each nominal type in the canonical illustrations, and they suggested that certain names which had long been understood as referring to specific types of vessels were in fact collective terms for ritual vessels in general. But their most important implication was more fundamental: collectively speaking, the self-named antiquities demonstrated that the interpretive methods that Nie Chongyi and his forebears had used to reconstruct the ritual forms of antiquity were fundamentally flawed. The decipherment of the bronzes, in other words, undermined not only the canonical forms themselves, but the entire underlying hermeneutic—the operating assumptions, reading strategies, and standards of validity—that earlier generations of scholars had brought to the classics.

In the wake of these discoveries, the imperial court developed a new hermeneutic. Mobilizing the proceeds of eleventh-century antiquarian scholarship, they derived new formal schemata from the juxtaposition of classical names and ancient things. These new schemata formed the basis for the next millennium of Confucian ritual facture and profoundly influenced the wider production of liturgical and decorative art. Their visual and conceptual aftereffects reverberate to this day in the ritual implements of East Asian temples, Sinitic vocabularies of formal analysis, and symbolic interpretations of early Chinese art. On the most fundamental level, the reordering of classical schemata that transpired over the course of the Northern Song changed the way scholars endeavored to manifest the written models of antiquity in the actual matter of their present. The aim of this book is to the explain how this change occurred.

My central argument is that ancient bronze vessels were not mere passengers in this process of transformation, but active, agentic things that influenced the transformation itself. Their agency lay dormant for centuries, embedded in the inscriptions in their bellies and the zoomorphic patterns on their surfaces, until it was awakened by the empirical dispositions of eleventh-century epigraphers. But once deciphered and aroused, bronzes elbowed their way into scholarly discourse as garrulous, disruptive things—dangerous supplements which upended the assumptions of a millennium of classical scholarship. In so doing, they powerfully endorsed a new, more synthetic approach to understanding the normative models of the ancient Sages and Former Kings described in the Confucian classics. Through close analyses of two of the world's oldest surviving antiquarian catalogs—Lü Dalin's *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (*Kaogutu*, 1092) and the court-sponsored *Revised Illustrations of the Manifold*

Antiquities of the Xuanhe Hall (*Chongxiu Xuanhe Bogutu*, 1123, hereafter *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated*)—this book examines the interpretive mechanisms of this new approach, tracing the processes whereby the complex, variable forms of ancient bronzes were reduced to nameable features and reproducible schemata. By explaining how the manifest coincidence of word and thing in the self-naming bronzes guided scholars toward a new method of transforming the words in the classics into actual material things, I endeavor to highlight the instruments that brought the cacophonous bronzes into harmony.

Of course, bronzes were just one section of this orchestra, and they were never sufficient in and of themselves. Their agency—in an essential sense, their capacity to affect other things—did not arise from a subjective, autonomous will, either in the reasoning of medieval scholars who spoke of bronzes "emerging" (*chu*) from the earth, or in my reasoning as a historian. But they were also more than merely inert things tumbling through history as occasional objects of human contemplation. Their voice was no less real for being metaphoric. Inspired by early Chinese notions of the productive work of naming and the responsive capacity of things, and the ways in which these notions resonate with the reticulated actant-networks proposed by such contemporary theorists as Alfred Gell, Bruno Latour, and Bernard Stiegler, this book endeavors to articulate the relations that gave bronzes this voice, and to tune our ears to that voice's historical cadences.[13] Medieval scholars thought *about* things, but the things that they thought were also entangled in things. It is impossible to disentangle the content of their ideas from the technologies of writing and drawing that brought those ideas into being, and from the influences that the objects they described and drew exerted on those technologies. All arose together. My aim in these pages is to tease out one small but revealing dimension of their codependency.

This approach entails reading texts somewhat differently than they are often read by intellectual historians of early and medieval Chinese thought. I am less interested here in the explicit arguments that scholars advanced or the specific personal and historical circumstances that motivated these arguments. My focus, rather, is on the more fundamental, underlying sense of the world that gave these arguments purchase, and the implicit, even unconscious assumptions and values that scholars developed through their embodied interactions with both their objects of study and the wider technical arrangements in which these objects were situated. Rather than attempt to offer a comprehensive account of all of the different things medieval scholars said about bronzes—a thick description that would, in any case, require far more space than these pages allow—my goal is to reveal the intellectual and technical undercurrents that gave bronzes their claim on the wider scholarly imagination of the eleventh century. I must stress, from the outset, that this claim presents itself in shadow, far less explicitly than the overt assertions of the

written record that constitute the primary, familiar domain of the intellectual historian. Some Northern Song writers had a great deal to say about bronzes, but most said nothing at all. Those who did write about bronzes did so in a decidedly "antiquarian" vein, distinguishing their private musings about the names and functions of ancient vessels from their more public disquisitions on politics, morality, and virtue. But even if most writers were silent on the specific subject of archaic bronzes, the tensions that those bronzes embodied, the unstated anxieties that made them significant and that they, in turn, endorsed and assuaged, were everywhere in the Northern Song. Even those who never said a word about bronzes were responding to a world that was being changed by them. Like the metal with which they were cast, bronzes were an *influence*—a liquiform influx into the interstices of cultural life.[14] To perceive both the forces behind this flow and the way it helped cohere the minds and the matter of the Northern Song, we have to read between the lines and mine the interstitial space between literary form and intellectual argument.[15]

Leveraging the materiality of Song antiquarian scholarship—its techniques of graphic representation and physical mechanisms of transmission—offers a new way of grappling with one of the thorniest quandaries in the intellectual historiography of medieval China.[16] Scholars have long regarded the eleventh century as a period that witnessed both an amalgamative, synthetic approach to interpretation—a hermeneutic that operated through the reduction of the manifest complexity of a text to a limited, abstract set of moral values—and a passion for the empirical observation of the material world.[17] On the surface, these tendencies seem to point in different directions: combinatory and reductive on the one hand, differentiating and expansive on the other.[18] The recurrence of identical names and matching motifs on different bronzes gave Song antiquarians the means to pursue both tendencies at once: to investigate ancient bronzes as unique, irreducible things and to discern, through the relationships between the forms of these things and the words in their inscriptions, underlying principles of normative design. In so doing, bronzes provided a space where Song intellectuals could practice the coherence-seeking, systematizing logic of their day while simultaneously seeking new knowledge in the fabric of the world around them. They helped to make it possible to imagine that the "investigation of the things" (*gewu*), as Zhu Xi (1130–1200) famously argued, could mean "penetrating to the heart of their coherence" (*qiongzhi shiwu zhi li*).[19] Invested in dense patterns of mental, verbal, graphic, and material praxis, bronzes assisted in weaving the otherwise divisive tendencies of Song thought into the coherent philosophical vision that would come to be known as Neo-Confucianism (*Daoxue*).[20] By sustaining and facilitating this wider process of intellectual transformation, they evolved from strange, portentous entities on the margins into the everyday fabric of cultured life.

Although scholars of China's Song-Yuan era (tenth to fourteenth centuries CE) have largely set aside the teleological, Eurocentric yardstick of "early modernity" that influential figures like Naitō Konan (1866–1934) and his pupil Miyazaki Ichisada (1901–1995) advanced as a framework for understanding historical change in this period, the field remains broadly materialist in orientation, insofar as most scholars continue to invoke the constellation of social, technological, economic, and demographic factors that Naitō and Miyazaki identified as the principal forces driving large-scale historical change.[21] While recognizing the role that these forces played in establishing the necessary conditions for China's medieval transformation, this book locates the sufficient causes for the actual changes that we witness in the medieval archive in the more proximate and immediate domain of interaction between particular humans and specific things. By focusing on interactions between the mechanisms of naming, writing, and drawing by which medieval scholars gave meaning to material things, and the practices of ritual, sculpture, and casting that produced the material world they experienced, the following chapters articulate one key dimension of the recursive processes of embedded subjectivity, or what Gilbert Simondon termed the "technicity," that transformed the structure of medieval experience.[22]

Making Facture Sensible

Underlying this story of disruption and harmonization is another, more conceptual argument about the status of representation in the historiography of art. This argument proceeds from the challenge of calibrating the languages of contemporary theory to the subjectivities of medieval China in a way that activates the power of this language to draw forth the unstated assumptions of these subjects, while simultaneously recognizing that those assumptions were grounded in concepts that critical theory cannot accept. We can alienate these concepts and look at them from the outside, but we cannot accommodate them as our own, for to do so would undermine the entire edifice of intelligibility upon which our contemporary structures of reasoning and languages of argumentation depend. Contrary to what some might claim, there is no ethnographic way out of this quandary, no way to rewrite history in Chinese terms,[23] as contemporary Chinese argumentation has been so thoroughly transformed by the forces of modernity that proceeding from the concepts in question would appear as alien to a contemporary speaker of Chinese as it would to a contemporary speaker of English.[24] The medieval Chinese past is a foreign country, and it will remain so, for everyone.

But we can confront the assumptions of this country, and on the field between its concepts and our own, we can look for opportunities to yield ground and withdraw to heights that allow us to see the lay of the land from less asser-

tive vantage points. To undertake such tactical retreats, we must begin by temporarily setting aside two assumptions that we have inherited from Western philosophy. The first is the assumption that there is a qualitative distinction between being and knowing.[25] Distinguishing writing from text, pictures from images, and things from objects—and thereby undertaking what are, in effect, the essential operations of contemporary literary, visual, and thing theory—only becomes possible by assuming, from the outset, that a doubling occurs in the act of perception which generates a second, representational domain that is not immediately available to the senses but nevertheless fundamental to the ways in which human beings make and communicate meaning. Just as writing becomes text when it is unshackled from the ground of the page, the picture, to follow a line of reasoning proposed by W. J. T. Mitchell, becomes an image by undergoing a radical process of abstraction and simplification:

> The image, then, is a highly abstract and rather minimal entity that can be evoked with a single word. It is enough to name an image to bring it to mind—that is, to bring it into consciousness in a perceiving or remembering body. Panofsky's notion of the "motif" is relevant here, as the element in a picture that elicits cognition and especially recognition, the awareness that "this is that," the perception of the nameable, identifiable object that appears as a virtual presence, the paradoxical "absent presence" that is *fundamental to all representational entities* [emphasis mine].[26]

Although, as Mitchell observes, the image/picture binary is only made possible by exploiting a vernacular English distinction unavailable in French or German,[27] it nevertheless proceeds logically from a much more fundamental distinction between the exteriority of the world and the interiority of the mind which sustains, across most modern languages, Cartesian dualism, the distinction between epistemology and ontology, and even, by way of opposition, the project of phenomenology.[28]

Because the ancient Greeks used various practices of art-making as metaphors for the operations of the mind, those operations became colored with their aesthetic biases. Aristotle likened the affections produced "by means of perception in the soul" to a sort of picture (*zōgraphēma*), and Plato drew a connection between an impression in a block of wax and the question of likeness (*eikōn*) to conceptualize the operations of memory.[29] As Paul Ricoeur explains, these characterizations bound perception and memory to both the verbal phantoms (*eidōla legomena*)—the "spoken copies of everything capable of making us believe that something is true"—and the plastic and graphic arts of likeness-making (*tekhnē eikastikē*), which in turn saddled perception and memory with the same capacity for error and deceit that Plato associated with mimesis in general.[30] The very idea that the mind might misapprehend

truth derived, in part, from the notion that apprehension itself involved the making of copies.

The second assumption, which follows from the first, is the logic of relations which sustains, if only heuristically, the distinction between word and image, and through this distinction, the dialectic between the representational practices of language and art and the "vibrant materiality" of things.[31] If the "linguistic turn" of twentieth-century philosophy has now been followed a "pictorial turn"—that is, "a recognition that philosophy is mediated [not only] by language but by the entire range of representational practices, including images"—and if it follows that the broader rise of "theory" constitutes a shift from inquiring into nature to inquiring into the mechanisms whereby nature is made knowable,[32] then it would be safe to say that we are living in an era when it is very difficult to think without thinking in terms of representation. The persistent resistance to reifying the distinction between word and image, the effort to move "beyond the word and image opposition,"[33] and the long-running interest in exploring the relations between writing and its many likenesses have all worked to sustain the word and image duopoly as a heuristic feint,[34] a bifurcation to which no one is committed but in which all are invested as a catalyst for inquiry into representational practices writ large.

Although the rise of affect theory, the resuscitation of the Heideggerian thing, and the "ontological" bent of much recent anthropology could all be seen as attempts to rend the fabric of image and text that poststructuralism wrapped so tightly around the Real, it is perhaps more honest to see them as accepting image and text and pursuing what Mitchell terms the "X" between them.[35] That X, which designates the "calm sand of the page" upon which all representations are inscribed, is Mitchell's way of characterizing the uninscribed space, or remainder, wherein some unrepresented reality is presumed to reside.[36] But of course, the very necessity and desirability of articulating a space beyond representation is predicated on the assumption that representation *is*. One of the clearest signs that we remain firmly embedded in an episteme premised on representational thinking is the fact that Eduardo Kohn's magnificent *How Forests Think*, which perhaps more than any other recent work in anthropology exemplifies the "ontological" critique of anthropocentrism and rejection of the nature/culture distinction, nonetheless relies on the representational logic of Peircean semiotics to articulate the elements of sign recognition that humans share with plants and animals.[37]

My goal in this book is not to undermine this episteme—the very standpoint from which I write and the language that I use depend upon it. Nor is it to critique the fundamental correctness or present intellectual value of sustaining the tension between words and images. That tension has stimulated the rise of a variety of new fields, from visual culture to media theory, that are beginning to create space in the humanities for a host of previously unvoiced,

suppressed, and otherwise marginalized subjectivities. The voices from early and medieval China that I examine here are among these now more readily apprehensible subjects.

Instead, what I propose are a series of case studies that demonstrate what the representational assumptions underlying the word and image paradigm inhibit our ability to see. In so doing, I hope to destabilize some of the ingrained prejudices and habits of thought that have led us to marginalize ways of making that can seem minor or nonsensical from the perspective of contemporary literary and visual theory. This marginality has ensured that the traditions considered in this book are largely unknown to the wider field of art history. And while the products of these traditions are familiar to scholars in the field of medieval Chinese studies, and increasingly to scholars engaged in the comparative study of "world antiquarianism," the indecipherability of the assumptions that sustained these traditions has led most scholars to naturalize them into representational frameworks. Virtually every object considered in these pages has been characterized as either an illustration or a reproduction. The secondary status implied by such appellations has, if only subconsciously, encouraged scholars to inscribe them into established narratives of social, political, and cultural history, rather than treating them as prompts for investigation in their own right.

In asserting this approach, I take inspiration from Brook Ziporyn's rigorous attention to "safeguarding the strangeness of the text" in order to "protect us from reading into it just what we have always assumed, forcing us to stretch our conceptual and imaginative powers in the attempt to make sense of it."[38] Ziporyn argues for suspending judgment, and indeed, for pursuing the suspension of judgment, as both a central tenet and method of inquiry:

> I will try to read every thinker I discuss here as if he is absolutely right about everything. I will not point out fallacies and inconsistencies. The nature of the project requires that each position be spelled out from within, requires the expositor to serve as each contradictory position's spokesman, as it were. I take it for granted that every possible position is in some sense or other "coherent"—it is simply a question of coming up with what other premises would be required in the background to make its coherence appear to the reader's eye. Here again I believe that the only way to overcome the hegemony of truth claims is to make plausible multiple conflicting truth claims. For to critique a philosophical position really only establishes more firmly the unseen philosophical position from which the critique is made: the unquestioned premises or rules of discourse that one wields in making the critique. Critiques of hegemony only establish the hegemony of the critique. More boldly, I would claim that a critique of any philosophical position is really a failure of nerve and imagination, of subjecting oneself to the alterations in

one's implicit framing notions of legitimacy that would be required to make it plausible.[39]

The same coherences that Ziporyn discerns in texts are also present in things. By extending his approach from thinking to making and from philosophy to history, it becomes possible to discern an alternative history of facture in which our conventional boundaries between the writing of words, the drawing of pictures, and the sculpting of things fall away in favor of a paradigm more revelatory than representational.

When we take the products of early and medieval Chinese lexicography and ritual studies seriously and inquire into the emic ways of thinking that made them seem plausible, persuasive, and powerful, several divergences from the representational paradigms of Western philosophy become evident. The most essential is that the early imperial scholars of the Confucian canon did not assume that rendering one thing in a new way necessarily constituted an act of doubling that generated a problematic relationship between the original thing and its copy. This was true both at the level of perception and in the domain of art.

Because the composers of the core texts of the Confucian canon did not proceed from the Aristotelian assumption that the world was full of puzzles (*aporiai*) that human beings were naturally compelled to investigate, they did not treat consciousness, perception, and morality as discrete subjects of philosophical inquiry. Instead, they explained the operations of the mind (*xin*) and the senses (*guan*) within a normative framework of moral subjectivity. The canonical texts are not entirely consistent in their articulation of how these operations work, but they proceed, on the whole, from the shared assumption that things are agentic, in the sense that they necessarily stimulate changes in whatever they encounter, that these transformations occur automatically, and that the function of art is to regulate these transformations.

Canonical authorities like the "Great Preface" (*Daxu*) of the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*) and the "Record of Music" (*Yueji*) chapter of the *Record of Rites* (*Liji*) assert that all affections, sensations, and feelings that arise in human beings do so because the minds of these human beings are stirred (*gan*) by external things (*wu*).[40] At first, these feelings are formless, but soon they overflow their human vessels and assume form as sound and movement. In a memorable passage, the "Great Preface" describes the sensing body as an assemblage of release valves for the affective pressure within: "The affections are stirred within and take on form in speech. When speech is inadequate, we let them out in sighs. When sighing is inadequate, we sing them. When singing is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance them and our feet tap them."[41] The basic elements of expression—words, sound, and movement—emerge spontaneously from the body as if from a bubbling spring.

But these elements are inchoate. As both texts go on to explain, it is only after they are organized into patterns (*wen*) that the feeling which generated them becomes apprehensible to others. This patterning can take many forms; poetry (*shi*), music (*yue*), and ritual (*li*) are the foci of the *Classic of Poetry* and *Record of Rites*, but it is clear that the operating definition of *wen* extended to writing, weaving, ornamentation, and a range of other arts. Whatever form it took, this process of formalization and organization took the inarticulate feelings of the sensing subject and sculpted them into a new thing that had the capacity to convey the original affect to someone who had not experienced it in person. The most important of these remote audiences were the ruler, who by hearing the songs of his domain could come to know whether his people were full of happiness, anger, or lament; and the historian, who by reading the poems of the past could come to know whether the governance of the day was harmonious or degenerate.

Because these formal practices, broadly conceived, produced things, and these things automatically stimulated reactions on the part of those who encountered them, the system also worked in the opposite direction as a mechanism for regulating human relations. This is why the editor(s) of the "Great Preface" found it justifiable to claim that, by means of poetry, "the former kings managed the relations between husbands and wives, perfected the respect due to parents and superiors, gave depth to human relations, beautified their indoctrination of the people, and changed local customs."[42] By attending to the songs that people heard, the tunes to which they danced, and the liturgies they performed, the virtuous ruler sculpted them into a harmonious polity.

The "Record of Music" recognized that different emotions arose in different people in response to the same stimulus, and that not all people were equally receptive to the harmonizing potential of a given art. However, it responded to this observation not by questioning the automatic continuity between stimulus and response, and positing, in the manner of the philosophers of ancient Greece, that the actual stimulus and perceived stimulus were somehow distinct from one another, but by emphasizing the importance of sensitivity on the part of the ruler in selecting the stimulus. From the perspective of the "Record," the qualities of the human mind that determine its reaction to a given stimulus—the wrathful mind that screams or the happy mind that hums—arise not from within the mind itself, but from its previous exposure to other things. This is why "the former kings exercised caution in what might cause stirring" (*xianwang shen suo yi gan zhi*). By deploying the appropriate stimuli at the right time, the virtuous ruler roots out the emotional detritus of earlier stimuli and tills the minds of his subjects into smooth, even furrows. Rites, music, and punishments are all presented as a continuum of moral instruments that the ruler uses selectively and experimentally to clear the field.

Because the field is never constant, adaptability is a moral imperative. When rites fail, he tries music, and if music fails, he offers punishment. The caliber of his virtue is determined by no more, or less, than his capacity to sense the appropriate tool for the moment.

For centuries, generations of canonically educated scholars and officials treated the assertions of the *Record of Rites* and *Classic of Poetry* as axiomatic, and invoked them in support of a wide range of (often contradictory) arguments. The assumptions that made these assertions seem plausible and persuasive thus became assumptions that pervaded scholarly discourse in general. The presumption of spontaneous response necessary to sustain the notion of the moral instrument implied that the mind, as such, had no subjective, a priori agency. Whatever effect the mind might have on one's response to a particular thing was simply an echo of its earlier encounters with other things.

The mind could, of course, be cultivated, and thereby trained to find balance amid the ceaseless tumult of things, but this process of cultivation was itself mediated by things. As explained in the "Record," there is "no limit to the things which affect human beings."[43] These affects are experienced as varying degrees of attraction (*hao*) and repulsion (*e*). If those feelings are not regulated within, if humans are allowed to be transformed by each and every thing they encounter, the text continues, then their "natural coherence" (*tianli*)—that is, their harmonious integration into the world around them—will be annihilated, and their base desires will proceed unchecked. To prevent this "great disordering of the Way" (*Dao zhi da luan*), the text announces:

> The Former Kings instituted ritual and music, and humans were regulated by them. With rough clothes and measured wailing, the Kings regulated the time of mourning. With bells, drums, shields, and axes, they harmonized repose and happiness. With weddings, hats, and hairpins, they distinguished men from women. With archery contests and feasts in the districts, they coordinated interaction and exchange.[44]

Rites and music, here, are trebly instrumentalized: they are directed to a particular end, they achieve this end through the deployment of literal instruments like bells and drums, and those instruments are in turn written into text as synecdochic figures for the rituals in which they were deployed. "Hats" and "hairpins" matter not only for their use in coming-of-age ceremonies, but as mechanisms, simultaneously verbal and visceral, for the articulation of ceremony in general. Intellectually speaking, the reason that scholars of the Confucian classics devoted such attention to particular categories of things like implements (*qi*) and garments (*fu*), is because those things were understood to be the instruments whereby the human mind was prepared for its

inevitable encounter with all other things. Since the mind that emerged from this calculus was essentially an equation of things—the myriad things that generated responses and the special, ceremonial things that calibrated one's responsivity, the very notion of a distinction between things in the world and their impressions in the mind was unthinkable. The mind reacted, responded, and recalibrated, but it did not represent.[45]

Although the canonical texts do not say this outright, the positions they take also imply an aesthetic of affect. If the art of ritual and music is the patterning of inchoate responses to stimulus into apprehensible form, it follows that the success of that art is measured by the apprehensibility of the responses it patterns. Since these responses are simply the spontaneous sum of the affects of things, both the affect of the immediate stimulus and the affects of the manifold earlier stimuli that have conditioned the mind to respond as it does, the caliber of art stems from its capacity to convey the affective sum of multiple things rather than its proximity to the appearance of any particular thing. The particular form of the pattern—whether it is a poem or a picture, whether or not it resembles the thing that prompted the affect being patterned—pales in comparison to its efficacy as an agent of emotional communication and moral transformation. The anticipation that follows from the presumption of automatic affect makes art inherently teleological, and it conditions the critic to assess it on the basis of the world it creates rather than the world it reflects.

This is, admittedly, a narrow reading of a handful of texts that were part of a complex and varied intellectual landscape. The issue is not whether this reading adequately encompasses all the possible ways in which people in early China imagined the relationship between the mind and the world, but that it encompasses one possible—and as I hope to show, influential—way in which they conceived that relationship, a way that also, importantly, happens to be rather different from the way we are accustomed to thinking about it today. It is this heuristic value, this way of highlighting the limits of the horizons wrought by the assumption of the mind as a representational organ, that I am endeavoring to articulate.

When we set aside the notion that writing and picturing inherently and distinctively represent something that already exists, in favor of a paradigm in which music, writing, picturing, and punishments were collectively understood as an instrumental continuum of moral means, the things that the early imperial scholars of the Confucian canon made—the commentaries that they composed, the scripts with which they wrote them, and the pictures that they drew into them—no longer sit so easily in the categories of image and text. They remain amenable to the discrete logics of visual and textual analysis, but simultaneously remind us that those logics are our logics, and invite us to reconsider them from a perspective more proximate to that of their makers. That perspective should remain interpretive—it should remain, that is, a *herme-*

neutics, but it should proceed from the assumption that their words, scripts, pictures, and things all constituted a singular and coherent mode of making, and it should direct attention toward the world they endeavored to generate through the things they made. It should pursue, in short, a *hermeneutics of facture*—an interpretation premised on the teleological technics of canonical Confucian scholarship.

When the history of scholarly efforts to extend the ritual lexicon of the canon into the manifest world of things is configured as a history of facture, an alternative story of representation resurfaces. Instead of presuming relations between signs and objects as the precondition for its narrative structure, and telling, for example, a history of changing relations between paintings and their subjects, or pictures and their meanings, this alternative account makes an actor of the stage, and gives representationalism itself a role to play. For when we forestall our most basic assumptions about what words and images are, and consider the matter of the Song antiquarian disruption from a less prejudicial position, we cannot but observe that the key force driving this disruption was none other than an emerging concern with representationalism itself. The difference is that in China this concern was not foundational, but a new twist in a story whose central tensions were already in place. And because it was merely an actor in the unfolding drama, it never enjoyed the unquestioned status of the mimetic stage of the Western tradition. It was a figure in history, and its role began at just the moment that the monumental ritual vessels of ancient China were preparing for their second act.

Bronzes rose from the yellow earth of the north China plain because the medieval Chinese prospectors who tapped the ancient tombs and forgotten hoards in which they lay heard the call of a new market. This market was an elite market—its customers were classically educated officials who knew texts like the *Record of Rites* by heart and who leveraged that knowledge to occupy some of the most powerful positions in the land—and it was fueled by scholarly desire. This desire, in turn, had many objects. Some, like the hunger to find an omen or a soothsayer in the earth, were older than the empire. Others, like the longing to make a memory endure, were timeless. But at its core, the will to possess corroded vessels inscribed with eerie signs was fueled by something new. So novel, in fact, that the men obsessed by it did not really have the words to describe what they were feeling, and so layered commonplaces about "reviving antiquity" and "seeking the Sages" over the subtext of their sentiment. When those layers are peeled back, what we find are uncannily familiar concerns—worries about the relationship between writing and meaning, script and semblance, pictures and things—that can make their authors feel disconcertingly modern. But they were not modern, and they inhabited a world that invested words and pictures with a revelatory potency that demanded accommodation.

The origins of this new anxiety about signs and their objects are complex—I argue in the pages that follow that a significant factor was changes in the media environment—but its consequences are plainly evident in the subjects that Song scholars selected and the things they chose to say about them. How they endeavored to reconcile an established vision of art as revelation with an emerging fear of representation says a great deal about the persistent power of the classical tradition to condition the distinctive empiricism that welled up from their forays into the earth. The practices of naming, drawing, and cataloging that grew out of this reconciliation established the essential contours of the traditions of knowledge production that the European inheritors of a different antiquarian tradition would encounter on the cusp of the early modern era half a millennium later.[46] By then, those traditions had spread across East Asia, and their echoes could be seen in everything from the representation of craft technologies in late Ming China to the encyclopedias of flora and fauna compiled in early Edo Japan.[47] The essential architecture of these traditions—their mechanisms for linking words to things, and the strategies they deployed to visualize these linkages—was erected on the Song conciliation of the essential semiological quandary of the new empiricism and the deeper, older challenge of grasping the unseen patterns that bound all things into a coherent totality. The contention of this book is that bronzes substantiated and encouraged that process of conciliation.

A Tale of Three Modes

This book traces transformation in normative technics through three discrete modes of facture: lexical pictures, empirical impressions, and schematic things. These modes emerged sequentially: the first in the canonical scholarship of the Eastern Han, the second in the investigations of Song antiquarians, and the third in the liturgical facture of the early twelfth-century court. The second and third modes each constituted a critical response to the mode that preceded them, embracing some of its techniques while simultaneously reconfiguring the relationship between words and things that determined its operative logic.

Each of the three sections of the book is devoted to one of these three modes of making. The introduction to each section highlights a single object that epitomizes the mode in question. The subsequent chapters prize apart the mutually imbricated techniques of conceptual reasoning, literary composition, and artistic visualization that made the object possible and persuasive. A significant portion of each section is intended primarily for non-China specialists and designed to articulate the essential dimensions of the classical tradition that informed and enabled the techniques examined in the balance of the section. In lieu of a broad overview, I home in on close readings of

specific texts that demonstrate the core assumptions at play while simultaneously illustrating the rhetorical styles of Chinese classicism.

Organized around a deceptively simple line drawing of a "chicken" *yi* vessel from Nie Chongyi's epochal *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (*Sanlitu*) of 961 CE, part I, "The Lexical Picture," examines the continuities between naming, lexicography, and classical exegesis in medieval China. Chapter 1 introduces the classical Confucian doctrine known as the "Rectification of Names" (*zheng ming*) and explains how this doctrine encouraged the assumption that aligning signs with their referents—titles with their officers, logographs with their words, names with their objects—was the wellspring of effective governance and moral order. By articulating the allegiance between verbal and visual insignia in early Chinese thought, and the ways in which these markers of rank and status provided the models for both language and ritual theory, I demonstrate why the intertwining of lexicography and ritual learning seemed self-evident to medieval Chinese classicists. Chapter 2 explains how Nie Chongyi mobilized the graphic assumptions of lexicography as a framework for his visual exegesis of the ritual canon. Just as graphical lexicographers utilized an amalgamative hermeneutic to weave the multivalent results of centuries of orthographic evolution into a coherent, universal system of written graphs, Nie integrated the traces of a millennium of graphic commentary into a synthetic system of one-to-one correspondences between pictures of words and pictures of names.

Prefaced with a meticulously drawn, woodblock-printed image of an ancient bronze *yi* vessel from the pages of Lü Dalin's *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*, part II, "The Empirical Impression," traces the processes whereby the synthetic systems examined in part I were dismantled. In place of the amalgamative hermeneutics of Nie Chongyi, eleventh-century scholars developed a new approach that was premised on the capacity of inscribed, self-naming bronzes to simultaneously substantiate the antiquity of the rites named in the Confucian classics *and* demonstrate the limits of the classics as a representation of those rites. By situating the antiquarian writings of these scholars within the intellectual milieu of their day, I explain why this dual capacity of the bronzes was so appealing. Chapter 3 introduces the intellectual culture of medieval Chinese antiquarianism by way of the influential polemicist Han Yu (768–824). Through close readings of two of Han Yu's most famous works, "Tracing the Way" and "Song of the Stone Drums," I trace the inception of three styles of thought that profoundly influenced the antiquarians of the eleventh century: a combinatory hermeneutic that stressed attention to abstract principles over formal particulars, an explicitly archaizing mode of reasoning premised on the assumption of a radical rupture between the ancient world and the more recent past, and a lyrical sensitivity to the materiality of the inscribed word. Chapter 4 follows the development of these

modes of engagement down to the eleventh century through a survey of the changing ways in which scholars responded to the textuality, visuality, and materiality of writing. I then turn to a close analysis of the early Song antiquarian circle surrounding the influential scholar Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), who was among the first to apprehend the significance of the self-naming bronze. Chapter 5 focuses on the relationship between the graphic and interpretive strategies deployed by Lü Dalin in his *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*. By highlighting the commonalities between Lü Dalin's hermeneutics and the investigations of the material world undertaken by such contemporaries as Shen Gua (1031–1095) and Su Shi (1037–1101), I show how bronzes endorsed and helped to define a direct, observational approach to the substantiation of classical names that undergird what I characterize as the "nominal empiricism" of Northern Song thought.

Introduced with the leering face of a monstrous Taotie on an archaistic bronze cauldron cast at the behest of the Song emperor Huizong (r. 1100–1126), part III, "The Schematic Thing," marks a shift in the book from techniques of picture making to techniques of three-dimensional sculpture and casting. Focusing on the imperial court's response to the antiquarian dismantling of the old ritual order, I explore the ways in which court catalogers and artists mobilized the logographic correspondences elucidated by Lü Dalin and his circle to produce a new synthetic order of schematic forms and substantive things. In short, part III identifies the design processes whereby the proceeds of the antiquarian investigations examined in part II were mobilized to produce an amalgamative system analogous to those explored in part I. Chapter 6 frames the discussion with an introduction to Song-era interpretations of the *Classic of Changes*, the hexagrammatic abstractions of which constituted the primary building blocks of the synthetic systems devised by the court. Focusing specifically on interpretations of the "Cauldron" hexagram, which alone among all the sixty-four hexagrams was characterized by the *Classic of Changes* as being a "schema" (*xiang*), I explain how Song exegetes came to recognize that the "cauldron"—as a word, hexagram, and manifest thing—constituted a model for schematically deriving designs from objects. I then turn to the ways in which the catalogers of Huizong's enormous collection of archaic bronzes mobilized this model to reduce the shapes and ornamentation of the bronzes to a system of visual and functional schemata. Through a close reading of *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated*, which, at more than four times the length of Lü Dalin's *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*, constitutes the most substantial antiquarian catalog published in medieval China, I endeavor to show how, in effect, the catalogers treated the bronzes as if they were hexagrams. Chapter 7 explains how the schemata generated through this process of reduction and conflation were utilized in the casting of new imperial bronzes. Through close comparisons between the ancient second and first

millennium BCE archaic bronzes collected by the court and the archaistic twelfth-century CE bronzes cast at the court, I elucidate the ways in which the artistic process of formal derivation mirrored the conceptual process of hexagrammatic schematization. In so doing, I demonstrate how the court resolved the discrepancy between the nominal categories of the classics and the manifest things of antiquity by creating objects that participated in both systems simultaneously.

The book concludes with a brief discussion of the ways in which the textualization and schematization of ancient bronzes explored in parts II and III worked to renew the lexical pictures of part I as a technology of visualization for a more empirical age. Exploring the connections between the visualization of ritual implements in the wake of the Song antiquarian disruption and the wider illustration of things in early modern encyclopedias and pharmacopoeias, I endeavor to explain why the finely detailed renderings of the antiquarian catalog were not, on the whole, adopted as a wider visualization strategy. Instead, the simplistic, categorical pictures of classical exegesis remained prominent. While the quality of the woodblock-printed images in encyclopedias and pharmacopoeias varied considerably from edition to edition, virtually all of the images echo the minimalistic qualities of the lexical pictures examined in part I. The antiquarian schematization of bronzes, I argue, reveals the underlying technics that sustained this strategy of visualization in the face of social and intellectual change.

On the Matter of Antiquarianism

Over the course of the past several decades, a small community of scholars, writing primarily in Chinese, have distinguished the object-oriented antiquarian practices of the Song from the wider, textually focused historiography of Chinese epigraphy (*jinshixue*). In conjunction with the flourishing international interest in comparative and world antiquarianism, this community has, for the most part, settled on "antiquarianism" (*guqiwuxue*, lit. "the learning of ancient artifacts") as a general name for a constellation of practices that included the collection and cataloging of ancient bronzes and jades, the study of ancient scripts and inscriptions, the reproduction of archaic ritual paraphernalia, and the wholesale importation of ancient bronze and jade designs into the decorative arts. Through the collective labor of this community, we now have a reasonably good sense of the *what* of Song antiquarianism—its people, texts, and objects. This book is deeply indebted to that labor.[48]

But despite tremendous advances in our knowledge of the subject, the *how* of Song antiquarianism remains something of a mystery. We know a great deal about what Song antiquarians did, but we have yet to develop a compelling picture of why.

Current scholarship on the subject typically attributes the eleventh-century interest in antiquities to a "passion for antiquity" that swept through the intellectual elite with the increasing prominence and influence of the "ancient style" (*guwen*) partisans in the 1040s and 50s.[49] Driven by the desire to strip away the obfuscations of canonical exegesis and Buddhist ceremony that they associated with the Han-Tang period (ca. first millennium CE), so the story goes, these champions of a purer, more explicitly Confucian authority recognized bronzes as unmediated traces of the moral order that had reigned in antiquity. By giving form to the implements named in the ritual classics and clarifying (through their inscriptions) the historical record of the early dynasties, ancient bronzes brought antiquity as an abstract ideal into the concrete realm of the physical world. In so doing, their physical presence in the lives of eleventh-century intellectuals visually manifested the "revival of antiquity" (*fu gu*) that they propounded in their writing.

In most renditions of Song antiquarianism, some variation of this narrative is presented as background for an inquiry whose attention is focused elsewhere—the origins of Chinese research on *qiwu* (objets d'art),[50] for example, or the history of collecting,[51] or the emergence of new hermeneutics.[52] Given the aims of such projects, the simplicity and clarity of the revival narrative is entirely understandable, even necessary. But it leaves one with tantalizing questions.

The most essential of these questions follow from the simple observation that the "cult of antiquity" was by no means new to the Song, nor particular to China. The early medieval scholars that Song antiquarians most forcefully rejected had also claimed to be manifesting the abstract ideal of antiquity in the material practices of their present. Tropes such as "reviving antiquity" or "cherishing antiquity" (*ai gu*) stretch back at least as far as the teachings of Confucius. They were central to the Old Text/New Text debate of Han exegesis, and they figured prominently in the literary aesthetics of the early medieval era.[53] If one considers the material evidence, it is even possible to trace the practice of appealing to antiquity as far back as the Shang dynasty (ca. sixteenth to eleventh century CE) penchant for collecting, repurposing, and imitating Neolithic jade carvings.[54] Similar themes echo throughout the history of humanity, and find manifestation in art-making traditions around the world.[55] In and of itself, claiming antiquity as an abstract ideal, and celebrating its resurrection amid the mundanity of the here and now, is not a phenomenon of a particular historical moment or place, but a core theme of history writ large.[56]

What is distinctive about the Song is that these tropes were invoked in conjunction with a new kind of practice. Although eleventh-century literati were not the first in China to collect ancient things, they were the first, as far as the evidence goes, to make and circulate catalogs of their collections. More

precisely, they were the first to systematically measure ancient bronzes, render them in graphic form, and decipher the ancient scripts cast into their surfaces. To explain the antiquarianism of the Song, we must explain why these empirical practices, in particular, suddenly seemed so urgent. Why did the matter of ancient bronzes suddenly become such an essential proxy for antiquity that classically educated scholars found it necessary to devise new technologies to categorize, reproduce, and share that materiality? To answer that question, we must set aside the historiographic category of antiquarianism and consider the more fundamental matter of the changing techniques that Song intellectuals used to calibrate the relationship between the world they experienced and the words they spoke. Thinking through the technologies deployed by scholars in and around the names of the ritual canon, and the assumptions that sustained these practices, is one way of doing so.

FIGURE 1.1 "Chicken *yi*" (*ji yi*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 14.1a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

PART

I

The Lexical Picture

The picture is disarmingly simple (Fig. 1.1). A single line traces the profile of what appears to be a cup, or perhaps a small urn. A second line, with a pair of acute angles, depicts a flared foot. Concentric ellipses describe a sharply adumbrated lip, and indicate that the container has a thick wall. The ellipses are the only indication that the picture represents a three-dimensional object. There is no modeling to convey volume or shadow. As a projection, the image is inconsistent; the ellipses extend it backward in space and suggest a slightly elevated perspective, but the acute angles and straight line at the bottom show the foot in absolute profile.

On the wall of the vessel is the image of bird. A network of hatch marks at its center suggests folded wings, while a pair of angled tridents below convey the characteristically back-bending legs of a bird. The pendant legs indicate that the bird is standing. Together with the prominent comb and substantial tail feathers, they suggest that it is a chicken. Like the vessel on which its image rests, the chicken is shown from multiple perspectives simultaneously. The head, body, and tail feathers are presented in profile, and the spacing of the legs conveys an attitude slightly forward of center, while the feet are shown from the top down. Apart from its placement, nothing about the image suggests its presence on a round, three-dimensional object. There is no foreshortening of the body to convey the curvature of the vessel. The flatness of the chicken accentuates the disunity of the picture's perspectives.

As an illusionistic representation of a material object, the picture is decidedly wanting. Its multiple perspectives seem naïve. It does not appear to have

been based on a close visual examination of an actual vessel or living chicken. But neither is it adequately diagrammatic, in the sense of being sufficiently detailed and providing the precise measures necessary to reproduce an actual object. And the rendering itself appears hasty; the vessel is slightly lopsided and the lines overall are loose and irregular. The apparent artlessness of the picture seems to invite nothing more than simple identification: this is the vessel's rim, here are the chicken's feet. In being so readily reducible to matter-of-fact language, the picture perfectly inverts the classical object of art history. This is no shield of Achilles, no object for exercising one's ekphrastic passions. This is a picture, it would seem, whose worth is far less than a thousand words.

And yet the intellectual complexity and political power of the historical forces that brought this picture into being suggest that we should not be too hasty in passing judgment on its value and interest. The picture was one of several hundred included in a woodblock-printed book of illustrations of Confucian ritual implements commissioned by the headmaster of the prefectural school in Zhenjiang, China, in 1175 CE. It was based on an earlier edition printed in the western region of Shu (modern Sichuan), which in turn derived from a set of illustrations submitted to the imperial throne by the scholar Nie Chongyi in 961 CE.[1] Those illustrations saw several incarnations. They were painted as murals on the wall of the State Academy in the capital Bianjing (modern Kaifeng).[2] It is also likely that at least one edition was printed by the court for distribution to regional schools.[3] The 1175 printing constitutes the oldest extant version of the pictures.

There has been a tendency in recent scholarship on these and other such printed pictures to interpret their simplicity in light of this complex history of transmission. Although no one has, to my knowledge, focused specifically on the question of why these pictures look the way they do, a number have implicitly suggested reasons for their appearance in the course of making other arguments. Most of these explanations proceed from the assumption that the extant images from 1175 differ substantially from the original, lost images of 961. The "crudeness" of the pictures, according to this line of reasoning, is a product of their derivation, the aftereffect of an unskilled copyist who transformed a finer image into the one we now have.[4] By implication, the original images of 961 are assumed to have been of higher quality, with finer, more even lines, a better sense of proportion, and a more coherent projection—in sum, the naturalistic representation by a skilled artist of an object close at hand.

This tendency is understandable given what we know about the wider context of image making at the time. At the very moment these pictures were being made, artists were producing some of the most naturalistic landscapes in the entire history of Chinese painting, works that were celebrated in their own day for their capacity to convey to their viewer an embodied sense of space. Painters associated with the Song court were renowned for their ability

to capture the distinctive patterns of a parakeet's feathers and the gossamer tracery of a grasshopper's wing. Printmakers were also creating extremely fine images for the frontispieces of Buddhist sūtras and other illustrated books.[5] The printed images associated with the cataloging of antiquities examined in parts II and III of this book demonstrate that producing detailed, persuasively three-dimensional renderings of objects was certainly among the capabilities of the era's illustrators. Thus the simplicity of the chicken cup cannot be attributed to a general culture of perception or period aesthetic.

But when the picture of the chicken vessel is set alongside other examples of "pictures of ritual" (*li tu*) or "pictures of ritual implements" (*liqi tu*), it becomes clear that its visual characteristics are symptomatic of the wider genre. Consider the three-footed vessels from Chen Xiangdao's *Book of Ritual* (*Li-shu*), completed in 1080 (Fig. 1.2), or the receptacle from Zhu Xi's *Shaoxi Era Illustrations of Confucian Rites for Prefectures and Counties* (*Shaoxi zhouxian shidian yitu*) of 1190–1194 (Fig. 1.3). Although the object is different in each

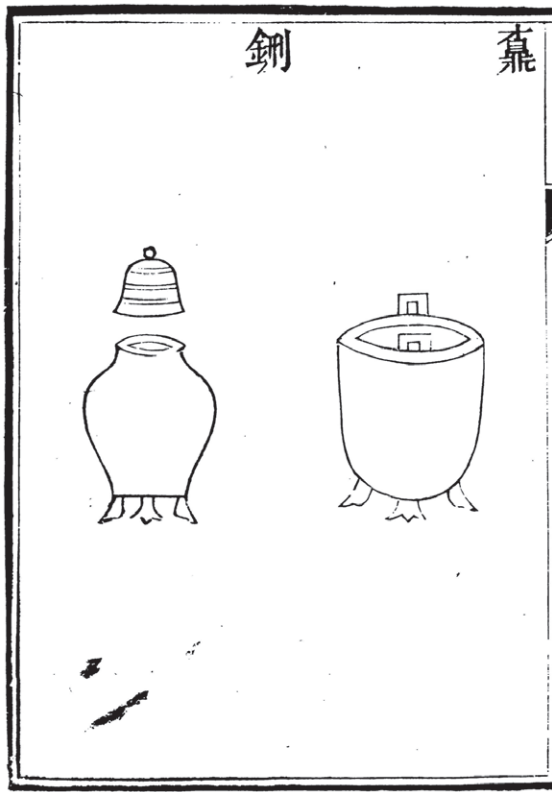


FIGURE 1.2 *Xing* and *Zi*. Chen Xiangdao, *Book of Ritual* (1804 edition), 99.7b. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

FIGURE 1.3 *Dou*. Zhu Xi, *Shaoxi Era Illustrations of Confucian Rites for Prefectures and Counties* (*Wenyuange Siku quanshu* edition, late 18th cen.), 31a. National Palace Museum, Taipei. The picture is a hand-drawn reproduction of an earlier woodcut.

FIGURE 1.4 Page from the 1175 edition of the *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics*. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

FIGURE 1.5 Page from the 1673 edition of the *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics*. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

case, the method of depiction is consistent. Each object is simply rendered from disjointed perspectives with minimally descriptive lines. Surface details are sketchy. In each case, the curvature of the rim does not literally match the curvature of the foot, yet the parallelism is clear. While these examples, like virtually all extant woodblock-printed pictures of ritual implements, represent recarvings of earlier images, it seems reasonable to assume that somewhere in the long history of the genre—dozens of books of ritual illustrations were printed over the course of the Song (960–1279), Yuan (1271–1368), and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties—we would find more persuasively naturalistic images if this is what their artists had intended. The same pattern holds true across multiple editions of the same collections. As a comparison of pages from the 1175 and 1673 editions demonstrates (Figs. 1.4, 1.5), although there are small and often quite interesting variations between different carvings of the same picture, the basic character of the images generally remains consistent.

But even if these surviving, derivative pictures were substantially different from the lost originals, their very existence suggests that they were still regarded as sufficient for their intended purpose, if for no other reason than the fact that the patrons who commissioned them and the printmakers who executed them chose not to discard them and start over. The adequacy of the images in the eyes of their day is further evinced by a rubbing that was recently rediscovered in the Fu Ssu-nien Library of the Academia Sinica in Taiwan. Taken from a stele erected in 1298 on the grounds of the prefectural school in Guilin, which was itself a recarving of an earlier stele erected on the same site in 1217, the rubbing represents the ritual implements used for conducting sacrificial rites to Confucius (Fig. 1.6).[6] Inscriptions on the stele clearly indicate that these pictures were prescriptive—that they were supposed to be used as mod-

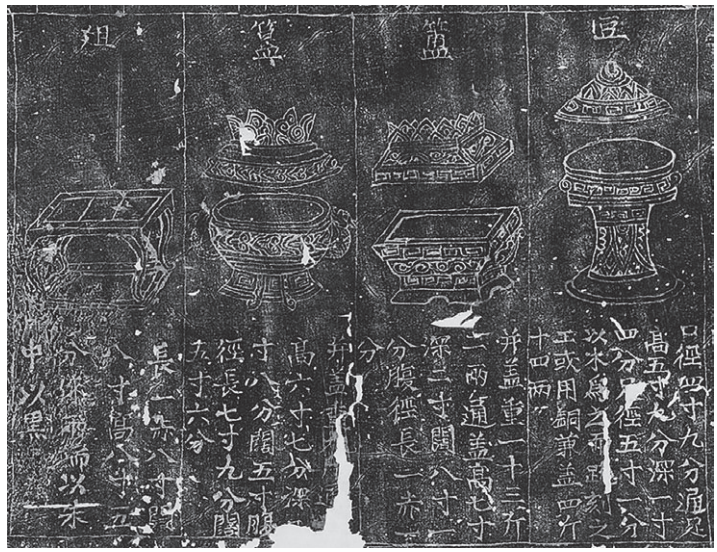


FIGURE 1.6 *Zu, Gui, Fu,* and *Dou*. Detail of a rubbing of a stele from the Prefectural School of Guilin, Guangxi. Stele dated 1298. Ink on paper. Fu-ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, Taiwan.

els for manufacturing the relevant implements. We can thus have confidence that the pictures preserved in the rubbing represent the implements as they were meant to be seen. And these pictures, like the other woodblock-printed examples, are abbreviated and minimalistic, amalgamating different perspectives in ways that preclude any illusionistic sense of their objects as coherent, three-dimensional things in the world.

Rather than focusing on what our eyes perceive as the malformed character of these pictures, and attempting to explain away their difference from the wider world of medieval Chinese imagery as an inadvertent accident of transmission, it would therefore seem more appropriate to endeavor to discern what made these images sufficient in the minds of their makers. If they were designed as models, what does the fact of their simplicity say about how the process of modeling was intended to work?

To answer that question, let us return to the picture of the chicken vessel. The characters above the image, read from right to left in Chinese fashion, say "Chicken *yi*" (pronounced ē, with a rising tone, like a question). When compared to the images of the five other *yi* preserved in the same book, it is clear that from the perspective of the tenth-century illustrator, the term *yi* referred to vessels having the same essential shape as the example in the picture—round bodies, steep sides, thick walls, and flared ring-feet (Fig. 1.7). Collectively speaking, the illustrations of the six *yi* thereby present the term *yi* as one category in a broader taxonomy of vessel shapes, and indicate that within this category, vessels can be further differentiated on the basis of the object depicted on their surface. This principle of subcategorization is plainly conveyed through an immediate, literal correspondence between the word "chicken" in the label and the image of a chicken on the vessel: the chicken *yi* is the *yi* with the picture of a chicken, the tiger *yi* is the *yi* with the picture of a tiger, and so on.

When the picture is understood as contributing to a broader taxonomy of forms, its simplicity begins to seem helpfully reductive. Showing the feet from the top down makes it easy to differentiate the three primary toes, and thereby recognize the feet as the feet of a bird. Presenting the head in profile clearly conveys the comb, which helps us identify the bird's head as the head of a chicken. Similarly, the tilted projection of the lip conveys the vessel's thick walls, while the perpendicular elevation of the foot communicates the steep angle of its sides. Each element in the picture unambiguously contributes a nameable feature to our characterization of the form. It operates like a graphic dictionary, expressing the definition of a name in visual terms. From this perspective, the picture's semantic shallowness—the very fact that it resists ekphrasis—is precisely what makes it effective. The simplicity of the image eliminates the chatter of our phenomenal experience of the world, focusing our attention on those qualities that make the chicken *yi* a chicken *yi*, and not

FIGURES 1.7A AND 1.7B The six *yi* vessels. Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 14.1a–2b. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

some other kind of *yi*, and those features that make the *yi* an *yi*, and not some other kind of object. It conveys, at a glance, the essential properties of a formal category.

Early thinkers, East and West, agreed that names constitute categories. In the *Cratylus*, Plato (ca. 428–348 BCE) argues that names imitate the essential qualities that distinguish one group of things from another.[7] In his discourse, the "Rectification of Names" (*Zheng ming*), Xun Kuang (ca. third century BCE) asserts that names operate by grouping things based on degrees of relative likeness.[8] Both traditions recognize that names create meaning by performing what Federico Marcon has aptly termed "a primeval foundational ordering of the world into categories."[9] Although the definition of "name" varied considerably both between and within these traditions, the essential notion that names denote groups was shared and axiomatic.

The picture of the urn with a chicken visualizes the name "Chicken *yi*" by describing those properties that constitute it as a category. It does not represent a unique thing or an exemplary member of a set of things. In this sense it is *sufficient* rather than *ideal*, an expression of the attributes necessary for inclusion in a given category rather than a representation of the ideal form from which the category could, in a Platonic sense, be understood to derive. It is, therefore, fundamentally lexicographic—not a representation of a thing that exists elsewhere under a given name, but a picture of the name itself. This is what makes it a *lexical picture*.

To suggest that the picture describes a word, rather than a thing, is to imply that it operates, in some sense, like writing. Writing visualizes speech; for some, this constitutes its defining attribute. Ferdinand de Saussure famously argued that writing exists for the sole purpose of representing language. Jacques Derrida's classic dissent is that the two systems of signs (one written, one spoken) produce meaning independently of one another, and that writing is therefore not inherently secondary to, nor derivative of, language.[10] But the power of Derrida's critique derives from the same thaumaturgy of embodied speech. The *magic* of writing is its ability to take something that is immaterial and ephemeral and give it substantive, persistent form. By articulating the imperfections of this transformation—its partiality, gaps, and aporia—Derrida revealed it as an illusion, exposing the sleight of hand with which Saussure's structuralism switched an axiom for an appearance. Yet his own wizardry of negation flows from the same dialectical logic. It denies the magical transformation of speech into writing through successive demonstrations of the mutual irreducibility of the two domains, thereby reinforcing the binary that made that magic plausible in the first place.[11] In refuting the fungibility of the spoken and written word, Derrida's deconstruction effectively reifies their duality.

The lexical picture challenges this binary. The picture of the *yi* represents a word without privileging that word as a figure of speech. A more naturalistic

picture, labeled in the same way, would present itself as an example of a preestablished linguistic category, thereby subordinating the work of the picture to the work of language: "Here is an example of those things called *yi*." The lexical picture, by contrast, is explicitly declarative: "This is *yi*." The equivalency between the category generated by the picture and the category generated by the name makes it possible for the picture to silently perform what Ludwig Wittgenstein termed the "ostensive teaching" of a word, which he understood as "the teacher's pointing to the objects, directing the child's attention to them, and at the same time uttering a word; for instance the word 'slab' as he points to that shape."[12] The lexical picture forestalls the utterance in Wittgenstein's formulation. It is not a representation of the slab toward which the teacher gestures, but a graphic instantiation of the signification of that thing *as* 'slab,' an external iteration of the mental projection that emerges in the child's mind when the gesture and the voice of the teacher meet. In this way, it writes the word without saying it.

This is not to say that the picture, in its origin and condition of possibility, is somehow nonlinguistic. As a matter of history, we know that the written expression of the logograph *yi* preceded the visual expression of the picture *yi*, and thus that the existence of *yi* as a visual category was contingent upon the expression of *yi* in language. The interest, rather, is in the way the picture writes the *yi* while eliding the vocalization that generated it. It does not communicate independently of language, nor is it simply a visualization of the spoken word. Instead, it occupies a middle ground between writing as visual language and writing as an independent system of signs, deriving its objects from language while simultaneously asserting the epistemological primacy of its own system of sign-making.

To come to grips with these simple pictures, we must therefore recognize their intrinsic relation to the linguistic act of naming while simultaneously resisting the urge to reduce them to linguistic signs. In other words, we must think about naming as a kind of designation that contributes to language without being fully linguistic itself. This is not a position that contemporary philosophy or linguistics would readily accept, but it is closer to the understanding of names that informed the making of these pictures. There has been a tendency, especially in the wake of Wittgenstein and Saussure, to read the classical Chinese texts on names as if they were texts about language, and especially about the nature of language as a representational medium. It is easy, these days, to assume that words and things exist in dialectical tension with one another; that language, as a system of signs, necessarily conditions our understanding of the world; and that the matter of words is, therefore, a matter of epistemology. But when read on their own terms, and in reference to their historical context, it is much harder to make the case that the early texts on names are about language per se. Their ultimate concerns are more operation-

al, more concerned with what names do in the world than in the way they mediate between thought and reality. They were part of the becoming of the world, not simply representations of what was already there.

The following chapters introduce the two primary traditions of lexical picturing developed by classical scholars during the early imperial and medieval periods. The first of these traditions was graphical lexicography—the analysis and categorization of Chinese characters on the basis of their visual appearance. The second was the illustration of names in the Confucian classics. Both traditions are implicated in the picture of the "Chicken *yi*": the representation of the word *yi* with the logograph 彝, and the illustration of the name *yi* with the picture itself. Although both traditions have deep roots in the preimperial period, it was not until the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE) that they emerged as distinctive genres of scholarship. For both traditions, the second century CE witnessed the compilation of canonical works that became the foundation for all subsequent exegesis. These canonical foundations were elaborated and interrogated intermittently over the course of the first millennium, and then significantly recapitulated in the second half of the tenth century—a transitional moment on the cusp of the Song dynasty which constitutes a critical watershed for both traditions. The new editions and recompilations of earlier pictorial lexicons produced during the latter decades of the tenth century established a baseline for all subsequent scholarship. They also constitute the oldest representatives of both traditions to survive into the present as coherent texts. Our understanding of the early history of these traditions is thus mediated by the early Song; we read their pasts through the prism of the tenth century.

Both traditions make strong claims about the capacity of their visualizations to give order to the world. In each case, I argue that these claims make sense when we understand the traditions that produced them as elaborations of the essential idea that names have agency. This notion is rarely expressed outright; the compilers of dictionaries and ritual illustrations do not explicitly associate their work with the Confucian doctrine of names. But if we accept this doctrine as a baseline assumption, it becomes much easier to understand why these scholars found it necessary to produce lexical pictures, and why they made these pictures as they did. Their practices, if not their statements, reveal the influence of the early theory of names.

Once we recognize the ubiquity of this assumption, we can begin to understand why the debates that occurred within these traditions were so heated; if the names were wrong, then the world, ipso facto, was also wrong. The urgency these scholars felt stemmed in part from their sense that the wider society in which they lived thought that names were just words, and that true power resided elsewhere. The lexicographers and exegetes that I examine in these chapters thought they knew better. They thought that martial rule without

the trust of the ruled was fragile and that supplications for divine intervention were pointless if they proceeded from a misunderstanding of heavenly providence. And they believed that the key to creating trust, speaking persuasively, and receiving Heaven's mandate lay in giving the right names to the right things. Understanding the strength and persistence of this idea is important, because it was precisely its persistence into the Song era that made the bronzes I examine in part II so epistemically disruptive.

Woven into this history of medieval Chinese scholarship is a more conceptual attempt to mobilize the "picturing of name" as a mechanism for destabilizing our own deep-seated aesthetic preferences. If we have the "nerve and imagination" to accept the lexical picture on its own terms, we may find ourselves forced to reckon with the degree to which our own attitudes toward pictures are constrained by our assumptions about the representational nature of language, and the way that these assumptions condition us to think about the derivations that occur at the intersection of words and images. For if we begin from the assumption that naming is constitutive rather than representational, then it follows that the visualization of names is the visualization of the normative order of reality. And if pictures of words are not derivative representations of representations but articulations of actuality, they transcend the seemingly simple impressions that we see. When we think in these terms, it becomes possible to understand why medieval Confucian scholars cared so much about something that, to our eyes, appears so small and insubstantial. Although I do not expect the picture of the chicken *yi* to grace the halls of the Louvre anytime soon, I hope to show why, from the perspective of a tenth-century scholar in China, it warranted space on the walls of the most prestigious edifices of learning.

1

Names as Implements

In the spring of the year 589 BCE, the state of Wei was confronted with a crisis on its eastern border. The state of Qi, Wei's neighbor to the northeast, had invaded the state of Lu, Wei's ally to the east. In response to this act of aggression, Wei dispatched an army under the command of Sun Liangfu, a descendant of the ducal house of Wei. Sun invaded Qi and met its forces outside the city of Xinzhu. The histories do not tell us what occurred in the course of the battle, but the outcome was unambiguous. In the laconic parlance of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, a historical chronicle of the events of this era, Sun's army was "soundly defeated" (*bai ji*).[1]

Vanquished on the field and encircled by the forces of Qi, Sun was facing imminent capture when a relief army came to his aid. The army succeeded in extricating Sun and the remnants of his army from their predicament. The nobles of Wei were overjoyed at the deliverance of their general, and they offered a walled settlement (*cheng*) to the commander of the force, a minor noble named Zhongshu Yuxi, as a reward for his timely assistance. The commander demurred, asking only for a set of bells (*quxian*)[2] and the right to present himself at court with "a saddle-girth and bridle" (*pan ying*) as trappings for his horse. The nobles of Wei readily agreed.[3]

Musical instruments and horse trappings. Small price to pay, it would seem, for the relief of an army and the rescue of a favored son. The nobles of Wei certainly seem to have thought so. But when Confucius heard of this turn of events, he said, "That is most unfortunate. It would have been better to reward him with many settlements."[4]

To the modern reader, Confucius's response is unexpected and counterintuitive, and it would have seemed counterintuitive to audiences of the day, who lived in a world in which titles and honors were bandied about with abandon. For the people who lived in the central plains region of what is today northern China, along the banks and tributaries of the great Yellow River, the middle centuries of the first millennium BCE was a time of chaos. For centuries, the great house of Zhou had ruled over these lands from their western capital of Zongzhou. The ruling clan bestowed ranks upon their relatives and loyal retainers, and installed them in domains in accordance with their status. But in 771 BCE, invaders attacked the Zhou heartland. Known to history only by the epithet given them by the settled elites of the central plains, these Quanrong ("dog barbarians") sacked the Zhou capital and forced the court to evacuate to the east. Although the Zhou succeeded in reestablishing themselves at their eastern capital of Chengzhou, in the vicinity of present-day Luoyang, the regime that emerged from this catastrophe was a shadow of its former self. The Zhou domains broke away into what were essentially independent states that paid only nominal lip service to the ostensible prerogatives of the central court. The history of Wei, Qi, Lu, and the other ruling houses of these domains, preserved in chronicles of the Spring and Autumn (722–479 BCE) and Warring States (403–221 BCE) periods, is a confusing mélange of dukes and potentates, kings and hegemons, whose respective authority and dominions were ceaselessly contested. One concise way to think about the trajectory of this period, which oversimplifies a complex reality but captures the essential understanding of its earliest chroniclers, is of ever-increasing realpolitik, as control over resources and raw military power displaced intricate systems of rank and honor as the fundamental levers of power. The conquest of the First Emperor of Qin, who defeated the last of his rivals and unified all the former domains of the Zhou in 221 BCE, is classically understood as the moment in which civility finally succumbed to violence.[5]

Read against this historical backdrop, Confucius's response marks him as a man out of step with his times, clinging to a world that was ceasing to exist. He explains his dismay at the reward of bells and trappings as follows: "The only things that must not be falsely awarded are implements (*qi*) and names (*ming*). To them, a ruler must particularly attend. With names, he generates trust. With trust, he protects implements. With implements, he stores ritual. With ritual, he practices righteousness. With righteousness, he generates benefits. With benefits, he pacifies the people. This is the essential mechanism of governance. If you concede it to someone, then you concede governance itself to them. When governance is lost, the state will surely follow."[6]

The names and implements to which Confucius is referring are titles and insignia—verbal and visual expressions of rank—which served as the uniforms and badges and honorifics of his day. Using a succession of enfolded

statements (with a, then b, with b, then c), he highlights the importance of these signifiers by giving them priority over abstract ethical principles like trust and righteousness.[7] Political power is achieved by practicing righteousness and righteousness is practiced by observing ritual (*li*).

In this and other classical Chinese texts, "ritual" operates as a collective term for everything from formal ceremonies held on particular days of the calendar to the ongoing daily observance of decorum and etiquette. How to stand when speaking to a superior. What words to say on which occasions. What to wear, and when. Ritual actualizes social and political hierarchy by making each person's place in that hierarchy visible to all. Implements (*qi*) are the physical things that manifest that hierarchy—the vestments and banners and vessels that display each individual's place in the system. They "store ritual" (*cang li*), making its invisible, abstract principles concrete and perceptible. Implements give etiquette a place to be.

The problem with granting Zhongshu's request was that the bells and saddle-girth and bridle were the implements of a prince (*hou*)—the second highest of the five peerage ranks of the Zhou, and among the most esteemed of its noble offices.[8] The states that broke free from the Zhou were known as the "domains of the many princes" (*zhuhou guo*). From Confucius's perspective, the state of Wei was granting Zhongshu the means to present himself as a prince. By giving him a set of bells and allowing him to outfit his horse in a particular way, the nobles of Wei were legitimating a status that they were not actually bestowing. In effect, they were being insincere, and their insincerity had consequences. What was to stop Zhongshu from claiming in practice what Wei had given him in name alone? What legitimate right could Wei now claim to oppose his usurpation? In handing over the bells and trappings, they had surrendered their moral authority. How could granting some upstart a legitimate claim over an entire state be better than buying him off with a few settlements?

The logic of Confucius's progression proceeds in pairs: first names, then trust; first implements, then righteousness. Each pair prioritizes the concrete over the abstract. Names are spoken and heard. Implements are touched and seen. Trust and righteousness, by contrast, are unspoken and invisible. They are the pervasive, general conditions, rather than the specific, individual mechanisms necessary for success. But what of the order of the pairs themselves? If names beget trust and trust begets implements, why does the ruler need to "particularly attend" to *both* names and implements? Would not a focus on names alone suffice? The quandary can be resolved when we understand names and implements as two sides of the same coin, and the "preserving of implements" that follows from the "generating of trust" as a process of temporal and spatial extension. In Confucius's response to the story of Zhongshu Yuxi, the presentation of the bells and trappings is troubling

precisely because it is understood *as* the granting of a title. Implements and names, in this sense, are extensions of the same thing into alternative realms of sense: one a materialization, the other a vocalization, of a common insignia. It was the act of signification, rather than the nature of the sign, that worried Confucius.

At the same time, the progression from names to trust to implements suggests a sensitivity to the phenomenological differences between the vocal and material expressions of the sign. The name is a declaration from the ruler. But the voice of the ruler is temporally and spatially limited; to reach the ends of his domains and persist into the future, it must be wedded to a concrete, material thing that can exist independently of the ruler himself. But these implements are fragile; they must be protected (*shou*) from those who might steal, damage, or misuse them. By securing their trust, the ruler ensures that his people will perform the essential duty of protecting the implements that bear his names, and thereby maintain his decrees in his absence.

Confucius's response to the story of Zhongshu Yuxi highlights two key dimensions of the theory of names that informed the classical scholarship of the early imperial period, and through it, the creation of the lexical picture. The first was the idea that names were agentic—not mere representations of things in the world, but active tools for changing the world. The second was the mutual imbrication of names and implements. There is strong evidence to suggest that both of these ideas were circulating among the so-called traditionalists (*ru*) in the century preceding the Qin unification in 221 BCE.[9] Often translated as "Confucian," the *ru* were traditional in the sense that they saw Confucius not as an innovator, but as one who, as Confucius himself is credited with claiming in the *Analects*, "transmits but does not create" (*shu er bu zuo*) and "follows the Zhou" (*cong Zhou*).[10] The traditionalists were one of the "hundred schools of the masters" (*zhuzi baijia*), that arose in the turbulent era of the late Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. As far as we can determine on the basis of the texts most commonly associated with the school, what distinguished the traditionalists from the other schools of thought promoted by their contemporaries was their commitment to the canons of ritual associated with the early Zhou court. The traditionalists regarded the etiquette and decorum of the early Zhou rulers as having been instrumental in manifesting the general ethos of loyalty, benevolence, and civility that distinguished the reigns of these rulers from those that followed.

Although they were committed to the models of the past, the traditionalists were not conservatives. To the contrary, their views were so different from those of their contemporaries, and their political recommendations so out of keeping with the established practices of power, as to make them essentially radicals. Their ideal past was not well-remembered; indeed, the models they pursued were so remote and obscure that the very apprehension of these

models was itself understood to be a supreme achievement. When Confucius claimed to transmit but not create, he was not being modest. Transmission, in the eyes of the traditionalists, required radical sagacity. It meant clinging to the traces of the ancient ways—the saddle-girths and scaled bells—with a fervor that, from the perspective of everyone but the traditionalists themselves, was nothing short of revolutionary.

The early texts associated with the traditionalists convey a keen awareness of their own radicalism. So keen, in fact, that one cannot help but wonder about the degree to which this sense of difference, of being out of step with the times, was itself a carefully constructed rhetorical strategy. The voice of Confucius figures prominently in this rhetoric, either commenting on an event, as in the story of Zhongshu Yuxi, or disabusing a disciple of some ill-conceived assumption, as in the teacher-disciple exchanges that make up the majority of his *Analects*. In both cases, the position against which Confucius is arguing is typically presented as if it were a commonsensical assumption of the day. This rhetoric of radicalism is clearly evident in *Analects* 13.3, the locus classicus for the Confucian theory of names:

> Zilu asked, "If the Duke of Wei were to employ you to serve in the government of his state, what would be your first priority?"
>
> The Master answered, "It would, of course, be the rectification of names."
>
> Zilu said, "Could you, Master, really be so far off the mark? Why worry about rectifying names?"
>
> The Master replied, "How boorish you are, Zilu! When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent.
>
> "If names are not rectified, speech will not follow; when speech does not follow, matters will not be accomplished. When matters are not accomplished, ritual and music will not flourish. When ritual and music do not flourish, punishments and penalties will miss their mark. When punishments and penalties miss their mark, the people will not know what to do with themselves. Therefore, that which the gentleman names can unquestionably be put into words, and that which the gentleman puts into words can unquestionably be put into action. The gentleman simply guards against carelessness in his use of words. That is all there is to it."[11]

The causal logic and order of priorities presented in the passage closely parallel Confucius's response to the story of Zhongshu Yuxi. Using names appropriately makes "matters" (*shi*) happen, these matters are necessary for ritual to flourish, and ritual establishes rules of behavior whose violations can be punished and the people, thereby, brought into line. The key difference is that this passage explains more clearly that the agency of names derives from their relationship to things. Rectifying this relationship, ensuring that

names are appropriate to their objects, enables productive, positive action in the world. This alignment is not a balancing, a stabilization of two entities in dialectical tension with one another, as it might seem from the perspective of Western philosophy, but rather one of according with the incipient disposition of reality itself. The Chinese term here is *shun*, which in its essential meaning describes the action of things in a river—they "follow the course," or "go with the flow." By using names appropriately, the gentleman generates speech that flows, and through this speech, rules and structures and systems that actualize an incipient cosmic order. But this going along with the momentum of the world is not the same as being swept under by events over which one has no control. The gentleman should go with the flow, but he also, if he fails to use names correctly, has the power to obstruct the flow and prevent it from generating the reality it was predisposed to generate. As far as the success or failure of human affairs are concerned, the world does nothing until he puts it into words, one way or the other. The gentleman has *agency*, both in the sense of having power and in the sense of being the agent of an authority that supersedes him.

There is widespread agreement among scholars today that both of these passages represent not the words of Confucius himself, but attitudes that evolved among the traditionalists in the later part of the Warring States era.[12] One of the key indicators for the comparatively late date for the two passages is their shared rhetorical structure. The use of anadiplosis—a enables b, b provides c, c creates d, and so forth—emerged as a widespread practice in late Warring States rhetoric, and examples of this imitable style of argumentation can be found throughout texts representing a diverse range of philosophical positions.[13]

The concern with names is also a common theme. The *Guanzi*, a lengthy treatise with a complicated textual history, contains a series of substantial statements about names, and an entire fascicle (*juan*) of the *Xunzi*, a collection of writings attributed to the third-century thinker Xun Kuang, is dedicated to "rectifying names" (*zheng ming*). Later Han sources also identify a "School of Names" (*mingjia*) as one of the hundred schools of Warring States thought, and associate it with the teachings of figures like Deng Xi (ca. 546–501 BCE), Hui Shi (370–310 BCE), and Gongsun Long (ca. 325–250 BCE). The relationship between name and substance (*shi*) also figures prominently in writings associated with the Legalists (*fajia*). The exact relationship between the transmitted corpus of early Chinese texts and these various "schools" has been a matter of debate and speculation for more than two millennia, and many scholars have found it more productive to trace histories of ideas across this corpus than to focus on distinguishing the schools from one another. Although the early texts advance a variety of mutually incompatible arguments, it is clear that they inhabit a shared intellectual world, and derive from com-

mon epistemological and ontological assumptions. The agentic capacity of names, and their inherent association with ritual and punishments, appears to have been one of these assumptions.

Nature as Convention

The most substantial effort in Anglophone scholarship to trace the history of names across this corpus of early texts is John Makeham's *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (1994).[14] Through a detailed analysis of the discussion of names in the various early texts, Makeham traces the intellectual history of the "name and actuality" polarity as a basic binary of early Chinese thought.[15] Makeham highlights the "prescriptive" (what I am here calling "agentic") nature of names in the *Analects* and subsequent writings, and explains how the significance of name is not merely to "'register' or designate the existence" of something, but to make it manifest by "giving formal significance to that which lies unrecognized and hence incomplete."[16] He demonstrates how the earliest thinkers in the tradition agreed that names participate in the realization of the world.

Makeham devotes considerable attention to distinguishing what he terms the "correlative" views of early imperial thinkers like Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BCE) and Xu Gan (171–218 CE) from the "nominalist" views associated with Confucius and his Warring States followers. He argues that Xu Gan was the first early Chinese thinker to argue that names "follow from actualities and not vice versa."[17] Xun Kuang had famously asserted that "names have no predetermined appropriateness" (*ming wu gu yi*) nor "predetermined substance" (*gu shi*) but are rather set by convention. Xu Gan, by contrast, claimed that names derived from things:

> A name is that which is used to name an actuality. When an actuality has been established, its name follows after it; it is not the case that a name is established and then its substance follows after it. Thus if a long shape is established it will be named 'long' and if a short shape is established then it will be named 'short.' It is not the case that the names 'long' and 'short' are first established and then the long and short shapes follow after them.[18]

Simply put, the categories into which the world can be divided are not a product of the language that we use to characterize them, but emerge from the world itself. The names that are right are the names that we derive from these natural categories. These names still have agency—by using the appropriate name, according to Xu Gan, we bring the actuality to completion and thereby extend its potential into the world of human affairs. But the names for things are not determined by humans.

Makeham cautions against confusing this premise with Platonic idealism: "Whereas a classical Western realist theory of naming might maintain that a variety of objects can all be given the name 'red' because they partake of the universal 'redness' or because the universal 'redness' exists in those particulars, a Chinese correlative theory of naming would postulate nothing more than that each red entity is red by virtue of its actuality . . ."[19] In other words, the qualities of a given object are nameable not because those qualities embody an abstract, ideal form—in this case, redness—that exists a priori and apart from its instantiation in the object in question. Instead, each thing (*wu*) has an inherent actuality (*shi*)—an amalgam of properties that make it what it is. This actuality exists nowhere other than in the thing itself. It is it.

And yet the ghost of Platonic theory still haunts Makeham's analysis. The fact that his correlative/nominalist binary so closely approximates the dialectic of Plato's *Cratylus*, the classical touchstone for Western language theory, should give us pause. Articulated in the voice of Socrates, and staged as a debate between Hermogenes and Cratylus, the *Cratylus* presents two diametrically opposing views on the nature of the relationship between names and objects. Hermogenes advances the position that names are always arbitrarily determined by local convention, while Cratylus holds that names only derive from the objects they designate. In leaving this dialogue between the "conventionalist" and "naturalist" positions unresolved, Plato established the relationship between words and reality as a foundational question for Western philosophy.[20] The parallel between the dilemma of the Cratylus and Plato's theorization of imitation—that both are concerned with the tension between a thing and its representation—worked to ensure that mimesis came to constitute a key problem for Western philosophy, and that word and image came to be seen as two sides of that same problem.

Lest Xu Gan and Xun Kuang wander into the shadow of Cratylus and Hermogenes, it bears noting that unlike Plato, no one in the early or medieval Chinese tradition ever asserted that Xu and Xun held diametrically opposing views about the nature of the relationship between language and reality. Xu Gan himself claimed to be upholding Xun Kuang's legacy.[21] Later thinkers, such as the influential theorist of "Dark Learning" (*xuanxue*) Wang Bi (226–249 CE), even found it possible to articulate "conventionalist" and "naturalist" positions simultaneously, suggesting that "names arise from the things they name" (*ming sheng hu bi*), while "designations issue from the I who designates" (*cheng chu hu wo*).[22] Although the various early thinkers who aligned themselves with the legacy of Confucius clearly adopted different approaches to the origin of names, those approaches did not implicate their more fundamental understanding of names as essential agents of social transformation.

Even Xun Kuang, who most clearly seems to embody the conventionalist position, recoiled from the idea that different communities of speakers should

determine for themselves what names mean. From his perspective, the correct names had already been established long ago:

> When the [former] kings established names, the names were fixed, and the corresponding substances were thus distinguished. This way was followed, and the kings' intentions were thus made understood. They then carefully led the people to adhere to these things single-mindedly. Thus, they called it great vileness to mince words and recklessly create names such as to disorder the correct names and thereby confuse the people and cause them to engage in much disputation and litigation. . . . Hence, none of their people dared rely on making up strange names so as to disorder the correct names, and so the people were honest. Since they were honest, they were easy to employ, and since they were easy to employ, tasks were accomplished. Because none of the people dared rely on making up strange names so as to disorder the correct names, they were unified in following the proper model of the Way and were diligent in following commands. Because they were like this, the legacy of the kings was long-lasting. To have such a long-lasting legacy and to achieve such accomplishments is the height of good order. Such is what can be accomplished by diligently preserving the agreed names.[23]

Names are not adaptable to the ways and byways of different communities; they are implements of control—mechanisms by which those with "different customs" are made capable of communicating with one another and thereby collaborating in carrying out the ruler's commands.

Xun Kuang recognized the essential fact that human beings had historically used a variety of different names for the same things, and he was not terribly interested in the question of whose usages were correct and whose were flawed. Instead, he was focused on how the ruler could fix names and thereby unify people of different customs into an obedient polity. Like the other traditionalists, he wanted to restore the order that he believed had been created by the sagacious rulers of long ago. Because later rulers had forgotten about the importance of "preserving names" (*shou ming*), strange words had arisen and introduced cacophony into the once harmonic correspondence of names and things.[24] Xun Kuang argued that because of this cacophony, it was impossible to restore order by simply studying the names of the present. One had to recreate the sagely system from scratch.

To do this, he proposed, the ruler should utilize his "heavenly," that is, "natural" faculties. Since all beings with the same sensory faculties experienced things in the same way, recoiling from objects that were hot and turning their ear to sounds that were melodious, the ruler could, by relying on his faculties, make the distinctions necessary to group things having similar qualities with one another and could count on the fact that others, observing

the same similarities, would recognize the wisdom of the grouping conveyed by the name. Each group could then be subdivided into smaller groups based on narrower similarities. And so forth.[25]

The names that resulted from this process were not preordained. Since there was no correct name intrinsic to each thing, the arbitrariness of any particular name was both assumed and unimportant. Names were simply a system of communication, a mechanism for observing what was manifestly there in the world and conveying it to others: "If a single name suffices, a single name should be used. If a single name is insufficient, a compound name should be used" (*dan zu yi yu ze dan, dan bu zu yi yu ze jian*).[26] But what was important was that the differentiations recognized by the senses matched the differentiations rendered by the names. The rightness of particular names was thus contingent upon the logic of the system as a whole. By using strict rules and regulations to maintain the conventions of that system, the ruler ensured that the naturalness of its distinctions remained apparent. Thus the conventionalist and the naturalist of Platonic theory converge in Xun Kuang's commitment to the appropriate implementation of names.

In sum, the evidence that the early followers of Confucius staked out different positions on the origins of names is irrefutable. But the reason they never explicitly distinguished those positions from one another is that they were not really concerned about the nature of names as such. Instead, they were invested in the questions of what names do and how to make them do what they should. From a contemporary perspective, one could say that they were more interested in the performative than the denotative function of language. Theorists today tend to use the performative to characterize a small subset of utterances—those that change the world in the process of their being uttered; when the candidate states "I accept your nomination," the "accept" is performative because the candidate ceases being a candidate and becomes a nominee upon its utterance.[27] Early Confucian theorists, by contrast, tended to regard all names as potentially performative—all intended to bring about a world that did not currently exist.

One of Makeham's most important observations is that the valence of "names" gradually expanded over the course of the Warring States and early imperial period from its original focus on ritual nomenclature to a much broader association with "words" in general.[28] In the process, names dragged the performative dimension of ceremonial investiture—the granting of name or title—into the understanding of language writ large. This led many to assume that language was supposed to be a mechanism of rulership, and to dismiss as strange or wicked any usage of language that inhibited the efficient operation of enlightened rule.

When words are understood as tools, the essential tension of mimesis—the relationship between the way something is and the words used to rep-

resent it—does not matter very much. The truth and comprehensiveness of the observation conveyed through the words is far less important than the capacity of that observation to motivate action. Within a world of language as implement rather than language as imitation, the essential differences between one animal and another pale in comparison to the recognition that that animal over there should be avoided while this animal over here is for eating, just as that official in the vermilion hat over there should be obeyed while this soldier in the striped livery over here awaits your orders. One of the reasons that China never developed a tradition of ekphrasis is that the thinkers who became most essential to the imperial polity never pursued the vain dream of reproducing the world in words. They wanted language to be a lever, not a mirror.

The Revelation of Writing

While the alignment of names and implements provided an essential foundation for the idea of the lexical picture, the actual grammar of these pictures was premised on the structure of Chinese script. The scholars who created lexical pictures did not regard these pictures as "writing" (*shuqi*) per se. But they had been conditioned to accept the text as a valid and sufficient proxy for the normative models of the past, and trained to witness, in the very structure of the written word, the sense of order that those models embodied. So when they approached the distinctive challenge of visualizing the names in the classics, they took their cue from writing. For Zheng Xuan, who produced the earliest set of illustrations for the Three Ritual Classics, and for the long line of exegetes who followed, no account of the origins and nature of writing loomed larger than that of the lexicographer Xu Shen (d. ca. 147 CE).[29] The preservation and republication of Xu's scholarship over the course of the two millennia between his time and our own has ensured that his views, more than any other, have come to constitute what scholars today mean when they speak of the "traditional" Chinese understanding of writing.[30]

Although the rise of the modern linguistics has dramatically reconfigured the way in which most scholars understand the historical relationship between written and spoken Chinese, the family of scripts that make up "Chinese writing," and their relationships to earlier pictographs, lineage emblems, and other types of graphic notation, continue to gnaw at the edges of neat and coherent definitions of writing as a historical phenomenon.[31] The debate persists, vociferously, on the margins, and it has come to constitute a helpful catalyst for exposing the different assumptions of the disciplines that choose to exercise themselves on the graphic fields of ancient China.[32] Fortunately, what is necessary for understanding the lexicographic underpinnings of the medieval lexical picture is not the truth of the Chinese writing system, but the truth as Xu Shen saw it, and the way that truth was transmitted to the early Song court

that accepted and promulgated Nie Chongyi's images. In the postface to his *Explanation of Patterns and Explication of Progenies* (*Shuowen jiezi*), the world's oldest surviving graphically organized dictionary, Xu Shen characterizes lexicography as a constant battle against the forces of entropy.[33]

Xu opens his account by reiterating the same essential genealogy of writing found in a number of the early texts.[34] In ancient times, he begins, the Sage Fu Xi looked up to the heavens and there amid the movement of the stars and the billowing of the clouds, he observed "schemata" (*xiang*).[35] Then he looked down to the earth and there in the rise and the fall of the land, he observed "designs" (*fa*).[36] These were not the intentioned designs of a godlike creator but simply the underlying structures and processes of the Earth.[37] Next, Fu Xi turned his attention to the birds and the beasts, and he observed that their patterns (*wen*) corresponded to those of the Earth. Thereupon he took patterns from his own body and from all the myriad things, and from these patterns, he crafted the Eight Trigrams of the *Changes*, so that he might transmit the designs and schemata to those who would follow.

Then, in the time of the Sage Shennong, the "Divine Farmer" who created agriculture, the people began using knotted cords to organize their affairs.[38] This system allowed "many professions to flourish," but it also enabled embellishment and fabrication. After this came Cang Jie, the chronicler (*shi*) of the Yellow Emperor,[39] who like Fu Xi before him looked to the Earth and observed that the tracks of the birds and the beasts he saw there could be distinguished from one another. This essential observation—the recognition that the differences between things correspond to the differences between the impressions they leave in the Earth; that the myriad things, in short, possess among themselves the principles of their own graphic categorization—inspired him to create writing.

Cang Jie began by "schematizing forms according to categories" (*yi lei xiang xing*) with the implication that the categories were those that he had apprehended from the correspondences between things and their impressions. Because the forms he created were premised on visual schematizations, he called them "patterns" (*wen*). Then he elaborated these patterns by means of the "mutual augmentation of form and sound" (*xing sheng xiang yi*). In other words, to cite a particularly famous example, he utilized what linguists now refer to as the rebus principle—the category agreement between the sound *xiang* ("elephant") and the schematic form 象 ("elephant") to paronomastically figure the word *xiang* ("to schematize") with the same schematic form. Thus 象 came to visualize both the category "elephant" and the process of schematization whereby that category was made visible. On the basis of these graphic homophones, he was able to create more forms for other names by combining, for example, the formal pattern 衣 ("garment") with the phonic marker 象 (*xiang*) to visualize the word *xiang* ("to adorn") with the graph 褰.

Because the forms that that he thereby elaborated were derived from the base patterns, he called them "progenies" (*zi*).[40] The resulting compound *wenzi* ("pattern-progeny"), which remains in use to this day as the Chinese term for Chinese logographs, captures the Han recognition of the fact that most Chinese characters were compounds of pictograms and phonograms—signs born from both formal and phonic associations. As most scholars recognize today, the relationship between the graphic form and the spoken lexeme is what makes Chinese characters logographic. The only (but essential) difference is that instead of being understood as pictures premised on vocal differences between spoken words, they were seen as pictures premised on formal distinctions that colonized spoken language.[41]

A linguist would argue that the ability to borrow the form 象 for the word *xiang* ("to schematize") is predicated on the recognition that 象 is not simply a pictographic representation of an elephant, but more significantly a logographic representation of the word *xiang* ("elephant"), and that Xu Shen's first graphic and then phonic narrative of the evolution of writing is therefore illogical.[42] From a linguistic perspective, the very possibility of having categories to schematize implies the existence of language. But this perspective rests on the very modern assumption that categories are human constructs—the abstractions produced when Wittgenstein's teacher points to a slab and says "slab." When we follow the logic of the Confucian theory of names, the categories are already there in the incipient structure of reality, and the names and graphs are simply constructs to call those categories forth. There is no fundamental epistemological distinction between names *as* language and graphs *as* images; like "prince" and the bells and trappings, both work in tandem to make the categories simultaneously audible and visible. That the graph 象 would carry with it the name *xiang* was simply a self-evident reflection of the same process of signification across the threshold between sight and sound.

From Xu Shen's perspective, the challenge arose not from the relationship between form and name, but from the mobilization of homophony to picture entities like "schemata" and actions like "adorn" that were not as readily visualizable as elephants and garments. As he saw it, the graphic colonization of language made it possible, for the first time in human history, for rulers to remotely "regulate the hundred trades and inspect the ten thousand products."[43] But it also entailed proliferation. "To write was to follow" (*shu zhe ru ye*), and because written progenies (*zi*) followed the forms of speech, as spoken language multiplied (*yan ziru*), so did script.[44] Xu Shen's choice of words at this juncture is telling—"to multiply" is what happens in springtime as animals breed and proliferate. Likening speech to breeding rabbits suggests a sensitivity to what linguists today refer to as the phenomenon of language variation—the inherent tendency of living language to evolve into ever more diverse forms of expression.[45] Writing was thus both the wellspring of empire

and the worm in its wood. By the time of the Five Emperors and founders of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, Xu explained, writing had undergone great changes. "Seventy-two generations of rulers had performed the royal sacrifices at Mount Tai, but no two of their scripts were the same."[46]

The challenge of writing was thus analogous to the challenge of naming. On one hand, writing, like implements, extended the normative order of names from the aural to the material, and thereby made it possible for rulers to govern domains that exceeded the scope of their hearing and the range of their voice. On the other hand, it was prone to heterogeneity, and thus in perpetual need of having its relationship to the administrative order of the polity reclarified, just as names were in constant need of rectification. Xu Shen thus establishes the work of graphical lexicography as essential to effective governance; by determining the equivalencies between the characters of present and past scripts, the lexicographer ensures that the patterns divined by Fu Xi and the categories schematized by Cang Jie remain apprehensible and intelligible.

In theory, this process of logographic equation extended all the way back to hoary antiquity. In practice, Xu Shen recognized that the writing systems known to the scholars of his day were only as old as the Zhou dynasty. This meant that, like the names determined by Xun Kuang, the legitimacy of any given writing system rested more on the apparent order of relations that it visualized than on its absolute age. If it made clear the distinctions between names, then it followed that it accorded with Cang Jie's script, even if its formal relationship to that lost script was impossible to determine. By decoupling allegiance to antiquity from any particular formal genealogy, and thereby countenancing the possibility that a writing system could be both formally new and functionally ancient, Xu Shen generated a rhetorical paradigm in which the ability of the lexicographer to equate contemporary scripts with one another implied an ability to recognize the patterns upon which the earliest scripts were grounded. In an essential sense, he made lexicography into an art of claiming antiquity by demonstrating systematicity.[47]

Xu devotes the balance of his postface to the more recent history of writing, which he traces through repeating cycles of standardization and fragmentation. He begins by explaining how the early rulers of the Zhou established the six categories of scribal acts (*liu shu*) and taught these categories to the "sons of the state" so that they would understand the complex relationships between written signs, spoken signs, and the things they signified.[48] Then he describes the sources for what would, in his own time, come to be understood as the two key scripts of the preimperial world. The first of these was the "greater official script" (*da zhuan*), which derived from a dictionary of standard character forms—the *Great Official Script* (*Dazhuan*)—compiled by Zhou the Chronicler during the reign of King Xuan.[49] The second was the "an-

cient graphs" (*guwen*) that Confucius had used to write the Six Classics and Zuo Qiuming had used for his commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

Having announced the authority of these writing systems, Xu turns to their fragmentation at the hands of the lords of the latter Zhou, those who disregarded the authority of their king and "divided the country into seven states" (*fen wei qi guo*). In characterizing the heterogeneity of these states, Xu elaborates the same essential coincidence of name and implement that we witnessed in Confucius's response to the story of Zhongshu Yuxi: they had fields of "different dimensions" (*yi mu*), axles of "different width" (*yi gui*), ordinances based on "different legal codes" (*yi fa*), garments based on "different ritual systems" (*yi zhi*), languages composed of "different sounds" (*yi sheng*), and scripts made up of "different forms" (*yi xing*).[50] The repetitive structure of his account reinforces the notion that writing, language, ritual, law, and measurements are mutually interdependent, and it invests variance (*yi*) with a sort of viral capacity to exploit these networks and propagate itself throughout the polity.

But the same coincidence of spoken word, written graph, and material thing that allowed variance to spread across the administrative apparatus of the state was also the key to eliminating fragmentation. By codifying writing, the ruler could counteract the diversifying pressure of local customs and regional dialects and embed the proper alignment of names and implements in a reproducible graphic structure. According to Xu Shen, this realignment is precisely what occurred when the First Emperor of Qin, upon uniting "all under Heaven" through force of arms, immediately accepted a proposal from his chief councilor Li Si to unify the writing system. The new script was a simplified version of the "greater official script" of Zhou the Chronicler, and like that script, it was inscribed in several important treatises that were preserved in the imperial library of the Han. The association of this new "lesser official script" (*xiao zhuan*) with the graphic order of the earliest writing was enshrined in the title of the most important of these treatises, the *Strips of Cang Jie* (*Cang Jie pian*).

Xu Shen proceeds to explain how, like the Zhou, the Qin built a lexicographic order around interchangeable scripts. For our purposes, what is more important than the accuracy and comprehensiveness of Xu Shen's account is his sense that that the normative order of writing lay in the transparent interchangeability of scripts. The multiplicity of scripts he attributes to the Qin is categorically different from the profusion of written graphs that followed from Cang Jie's adaptation of schematic patterns (*wen*) into figures for spoken words (*zi*). Whereas that earlier innovation exposed the graphic forms of writing to the sounds of language, the multiplicity of the Qin was exclusively visual. The graphic innovations represented by the many scripts were not intended to figure spoken words that had not already been figured in the ancient graphs

of Confucius or the greater and lesser official scripts of Zhou and Li Si. They were simply new ways of visualizing the established logographs. Ideally, those established forms remained stable—in one-to-one relationships with specific names, and those names in one-to-one relations with the specific implements of ritual, law, and administration—beneath the veneer of graphic variability. Xu Shen's willingness to accommodate multiple scripts was thus premised on the basic assumption that the form of the character was distinguishable from the graphic expression of that character in script. Just as the distinction between orthography and typography in a modern phonetic script is premised on a distinction between the arrangement of the letters whereby a word is visualized and the representation of those letters with specific graphic forms, Xu Shen's willingness to countenance a distinction between the logography of characters (*wenzi*) and the pictography of script (*ti*) gestures toward an imagined form standing behind the visible graph on the page. The challenge was ensuring that this underlying form remained legible beneath the graphic ripples on its surface.

Here we come to the crux of Xu's argument and vision for his dictionary. The three early scripts—the "ancient graphs" of the Confucian classics, the "greater official script" of Zhou the Chronicler, and the "lesser official script" of the Qin—constituted the clearest expression of the pictographic and phonographic forms that determined the meaning of the actual character beneath the inscribed graph, and thereby made it possible to align that character with a particular name. Because "characters were the foundation of the classics, and the beginning of royal government" one could not hope to "know the past" and govern well unless the normative relations embedded in their schematic structure were laid bare.[51] Xu Shen endeavored to expose this order by organizing the graphs of the "small official script" into 540 discrete groups on the basis of shared graphic elements, or "radicals" (*bu*). In the entry for each character, he noted the equivalent characters in the "ancient graphs" and "greater official script." By organizing all three scripts into a coherent graphic template, Xu made a powerful argument for having, in effect, reconstituted the schematic order of Cang Jie's original system: "All the myriad things have been made visible" (*wan wu xian du*), he exclaimed in the final lines of his postface, "and nothing has been omitted" (*mi bu jian zai*).[52]

For a scholar of the second century CE, much of the authority of Xu Shen's graphic triumvirate flowed from the fact that none of the three scripts that composed it remained in regular use.[53] Although Xu made it clear to his readers that none of the three scripts predated the Zhou, the striking visual differences between these scripts and those in contemporary use nevertheless lent an air of antiquity to what was, in actuality, a new synthesis. This synthesis laid the essential foundations for the graphical lexicography of later China, and it established the "small official script" as the baseline for analyzing the struc-

ture, meaning, and relationships between characters. Although new scripts continued to emerge over the course of the following centuries, the small official script, which would variously be termed the "Qin official script" (*Qin zhuan*), or simply the "official script" (*zhuanshu*), continued to be regarded as the most transparent expression of the fundamental structure of the character beneath the superficial variability of the script.

Xu Shen's systematicity provided a clear model for scholars seeking to visualize the normative order of antiquity. By distinguishing the essential form of the character from the particular appearance of that character in script, he performed the visual equivalent of the same process of schematic categorization that Confucian ritualists performed when they aligned implements with names. Just as graphical lexicography demanded that a distinction be made between the character 觚 and the expression of that character in writing, ritual required that the essential features that made a chalice a "chalice" be distinguished from those qualities of a chalice that were superfluous to its chalice-hood. In demonstrating how one could use principles of graphic organization to make visible the semantic and phonetic relations between names, Xu provided a template for conceptualizing the way in which the formal relations between the implements associated with those names might similarly be visualized. And by claiming that the measure of a model's normativity rested on the clarity of the relations between the components of that model—in his case, the clarity of the relations between the graphical elements of Chinese characters—he established a clear rhetorical precedent for the idea that a scholar could claim the authority of antiquity by being systematic in the present. Within a century of his death, scholars began using his conceptual template and relying on his rhetorical precedent to elaborate the names in the ritual classics into pictures.

FIGURE 1.8 The character *yi* in small official script.

2

Picturing Names

Like every other logograph defined in its pages, the *Explanation of Patterns and Explication of Progenies* organizes its definition of the character 彝 on the basis of the character's graphic structure (Fig. 1.8). The graph, it explains, signifies "a common vessel used in ancestral shrines." It is made up of the radical 糸, meaning "thread," because it is tasseled, and it features 米 ("husked rice") above 廾 ("to offer up with both hands"), because the "treasure in the vessel is the rice that is offered up." At the top of the character is the graph 彑, representing its pronunciation: *yi*. The dictionary then quotes the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli*): "There are six *yi*: the chicken *yi*, the bird *yi*, the yellow *yi*, the tiger *yi*, the insect *yi*, and the 'jia' *yi*." It closes by identifying several variant "ancient script" (*guwen*) logographs representing the same word.[1]

Sentences like this passage from the *Rites of Zhou* were undoubtedly the inspiration for Jorge Luis Borges's "Chinese encyclopedia," which famously proposed a taxonomy of animals organized into such categories as "stray dogs," "belonging to the emperor," and "that from a long way off look like flies."[2] The popularity of that passage now blunts its humor, and its vaguely Orientalist undertones undoubtedly warrant sustained interrogation. But in light of its proximity to the actual Chinese canon, perhaps it would be better to come at the matter head on: How indeed, as Foucault wondered, are we to countenance the possibility of thinking *that*?[3] Is not the chicken also a bird? Why one color and not six? And what of *jia*, which was the name used for another, possibly pitcher-like ritual vessel? Two vessels associated with specific animals, two

with broad zoological categories, one with a color, and the last with another vessel. What manner of system is this?

We need not imagine that people in early China possessed some radically alien worldview to answer our question. The typology of the six *yi* makes sense once we recognize the fundamental conservatism of the *Rites of Zhou* as a text. The text as we have it did not assume its present form until the early imperial period, and it has long been thought to represent a late classical or early imperial retrospective that regularized the ritual and administrative structures of a distant past that were never as systematic in actuality as the text claimed them to be.[4] But whatever its textual history, the *Rites of Zhou* was also internally conservative, in the sense that many of its passages were clearly designed to preserve and organize fragments of an older civilization. The text is filled with lists of lists—the Six Arts (*liu yi*), for example, consist of the Six Forms of Music, the Five Styles of Archery, the Nine Modes of Calculation, and so forth. Judging from the contents of these lists, it is highly unlikely that they were ever practiced at the same time by the same group of people. Take, for instance, the text's influential enumeration the Six Implements (*liu qi*): "From jade are made the Six Implements, which are used to venerate Heaven, Earth, and the Four Directions. The blue disk is used to honor Heaven. The yellow *cong* is used to honor Earth. The green tablet is used to honor the East. The red blade is used to honor the South. The white "tiger" is used to honor the West. The black pendant is used to honor the North."[5]

Tens of thousands of jade objects have been recovered from preimperial archaeological sites across China, but no objects approximating the six jades enumerated in the *Rites* have ever been discovered together as an assemblage. The jade forms associated with the six names were only conventionalized in the Song,[6] and even if we accept this convention as a provisionally accurate rendering of the preimperial past, the temporal and spatial distribution of the form corresponding to each name varies tremendously.[7] Disks are ubiquitous in the archaeological record; tablets less so. No sculpted jade "tiger" predating the Han has ever been found.[8] Moreover, the vast majority of early "jade" carvings are made from lustrous stone of muted or polychromatic hue that is not readily reducible to one or the other of the six colors in the list.

Instead of accurately representing an earlier ritual system, what appears to have happened is that the author(s) of the passage started with the spatial template of the six directions and chromatic template of the six colors and then accommodated the precious fragments of earlier material cultures to those templates. Regardless of the terms by which they were known in their own day, we know that Neolithic jade disks and blades and tablets were collected and preserved throughout the Shang and Zhou dynasties.[9] Alongside these actual things were transmitted words and logographs—the spoken names of jade implements and written graphs bearing the radical 玉, meaning "jade."

It is likely that the six categories reasonably accommodated these material, linguistic, and textual fragments. Had the author(s) recognized a larger typology of treasured jades—eight categories, perhaps, or ten—other templates could surely have been found. It is also entirely possible that the reason no preimperial jade tiger has ever been discovered is that the logograph 琥, combining *yu* 玉 ("jade") and *hu* 虎 ("tiger"), was originally chosen not because the jade was a tiger, but because it was some other thing that also happened to be pronounced *hu*. Such was the confusion that phonetic borrowing and the proliferation of scripts in the classical world generated, and it was precisely such confusion that much of the early commentary on the Confucian canon aimed to put straight. As Confucius had explained, it was, in the end, all about the rectification of names.

In much the same way, the framework of the six *yi* vessels was a way of taking the textual and material fragments of the past—a bird-shaped vessel, perhaps, and a golden vessel, and the word *jia*—and incorporating them into a new scheme whose efficacy was made apparent through the numeric correspondence between the six *yi* and the text's other lists of six. In so doing, the *Rites of Zhou* invested its numerical templates with an aura of universality—they encompassed not only the six directions and the six colors, but indeed all the treasures of antiquity, including those that survived in the flesh and those only remembered by name. The traditionalists had staked their reputation on their reverence for the names and implements of the past. The *Rites of Zhou* worked by revealing the hidden order that those names and implements embodied.

Xu Shen's entry on the *yi* undertakes an analogous operation. It, too, is more concerned with accommodating received knowledge to a schematic template than with justifying that knowledge or explaining the principles that brought it into being. The radical 糸 can "mean" many things, depending upon the logograph in which it is found, as can the graph 米. The dictionary is not out to explain why the combination of those and other elements, here, *must* mean *yi*. Instead, it accepts the character *yi* as a given and then accommodates it to its template of 540 determinative graphs by explaining the function that each graph performs in linking the logograph to both the word *yi* and the category of vessels that that word denominates. Imre Galambos has demonstrated that despite its appearance, the graphical analysis in *Explanation and Explication* was not designed to explain the etymology of Chinese logographs.[10] Rather, it was mnemonic—a system for dissecting characters into standard components which could more easily be memorized. This memory palace of graphic units worked because Xu Shen had eliminated the chatter of the variant forms and transcribed the "standard" characters into a fixed script—Li Si's small official script—which always represented the same word using the same graphic elements in the same position relative to one another.

The citation from the *Rites of Zhou* supports the simultaneously conservative and reductive operation of the wider entry. Although it might, at first glance, appear analogous to the citations found in descriptive dictionaries like the *Oxford English Dictionary* or its Chinese equivalent, the *Hanyu Dacidian*, it did not serve as an example of a particular historical meaning or usage of the word *yi*. If that had been the citation's purpose, Xu Shen would have chosen a passage that more clearly demonstrated that the *yi* was a vessel and that its function was ceremonial. The citation does not, in any way, corroborate Xu Shen's *definition* of *yi* as a "common vessel used in ancestral shrines." There are plenty of passages in the Confucian canon that could have provided such corroboration, had Xu Shen been so inclined. (Here it bears noting that the passage from the *Rites of Zhou* does not figure among the nine historical citations provided by the editors of the *Hanyu Dacidian* in their entry for *yi*.) Instead, the citation endorses the entry by enunciating the ritual formulation that constituted its *locus classicus*. The Zhou had organized the ritual vessels of their ancestral temples into six discrete categories, and now Xu Shen would ensure that the clarity of that system remained apprehensible to human beings in the present by organizing the visual expression of the name of those vessels into four graphic components. Just as the transparency between name and implement ensured the extension of normative hierarchies across time and space, the transparency between vessel, word, and logograph generated by the dictionary enabled the perpetuation of those hierarchies into the future. This is precisely why the abandonment of Li Si's script that followed the rise of the art of calligraphy and the emergence of the new "clerical" (*lishu*) and "standard" scripts (*kaishu*) so troubled later scholars like Xu Xuan (916–991)—it masked the order that Xu Shen's lexicography endeavored to transmit.[11]

From the perspective of the Confucian scholars who followed Xu Shen, however, the clarity of the logograph was only part of the problem. More fundamental was the fact that the actual implements of Zhou ritual that had been so carefully enumerated in the *Rites of Zhou* no longer existed. Earlier scholars had succeeded in inscribing the fragments of earlier civilizations into textual templates that endowed these fragments with authority. But they had not succeeded in preserving the fragments themselves. The *Rites of Zhou* gave order to the names, and Xu Shen gave order to the logographs for these names. For words whose referents were still known throughout the world, that was enough. Everyone knew what was meant when they heard the word *xiang* ("elephant") or read the graph 鼎 ("cauldron"). But nobody knew what an *yi* looked like. As later medieval scholars would say, for most of the more than four hundred implements named in the Confucian classics, the "names survived but their substance was lost" (*ming cun shi wang*).[12]

This absence presented the late Han scholar Zheng Xuan with a distinctive problem. For him, classical learning was first and foremost a matter of

"explication" (*xungu*)—the elaboration of meaning through the glossing of the difficult words and passages in a text.[13] The appropriate response upon encountering a challenging term was to extrapolate the meaning of the word from the context of the passage, or to cite the usage of the same word in another text whose meaning was more obvious. To cite but one example, it was relatively straightforward to take a classical line like "The Administrator of Vessels manages the seats of the six *zun* and the six *yi*" and explain that "the seats" (*wei*) means "the place where the vessels are displayed" (*suo chen zhi chu*).[14] The problem was that "seats" was not the only challenging word in the passage. *Zun* and *yi* were equally hard to understand. But unlike "seats," there was no way to extrapolate what the words meant from their context, other than to say that they were both vessels that were in some sense different from one another. Passages elsewhere in the text enumerated the six *zun* and the six *yi*, but they did not define what it was that made the *zun* a *zun*, and the *yi* an *yi*, and not some other sort of vessel. Because these names were, in effect, the lowest common denominator of the text, there was no way for the practices of "explication" to do anything better than point to equivalent names in other texts. The very intertextuality of the practice foreclosed greater specificity.

In the face of this conundrum, Zheng Xuan devised a new way to fulfill his mission. Instead of simply glossing words with other words, he began to draw pictures. From the standpoint of the established hermeneutics of naming and writing, these pictures were simply the latest stage in an unfolding process of revelation—just as Cang Jie and Xun Kuang had formulated writing and determined names of the basis of their observations, and Xu Shen had systematized the logographs for these names on the basis of their graphic structure, now Zheng Xuan would visualize these names to help his contemporaries comprehend the world that the classics inscribed. Taken individually, the pictures that he produced, as far as we can tell from surviving evidence, were as arbitrary as the logographs they pictured—the relationship between the picture of the *yi* and the name *yi* was no more preordained than the relationship between the logograph 彝 and the word *yi*. But collectively, the overall visual impression of these pictures overrode the arbitrariness of their individual designs with the same graphic rhetoric of systematicity that Xu Shen had deployed in his lexicography. In effect, Zheng Xuan and the exegetes who followed developed a visual practice whose persuasiveness was premised on its capacity to perform, in pictorial terms, the same systematicity of the text they sought to explain.

Our understanding of this graphic regime, and of the lexicographic practices that underwrote it, is mediated by the imperial publishing initiatives of the tenth century. Xu Shen's dictionary was edited at least twice before being printed for the first time in the late tenth century, once by the famous Tang "official script" calligrapher Li Yangbing in the eighth century, and then by Xu Xuan (916–991) and his brother Xu Kai (920–974), southern émigrés at the

northern court of the Song emperor Taizong (r. 976–997). The edition of the Xu brothers was the basis for all subsequent scholarship on the text.[15]

Although echoes of earlier pictures survive in the material record, our earliest coherent source for the pictorial exegesis of the ritual canon is *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics*, which was submitted to the throne by its compiler Nie Chongyi in 961 and repeatedly promulgated over the next several decades, at precisely the same time that the Xu brothers were completing their work on Xu Shen's dictionary. Bibliographic treatises of the dynastic histories of the Sui and Tang indicate that it was preceded by at least twenty-two distinct compilations of "ritual pictures" (*li tu*).[16] The earliest of these now lost texts is Zheng Xuan's identically titled *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics*. Zheng Xuan is generally recognized as having been the first scholar to group the *Record of Rites*, the *Book of Ceremony and Rites* (*Yili*), and the *Rites of Zhou* together as the "three ritual classics," and the first to compose commentaries on the three texts as a coherent corpus.

Although Nie Chongyi, as we shall see, deployed a distinctive hermeneutic that distinguished him from his forebears, the consistently conservative way he talks about his editorial intervention lends credence to the notion that the pictures preserved in the earliest, twelfth-century edition of his text reflect the essential visual character of the lost pictures that preceded it. Nie presents his book as a compilation of and addendum to earlier illustrations. He notes that he only added pictures in those instances in which the ritual classics communicated some sense of an implement's "form" (*zhi*) and the "old pictures" (*jiu tu*)—that is, the pictures he had inherited from earlier ritual compendia—had "left them out" (*lüe*).[17] He also stresses his fealty to the commentaries of Zheng Xuan and the subcommentaries of Zheng's successors. In a couple entries, he even goes so far as to say that he adopted the picture from Zheng Xuan's *Illustrations*.[18] The material record provides further corroboration. Archaeological artifacts recovered from Tang imperial sites not only presage Nie's pictures but share their reductive character. The simple, sparrow-shaped base of an earthenware cup and tortoise-shaped lid of an earthenware jar recovered from the tomb of Empress Ai (buried 687 CE) echo the illustrations of the *jue* and *dui* vessels in *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (Figs. 1.9–1.12), just as the mountains painted on a jar from the same tomb share the bold, schematic ornamentation of the "mountain *zun*" (*shan zun*) and *lei* vessels (Figs. 1.13–1.14). The combination of the sharp profile and planed, unadorned surface of a disk found in the ruins of a Tang imperial palace echoes the diagrammatic simplicity of the similarly proportioned "tablet disk" (*gui bi*) in Nie's text (Figs. 1.15–1.16). These and other such artifacts demonstrate the influence of earlier ritual pictures on the workshops of the Tang court, and point to a basic congruence between those pictures and the pictures preserved in the twelfth-century edition. Thus, while it remains unquestionable that Nie

FIGURE 1.9 Earthenware goblet. Excavated from the tomb of Empress Ai (buried 687), Yanshi, Henan. After Guo Hongtao, "Tang Gongling Ai huanghou mu," 14, fig. 6.4.

FIGURE 1.10 "Jade *jue* cup" (*yu jue*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 14.5b. Woodblock print on paper. National Library, Beijing.

FIGURE 1.11 Earthenware vessel with tortoise lid. Excavated from the tomb of Empress Ai (buried 687), Yanshi, Henan. After Guo Hongtao, "Tang Gongling Ai huanghou mu," 14, fig. 6.1.

FIGURE 1.12 *Gui*. Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 13.6a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

FIGURE 1.13 Earthenware vessel with painted mountains. Excavated from the tomb of Empress Ai (buried 687), Yanshi, Henan. Luoyang Museum.

FIGURE 1.14 "Mountain *zun*" (*shan zun*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 14.5a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

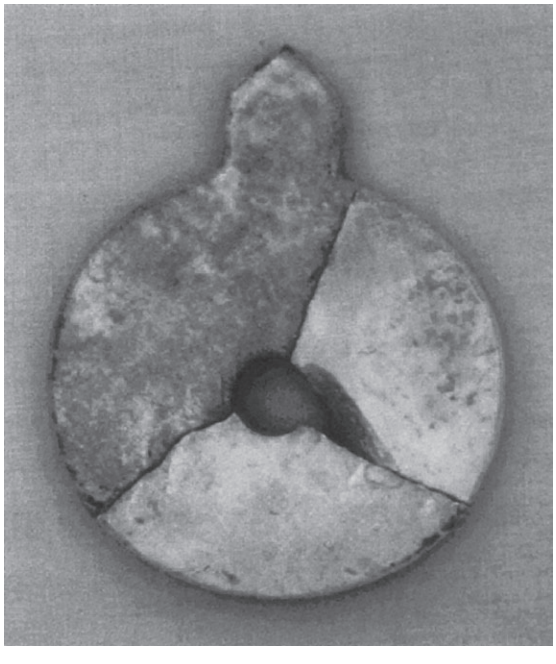


FIGURE 1.15 Jade disk excavated from the remains of the Tang dynasty Daminggong imperial palace in Xian, Shaanxi. Ninth century. Adapted from Liu Qingzhu, "Tangdai yuqi de kaogu faxian yu yanjiu," 166.

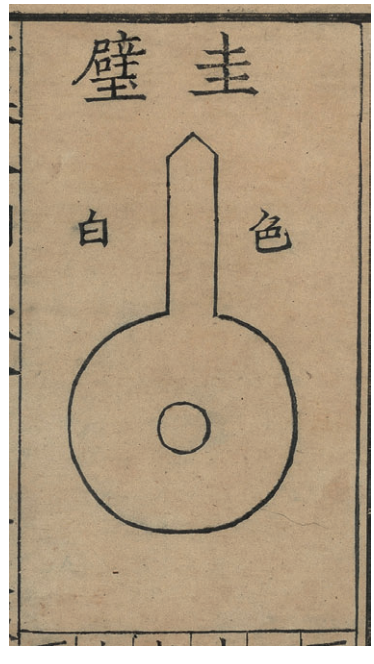


FIGURE 1.16 "Tablet disk" (*gui bi*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 11.4a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

Chongyi developed a number of his own illustrations, it is also reasonable to conclude that the basic character of his illustrations—the qualities that make them "lexical pictures"—reflects that of the tradition he inherited.

Most of the interpretive techniques that Nie used to grapple with this tradition lie hidden beneath the surface of his text. Although his postface to *Illustrations* highlights a handful of his editorial principles, he rarely explains why he chose one picture over another, or why he found the reductive categoricity of his imagery visually persuasive. To uncover his hermeneutic, we must prize apart the armor of his exegesis. One chink in the carapace is the fine fissure between the way he inscribes and the way he pictures names.

The Complexity of Yellow

Like every other one of the more than three hundred entries in *Illustrations*, Nie Chongyi's entry for the "yellow *yi* vessel" (*huang yi*), the third of the *yi* vessels listed in the *Rites of Zhou*, is composed of a picture and several lines of text (Fig. 1.17). The picture shows a small cup with a short, slightly flared foot seated atop a much larger stand. The stand is composed of a foliated platter surmounting the tiered neck of a vase-like body with broad shoulders tapering to a flat base. A short gloss appended to the label identifies this stand as a *zhou*, which we recognize as a discrete object from an illustration on the preceding page (Fig. 1.7). The tiers of the neck are black in color, suggesting discrete decorative registers. At the center of the upper register is the top third of a circle, balanced on the other side by pairs of roughly parallel lines. At the center of the lower register is a triangle with slightly concave sides, with matching pairs of parallel lines immediately on either side. The base of the body bears five horizontal lines, above which can be seen a roughly triangular area framed by three nested parallel lines articulating five discrete lobes that echo the foliated edge of the platter above. This lobed pattern is reversed in single lines on either side, suggesting additional triangular registers on the unseen portions of the vessel. At the center of the triangular area, and on the otherwise unadorned cup above, are a pair of almond-shaped ellipses. We immediately recognize these as eyes on the basis of their shape, their symmetrical arrangement, the discrete dots at their centers, and the inset depth suggested by curved lines above and below. As the only explicitly representative element of the decorative scheme, these eyes attract the viewer's attention and, together with its distinctive shape, present themselves as the most salient feature of the yellow *yi*. Following the picture is a short passage:

> The yellow *yi* vessel holds fragrant liquor. The "Officer of Zun and Yi Vessels" (*Si zun yi*)[19]states, "In the autumn and winter sacrifices, liquor is sprinkled on the ground using a *jia*-style *yi* vessel and a yellow *yi* vessel. Both have

stands." The king uses the jade ladle with a *gui*-shaped handle to make wine offerings to the sacrificial recipient and honor the gods. The queen uses the jade ladle with a *zhang*-shaped handle to make the subsequent offering.[20] Zheng Xuan notes that "yellow *yi* vessel" means that it has yellow eyes, for which gold is used. The "Suburban Animal Sacrifice" (*Jiao te sheng*)[21] says that "'Yellow eyes' refers to the *zun* vessel that occupies the superior position and holds fragrant liquor. 'Yellow' refers to what is at its center. 'Eyes' refers to the pure clarity of the fragrant vapor. This means that when liquor is within, it is clearly visible on the outside." This type of *yi* vessel and stand are entirely lacquered with golden lacquer.[22]

Nie Chongyi begins by introducing the function of the "yellow *yi*," citing the *Rites of Zhou* as his authority. He then explains the respective types of ladles that the king and his consort would use in conjunction with the *yi*. Having clarified its function, he next offers two different explanations for the vessel's distinctive name. The first, from Zheng Xuan, is that "yellow" refers to the golden yellow eyes (*huang mu*) that decorate the vessel's surface. The second, an attenuated elaboration of the term "yellow eyes" based on a reference from the *Record of Rites*, is that the exterior of the vessel somehow reveals the liquor within. Striking here is the fact that the *Record of Rites* interprets *mu* not as literal eyes, but as an indication of the vessel's capacity to make its contents visible. In the text itself, this difference passes without comment; Nie does not identify which of the two readings he considers to be correct. The picture, on the other hand, is explicit. The central motif of the pictured *yi* is a pair of staring eyes.

This discrepancy between text and picture tells us two things. First, that the picture is not a complete visualization of Nie Chongyi's composite text. A comprehensive visualization would require two pictures: one with eyes and one that somehow graphically instantiated the vessel's capacity to make its contents visible. Instead, the image is an illustration of the name "yellow *yi*." The text provides additional information that the image does not reveal, such as the vessel's function, a justification for certain pictorial decisions, such as the illustration of eyes, and alternative sources which are not reflected in the image. It is thus both a commentary on the name and a commentary on the picture of the name, an exegetical gloss that elaborates the significance of the picture by associating it with instances of the same name in the ritual classics. By presenting multiple interpretations of the same name without resolving the discrepancy between them, it announces the picture as the locus of judgment. Moreover, by refusing to echo this judgment, the text effectively denies that it is the authority upon which the judgment was made. The discrepancy between picture and text thus gestures to the existence of an unnamed outside authority, external to the entry itself.

When we consider the yellow *yi* alongside Nie Chongyi's pictures of the other five *yi* (Fig. 1.7), the nature of that authority becomes clear. In each case, the essential form of the vessel and stand remains constant—the visual assertion being that what makes the *yi* an *yi* is its shape, instead of, say, its function or color. And in each case, the modifier is rendered graphically on the wall of the vessel. The simple, self-evident logic of interpreting the "bird *yi*," "tiger *yi*," and "chicken *yi*" as vessels decorated with birds, tigers, and chickens thereby endorses the less-evident interpretation of the "yellow *yi*" as a vessel decorated with eyes and the "*jia yi*" as a vessel decorated with grain. Thus the logic of visual consistency in the transformation of names into pictures provides the basis for favoring one classical precedent over another. In a manner remarkably analogous to that of Xu Shen's dictionary, Nie organizes his pictures into a graphic template of one-to-one equivalencies between form and meaning, and he uses the consistency of these equivalencies to visually justify his interpretive judgments. The order of the arrangement as a whole effaces the arbitrariness of the individual picture.

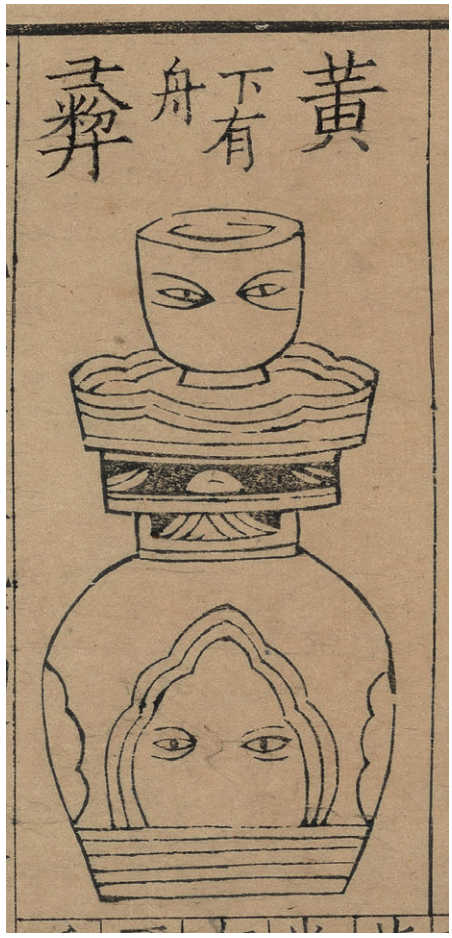


FIGURE 1.17 "Yellow *yi*" (*huang yi*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 14.2a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

Much as the entries in Xu Shen's dictionary demonstrate the comprehensiveness of his graphic system by identifying the many earlier graphs that the system accommodates, the text in Nie Chongyi's entry endorses both the comprehensiveness of his learning and the importance of his arbitration. Reading the text after the picture, the reader is struck by Nie's command of his classical sources, and by the confusion that these sources generate. By reading the Three Ritual Classics as a single composite document of ancient ritual practices, Zheng Xuan had established an exegetical paradigm that demanded the incorporation of mutually inconsistent sources into a coherent template. As a textual practice, his interlinear "explications" performed this coherence by intertextually linking up passages from the three texts as glosses for one another. The categorical generality of names masked the material distinctions between the many ancient things that the earliest compilers had inscribed into the classics. As a picto-textual practice, Nie Chongyi's *Illustrations* carried this coherence forward by resolving the contradictions that emerged when these names were visualized, while maintaining the intertextual glosses that tenth-century scholars were accustomed to encountering when they read the classics.[23] The resulting amalgam was laden with the kind of image/text disjunctures that we witness in the entry on the yellow *yi*. But the contemporary reader of the text, long habituated to find coherence in the systematicity of the template as a whole, was disinclined to look for these disjunctures. Instead, the consistent visual pattern of the text, instilled by the regularity of the correspondences between name and logograph, and logograph and picture, conveyed a sense of order. The persuasiveness of the paradigm as a whole relied upon the reader's willingness to presume one-to-one relations between written and pictured names. As we shall see in part II, these relations were ruptured when actual, "self-naming" ancient implements were reintroduced into the equation.

But prior to this disruption, the central challenge for a scholar of Nie Chongyi's generation was more a matter of integration than logical resolution. The hermeneutic deployed to achieve this integration was simultaneously *conservative*, in the sense that it aimed to accommodate the traces of earlier picto-textual exegesis, and *destructive*, insofar as it deployed the assumption of one-to-one lexico-graphic equivalence to eliminate the chatter of variant forms. The audibility of these interpretative operations grows when we turn our ear from a single name to the wider text, and to the circumstances of its compilation.

The Art of Restoration

Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics was the product of a series of reform measures initiated by the Later Han (947–951) and Later Zhou (951–960)

courts. The last of the five successive regimes that ruled North China from Bianjing (modern Kaifeng) during the first half of the tenth century, these courts sponsored a series of publication projects and ritual reforms that did much to establish the scholarly and ceremonial infrastructure of the subsequent Song dynasty. These ventures took place against a backdrop of political turmoil and material loss. In February 947, the Khitan Liao captured Kaifeng and brought the reigning Later Jin dynasty (936–947) to a close. Shortly thereafter, they withdrew to the north with the Jin imperial family as their prisoners. According to the *Dynastic History of the Liao* (*Liaoshi*), they also took all of the Jin officials, palace ladies, eunuchs, physicians, diviners, and artisans, as well as the court's books and maps, astronomical charts, arms and armor, and ceremonial paraphernalia.[24]

One month later, the military governor Liu Zhiyuan (895–948) moved from Taiyuan into the vacuum left by the departed Khitan and established the Later Han (947–951) court at Bianjing. Liu immediately commissioned a series of projects that aimed to reconstitute the scholarly and ritual materials that had been stolen by the invaders. Liu died little more than a year after assuming the throne, but work continued under his son and successor, the emperor Yindi (r. 948–951). Yindi came to an ignominious end three years later when he was overthrown and executed by his general Guo Wei (904–954), who proclaimed himself the first emperor of the Later Zhou dynasty (951–960). Nine years later, Guo Wei's successor Guo Zongxun (953–973) was in turn overthrown by his general Zhao Kuangyin (927–976), who established the Song. The fact that the scholarly projects initiated by Liu Zhiyuan persisted through three successive regimes, largely uninterrupted by the political turmoil swirling around them, suggests considerable consensus on the part of the ruling elite about the nature of the problem and its solution.

The tone of the excerpts of imperial memorials that survive in the historical records of this period suggests that the political turmoil of the age was matched by an acute fear of illegitimacy on the part of its leaders. Much of this fear followed from the looting of the Jin court, which had deprived its successors of the material accoutrements of status—the contemporary equivalents of the ancient bridles and bells—that were used to perform the routine sacrifices to the ancestral spirits and other deities whose intervention in human affairs the sacrifices were supposed to regulate. The importance of these implements stemmed, in part, from the marginal status of the capital at Bianjing relative to the old imperial capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang, and from the complex bloodlines of the men who held power there.

The fact that virtually all of these figures murdered their way to power created a strong incentive to whitewash the realpolitik of their authority with an illustrious backstory. By being adopted or reading themselves into a storied lineage (Guo Wei famously claimed descent from Guo Shu, the younger

brother of King Wen (ca. eleventh century BCE), the illustrious founder of the Zhou dynasty), and by reviving the name of an earlier dynasty, like the Han, Tang, or Zhou, the warlords of the tenth century claimed political patrimony.[25] Regardless of whether that patrimony was defined by bloodline or moral authority, the key to its assertion lay in sacrificing to the imperial ancestors and performing the other rites of emperorship.[26]

The looting of the ritual implements of state thus left a gaping hole in the practice of power. The cultural restoration launched by Liu Zhiyuan sought to plug this hole. The most famous dimension of the restoration was the completion of the first printed edition of the Confucian classics, a massive undertaking that had been initiated nearly two decades earlier by scholars at the court of the Later Tang. Blocks for several of the classics had escaped Khitan depredations; scholars set about determining the standard texts to be used for the remainder.[27] Nie Chongyi's first appearance in the historical record is connected to this project; we know virtually nothing of his life before the year 948, when he was appointed erudite of the *Record of Rites* in the Directorate of Education (*Guozi Liji boshi*), the primary bureaucratic organ tasked with administering the scholarly initiatives of the court. Nie was placed in charge of the printing of the *Gongyang* commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, but as his title indicates, he was also recognized for his knowledge of the ritual classics.[28]

The making of authoritative ritual instruments was fundamentally a matter of classical scholarship, as the types, designs, and functions of these instruments were all derived from the Confucian canon and the commentaries that had accumulated around it. The establishment of an authoritative edition of the classics thus went hand in hand with the restoration of rites. But having the classics was not enough—ritual was also a matter of precedent and place. Immediately following the completion of the printing blocks for the classics in 953, Guo Wei ordered the prominent minister Feng Dao (882–954) to recover the spirit tablets from the ancestral temple and altars to the Gods of Earth and Grain in Luoyang, and to oversee the reconstruction of these edifices in Bianjing.[29] Feng is a prime example of the administrative continuity of a period that can, from the rapid turnover of emperors and dynasties, seem like a time of tremendous turmoil. One of the Jin officials abducted by the Khitan, he eventually found his way back to Bianjing and served the courts of both Later Han and Later Zhou.

In 956, several years after completing his work on the *Gongyang* commentary, Nie Chongyi was finally presented with an opportunity to demonstrate his expertise on the ritual classics. Having witnessed Guo Wei's temple- and altar-building projects, Guo's adopted son and successor Guo Rong (921–959), who assumed the throne following his father's death in 954, turned his attention to the implements used therein. He invited scholars to examine the

designs of the offertory vessels and ceremonial jades used in the sacrifices to imperial ancestors and in the suburban offerings to Heaven and Earth.[30] Invoking what would become a standard trope for recently enthroned emperors, Guo Rong announced that the officials who had previously been tasked with manufacturing these implements had blindly followed the designs of their predecessors without knowing the classical standards from which these designs derived. He called for new designs grounded on the models of antiquity.[31]

Nie submitted a proposal and controversy ensued. His superior, Yin Zhuo (891–971), chancellor of the Directorate of Education, disagreed with the designs that Nie had proposed for the aforementioned blue disk and yellow *cong* named in the *Rites of Zhou*. Nie had argued for a disk of nine inches (*cun*) in diameter, with a round hole at its center, and a *cong* that was octagonal on the outside with no hole at its center, while Yin argued that the disk should be twelve inches in diameter with a square hole and the *cong* should be square on the outside with a round hole at its center.[32] Arguments over such minutiae were typical of the debates over ritual that regularly echoed through the court, and the fact that traces of such disagreements have been preserved in records of the era is a sign of how much they mattered to the chroniclers of the day. It can seem hard to reconcile the virulence of these debates with the apparent triviality of their subject matter. How much did it really matter whether the little hole at the center of the disk was round or square? In part, the quarrel was a sign of a world in which the particularity of a form mattered—when rank and status are measured in the diameter of a disk and the hue of a hemline, those in power attend to details. But ultimately, the reason scholars were so invested is that these minor discrepancies were also proxies for larger debates between discrete exegetical traditions—in this case, Yin's proposal was premised on the interpretations of the sixth-century scholar Cui Ling'en, while Nie's, elliptically, was closer to those of Zheng Xuan.[33] How one felt about the dimensions of a disk said a great deal about how they felt about a host of other problems of classical interpretation, and it implicated them in social networks of allegiance to particular intellectual genealogies.

For our purposes, what matters about this and other such debates is less the virulence of the disagreement than the shared assumptions it concealed. However detailed the subject of the debate happened to be, it was nevertheless textually reductive: it concerned a matter that was easily represented in writing—dimensions figured in numbered units, forms figured in essential geometrical shapes, materials figured in basic categories of wood, clay, and jade. The finer details of ornamentation and workmanship, matters that were central to the sensory appeal of the object but less readily quantifiable in writing, are almost entirely absent from the court's debates about ritual implements. Such details surely mattered to the court; the arts of the era demon-

strate that its elites cared a great deal about having well-crafted things. But these details did not bear on the hermeneutics of canonical facture. This remained true when it came time to make pictures of the implements; never did the arguments about which picture to use concern a detail that was predominantly visual—like the particular arc of a vessel's profile or the luster of its surface—the sort of thing that an artist would see and feel but a writer might overlook. Every argument turned, rather, on a judgment about which words to prioritize over others.

In the end, Nie won the day. Tian Min, the chamberlain of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, who was tasked with adjudicating the debate, decided that Nie's arguments were more grounded in the text of the classics themselves and the earliest strata of commentaries. His reasoning favored graphic systematicity over precedent. Tian knew that none of the ritual classics, nor the early commentaries, provided precise measurements for the ritual jades. The earliest dimensions were those of the *Derived Meanings of the Three Ritual Classics* (*Sanli yizong*), composed by Cui Ling'en—the very text from which Yin Zhuo had drawn his arguments. Cui's commentaries had served as the basis for court ritual for the past four hundred years, providing the standards for the Tang liturgies preserved in the *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era* (*Kaiyuan li*) and *Essential Meanings of the Five Rites* (*Wuli jingyi*), and for the rituals of the Later Jin and Later Han courts.[34] The chamberlain's willingness to accept Nie's judgment follows logically from the emperor's express desire for a decisive break from established practices. It also betrays a desire for visual coherence. Although Nie's arguments derived their authority from the earliest commentaries, the lack of dimensions in those commentaries effectively meant that he had to make most of them up himself. This gave him the liberty to consider setting and design, and to ensure that the proportions of the implements relative to one another matched their status in the ritual hierarchy. As with Xu Shen's lexicography, rejecting contemporary for archaic forms gave Nie the means to impose visual order.

Having won the debate, Nie received the commission to revise the court's ritual implements. Several months later, in the spring of 957, he submitted a total of fifty-three designs—ten jades and forty-three vessels. These designs were then forwarded to the Ministry of Works, which managed the court ateliers, for manufacturing. By 959, all of the work had been finished and the complete set of revised implements installed at the suburban altar and ancestral temple.[35] Nie thereafter proceeded to expand his designs to encompass the majority of the various chariots, vestments, and other ceremonial paraphernalia named in the ritual classics. This expansion also reframed the goals of his work: whereas the initial designs were directed toward the immediate end of rectifying a specific group of implements, the expanded project was a far more encyclopedic endeavor that aimed to organize the accumulated proceeds

of a millennium of visual exegesis on the ritual classics into a single, coherent book.

On June 19, 961, Nie submitted his magnum opus to the newly enthroned emperor and founder of the Song dynasty, Zhao Kuangyin.[36] Upon receiving the text, the emperor ordered a thorough review, which again generated wide-ranging responses. The disputatious Yin Zhuo, once more at the center of the debate, produced four scrolls worth of dissenting opinions, which together with the criticisms and countercriticisms of other scholars soon swelled to a total of fifteen scrolls. Although the full scope of these opinions is lost to us, a summary of the disagreements drafted for the emperor by the office of the Minister of Personnel Zhang Zhao survives. The matters at issue, which included the design of the grain measure (*fu*) and, again, the dimensions of the jades, were largely consistent with those that had been debated five years earlier.[37] The outcome was consistent as well. Although Nie was commanded to incorporate his critics' recommendations into his revisions, the surviving book indicates that he was granted considerable latitude in determining when and how to do so. In several instances, he included the dissenting opinions in the text of his entries but left his pictures unchanged.[38] Just as it effaced discrepancies between the classical texts, his picto-textual explications elided the variance of contemporary opinion, substituting thoroughness and exhaustive citation for logical coherence between image and text. Our knowledge of the work is based on this revised version, which was thereafter preserved under a title redolent of imperial sanction—the *Newly Authorized Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (*Xinding Sanlitu*).

The Hermeneutics of Picturing

The surviving edition of Nie's *Illustrations* preserves two paratexts that were composed prior to his final submission of the revised version. The first is a preface written in 960 by Dou Yan, a prominent scholar who oversaw Nie's work in conjunction with his own editing of new, comprehensive codes for the musical scores, dance choreographies, ceremonial arrangements, and rules of etiquette that collectively constituted courtly ritual.[39] The second is a postface written by Nie himself and dated May 25, 961, one month before his submission of the initial version.[40] Taken together, the two texts provide a clear synopsis of what the men most responsible for *Illustrations* understood its accomplishments to be, and their sense of how those accomplishments had been achieved. Nie's postface in particular gives name to and thereby helps to clarify the interpretative operations undergirding his imagery. The preface and postface also indicate that Nie's initial review of jades and vessels and his subsequent compilation of pictorial exegesis were, from his perspective and in the view of his superiors, part and parcel of a single intellectual project spanning

the five years from the initial commission from the Later Zhou court in 956 to his formal presentation of the text to the Song court in 961.

The conservatism of *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* is laid bare in Nie's postface, which emphasizes that the project was an attempt to rationalize the accumulated corpus of pictorial exegesis on the ritual classics. Throughout the text, Nie regularly refers to a body of visual reference material in ten fascicles that he calls the "old illustrations" (*jiu tu*). Medieval bibliographies indicate that between Zheng Xuan's initial *Illustrations* and Nie's tenth-century edition, at least five other scholars compiled illustrations of the *Three Ritual Classics*.[41] In addition to regularly citing Zheng Xuan's work, Nie cites three of these scholars by name: Ruan Chen, Liang Zheng, and Zhang Yi. It is not clear how much of this visual commentary was embedded within the ten fascicles of "old illustrations" and how much was available to Nie in the form of independent books. It is also possible that he had access to other, now lost sets of illustrations, such as the *Illustrations of the Luminous Hall and Ancestral Temple of the Zhou Royal Palace* (*Zhoushi wangcheng mingtang zongmiao tu*) or one or more of the four different compilations of *Illustrations of Mourning Garments* (*Sangfutu*) that had once been in the Sui imperial library.[42] We also know that court scholars in Bianjing had access to Guo Pu's (267–324) illustrated commentary on the *Erya*, a classical dictionary that included an entire fascicle dedicated to "implements" (*qi*), as recently as the 940s, but whether it survived the Khitan raid is uncertain.[43] Regardless of which particular illustrated commentaries he had and which he lacked, it is clear that Nie was confronted with a confusing mass of material that was rife with inconsistencies and widely diverging illustrations of the same names: "The ten fascicles of old illustrations," he wrote, "are missing shapes and lacking words, and their rules governing the apportioning of ritual forms according to rank are inconsistent. They offer nothing to follow, and it is difficult to obtain schemata from them. This is because earlier generations long transmitted what was customary without knowing its source."[44]

Nie uses a three-pronged scheme to characterize his methodology for organizing this morass of written and pictured names into a coherent template. First, for those "whose name and number varied, but whose form and measure were consistent" (*ming shu sui shu, zhi du bu bie*)—that is, in those instances in which the same picture and written dimensions were associated with different or multiple names, like the pictures associated with both "the six *hu* vessels used in Shang times and the eight *gui* vessels used in Zhou times"—he "preserved the names but eliminated the duplicate forms."[45] The body of the text demonstrates that, in practice, what this meant is that Nie Chongyi included only a single picture under the title *gui* and then noted, in the appended commentary, that the same vessel had been known as a *hu* during the Shang. And because the six *hu* and eight *gui* were all identical, he included only a single

picture instead of reproducing the same picture six or eight times.[46] In other words, instead of drawing the eight *gui* vessels as they would have appeared lined up on an altar, he drew only a single picture of the one form that corresponded to the one name. This practice reinforces the lexicographic bent of the wider project: Nie is picturing names in isolation, not implements in action.[47]

Second, for those cases in which a "name had multiple meanings that the old illustrations elided" (*ming yi duo er jiu tu lüe*), and general categories that had not been subdivided into specific forms, he "added a picture in each case" (*jiu er zeng zhi*).[48] He indicates that his entries on archery targets are one instance in which he employed this method, and examination of those entries offers a clear indication of what the method meant in practice. He illustrates a total of fifteen different targets, each with its own distinctive name, and prefaces these illustrations with a substantial description. In it, he explains that the "Heavenly Offices" (*Tianguan*) chapter of the *Rites of Zhou* refers to three targets used in major royal archery ceremonies: the tiger target, the bear target, and the leopard target; while the "Summer Offices" (*Xiaguan*) chapter refers to three royal targets having, respectively, five, three, and two concentric squares. The "Suburban Archery" (*Xiangshe*) section of the *Book of Ceremony and Rites*, by contrast, lists four targets that are distinguished from one another on the basis of both their appearance and the status of the archer: "The Son of Heaven uses a bear target with a white surface, the princes (*zhuhou*) use an elk target with a red surface, the high officers (*dafu*) use a target covered with fabric upon which tigers and leopards are painted, and the officers (*shi*) use a target covered with fabric upon which deer and boar are painted."[49]

When faced with these different lists, one could theoretically attempt to correlate the bear target in the *Rites of Zhou* with the bear target in the *Book of Ceremony and Rites*, or suggest that the tiger target had five squares, the bear target, three, and the leopard target, two. Instead, Nie Chongyi asserts that each list refers to an entirely distinct set of targets and then proceeds to produce a separate illustrated entry for each member of each set. He states that the three targets in the "Heavenly Offices" are named after the type of fur with which they are covered, that they are used respectively by the Son of Heaven, princes, and the ministers and high officers during the suburban sacrifices. The four targets in the *Book of Ceremony and Rites*, by contrast, are named after the faces of the animals painted on their surface (not their fur), and used in ceremonies held within the city walls. He represents these distinctions graphically, illustrating the distinctively patterned fur of the different animals for the first set (Figs. 1.18–1.19) and drawing likenesses of their faces for the second (Fig. 1.20). Even though the *Book of Ceremony and Rites* identifies only two of the four targets as being painted with images of the relevant animals, Nie Chongyi evidently regarded this as sufficient justification for drawing faces on all four

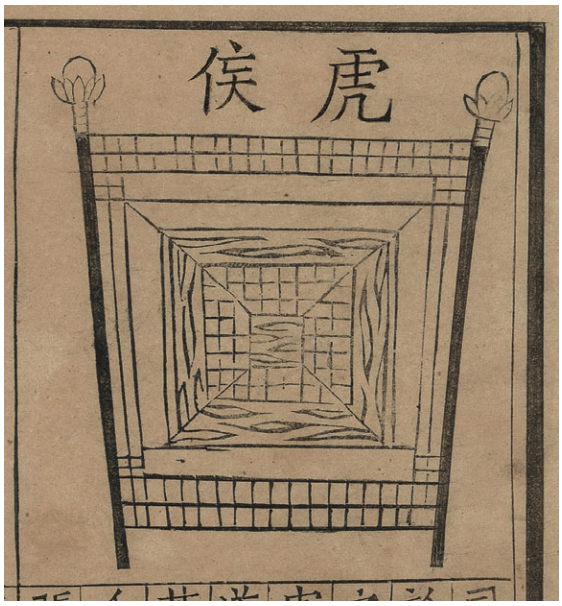


FIGURE 1.18 "Tiger target" (*hu hou*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 6.2a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

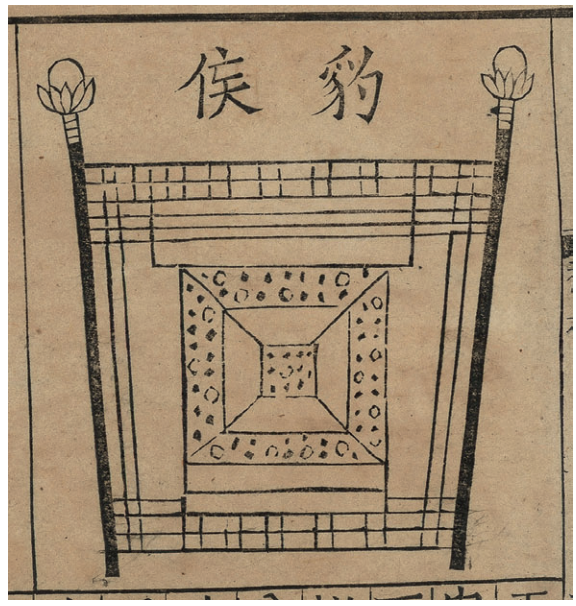


FIGURE 1.19 "Leopard target" (*bao hou*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 6.2b. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

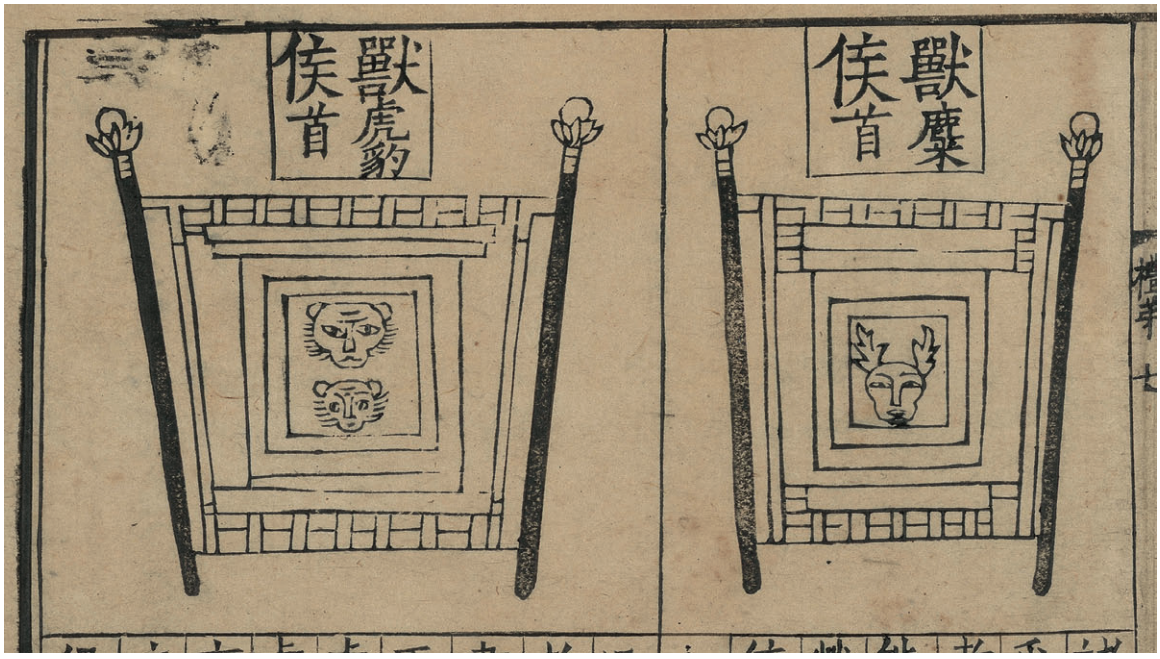


FIGURE 1.20 "Tiger-and-leopard head target" (*hu bao shou hou*) and "Elk-head target" (*mishou hou*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 7.1b. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

targets. Thus he used the pictures to create a sense of formal coherence for each subcategory that was not found in classical references themselves. Drawing upon these and a handful of other citations, Nie thereby constructed a comprehensive set of archery targets which formally instantiated differences in rank and occasion. By the time he was finished, he had a total of fifteen different targets, far more than were listed in any single classical source.

The logic of this approach makes sense when we proceed from the assumption that Nie's central aim was to conserve as much of the visual material inherited from his predecessors as possible. Presumably he had inherited one commentary that illustrated a "bear target" with the face of a bear, and another that illustrated a "bear target" without a face. Since the pictures at his disposal illustrated the same name two different ways, he knew that featuring only one picture for the name "bear target" would force him to choose one picture over the other. In order to retain both pictures, he needed to assume that the "bear target" in the *Rites of Zhou* meant one thing, while "bear target" in the *Book of Ceremony and Rites* meant something else. Once he had made that distinction, it followed that each of the targets listed in each of the classic texts meant something different, even if the names were the same. Since each meant something different, he needed to ensure that each distinct reference to a target in the classics had its own distinct picture. In those instances where the received commentaries did not provide a picture, or provided only one picture for what he considered to be distinct references, he needed to "add a picture in each case."

If one prioritizes the relationship between the classic texts and the archaic ritual system they purport to describe, the copresence of the first and second methods presents something of a conundrum. If different names and different references to the same name refer to different objects, how could it be that the six *gui* and the eight *hu* all refer to the same thing? Conversely, if it is possible for two names to mean the same thing, why would it make sense to assume that every mention of a target, regardless of the name, refers to a formally distinct thing? The only way for both methods to be valid is to assume that there is no unified principle of name-substance correspondence. Which in turn would seem to suggest that Nie's methodology is not internally consistent—that the principle undergirding the second method does not flow logically from the first—and that Nie is simply using his "methodology" to justify decisions that are in fact purely arbitrary.

But when we assume that the key problem is not the relationship between the text and the past—not, that is, a matter of representation—and instead start from the assumption that the text and associated commentaries *are* the past, that there is, in effect, no meaningful ontological distinction between what the texts inscribe and what was, then it follows that if one wants to revitalize antiquity, one needs to resuscitate as much of what is in the texts as

possible. Suddenly there is method in the madness, and what seems arbitrary begins to make a great deal of sense. Throughout the text, Nie regularly remarks that the ancients used different principles on a case-by-case basis to associate names with forms. In order to recover these associations, he could not therefore begin from unified principles of correspondence. Instead, he began from the surviving pictures themselves, and then deduced the principle that brought each into being. As an inductive method for moving from names to forms, this approach provides little guidance, for it means that every time one encounters a new name they need to decide for themselves how to give it form. But as a method for sorting preexisting forms, it is extremely helpful, as it provides a tool for integrating diverse designs into a visually consistent format.

For example, throughout his entries on ritual vessels, Nie repeatedly invokes the principle, derived from a comment by Zheng Xuan, that "in the rituals of the Zhou dynasty, implements were decorated according to their type" (*zhou zhi li, shi qi ge yi qi lei*).[50] When we examine the entries in *Illustrations*, it is immediately obvious that there is more than one way to interpret this principle. The ox décor on the ox cauldron, for instance, comes in the form of an ox head positioned at the juncture between each leg and the body. Although the heads to either side are ambiguous, the extension of the foremost ox's nose over the leg indicates that the illustrator understood these heads as three-dimensional, sculpted elements (Fig. 1.21).[51] A more obvious example of sculpted décor is the "jade *jue* cup" (*yu jue*; Fig. 1.10), the central portion of which is shaped like a sparrow on the basis of the variant reading of the character *jue* as *que* 雀 (sparrow). In other cases, however, the term is figured in pictorial terms, as seen in the upper portion of the "chicken *yi* vessel" (Fig. 1.1)[52] and the "mountain *zun*" (Fig. 1.14).[53] In his entry on the jade *jue* vessel, Nie explains the logic behind this variation:

> When the models of previous eras were handed down and observed so as to systematize implements and apparel, the same principle was not always followed. In some cases, the thing that corresponded to the object's name was painted in full. In other cases, the shape derived from the object's category was sculpted in part. Thus, for the chicken, bird, and other members of the six *yi* vessels, as well as the two green and white garments worn by the Empress at sacrifices to the imperial ancestors, a complete image of the corresponding thing was painted onto [their] surface. For such things as the jade *jue* vessel and the handles and rulers, or the dragon and cattail spoons, where the name is based on the category, the corresponding shape was sculpted in part to decorate [their] surface. Thus the rhinoceros and elephant *zun* vessels naturally have painted décor, while the Nine Cauldrons of the Xia dynasty had cast forms for things. The meaning of their names was obtained in the same manner.[54]

FIGURE 1.21 "Ox cauldron" (*niu ding*). Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 13.2a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

Much as the additive handling of the archery targets enabled the integration of multiple, potentially contradictory pictures into a single coherent system, the principle of "decorating vessels according to their type" rationalized the formal diversity of the models inherited by the Later Zhou and early Song courts. For a thousand years, exegetes had agreed that both the typological name (e.g., *ding*, *yi*, *zun*) and the subtype (e.g., ox, goat, mountain) corresponded on a literal one-to-one basis with a formal design: the ox cauldron was an "ox cauldron" because it was decorated with oxen, not because it was used for sacrificing ox blood or because it traveled on an oxcart or some other functional rationale. But some of the preexisting designs sculpted these names in three dimensions, while others painted them in two. Zheng Xuan's principle provided a pretext for accepting both approaches.

The third and final dimension of Nie's methodology concerns those instances in which "there are names but no forms" (*you qi ming er wu qi zhi*), meaning names recorded in the ritual classics for which no pictures, descriptions, or dimensions survived in the accumulated exegeses on the ritual classics. In these cases, Nie explains, he "left the name out without drawing a picture" (*lüe er bu tu*).[55] This detail, more than any other, exemplifies the conservatism of the project as whole. Nie emphatically resisted the urge to make up forms from scratch. Extrapolating the appearance of the elk target from the bear target was one thing, devising a new image for a category that had never been pictured was another. As the controversy with Cui Ling'en demonstrates, Nie was more than willing to make up measurements, but he appears to have drawn the line at extrapolating pictures from words without having at least

some kind of categorically analogous imagery to work from. As he stresses in his postface, "all of the commentaries that I compiled follow the true classics of the Duke of Zhou as set down by Confucius, with annotations by Kangcheng (Zheng Xuan) and further support from the subcommentaries."[56]

It is tempting, given his evident commitment to this written tradition, to call Nie's interpretive approach a form of textualism. But it would be more accurate to label his method *pictorialism*. A literal textual approach would demand that every name in the text be given material form. Nie's willingness to leave out those names for which he possessed no formal knowledge indicates that his horizon was defined by the sum total of the pictures, rather than the words, at his disposal. Unless the form for a name could be visually extrapolated from the imagery associated with analogous names, it had no place in his system. Privileging pictures over words freed Nie from the stratigraphy of textual exegesis, flattening his field of reference in a manner that does much to explain his rather unorthodox approach to the problem of precedent.

Throughout the first millennium CE, textual exegesis on the Confucian canon was largely a matter of layering ever more prolix layers of words over the layers laid down by one's predecessors. The first layer of the "commentary" (*zhu*) typically used more words to explicate a classical passage than were contained within the passage itself, while the second layer of the "subcommentary" (*shu*) used still more. At each stage, the opaque names and hermetic compounds of the underlying text were expanded, accordion-like, to renew their meaningfulness for a literary language ever more distant from the laconic formulations of the original classic. This stratigraphy inherently invested the medieval commentators of Nie's era in layered considerations of precedent; in order to articulate their particular understanding of a given text, they first had to decide how deep in time their disagreement with received judgment was willing to go. Many questioned the opinions of the Tang and earlier medieval subcommentaries, few disagreed with Zheng Xuan's commentaries, and none went against the wording of the classics themselves, apart from addressing transcription errors and other details of textual transmission.

Pictorial exegesis, by contrast, presented a single, continuous plane of elaboration. Because each picture was linked to a single name, the layers of commentary that bracketed the experience of reading the name had little bearing on its visualization. Unless the commentary concerned formal matters of figuration, the exegete could move directly from the name to the picture without thinking through the strata of text and time between them. The pictures associated with a given name multiplied over time, but because of their fundamentally lexical nature, they did not become more detailed or complex. "Seeing" the name was thus a matter of picking between pictures, not layering them on top of one another. This flattening of the interpretive challenge effectively eliminated the question of precedent, and with it, the sense of temporal

depth and distance. We have already seen, in the aforementioned example of the "yellow *yi*," that Nie was remarkably willing to grant a commentary on one classic priority over the original content of another classic. This violated the rules of textual precedent, but as a response to the problem of the picture, it made perfect sense. Nie needed a picture that made sense alongside the other pictures, and because the pictures from which he was choosing did not force him to recognize which was newer and which was older in the way that the commentaries and subcommentaries would have, he was free to make a determination on the basis of visual rather than temporal logics.

Monumental Designs

By following the path laid down for him by earlier exegetes and lexicographers, Nie was able to create a graphic schema that comprehensively "rectified" the relations between names and images and embodied the normative hierarchies of the imperial state. The final "newly authorized" version of the *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* occupied a total of twenty fascicles, far more than any earlier compendia of ritual illustrations. The entries in the text feature, in order, the ceremonial hats, robes, and other garments for the imperial family, court nobility, and officials (f. 1–3); the layout of ritual spaces (f. 4); musical instruments (f. 5); ceremonial archery equipment (f. 6–8); banners and other processional insignia (f. 9); jade insignia (f. 10); jade implements used in sacrificial ceremonies (f. 11); ritual vessels and other sacrificial implements (f. 12–14); mourning vestments and other funerary paraphernalia (f. 15–19); and an index (f. 20). The order of the chapters thus reveals a hierarchy that moves outward from the imperial person and downward from the most auspicious to the least auspicious rites.

Nie Chongyi knew well the monumentality of his accomplishment. His postface concludes with a picture of perfect hierarchy, made visible in the manifest order of things:

> On the Xinchou day of the fourth month of the second Jianlong year [May 25, 961] of the Great Song dynasty, the arrangement was completed. The ceremonial apparel now shows the schemata for auspicious and inauspicious rites; the palaces, halls, carriages, and banners show the forms of past and present; the bows, arrows, and archery targets show difference in rank; the bells, drums, pipes, and chimes show the balancing of rules and measures; the sacrificial implements and sacrificial jade show the quantities appropriate to status; the jade tablets, disks, and silk wrappers show the order of lords and servants; and the mourning and burial paraphernalia show rules for those above and below. When rituals are implemented on this basis, it will be easy to review them in detail.[57]

In his final line, Nie offers a clear indication of how he intended the volume to be used: from that point forward, the consistent, one-to-one alignment of classical names with schematic images in *Illustrations* would enable the scholars at court to review the assembled ranks of civil and martial officials present at the great ceremonies of state, to note any discrepancies or errors in the accoutrements that marked their place in the normative harmony of the whole, and to communicate these discrepancies easily in writing—to convey, with clarity and precision, when a chalice was a "chalice," and when it was not. The reproduction of the lexical pictures would enable the communication of these correspondences across time and space, extending the standardization of script into the domain of things. As Dou Yan, the senior scholar overseeing the project, remarked in his preface to *Illustrations*: "Upon reading Nie's words and examining his implements, one finds that the graphs and schemata correspond without any disparity, establishing standards and putting rules in place that are limitlessly demonstrable."[58]

We do not know for sure when *Illustrations* was first printed. Later accounts indicate that it was "promulgated" (*banxing*) on the orders of Emperor Taizu following its final submission. In light of the many printing projects happening at court in this era, many scholars assume this to mean that it was printed, but doubts remain.[59] Manuscripts remained an important method of textual transmission throughout the Northern Song era.[60] One of the values of the lexical picture was that its lack of detail made it amenable to copying by hand. Whatever the case, it is clear that Nie's picto-textual pairings circulated widely, as the extant 1175 edition claims to be based on a Northern Song edition printed in Sichuan, which in turn was most likely based on a version disseminated by the court.

What we do know with considerable certainty is that one of the principal engines motivating familiarity with Nie's imagery was not a book but a place. Shortly after Nie submitted *Illustrations*, Emperor Taizu had its images painted on the walls of a specially erected building north of the main sacrificial hall of the temple to Confucius.[61] A couple of decades later, his successor Emperor Taizong (r. 976–997) had the images repainted on the walls of an even more prominent location—the Lecture Hall of the State Academy, the principal location where students in the capital received the instruction they needed to pass the civil service examinations and obtain positions in government. The images would remain there for more than a century, visible to every student who passed through the academy, as an essential key to understanding the schematic forms inscribed within the names of the classics.

In heralding the scope of *Illustrations*, Dou Yan recognized that Nie had made changes to the established implements of state. "Some he retained and others he discarded," but in all of these determinations, Dou remarked, Nie "had made changes on the basis of coherence, and only followed their fun-

damentals" (*cong li yi bian, wei shi qi ben*).[62] And in so doing, he had clarified the order by which "those above transform those below, and those below are compelled to follow."[63] These instruments of hierarchy, laid bare in a parade of pictures, collectively constituted the natural order of things—the Way, in Dou's words, that was "so-of-itself" (*ziran*).[64]

In speaking in terms of coherence, fundamentals, and the Way, Dou echoed the language of a new kind of Confucianism that was growing in the interstices of established discourse on the classics. The models for this new approach were well-known by Dou Yan's day, but they would not achieve real prominence at court until a half century later, in the second quarter of the eleventh century. These new Confucians would agree, emphatically, that recognizing coherence and returning to fundamentals and practicing the Way that was so-of-itself was the essential path to moral consciousness and social harmony. But they would vociferously disagree with Dou Yan and Nie Chongyi's approach to finding this Way.

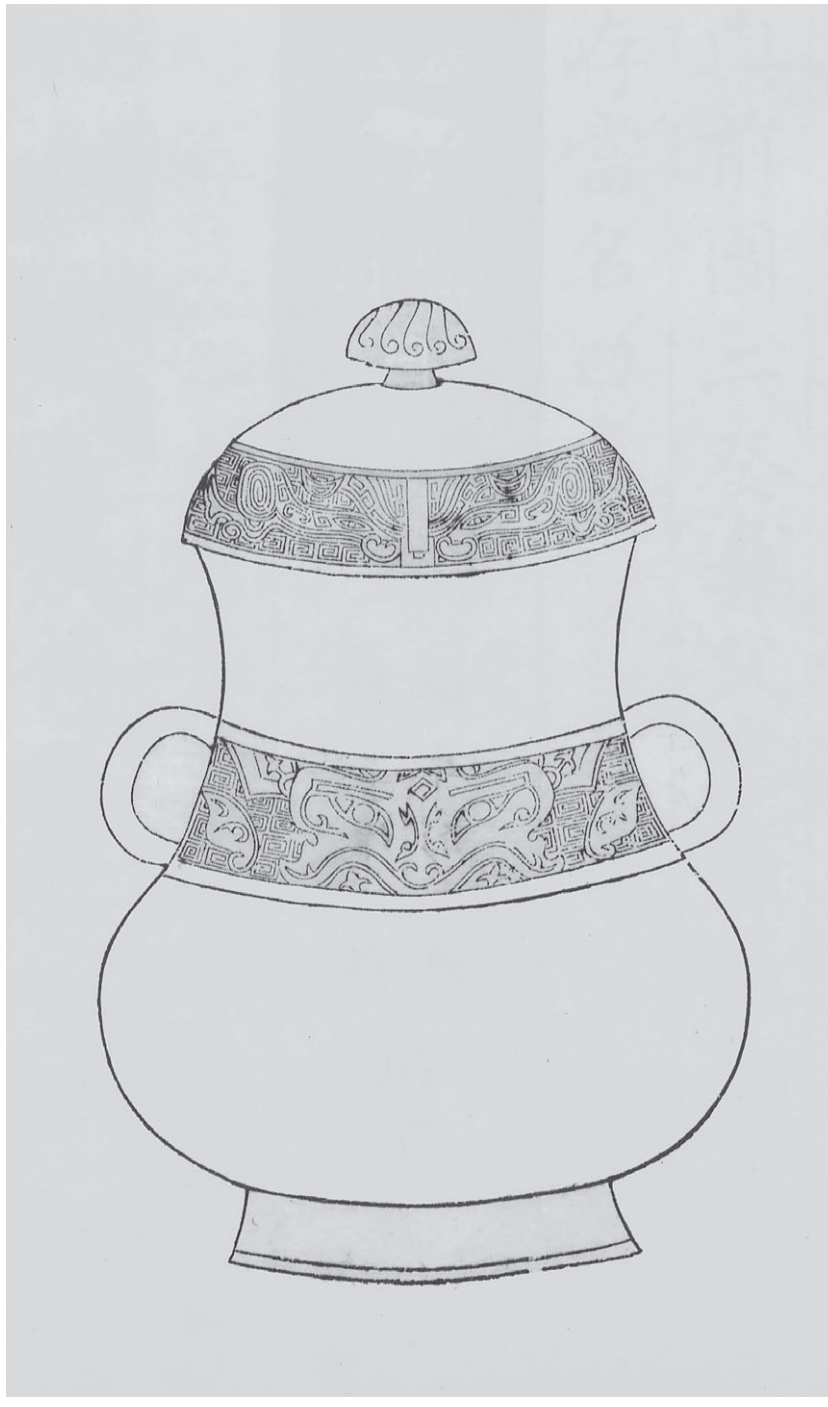


FIGURE 2.1 "*Yi* Vessel of Ancestor Ding" (detail). Lü Dalin, *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (Yizhengtang edition, 1752), 4.22a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

PART

II

The Empirical Impression

The illustration is meticulously delineated (Fig. 2.1). A single, continuous line traces the profile of a squat vessel with a flaring mouth and low, bulbous belly. A second line renders a short, toadstool-shaped foot, with a parallel line along its lower edge suggesting an incised band or, perhaps, a folded lip. Atop the vessel sits a dome-shaped lid with a round finial adorned with a series of five curlicues. Encircling the shoulder of the vessel is an ornamental band. The design of the band is, from our vantage point, symmetrical—a large, central motif of broadly spaced hooks and curls set against a field of tighter, squared spirals. The motif within the band is difficult to make out at first, but our eyes are drawn to the twin circles—the only perfect circles in the pattern—positioned equidistant to the axis of symmetry. Once we register these orbs as eyes, we realize that the vessel is looking back at us. The hooks and curls around the orbs grow increasingly bestial. The orbs are set in pointed ellipses, like the eyes of a falcon. The pair of double lines undulating along the base of the motif suggests a gaping maw, the twin coils near their center, nostrils, and the fleur-de-lis below, fangs, which seem to prod the lines into a snarl. And yet this zoomorphism is locked in battle with geometric abstraction—the outlines of the motifs are defined not by their resemblance to an animal, but as an echo of the hooks and curves within. The face both defines and dissolves into the pattern.

A second decorative band encircles the lid. Close examination reveals another pair of eyes, less obvious than those below but similarly almond-shaped and predatory. Unlike the face below, here each eye is set at the head of a

serpentine body shown in profile against a similar field of fine, square spirals. The eyes thus present a visual conundrum: is this a single creature staring out at us, as the pupils suggests, or twin creatures squaring off against one another, as the bodies imply?

To struggle with this conundrum, to gaze into these eyes and wonder about the being looking back, is to participate in a mode of engagement that was central to the experience of the eleventh-century intellectuals who produced the original illustration from which this picture derives. But for them, the experience was doubly loaded. We are drawn to these eyes because we are animals, and somewhere in our deep genetic memory is the knowledge that predators peer, and that peering things are therefore dangerous, and thus powerful.[1] Song scholars undoubtedly felt the same. But they also knew the object in other ways. They knew that it came from an ancient time, and they recognized it as belonging to the category of "ritual implements" (*liqi*) that they knew from the Confucian classics. They were familiar with the lengthy discussions of ocular phenomena—the appearance of eyes, the transparency of the vessel—found in the historical commentaries on these implements, and they sensed that somehow these eyes and those eyes were related.

They also knew that bronze vessels like this bore inscriptions written in ancient scripts that predated the unification of the Chinese writing system by the First Emperor some thirteen hundred years earlier. These scripts were difficult for even the most expert epigraphers among them to read, but they persevered in the effort, for overcoming the challenge of decipherment promised to unlock forgotten systems of revelation that would help them address the most pressing political, intellectual, and ethical problems of their day. Undergirding this inquiry was their sense that history had somehow gone wrong with the creation of the imperial state—a sense that beneath the rules and ranks and measures of the bureaucratic system, something essential had been lost. The moral order that earlier rulers had cultivated with rites and music, the personal ties that linked ruler and ruled as father and son, had been replaced by an impersonal system that reduced human beings to quantifiable units on a tax register. Instead of transforming the people through the model of their virtuous conduct, rulers left them alone to be corrupted by the teachings of Buddhists and Daoists, and by art and literature that filled their minds with beautiful images but left them fundamentally unprepared to respond ethically to the challenges of the real world. Decipherment was thus about more than reading lost texts; it was about unlocking in the reader the potential for the sagacious action that had generated the moral domain that preceded those texts.

In the end, it was this sagely potency that Northern Song intellectuals most sensed behind the power of those peering eyes—the agency of an older power looking toward them from a time long past. Behind those eyes they saw the Sages of high antiquity, those progenitors of civilization who first divined

the structures and patterns that cohered all things under Heaven into a seamless tapestry of relationships. By creating systems of graphic signs—trigrams and writing—the Sages had made these patterns apprehensible to ordinary human beings. And in making them apprehensible, they had shown human beings how to work in accordance with these patterns and thereby transform the world they had experienced as capricious and full of danger into a place that was predictable and life-sustaining.

The eleventh-century intellectuals who were attracted to the study of ancient bronzes still believed in the possibility of that seamless world, more or less, but they regarded themselves as living in a time in which the threads of the tapestry had come completely unraveled. Floods and famines demonstrated that human beings were not following the will of Heaven; warfare on the borders and uprisings in the provinces showed that rites and music were not working as systems of socialization and communication. The intellectuals who were most attracted to ancient bronzes agreed that at their root, all of these problems stemmed from a failure of signification. The Sages had shown ancient human beings where the Way (*dao*) led and how to proceed along its path with Power (*de*). But now, although the words "Way" and "Power" remained, the course and conduct that they signified had been forgotten. They had become "empty seats" (*xu wei*)—dangerously vacuous words that could be filled up with anything that manipulative rhetoricians desired.[2] When eleventh-century intellectuals looked back over the preceding millennium, they saw nothing but misguided efforts to fill those empty seats with meaning that was nothing like what the Sages had intended. The Buddhists explained them one way, the Daoists another. The Confucian classics were no help either, because their interpreters were many and no one could agree on who understood them correctly. Everyone agreed that there was a Way, but no one concurred on where (or even how) it led.

But bronzes were different. Unlike the Confucian classics, they were not filled with floating signifiers. Bronzes were the things themselves, fragments of the original occupants of those emptied seats. They were, in the parlance of the day, "traces of the Sages" (*shengren zhi ji*), physical remnants of the coherent ritual order that had been devised in hoary antiquity and transmitted down through the ages by the illustrious founders of the early dynasties. Bronzes were vestiges of the moral practices that the anarchy of the Warring States and the cataclysm of the Qin had banished from living memory. As *ji*, they were traces in the sense that tracks are traces, and like the literal tracks of birds and beasts that the same term represented in other contexts, they gave the tracker a path to follow. In a Peircean sense, *ji* were not symbols that existed in arbitrary, consensually determined relations to their referents, but genuine indices to the past presence of the Sages on the Earth. From the perspective of the antiquarian Lü Dalin, who compiled the book from which our illustration of

the vessel with peering eyes derives, "Observing these implements . . . is like seeing their creators" (*guan qi qi . . . ru jian qi ren yi*).[3] And as we shall see, this vision of the Sages gave scholars the sense that they had the authority to act in the absence of consensus with their peers. Bronzes endorsed the polemics of the new kind of Confucianism that was brewing in the eleventh century.

In their most essential sense, tracks are impressions in the surface of the earth, prints whose principal meaning derives from their relationship to one another. Thinking about traces in this way points toward congruencies between the conceptualization and graphic representation of ancient bronzes by the eleventh-century scholars who inaugurated their study. These congruencies come into focus when we consider the illustration of the vessel with the peering eyes in the context of its page, and position that page alongside the following page of the catalog from which it hails (Fig. 2.2). That catalog—*Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (*Kaogutu*), completed in 1092 by the aforementioned Lü Dalin—is the world's oldest extant illustrated compendium of antiquities.

FIGURE 2.2 "*Yi* Vessel of Ancestor Ding." Lü Dalin, *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (Yizhengtang edition, 1752), 4.22a–b. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Both images register the same formal quality that defines the footprint—relief—in the sharp contrast of black and white. On the left we see a series of graphs in white against a black field, which gives them the appearance of a rubbing taken from an incised surface. Below is a short text which alternately describes and transcribes the graphs in what was in the eleventh century and remains to this day standard Chinese script. On the right is the vessel that bears the inscription. Although the actual vessel depicted in the illustration is lost, we know from analogous objects that the two bands of dense patterns were incised in low relief (Fig. 2.3). These reliefs are generally comprised of two discrete layers—one flush with the surface of the vessel, the other inset. The lines of the drawing express the profile of that relief, with the lines themselves representing the shadowed recesses of the lower layer and the blank

FIGURE 2.3 *You* covered ritual wine vessel with decorative band of dragons. Western Zhou era, 11th–10th century BCE. Harvard Art Museums / Arthur M. Sackler Museum. Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop. Photo ©President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1943.52.109.A-B.

areas conveying the flush plane of the upper layer. In this way, the careful delineation of the ornamented surface registers relief in the same manner as the rubbing, effacing what little three-dimensional complexity might exist on the source object in favor of a binary juxtaposition of two essential layers. This makes the image more legible and more like writing, the sharp opposition of positive and negative space echoing the contrast of black words on a white surface. To return for a moment to the metaphor of tracking, one could say that there is greater interest in the identity of the creature, as conveyed by the profile of the footprint, than in whatever activities of the creature might be suggested by variations in depth internal to the footprint. More emphasis, that is, on the unchanging nature of the impressing thing than on its particular circumstances at the moment of impression. Focusing on the profile reduces such circumstantial complexity and makes the image more susceptible to nominalization. Scholars have noted that premodern Chinese illustrations of ancient bronzes generally elide visual signs of the object's age such as its patina, as well as any dents, ruptures, and corrosion, which we know from the archaeological record are ubiquitous on ancient bronzes when they come out of the ground.[4] The reduction of surface variation to a black-and-white binary of positive and negative relief constitutes the mechanism by which such aging was effaced. Comparison with extant examples of Western Zhou bronzes (Fig. 2.4), and their inscriptions (Fig. 2.5), demonstrates how radically this reduction changes the visual experience of the bronze.

The *impressionistic* character of the rubbing and the line-drawn illustration thus comprises a mirror image of the Impressionism that we know from the history of art. It effaces all trace of the experiential nuances of a moment of vision in favor of an essential contrast between presence and absence. By indexing the haptic act of impressing as a binary contrast of black and white, it also generates a tension between the intended and inadvertent image. Here it is important to remember the space between the technologies of rubbing and illustration that were used to generate the initial images of the inscribed bronze, and the technology of woodblock printing that was used to translate these images onto the actual leaf of the book represented above (which has itself been reproduced by means of a digital scan). Traces of the materiality of the inked woodblock can be discerned in the image: faint variations in the tonality of the black field capture the nuances of a hand-planed and hand-inked surface, and perhaps, in the diagonal striations across the lower third of the field, slight folds or undulations in the paper at the moment of impression, while a break in the line describing the bottom of the vessel's foot suggests damage to the woodblock. And yet the image asks us to look past these imperfections, to see the field as if it were uniformly black and to read the line as if it were complete. The sharp delineation of the boundary of the field, the profile of the characters within, and the integrity of the lines elsewhere in the

FIGURE 2.4 *You* vessel. Western Zhou era, 10th century BCE. Cast bronze. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Addie W. Kahn, 1949.

FIGURES 2.5A AND 2.5B Details of matching inscriptions on the interior of the *you* vessel's lid and body. Both show traces of cleaning and rubbing.

illustration exhort us to experience the image as a contrast of black and white rather than as the impression of a three-dimensional block.

When the block-printed page is compared to eleventh-century examples of rubbings and line-drawn illustrations, it becomes clear that this masking of the inadvertent trace of facture with a visual rhetoric of intentionality was consistent across period uses of all three media.[5] Although a handful of eleventh-century intellectuals had begun to admire rubbings for their capacity to capture the pocked, eroded materiality of a timeworn surface, most experienced rubbings principally in the form of model calligraphies (*tie*), a medium which thrived on its capacity to enunciate the modulated profile of characters by setting them in a smoothly planed, heavily inked ground (Fig. 2.6). The sharp contrast between the characters and the ground invites the viewer to look

FIGURE 2.6 Wang Xizhi (303–361), "On the Seventeenth Day" Model Calligraphy (detail). Thirteenth-century rubbing of a Song (960–1279) recutting of a seventh-century carving of the original calligraphy. Rubbing mounted in album format, with later seals and transcription in red. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H. C. Weng, 1991.

past the materiality of the paper, ink, and block to the form of the characters represented within. The clarity of this contrast between form and field has, for centuries, facilitated the time-honored fiction that the viewer of a *tie* is looking at a work of calligraphy rather than a work of carving.

Although the original rubbing upon which the woodblock-printed inscription is based no longer survives, it is likely that the transformation of the corroded matrix of an ancient bronze inscription into the planed flat ground of a *tie* occurred in the transference of the inscription to the rubbing rather than the translation of the rubbing to the woodcut. This could have been effected by a number of means: The variegated field of the rough surface could have been inked in after the rubbing was taken. Alternatively, evidence of particularly extensive cleaning and polishing of the area immediately surrounding the inscription on a number of ancient bronzes from historical collections demonstrates that collectors smoothed out the physical surface of the bronze to prepare it for rubbing (Figs. 2.5, 2.7). In either case, the result is an impression of the inscription which elides the materiality of the corroded bronze from which it came. By reducing the visual discrepancy between the rubbed ground and the printed ground, the transformation of the bronze surface into a smooth *tie*-like plane facilitated the silent translation of the rubbing to the print. This helped the printmaker maintain the illusion that the viewer was looking at a series of inscribed words rather than a printed impression of a woodcut replication of a rubbed impression of a bronze surface.

While the nature of the original illustration that preceded the fine-lined woodcut representation of the vessel is less certain than the rubbing-cum-woodcut, it is reasonable to assume that it was produced using the so-called *baimiao* (typically "fine-line," but literally "describing-in-white") painting technique. The technique was popular among the eleventh-century literati circles which produced the earliest antiquarian publications. The painter and antiquarian Li Gonglin, whose own now lost *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* was the source for much of the material in Lü Dalin's catalog, was the undisputed master of the method. The *baimiao* technique relies almost entirely on the use of line. Some texturing is used for rocks and other landscape features, and ink washes are sometimes used to distinguish one element from another, but for most human figures and man-made implements, including ritual vessels of the sort seen in *Illustrated Investigations*, the *baimiao* painter works exclusively with line (Fig. 2.8). While the painting of the *baimiao* line involved the use of the same tapered brush (*maobi*) deployed in other genres of Chinese painting and calligraphy, the master of the technique demonstrated their control over the implement by limiting its expressive versatility to the consistent creation of fine lines of even tonality and only the slightest modulation. Although *baimiao* was celebrated for its calligraphic minimalism, it was, in this sense, *anti*calligraphic. Instead of deploying the full range of variables

FIGURES 2.7A AND 2.7B *You* vessel, with detail showing extensive polishing around the inscription on the vessel's interior. Western Zhou era, 11th–10th century BCE. Cast bronze. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Ernest Erickson Foundation, 1985.

that figure in most works of calligraphy—pressure from the hand, angle to the surface, saturation and viscosity of the ink—*baimiao* limited the brush to its essential role as a stylus. In the words of Richard Barnhart, *baimiao* "was not calligraphy, it was painting reduced to its linear essence."[6]

Like the lines in the woodblock-printed illustration of the vessel, *baimiao* renderings of vessels rely upon the clarity of the distinction between mark and ground to separate the whiteness within the vessel from the whiteness without. In the absence of shading, stippling, crosshatching, and other techniques of rendering volume, it is the integrity of the line that matters. The common reliance on line across the two technologies of woodblock printing and *baimiao*

FIGURE 2.8 Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106), Frontispiece to "The Government of the Sages," chapter 9 of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, ca. 1085. Ink on silk. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, from the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Family Collection, Gift of Oscar L. Tang Family, 1996.

painting, here again, facilitated the silent translation of the painting into print. Whereas the Northern Song woodblock carver's translation of complexly textured and shaded landscape paintings required considerable modification of the source image, the carver of our picture of the peering vessel worked from a source image that was already amenable to the facture of the woodcut.[7]

In sum, the art of the woodcut perpetuates the erasure of facture and enunciation of line that characterize the deployment of the technologies of rubbing and *baimiao* painting in Northern Song antiquarian circles. It works to transform the complexity of the three-dimensional object into the essential visual elements of the written word—linear images that stand out sharply from the surrounding field. In this way, the application of the three media exemplify a consistent concern with graphic legibility.

In organizing visual representations of bronzes into a linear sequence, pairing picture and inscription, and aligning all representations on a consistent plane of graphic legibility, the catalog reduces the distinction between object and text. It encourages the viewer to read the images as if they were reading a text, looking past the materiality of the medium to an underlying series of signs.[8] These features became so ubiquitous in later scholarship on Chinese bronzes that it is easy to overlook them. But the antiquarians of the eleventh century had no preexisting genre to work from. Their approach was not entirely ex nihilo; they drew upon earlier traditions like model calligraphy and fine-line painting. But as a composite of these earlier traditions, the antiquarian catalog was fundamentally new. What encouraged eleventh-century literati to begin to systematically document antiquities, and to do so in this way?

In the following chapters, I attempt to answer this question by explaining how changes in the structure of eleventh-century intellectual life created new grounds for bronzes to express themselves. The receptivity of eleventh-century intellectuals was essential for the success of this expression, but these intellectuals were not the only players in our drama. The bronzes, too, performed. Their particular nature as inscribed, self-naming objects with zoomorphic, low-relief patterns amenable to schematization, and their self-defined embodiment of ancient rituals, gave them a unique capacity to speak to the concerns of eleventh-century intellectual life. As we shall see, the bronzes—as objects of empirical investigation—nurtured some kinds of inquiry and buttressed certain claims about antiquity while forestalling other inquiries and undermining other arguments about the past. In this way, they channeled the currents of intellectual life. The bronzes would never have emerged as important cultural artifacts were it not for the particularities of eleventh-century thought, but without their presence on the scene, that thought would not have evolved as it did. The antiquarian road was a two-way street.

Part II of this book traces the story of these interwoven agencies. I do not aim for a comprehensive account of Song antiquarianism.[9] Instead, I endeavor

to isolate, through close examination of a handful of artifacts, key threads in the tapestry that Northern Song literati wove in and around ancient bronzes, and the patterns they made together in the wider fabric of intellectual life. Chapter 3 sets the stage with Han Yu, whose approach to reasoning, interest in ancient things, and assumption of a radical gulf between past and present presaged the antiquarian scholarship of the eleventh century. Chapter 4 explores the role that reprographic technologies of rubbing and printing played in making ancient bronzes accessible, and how this access, in turn, reinforced Han Yu's "ancient style" of reasoning and guided its reception in earliest antiquarian writings of the mid-eleventh century. Chapter 5 turns to a close reading of Lü Dalin's *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*. By connecting the techniques Lü used to catalog ancient bronzes to the wider antiquarian predispositions of his day, I endeavor to show how the self-naming character of the bronzes encouraged "nominal" approaches to empirical observation across the ideologically fractured landscape of the late eleventh century.

3

The Style of Antiquity

Over the course of the eleventh century, a new critique of Nie Chongyi's ritual reconstructions emerged. This new critique aimed not for the shape and dimensions of particular ritual forms, but for the underlying mechanism whereby all of his forms were determined. We have seen how Nie Chongyi's reconstructions relied on an amalgamative hermeneutics that began from the assumption of visual consistency in the rendering of similar names. Achieving such consistency demanded the selective adoption of precedents. Longstanding principles of exegetical priority—traditions (*zhuan*) precede commentaries (*zhu*), commentaries precede subcommentaries (*shu*)—were not assumed. A commentary on one classic could overrule the actual wording of another classic. Interpretive tools were selectively deployed to explain the copresence of implements whose principles of formal reconstruction might otherwise seem contradictory. This interweaving of disparate textual and pictorial precedents into a visually consistent tapestry is precisely what bothered eleventh-century literati, for it substituted superficial consistency for a system of categories whose differences could be extrapolated logically from an abstract idea.

The trouble was not limited to ritual, and it had been brewing for a long time. Although the precedents for the dramatic intellectual transformations of the eleventh century were many, the figure who mattered most for eleventh-century antiquarians was the famous Tang polemicist Han Yu (768–824). His most essential influences were two. The first was an attention to first principles. The second, which followed from the first, was his assumption of a radical

gulf between the debased and deluded practices of the recent past and the moral clarity of antiquity. Although the idea of reviving antiquity was, in and of itself, nothing new—Confucius himself had heralded the ancients—what was different was the scope of the rupture and the clarity of Han Yu's vision for how to bridge it.

Empty Seats and Wandering Ways

Han Yu opened his most famous essay— "Tracing the Way" (*Yuandao*)—in a manner that was characteristic of his thought in general, and highly influential on the structure of reasoning and style of argumentation of the Song literati who would adopt him as their forefather.[1] He began by rectifying names:

> Cherishing expansively is the meaning of Benevolence, putting it into practice harmoniously is the meaning of Righteousness. Proceeding from here to there is the meaning of the Way, and being sufficient unto oneself is the meaning of Power. Benevolence and Righteousness are fixed names. The Way and Power are empty seats. It is for this reason that there is the Way of the Gentleman and the Way of the Petty Man, the Power of Evil and the Power of Good. When the Old Master (Laozi) disregarded Benevolence and Righteousness, it was not because he sought to defame them, but because his perspective was limited. If one observes the sky from the bottom of a well and says that the sky is small, it is not because the sky is genuinely small. He treated little kindnesses as Benevolence, and minor graces as Power. By these definitions, it is appropriate to disregard them. The Way of which he spoke was his own Way, and not the Way of which I speak. The Power of which he spoke was his own Power, and not the Power of which I speak. Every time I speak of the Way and Power, it is together with Benevolence and Righteousness. This is the common pronouncement of all under Heaven. When Laozi speaks of the Way and Power, it is in the absence of Benevolence and Righteousness. These are the private words of one.[2]

Han Yu is frequently remembered, especially in modern scholarship, as the champion of an orthodox, absolutist Confucianism, and as someone who was radically opposed to the teachings of Buddhism and Daoism.[3] One of the primary reasons that later thinkers tended to see these as opposing positions was that they had been schooled in the dialectical mode of thinking that Han Yu championed. What is often overshadowed by the feisty, hyperbolic language of Han Yu's diatribes—such as his infamous "Memorial on the Buddha Bone"—is that his dichotomizing tendencies followed naturally from the structure of his reasoning, which began with a return to first principles, in

this case the definitions of the Way and Power, and proceeded sequentially from there. Thinking in these terms demanded that disagreements about outcomes be understood as the necessary consequences of disagreements about fundamentals. Cognitive style fostered and encouraged fundamentalist dichotomies.

In opening his argument, Han Yu posits the existence of two kinds of names: "fixed names" (*ding ming*) and "empty seats" (*xu wei*). Fixed names are those that unerringly signify the same object; empty seats are indefinite, floating signifiers. The distinction is largely circumstantial, in the sense that Han Yu is making an assertion about four words rather than an assertion about all words, and using this assertion to advance an argument that is not about language per se. But the substance of his argument is nonetheless grounded in a certain understanding of language; words are not merely rhetorical tools for enunciating an argument whose evidence exists elsewhere, they are the evidence themselves. Han's understanding of "fixed names" derives from the linguistic conventions of his day; it was impossible for a Tang writer to imagine that the word "benevolence" could mean radically different things. No one spoke of good benevolence and bad benevolence the way they spoke of good ways and evil ways. Benevolence, after all, was benevolence. It was inherently good.

Parsing words in this way helps Han Yu establish priorities. In using the fixed-empty dichotomy, he transforms what readers might otherwise perceive as a marginal distinction between misleading and inadequate language into an absolute contrast between substantive and vacuous words. By privileging the latter over the former—that is, by prioritizing the accuracy of words as signifiers over their comprehensiveness as representations—he presents the essential debate as a matter of one-to-one rather than one-to-many relations. The ultimate problem was not that Laozi had failed to recognize the full scope of the many good deeds and appropriate actions represented by "Benevolence" and "Righteousness," but that he had failed to realize that the words "Way" and "Virtue" and the words "Benevolence" and "Righteousness" were mutually codependent. The logic of Han Yu's opening argument turns, in short, on an implicit distinction between the *categorical* work that words do in stuffing lots of individual things together under a single name and the *semantic* work they do in creating meaning through discrete relationships to other words. For him, it is on sematic grounds that the nature of the problem is to be observed, and its solution articulated.

When Han Yu announces that his understanding of the Way and Virtue is the "common pronouncement of all under Heaven," he is mobilizing what is to his mind an axiom of language—that there are such things as fixed names—to forestall counterarguments to his position. Suggesting that some names are fixed and others empty suggests that the definitions of some terms are open to

debate while the definitions of others are not. Fixed names are fixed because everyone already knows what they mean. By characterizing his association of the Way and Power with Benevolence and Righteousness as "the common pronouncement of all under Heaven," he is essentially wielding an established interpretant (i.e., the axiomatic relationship of the signs "Benevolence" and "Righteousness" to the objects Benevolence and Righteousness) to justify a contestable one (i.e., his association of Benevolence and Righteousness with the Way and Virtue). Thus the semantic logic of language provides the justification for a moral position with real world implications.

In treating moral questions as semantic problems, Han Yu encourages the reader to think about the world as if that world was nothing but a fabric of signs. Instead of enunciating the difference between the representation of the world in language and the actuality of the world in substance, he treats the domain of language as if that domain were the world—as if the solutions to problems of signification were themselves solutions to the problems of moral life. In so doing, he reduces the complexity of the objects to which his words refer to the same level of simplicity as the words themselves. In a manner not entirely distinct from the lexical pictures examined in part I, he forges the objects of his signs out of the signs themselves. This is part of the reason that generations of readers have found his argument so powerful. The style of his reasoning produces the world that sustains his argument.

Having thus grounded his moral authority on the logic of language, Han Yu explains how the lashing between the empty seats and fixed names broke free, and the hand that held the rudder steady on a moral bearing lost its grip, leaving the vessels of the "Way" and "Power" to the mercy of the winds. It was a process that took some time, but that time was long ago, and the ship had been adrift for centuries. Tracing a two-thousand-year-long history of decline from the glorious reigns of the early Zhou rulers at the turn of the first millennium BCE, through the burning of the Confucian classics by the First Emperor of Qin, and down to the arrival of Buddhism in the early centuries of the first millennium CE, he explains:

> The Way of the Zhou declined, Confucius perished, and Qin burned the books. The teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi rose in the Han, those of the Buddha in the Jin, Wei, Liang, and Sui. As for those who spoke of the Way, Virtue, Righteousness, and Benevolence, if they did not enter the teachings of Yang Zhu, then they entered the teachings of Mo Di. If they did not enter the teachings of Laozi, then they entered the teachings of the Buddha. If one enters into one teaching, they necessarily leave another. Whatever one enters, they exalt. Whatever one leaves, they suppress. Whatever one enters, they draw close to. Whatever one leaves, they abhor. Alas! When people in latter times wished to hear the teaching of the Way, Power,

Righteousness, and Benevolence, whose teachings were they supposed to follow and observe?[4]

The downfall of morality was epistemological—more than the mere decline of one teaching and rise of another, human beings' very capacity to know what words meant had been lost. Everyone spoke in the axial terms of the classical tradition—using words like "Way," "Power," "Righteousness," and "Benevolence"—and everyone meant something different. Here, Han Yu extends his indictment of Laozi's specific error into a categorical attack on all contemporary learning. Because the transmission of the Way of the Zhou had failed, there was no longer a compass for plotting a moral path. Many trails crisscrossed the thicket, but none showed the way out. Confusion reigned.

Once again, Han Yu hardens relative hermeneutic differences into absolute moral dichotomies by extrapolating human behavior from nominal oppositions. The axis of his argument is the line "If one enters into one teaching, they necessarily leave another." A smoother English translation would read, "If one follows one teaching," but "enters into" better retains the force of the antonyms *ru* ("to enter") and *chu* ("to leave") that Han Yu uses to dichotomize the matter of learning. After all, one could, in theory, learn from many sources, sequentially or simultaneously, and take many people as their teachers, as Confucius so memorably instructed.[5] Many of Han Yu's contemporaries found it possible to find wisdom in Buddhist and Daoist thought while still considering themselves students of the Confucian classics.[6] But Han Yu denies this possibility by presenting learning in spatial terms: once you "enter" a house, you are necessarily inside it. Your presence there, and absence elsewhere, is implied by the verb itself.

The matter is stylistic, to be sure—*chu* and *ru* exemplify the punchy tempo that makes Han Yu's prose so memorable. But this rhetorical ploy has conceptual implications. Han Yu extrapolates the "exalt" (*zhu*) and "suppress" (*nu*), "draw close to" (*fu*) and "recoil from" (*wu*) antonyms from the mutual exclusivity of *ru* and *chu*. As each pair echoes the opening polarity, it reinforces the overall sense of antithesis. The reader is swept along by the cadence of mutual exclusivity.

It was, in essence, this alignment of rhetoric and meaning that distinguished the "ancient style" (*guwen*) that Han Yu's writing came to represent for his champions in the Song two centuries later. He modeled a way of thinking well by writing well, a way of expressing oneself such that the form of one's prose instantiated and reinforced the substance of one's argument, and vice versa.[7] By blending cogent reasoning and mellifluous language into a coherent form, he demonstrated that literary composition and moral commitment could substantiate one another. But the cost of such lucidity was the blurring of the boundary between words and their objects. Han Yu made it harder for

people to maintain a distinction between what they felt and the words they used to express those feelings—to think, in the parlance of the day, about the remainder of human sentiment that "was not exhausted by speech" (*yan bu jin yi*). His words were "emotive" in the sense that they were designed to produce the sensation that they represented.[8] In this way, he made writing more ideological and coercive.[9]

When Han Yu proceeds, later in the essay, to explain his specific reasons for despising Buddhism, he invokes the classical tautology from the *Analects* on the normative substance of names—that "rulers rule, ministers minister, fathers father, and sons are sons." He explains that the *Record of Rites* had established a clear set of priorities for leaders to follow: in desiring to bring order to their states, first they must harmonize their families; in desiring to harmonize their families, first they must cultivate themselves; in desiring to cultivate themselves, first they must rectify their minds. The problem with the Buddhists was that they focused on rectifying their minds while forgetting their families and states: "As sons, they do not treat their fathers as fathers. As ministers, they do not treat their rulers as rulers."[10] As before, it is important to avoid naturalizing the "treat" I have introduced to render the Chinese expression into English. In Han Yu's literal construction—"not father their father" (*bu fu qi fu*), "not minister their minister" (*bu jun qi jun*)—no distinction is made between transformative and normative action: "making fathers of their fathers," in which the person who sired the son is transformed into the father through the actions of the son, is just as plausible a rendering as "treating fathers as fathers," in which the fatherhood of the father is constant and the only variable is the behavior of the son relative to that constant. The closest parallel in idiomatic English might be the phrase "You are his father," which, depending upon context, could be taken either as a simple declaration of a state of being or as an imperative to change, as in "You need to be a father to him." In Han Yu's case, no context is necessary, because he means both things. Not treating fathers as fathers is thus both a stain on the moral fiber of the Buddhists and a threat to the wider reality of human relations.

Here again, the noun-verb continuum in literary Chinese, according to which the same word can stand for a both simple noun and a transitive verb, is deployed as the crux of a moral argument. Han Yu asserts that when Confucius compiled the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, "If the many princes practiced barbarian rites, he *barbarized* them. If they drew close to [the practices of] the central states, he *central-stated* them."[11] In effect, what this means is that Confucius treated them as barbarians or civilized people, called them barbarians or civilized people, and for all intents and purposes considered them barbarians or civilized people, depending upon their conduct. But the ontological implications of Confucius's responses are left unspoken. From Han Yu's perspective, the issue of whether barbarians who behaved in a civilized manner actually

ceased being barbarians and became civilized people, or simply became civilized barbarians, was morally irrelevant. The possibility of asking such questions assumed that an epistemological distinction should be made between what a thing was called and what it was. For Han Yu, such distinctions were ethically unsustainable.

The contentiousness of Han Yu's refusal to admit the distinction between names and substances into the framework of his moral reasoning comes into focus when we consider the arguments of those who disagreed with him. The most significant of these interlocutors was his friend Liu Zongyuan (773–819). When Liu criticized Han Yu's hostility toward Buddhism, he did so in terms of the name-substance dichotomy. In a preface written on behalf of the Buddhist monk Haochu, Liu traces the history of his disagreement with Han Yu, which evolved over the course of several exchanges during the first decade of the ninth century.[12] Although only a portion of these exchanges survive in the documentary record, it is clear from Liu's characterization of Han Yu's position that the latter's argument was consistent with that of "Tracing the Way."

According to Liu, Han Yu decried Buddhism "because it is barbaric" (*yi qi yi ye*). But then did it follow that he would befriend the scoundrels Elai and Daozhi, who both hailed from the central heartlands, and despise the barbarians Jizha and You Yu, who despite their alien origins were deeply knowledgeable of the Confucian classics? If "barbarians" were necessarily barbaric, how could it be that there were such civilized barbarians? From Liu's perspective, the same argument applied to Buddhism. Since everything that he adopted from Buddhism accorded with the teachings in the Confucian *Classic of Changes* and *Analects*, Liu argued, then even if the Sages were reborn in their day, they would find nothing in his learning to criticize. Thus Han Yu's criticism of Liu amounted to nothing less than a failure to "do away with names and focus on substance" (*qu ming qiu shi*).[13]

In so arguing, Liu Zongyuan essentially took the axiomatic continuity of names and substances that underlay Han Yu's argument and turned it on its head. Instead of aspiring to a world in which names and substances aligned with one another, Liu suggests that ethical progress can only be made if one rejects the very possibility of their alignment. Rather than treating the dichotomy of names and substances as an ethical dilemma to overcome, Liu presents it as an inherent condition of reality—a position to think from rather than an obstacle to push against. As Liu saw it, Han Yu's commitment to the agency of names revealed a fundamental superficiality in his thought; he "only comprehended the rock, and failed to recognize the jade within" (*zhi shi er bu zhi wenyu*).[14]

Like Han Yu, the position that Liu Zongyuan advances in his preface for Haochu is more rhetorical than ontological; he is more focused on making an argument against Han Yu and for Buddhism than on advancing a philosoph-

ical discussion about the nature of reality as such. But his arguments nevertheless carried philosophical implications that would come to matter a great deal to the eleventh-century scholars who used Han and Liu as touchstones for their own ideas about the relationship of words and things.

Peter Bol has characterized the essential tension underlying the epochal intellectual changes of the Tang-Song transition as a debate over the capacity of cultural forms (*wen*)—language, writing, art, music, ritual—to adequately represent the Way (*dao*) of existing in the world as a moral being.[15] What we are seeing in Liu Zongyuan's disagreement with Han Yu is the beginnings of a deeper tension underlying this tension between *wen* and *dao*. Do the signs that humans make—the names they give to objects, the pictures they draw of things, the music they compose to express feeling—have the capacity to call forth reality, and thereby make what *should be* into what *is*, or do they necessarily fail as manifestations? Are signs sufficient? If the answer is yes, then it follows that there is an inherent continuity between signs and substance, that changes in one domain effect changes in the other—just as a trail dictates the path to follow. From this it follows that writing, art, and music simultaneously echo and set the tenor of their time, and that by writing, making, and composing one necessarily transforms one's world. If the answer is no, that there will always be a gap between representation and reality, then the question is how to negotiate that gap, how to look past or through the representation to the world beyond; how to see, in the parlance of the day, those dimensions of the substance that the name fails to convey.

The tension between these two positions—what we might, for the sake of convenience, call *agentic* and *mimetic* theories of signification—underlay the thinking of the eleventh-century literati who inaugurated the systematic study of ancient bronzes, and it helps to explain why bronzes held such particular appeal. As we shall see in chapter 5, bronzes were attractive because they suggested to literati the possibility that they could have it both ways, that they could recognize the discrepancy between words and substances and still believe in the agency of names. Literati were attuned to bronzes because the bronzes asked them to engage in a mental operation that was analogous to the reductive mode of thinking that Han Yu encouraged.

Trunks and Branches

Han Yu's characterization of the Way of the Sages is radically reductive. Articulated in the opening lines of "Tracing the Way," and reiterated, word for word, in its conclusion, it is essentially no more complicated than treating others with the care and affection that parents have for their children: "Expansive affection is the meaning of Benevolence, putting it into practice and making it suitable is the meaning of Righteousness. Proceeding from here to there is

the meaning of the Way, and being sufficient unto oneself without relying on others is the meaning of Power."[16] The term "expansive affection" (*bo ai*) is repeated so frequently as a gloss for "Benevolence" in classical discourse that it is virtually a tautology. "Affection" (*ai*) is the feeling that parents have for their children: compassion, caring, and concern for the well-being of another.[17] "Expansive" implies that this affection extends beyond the familial relations for which the term *ai* is usually reserved. The second phrase expresses the behavior that follows from the sentiment. That behavior is "made suitable" in the sense that it is adapted to circumstances. We begin, in other words, with a statement of the paternalistic concern that the Sages showed for humans in giving them the tools they needed to survive and thrive. The Sages made their affection suitable by responding to the particular circumstances in which humans found themselves, giving them food when they were hungry, clothing when they were cold, and so forth.

The rigor of Han Yu's writing comes into focus in the second two phrases, where he defines "Way" and "Power" in a manner consistent with his characterization of the two words as empty seats. In its most elemental sense, a "way" is a path or trail, either that which is traveled or that which is laid down by a person in traveling, and this is precisely how Han Yu defines it, as "a proceeding from here to there." "Power" is similarly empty of intrinsic moral content; for Han Yu, it simply means acting on one's own accord without having to be told what to do or pushed into action by others. Which path one travels and what one is compelled to do when they act of their own accord are expressly unstated. The vector of the path (the "here" of Benevolence and the "there" of Righteousness), and the goodness of the compulsion, is implied only by the subordination of the second pair of definitions to the first.

The feeling/action distinction within the first pair and the fixed name/empty seat distinction between the first pair and the second effectively rolls four definitions into one essential moral. Benevolence is feeling expansive affection, Righteousness is doing expansive affection, the Way is walking the path of doing expansive perfection, and Power is walking that path under one's one volition. The result is a single moral and a characterization of the manner in which one puts that moral into effect. Semantically speaking, this achieves Han Yu's rhetorical aim of tying the empty seats to a cardinal Confucian value and thereby criticizing the arguments of those who would define "Way" and "Power" differently. But the passage also has another more subtle and less intentional effect. As an analytical structure, it suggests that the way to think through the relationship between different moral values or different abstract terms is to understand them as different iterations or dimensions of one more cardinal term—to move, that is, from the particular to the categorical.

Han Yu reiterates a similar mode of assimilative thinking when he proceeds, in his conclusion, to articulate the various dimensions of the Way of

the Sages: "Its writing is the *Classic of Poetry*, *Revered Documents*, *Classic of Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Its methods are ritual, music, punishments, and governance. Its people are officials, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. Its positions are ruler and minister, father and son, teacher and friend, guest and host, young and older brother, and husband and wife. Its garments are hemp and silk, its dwellings are palaces and houses, its foodstuffs are grain, fruit, vegetables, fish, and meat."[18] It is important to recognize the elementary plainness of Han Yu's diction. The terms that he lists under each of his categories are the words under which all other words in the lexicon of Chinese political and moral thought are organized. The ritual classics contain numerous different terms for different grades of cloth; Han Yu reduces them all to a simple distinction between rough hemp and fine silk. The *Classic of Poetry* is filled with the names of different fish, animals, and plants; Han Yu reduces them to the essential food groups. For him, the Way of the Sages is not a way of myriad things (*wan wu*), but a way of generic categories. As a model for writing, Han Yu's "ancient style" is anything but erudite.[19] His terminology is no more complicated than that of a grade-school primer; one of the reasons that "Tracing the Way" was so frequently anthologized, especially in later eras, is that it was good for teaching children how to read. To this day, it remains one of the most common selections in textbooks of literary Chinese.[20]

Whereas Nie Chongyi and Xu Xuan's style of amalgamation was like the weaving of a textile, wherein each substantive entity is a thread of equal importance, Han Yu's was like a tree, with twigs growing from branches, branches from limbs, and limbs from trunks. He spoke in trunks and limbs rather than branches and twigs. In the language of his day, his advocates would say that he focused on what was fundamental (*ben*) and ignored what was dependent (*mo*).

Such language has encouraged some to characterize *guwen* as a kind of Confucian fundamentalism. Yet Han Yu's approach was less about literalism or strict adherence to fixed principles or texts than it was about simplification and conflation—the characterization of multiple apparently different things as actually instances of the same phenomenon. Han Yu did not deny the existence of difference, he simply deprioritized it. In effect, he implied that most of time when people made distinctions, they were splitting hairs.

The reductive logic of Han Yu's analysis extended to his analysis of social hierarchy. As he explains in "Tracing the Way," all of civilization, from the houses in which people dwell and the food they cultivate to their rituals and systems of government, were created by the Sages for the same unified purpose—to help human beings defend themselves against the dangers of a hostile world. These dangers included the obvious threats of disease, starvation, and wild animals, and they also included ancillary threats that arose from civilization itself. People needed to trade in order to obtain what they

lacked, but when they traded they tended to cheat one another, so the Sages gave them standard measures to help them build trust. People built houses and made meals, but then could not determine who should walk through the door first and who should come second, and who should sit at which place around the table. And so the Sages gave them ceremony and ritual, etiquette and decorum to help them organize themselves in time and space. And so on.

The logical progression of the Sages' efforts is symptomatic of *guwen* style argumentation. By organizing these efforts hierarchically, beginning from the most essential—food to eat and clothing to wear—and moving to the more sophisticated—rites, music, government, and punishments—Han Yu implies that there was a sequential logic to the Sages' work that proceeded outward from biological needs of the individual to the social needs of the group, and upward from the domain of hunting and foraging to the domain of adjudicating and administrating. The Sages made hierarchies, giving rulers and teachers to mankind, but the way they created was also hierarchical, as was the "ancient style" whereby Han Yu explained that way. Hierarchic prose conveys a hierarchic way of making hierarchy. The object, action, and representation of the subject all reinforce one another, generating a sense of consistency that propels the reader toward accepting the logic that made the argument viable in the first place. That logic was not the logic of analytical philosophy—there are plenty of ways that one could poke holes in Han Yu's argument—but for a world committed to the possibility of continuity between signification and reality, it held a powerful allure. Part of the reason that "Tracing the Way" was such an important touchstone for Song intellectuals is that as signification increasingly came to be understood as a matter of representation, the relationship between the compelling vision of antiquity that Han Yu presented and the way he presented it became increasingly problematic. In order to preserve the vision, Song intellectuals had to rework the argument.

The modern inheritor of Enlightenment notions of individual liberty and self-determination may recoil from the obviously self-serving elitism of Han Yu's vision. But it is important to remember that the literate elite of medieval China lived in a world of multiple ideological possibilities, all of which, in one way or another, endorsed power structures that were profoundly hierarchal and that depended on the acquiescence of the peasantry to the worldview of the lettered. It was not merely its endorsement of their social position that drew literati to Han Yu's writing. The question that should concern us is why Han Yu's vision, in particular, became so attractive to the literate elites who dominated the cultural scene from the mid-eleventh century.

Scholars have proffered answers to that question for nearly a thousand years. Some of the more recent answers have pointed to the marginal family background and limited political resources of the officials most responsible for advancing Han Yu's vision at court.[21] For men such as these, it was extremely

useful to have a style of argumentation that drew explicit moral distinctions between oneself and one's opponents, and did so in lucid, unambiguous language, especially when those opponents were committed to floral, indirect modes of expression that were deliberately anti-ideological and ecumenical.[22] Simplicity and self-righteousness have an essential political power that transcends time and place. Such realpolitik answers are surely part of the picture; the power of *guwen* as a rhetorical weapon in the cutthroat world of court politics should not be discounted. But Han Yu also encouraged trajectories of thought and ways of engaging with the world that responded in more subtle ways to the cultural currents of the mid-eleventh century. For an intellectual world confused by the proliferation of multiple, mutually exclusive representations of the past, he encouraged his readers to worry less about the complex contingencies of history and to focus instead on the variable manifestations of a consistent, atemporal mode of responsivity. In an essential sense, he changed what scholars looked for when they looked to the past, and in so doing, collapsed the distance between the antiquity of the Sages and the now of moral life.

Past as Present

The Xu brothers and Nie Chongyi stood at the end of long scholastic traditions. Scholars within these traditions tended to focus on a single or small group of closely related classical texts, and primarily concerned themselves with the decipherment and interpretation of individual words and phrases within those texts. Expertise was narrow but deep.[23] As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, the lexicographic and liturgical traditions that Nie Chongyi inherited traced back to the Eastern Han scholars Xu Shen and Zheng Xuan, whose scholarship was in turn grounded in textual debates that followed the unification of the Chinese script under the Qin and the canonization of the Confucian classics in the Western Han.

Han Yu dismissed these traditions in their entirety. His reductive approach to language and ethics marginalized their attention to technical terminology and specific word-graph-object correspondences. His suggestion that the Way had been corrupted during the Han dynasty and the Six Dynasties cast doubt upon the purity of the classical learning that occurred during these periods. But most importantly, Han Yu rejected the way in which the traditions of Han scholarship understood time. Although the classical scholars who preceded him did not necessarily prioritize older sources over more recent ones, they still saw themselves standing at the end of long traditions of scholarship and they still justified their work by explaining how it was necessary to transmit "classical learning" (*ru xue*) to the future. They thought in terms of chronological progression, with each generation critiquing, revising, and improving

the precedents established by the generation before them. Revivals of forgotten knowledge occurred, but the time frame of those revivals was generally narrower—decades or centuries instead of millennia—and the scope of recovery generally smaller—a particular text or commentary rather than the Way writ large.

From Han Yu's perspective, chronology and precedent were irrelevant because the object he sought to recover had not changed over time. The Way had always been, and always would be, only one thing: "The names and titles of the Emperors and Kings were different, but that which made them Sages was the same. Wearing hemp in summer and furs in winter, drinking when thirsty and eating when hungry, such matters are different, but that which makes them wise is the same."[24] The thing that distinguished the Sages from all other human beings was not to be found in any particular set of objects, signs, or technologies, but simply in their responsiveness to the particular challenges of the moment.

Because the Way was just benevolent responsivity, forever manifesting new things in response to changing circumstances, there was nothing substantive to transmit. The Way was not some sort of family heirloom passed down from one generation to the next, nor a coherent body of teachings conveyed from master to disciple. And the transmission of the Way did not, therefore, follow the model of a bloodline, inheritance, or office. One could trace the lineage of the Way, to be sure, but what they would find when they did so would be a genealogy of ageless sagacity. Han Yu makes this abundantly clear when, in the conclusion to his essay, he relates the transmission of the Way: "Yao transmitted it to Shun; Shun transmitted it to Yu; Yu transmitted it to Tang; Tang transmitted it to Wen, Wu and the Duke of Zhou; Wen, Wu, and the Duke of Zhou transmitted it Confucius; Confucius transmitted it to Mencius. When Mencius died, none received the transmission."[25] Yao and Shun were legendary predynastic rulers. Yu and Tang were the founders of the Xia and Shang dynasties, respectively. Kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of Zhou had established the Zhou dynasty. Confucius and Mencius had sought to restore the order of the Zhou in the fractious turmoil of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. The key is that there are no objective links in the transmission between them. Six centuries separated Yu from Tang, and another six separated Tang from Wen, Wu, and the Duke of Zhou. Nothing of significance was handed down by their descendants over the generations; no scholar sat at their side preserving their words for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to read when they were gone. The last ruler of the Xia did not give some mantle to the first ruler of the Shang, nor did the final ruler of the Shang recognize the Zhou in word or deed. The transmission occurred, rather, between founder and founder, leaping over vast spans of time. And it was fundamentally retrospective, driven by the actions of the later ruler in reproducing the sagely re-

sponsiveness of the former. Yu had modeled the Way, but he had not given it to anyone. It had been up to Tang to perceive it and produce it anew. There was, then, nothing to teach, in the active sense of the word, and no one to learn it. There was only a mode of being to manifest and emulate. By implication, Han Yu is claiming that in writing "Tracing the Way," he is benevolently responding to the needs of his moment, emulating the Sages of antiquity, and thereby taking up the timeless mantle of the Way from Mencius. An unspoken "until me" lingers in the space beyond "none received the transmission."

Within this transmission of moral responsivity, the chronological location of events relative to one another is largely irrelevant. The fact that Yu came before Tang matters only insofar as it explains why Yu's contributions to civilization were different from those of Tang. Chronology explains why Han Yu is practicing the Way by writing an essay instead of inventing agriculture. But it does not in any way implicate the Way that he is practicing. That Way has never changed. There is, therefore, nothing to go back to, no lost world to recreate. There is simply a mode of responsiveness to remember. By implication, because the conditions of the present are objectively different from the conditions of the past, the things one should say and make in the present will be different from the things the Sages said and did in the past. Reading those past sayings and examining those past things can be valuable as tools for investigating the sagely responsivity that brought them into being, but they possess no inherent value as models in and of themselves. Their value is solely indexical—exclusively premised on their decipherability as tracks leading to the Sages.

Han Yu's influence on Northern Song literati was not limited to the broad philosophical and stylistic concerns expressed in "Tracing the Way." He also wrote other essays and poems that established narrower precedents, providing models for the handling of specific themes and particular genres. These texts offer insights into some of the ways in which his abstract vision of the Sages and their Way guided him in his substantive encounters with the material world—the way in which his reductive mode of thinking played out in the messy domain of things. But they also reveal a picture of Han Yu as a more complicated figure who practiced more than he preached, one whose oeuvre cannot be entirely resolved into a coherent philosophical program.[26] The Han Yu of his own day was more complex than the Han Yu that Song literati came to hold in their minds, and even that latter Han Yu was more multifaceted than the polemical voice of "Tracing the Way." A full picture of this man and his Song shadow is beyond the framework of this book, and, in any case, has been examined at length elsewhere.[27] But there is one other work that had a substantial influence on the way in which eleventh-century literati thought about antiquities. This work revealed another path that the Sages had taken in practicing the Way, one that preceded the composition of the Confucian classics and exposed the imperfection of their representation of antiquity. The

traces of this other path were grittier and more fragile than the timeless names of the classics. These tracks wound their way through actual rocks, and they traversed a genuine mountainside.

The Fragility of Stone

It was the year 811, and the Eastern Capital of Luoyang was abuzz with intrigue. The emperor, Xianzong, had embarked on an ambitious campaign to reassert imperial control over the separatist provinces of the northeast, and the governors of those provinces were secretly recruiting agents in the Eastern Capital. Han Yu, having recently been transferred to administrative positions in the Luoyang offices of the Bureaus of Rites (*Libu*) and Punishments (*Xingbu*), found himself in the midst of intrigue. When his colleagues proved too intimidated by the court to admit that they had allowed the resistance to grow unchecked, Han Yu took it upon himself to launch a counterinsurgency, initiating a series of prohibitions on clandestine activities. Although the scope and efficacy of the measures themselves is unknown, his words worked, for upon learning of the injunctions, the senior ranking officials in Luoyang, including Han Yu's own patron, the governor Zheng Yuqing (745–820), issued their own injunctions, lest they be seen as soft on the separatists. The emperor himself commended Han Yu for his bold and forthright action.[28]

At some point in the course of these events, an acquaintance shared a set of scrolls with Han Yu.[29] The scrolls featured rubbings of the so-called Stone Drum (*shi gu*) inscriptions (Fig. 2.9). Han Yu knew the inscriptions well. The great poet Du Fu (712–770) had mentioned them, as had the earlier Tang writers Su Xu, Li Sizhen, and Zhang Huaiguan. Han Yu's near-contemporary Wei Yingwu had composed a song (*ge*) about them.[30] But in light of present circumstances, the inscriptions acquired new significance. The rubbings had been taken from inscriptions on ten "drums"—actually squat stone cylinders—that had been sitting somewhere in the Guanzhong area of present-day central Shaanxi (the actual site of their discovery is contested) for at least a millennium.[31] Modern scholars now recognize the inscriptions as having been written in the official script (*zhuanshu*) of the preimperial State of Qin. Han Yu and his Tang predecessors gave them an older provenance, claiming that the inscriptions had been composed and set in stone during the reign of King Xuan of Zhou (828–782 BCE).[32] Historians had long credited King Xuan with restoring the glory of his dynasty's early years. From Han Yu's perspective, a similar restoration was at work in Emperor Xianzong's reassertion of imperial authority. The drums resonated with the harmony of the present emperor and the ancient king. Han Yu composed a lengthy poem in celebration of the drums, and like Wei Yingwu before him, he entitled his verse "Song of the Stone Drums."

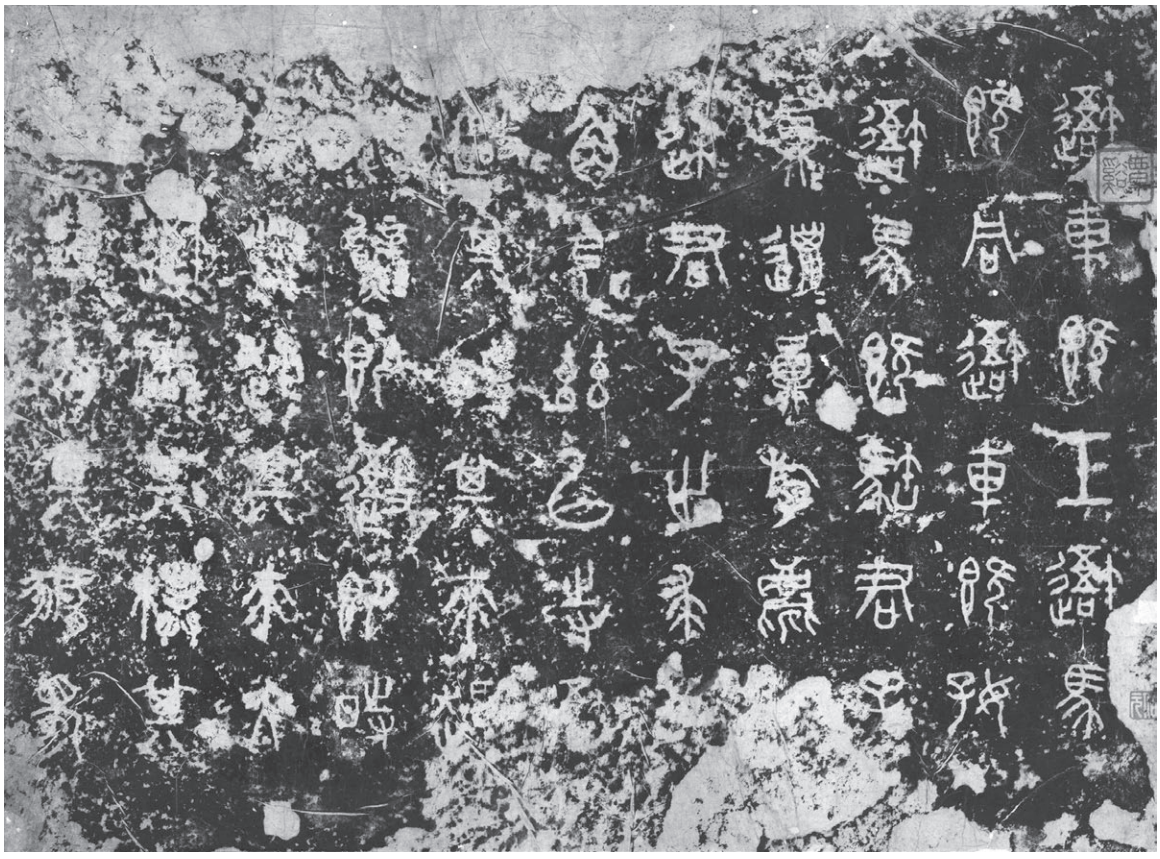


FIGURE 2.9 Rubbing of the first of the ten Stone Drums. Seventeenth-century CE rubbing of a ca. fifth-century BCE inscription, with later seals in red. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H. C. Weng, 1992.

The poem would go on to become one of the most famous in Han Yu's oeuvre, an emblem of the balance between dynamic vigor and formal restraint that he achieved in his later years, and thus, stylistically speaking, a poetic counterpart to the renowned prose of "Tracing the Way."[33] But beyond its value as literature, "Song of the Stone Drums" is important for understanding the development of Song antiquarianism in three essential respects. First, it imbues antiquities with extracanonical authority, which was the principal quality that would make them appealing to intellectuals of the *guwen* persuasion. Second, it presages the attentiveness to the materiality of the sign—to the physicality of the trace as a unique, irreproducible thing—that would inform virtually all eleventh-century writing on antiquities. Third, it integrates these twin themes with older notions of antiquities as portents of heavenly favor. From our perspective, the combination of these three themes marks Han Yu's "Song of the Stone Drums" as a kind of bridge between older and newer approaches to the objects of antiquity, and a useful resource for recognizing the commonalities

and teasing apart the differences between these approaches. As we shall see in chapter 4, the rehearsal of older understandings as endorsements for newer hermeneutics would continue in the Song.

The poem begins with a celebration of King Xuan, who, having "brandished his Heavenly spear" and defeated all of his enemies on the battlefield, gathered together his nobles for a great, celebratory hunt. At the conclusion of this hunt, it was decided to make a permanent record of his glorious deeds:

> His accomplishments were engraved, telling ages without measure;
> Stone was chiseled to make the drums, shattering there the mountain high.
> Attending ministers of skill and talent, each first among their fellows;
> Were chosen to compose and carve the words, which they left there in the hollow.[34]

Han Yu's vision of the drums is marked by a keen attention to the physicality of the labor that brought them into being and the way in which traces of that labor remain in the fabric of the Earth. In chiseling the drums free from the mountainside, the stoneworkers shattered the surrounding rock and left a gaping wound in the slope. Once the inscriptions were incised, King Xuan and his retinue left the drums where they found them, exposed in the hollow—a testament that even the mountain itself was no match for the mighty king. The dark void in the shattered mountainside stands together with the drums as a silent reminder of the destruction wrought by the king's conquest. Han Yu makes the writing on the drums powerful in the same way that he claims power in his own prose—by tracing the origins of the king's victories and the origins of the writing about those victories to the same generative wellspring of violence. Once again, he assimilates the facture of reality and the facture of representation into a unified Way of making.

In linking the content to the appearance of the inscriptions, Han Yu quietly alludes to the stone stelae of the Qin dynasty, which had been erected on the orders of the First Emperor to demarcate his dominion over the heartlands of Chinese civilization. Each of the stelae had been placed on a major peak in one of the eastern states that the emperor had brought to heel, and inscribed in the formal script of the Qin court with a proclamation of the First Emperor's authority.[35] Scholars had long attributed both the design of the script and the writing itself to the hand of the First Emperor's chief minister Li Si, and regarded the inscriptions as an orthographic model for the production of Qin-style formal script. Highlighting the skill of the writer in the context of a stone inscription would have figured, in Han Yu's time, as a subtle but unmistakable reference to this famous model.

From the perspective of Tang scholars, the erection of the Qin stelae was by far and away the best known and, for many, earliest example of a practice

that would become commonplace in early imperial and medieval China. Undergirding this practice was a widespread metonymic imaginary which vested the objects represented by words carved on stone with the durability of the stone itself. According to this imaginary, the inscription fused the meaning of the words to the materiality of the rock, and thereby announced, through its physical presence, that whatever the words proclaimed would persist as long as the rock persisted.[36]

This lithologic was well-established by the end of the Han dynasty. It encouraged the successive carvings of the Confucian canon in stone—the "Stone Classics" (*shi jing*)—under the auspices of Emperor Ling (r. 168–189), Cao Fang (r. 239–254), and a series of later rulers.[37] It also motivated the choice of exposed mountainsides as grounds for large-scale inscriptions of Buddhist sūtras, as well as the preservation of scriptures on stone tablets in sealed scriptoria so that they might survive the coming "destruction of the Buddhist dharma" (*mo fa*).[38] Many later emperors, regional potentates, and other would-be aspirants to political authority would follow the First Emperor's example and erect stelae to proclaim the coming longevity of their rule.[39] By Han Yu's time, stone was thus widely utilized as an anticipatory medium, in the sense that it facilitated the imagination of a distant future in which the writing on the stone, and the world inscribed in that writing, would continue to exist.[40]

In his earlier account of the stone drums, Wei Yingwu unaffectedly reiterated this highly conventionalized symbolism of stone: "A singular writing handed down by [Zhou] himself," he observed, "is still in the world, preserving essences and ideas for so long, with generations unaware."[41] Although some modern scholars have suggested that Song antiquarians were the first to regard ancient things as direct, physical conduits to the Sages of antiquity, Wei's couplet clearly indicates that such ideas already had currency by the eighth century.[42] And even so, his innovation, such as it was, was little more than a reversal of a much older subject position. Instead of the inscriber looking forward to a distant future in which the inscription persists, we have a reader looking back to a distant past in which the inscription was originally carved. The subject position of the antiquarian, looking to the past through the medium of the material trace, is thus already anticipated in the early imperial practice of inscribing stone.

The novelty of the antiquarian turn comes, rather, with Han Yu. Whereas earlier writers had celebrated stone as an enduring medium, Han Yu highlights its fragility. Having recounted the engraving of the inscriptions, he describes in the following couplet what became of the drums after the king departed.

> Drenched with rain, scorched by sun, they burned in wild fires;
> But ghostly beings stood guard around, troubling to defend them.[43]

The couplet is a mischievous mash-up of old and new symbolisms. What began as an enduring sign of impermanence—a reminder that the memory of the king's accomplishments far outlived the accomplishments themselves—becomes a figure for ambiguity: the stone still endures, but now it endures *in spite of* its materiality. Persistence is no longer an inherent attribute of stone for the inscriber to call forth as a way of figuring the durability of something else; here, it constitutes the miracle itself.

By crediting the drums' remarkable state of preservation to spectral guardians, Han Yu extracts the inscriptions from the established lithologic of his day and transforms their persistence into a portentous sign. In so doing, he associates the drums with what was, by then, the well-established notion that the discovery of an ancient object was an omen.[44] A few lines later, he elaborates this idea in what is without question one of the most evocative descriptions of script in the entire Chinese canon:

> How could a thing so deep in years not have lost a stroke?
> A keen blade cut them, engendering water dragons and crocodiles.
> Rocs soar, phoenixes mount, while a band of immortals descends,
> Trees of emerald and coral, crisscrossing branches and boughs,
> Golden ropes and iron cables, bound and locked fast,
> Ancient cauldrons leap from the water, dragons fly from shuttles.[45]

The dragons, crocodiles, and bands of emerald and coral materialize in Han Yu's perception of the inscription because, as he confesses several lines earlier, he cannot actually read the poems.

> Stern in diction, dense in meaning, difficult to comprehend in reading.
> The words in shapes unlike the scripts of clerical and tadpole writing.[46]

This is Han Yu at his mischievous best. The first line suggests that the problem is semantic—that the difficulty of parsing the relationships between the words makes the writing seem formal and officious. But of course, one would have to be able to recognize the words in order to struggle with the semantics of the verse. In the second line, Han Yu reveals that the real problem is his inability to do just that. The "clerical" and "tadpole" scripts refer to archaic writing systems that had fallen out of favor centuries earlier but remained basically legible to the general Tang reader. The drum inscriptions, by contrast, were written in a script whose orthographic relationship to the contemporary "standard script" (*kaishu*) familiar to most Tang readers was relatively opaque. Unable to see through the writing to the words behind, Han Yu's eyes came to rest on imagery of the script itself, which presented itself as a dense forest of interlocking branches and knotted tangle of interwoven cables. Missing the trees for the

forest, Han Yu invites his reader to experience the writing for what it shows rather than what it says—a vision whose lexical incomprehensibility testifies to its oracular potency.

That portentousness is made explicit in the final line with a pair of miraculous images: an ancient cauldron rising from the water and a weaving shuttle transforming into a dragon. The shuttle is an allusion to the early medieval story of a weaving implement that miraculously turned into a dragon upon being caught in midair by the general Tao Kan (259–334).[47] The ancient cauldron is an unmistakable reference to the most famous of all political omens—the legendary Nine Cauldrons (*jiu ding*). Purportedly fashioned by the legendary King Yu (ca. twenty-second century BCE), who famously "channeled the waters" to make the land habitable and agriculturally productive, the cauldrons were said to have been passed down by the successive rulers of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties until they were lost and sank into the Si River in the fourth century BCE. According to these early accounts, the number of the cauldrons derived from the number of the regions of the known world that Yu demarcated and regulated by clearing and leveling mountains, channeling watercourses, and establishing the appropriate tribute that each region would submit to the ruler.

Han Yu's characterization of the cauldrons "leaping" from the water drew upon long-standing understandings of the cauldrons as political portents that refused the boundary between human and nonhuman agency. In classical Chinese political parlance, cauldrons were animate things that sank, rose, and flew from one place to another in response to the presence or absence of moral virtue in the ruler. Although their pursuit of virtue was invariably reactive—cauldrons were not anthropomorphic, fickle things that moved on the basis of their own free will—they actively resisted human efforts to make them behave.[48]

By aligning the Stone Drums with the legacy of animate cauldrons, Han Yu muted their phenomenal specificity. Just as the illegibility of the writing helped him see the inscriptions as signs rather than texts, the weathered persistence of the drums helped him see them as responsive, miraculous things rather than timeworn remnants of a dead civilization. The distinctive, unusual materiality of the drum inscriptions ironically abetted Han Yu's desire to look past their appearance to the workings of the Way within. As we shall see, the phenomenal particularity of ancient bronzes would play a similar role for eleventh-century literati.

The Failure of Confucius

If "Song of the Stone Drums" were to have ended with the invocation of responsive cauldrons, we would be justified in classifying it as just another

example of a centuries-old understanding of ancient objects as magical but ultimately comprehensible signs of a correlative cosmos. However, in the subsequent couplets, Han Yu moves in an entirely new direction:

> Some foolish scholar compiling the Poems did not include them,
> Now the *Greater* and *Lesser Odes* are cramped in scope, not expansive.
> When Confucius went west, he did not reach Qin
> Thus gathered the constellations, but overlooked sun and moon.
> Alas that I, though I love antiquity, was born terribly late,
> In the face of this, my tears fall, streaming down both cheeks.[49]

While the discovery of the drums first reminded Han Yu of the connection between King Xuan and Emperor Xianzong, now they speak to him of the gap between the songs of old and those contained in the present text of the *Classic of Poetry*. Melding two traditional theories about the compilation of the *Classic*—one of which held that Confucius edited the poems to reveal the moral history of the Zhou state, the other of which claimed that the poems were gathered by an official in the Zhou court to express the popular sentiments of the different regions of the kingdom—Han Yu suggests that Confucius, in gathering the songs of the various Zhou polities, failed to include those of the State of Qin, and that the *Classic of Poetry* is a far lesser text for their absence.

Making such a claim in a couplet is different from advancing a programmatic vision in a treatise. Elsewhere, Han Yu focuses primarily on the failures of imperial exegetes to accurately interpret the classics, not the inadequacy of the classics themselves. As we have seen, the *Classic of Poetry* was among the texts that he heralded as "the writing of the Sages." And yet, even if Han Yu's assertion was merely rhetorical, a contemporary reader of Han Yu's poem, schooled in the notion of the *Classic of Poetry* as a pillar of the Confucian canon, would have still come away with a diminished view of the text. Han Yu presumably must have realized that his poem would have this effect, even if critiquing the *Classic of Poetry* was not his principal goal. Elsewhere in his writings, he asserts definitively that Confucius corrected the work, including everything that was consistent with the Way and eliminating everything that was not.[50] But even if his characterization of Confucius's failure to acquire the Stone Drum texts is, as Stephen Owen has argued, simply laudatory hyperbole, the effect of that hyperbole is to reinforce a sense that the authority of the classics lies more in the hands of one who, like Han Yu, knows the Way, and thus understands how to interpret the text synthetically, rather than one predisposed to read the text as a more literal, direct presentation of antiquity.[51]

In turning the tables on the virtuous responsivity of the cauldrons, Han Yu paved the way for imagining ancient things as iconoclastic implements rather

than correlative signs. He showed how antiquities forced a reckoning with the claims of the canon, and thereby encouraged the interpretation of the Confucian classics as an imperfect representation rather than a perfect transmission of the Way of antiquity.

But he also made antiquities into something more than mere objects of knowledge; by revealing their sagacity, he forged the drums into emblems of the Way. Han Yu reminded his readers that they, too, "were born terribly late," and that they could not hope to know the world in which the drums were carved. The past was lost, and irrevocably so. But its traces remained as weapons for slicing the Gordian knot of accumulated tradition and thereby making it possible to finally, at long last, practice the Way of antiquity as it had once been practiced, with tools appropriate to the circumstances of the present. Han Yu never explained whether or how he saw antiquities fitting into that toolbox. For him, they remained implements for tearing down the old order rather than building the new. But his followers in the coming centuries would make far more with them.

Virtually every Song scholar who wrote on the subject of antiquities mentioned Han Yu's account of the Stone Drums. The inscriptions remained famous in their own right, but Han Yu loomed so large in the later medieval imagination that it became impossible to think about the drums without reflecting on what Han Yu had thought about them. Yet even more than the "emerald and coral branches" of the inscriptions themselves, it was the way that Han Yu thought about them—as fragile traces and purposive things, all at once—that modeled a more general way of thinking with physical traces of the past. In the eleventh century, artists and scholars began using that way to produce objects that Han Yu never would have imagined.

4

Agents of Change

> In the beginning, no one realized that the vessel was a *dui*. Later, we realized that its inscription included the words "treasured and esteemed *dui*." Thus we knew it was a *dui*.[1]
>
> Ouyang Xiu, *Records of Collected Antiquities*

There is no poetry here, no soliloquy nor rumination. Just a self-evident and undeniable truth. Ouyang Xiu knows the vessel is a *dui* because it calls itself a *dui*. And yet the stark obviousness of his observation should not blind us to the radicalism of the intellectual changes that made it possible.

Scholars have long recognized that the mid-eleventh century witnessed the emergence of a new passion for empirical inquiry in Chinese intellectual life. Previous generations had examined the world around them and endeavored to explain their observations, but none before Ouyang's generation had done so in such an all-encompassing manner, a manner which included, among other things, the development of a new genre of writing—the miscellany, or "notebook" (*biji*)—that provided a flexible platform for the expression of empirical observations free from the literary conventions of established genres.[2] The scope of Song empiricism was vast, and because it included observations about plants and animals, stones and metals, and phenomena like lightning and fossilization, there is a long modern tradition of suggesting that the Song marks the beginning of a rational, scientific mode of inquiry akin to that of the European Enlightenment.[3] But as some have more recently observed, a better analogy would be to the antiquarians of early modern Eu-

rope, who were schooled in classical traditions of learning and who sought to forge connections between the knowledge that they gleaned from books and their observations of the material world.[4] Like the great antiquarian polymath Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), Northern Song empiricists like Shen Gua (1031–1095) were not interested simply in ancient things, but in the investigation of all physical things—ancient and modern, natural and man-made—as a way of grounding the knowledge they derived from the classics, histories, and other traditional sources in the material fabric of the world around them.[5] Eleventh-century intellectuals extended the classical name-substance dichotomy beyond the moral assessment of men's character to encompass a concern for the relationship between all of the words they read and the entirety of the world they saw. They took seriously Confucius's assertion that the ancient poems were good sources for learning the names of birds and beasts, and endeavored to determine which creatures out in the world corresponded to the names in those poems.[6]

One of the great challenges facing historians of the period is that this attention to the particularity of things coincided, often in the writings of the same intellectuals, with the essentializing tendencies that we witnessed in Han Yu's "Tracing the Way." On the surface, it would seem that these two tendencies pull in opposite directions. Why worry about identifying the animal to which some name in an old poem referred when the real point was grasping the Way that had guided Confucius to preserve that poem as an emblem of moral virtue in the first place? And, indeed, many of the eleventh-century scholars who recorded their empirical observations expressed considerable reservation about the ethical value of what they were doing, suggesting that the recording of such things was but a private, idle pastime for their leisure hours.[7] The open-ended structure of the notebooks, colophons, and other occasional forms in which they recorded their observations accommodated a great variety of personal expressions, only some of which were genuinely empirical. Direct observations of material phenomena were interwoven with rumor, hearsay, and expressions of subjective taste. Although Song scholars demonstrated a keen awareness of the difference between objective knowledge and subjective supposition, they did not organize their miscellanies accordingly. The notes containing their empirical observations were not constrained by an objective standard of validity.[8] So it is with good reason that some modern historians have followed Song scholars in characterizing the antiquarian dimension of those scholars' intellectual lives as external to the moral commitments and weighty sentiments they expressed in their more formal poetry and prose.[9]

And yet it would be a mistake to regard the antiquarian writings of eleventh-century scholars as somehow less fundamental to their sense of self than the commentaries they wrote on the classics and the memorials they drafted for court. The fact that they composed these writings outside the

auspices of court and away from the demands of friends and family suggests other, deeper motivations. Song scholars had to be poets and memorialists, and they had to compose examination questions and write lengthy epitaphs for dead men whom they barely knew. But they did not have to be antiquarians. The fact that some were suggests that they were compelled by something more fundamental than social obligation or political necessity. The spaces of reclusion, exile, and retirement in which they wrote down their observations of antiquities, rocks, flowers, and animals were conventionally understood as wellsprings of incorruptibility. The private scholar alone in his study, or in the company of a small group of like-minded men, was the moral center of traditional Chinese cultural life, celebrated in countless poems and paintings. The disavowal of the seriousness of the cultural life that occurred in these spaces was therefore less a denial than a deferral—an assertion that what happened there enabled the ethics that were practiced elsewhere.

So if the antiquarian urge, or, to borrow a term from Felipe Rojas, the *archaeophilia*, of Song intellectual life arose from something deeper than social and political necessity, the question that bears asking is: where did this urge come from, and why did it come to matter in a way that it never had before?[10] While the answer to that question is inherently multidimensional, what I propose in this chapter is that a key factor in the emergence of Song antiquarianism was the discovery of the antiquities themselves, and in particular the discovery of inscribed Western Zhou bronzes. This discovery was sparked less by the physical recovery of lost bronzes, which, as we have seen, had been surfacing for centuries, than by the deciphering of the inscriptions they bore. The fact that the inscriptions contained the name of the vessel upon which they were inscribed impressed upon scholars the possibility of aligning the words they read in the classics with the actual objects of antiquity. It gave them the means to recognize the sagely works that preceded the representations of the Sages that they read in their books, and to experience those works as manifest, present things. The simple observation that a *dui* was a *dui* because it called itself a *dui* opened the floodgates for a radical reorganization of the methods used to produce and validate knowledge. This reorganization occurred at the most fundamental level of reading as such, insofar as it was premised on the recognition that the synthetic systems for understanding the structure of characters and the objects of names that I examine in part I were not embodiments of antique, sagacious ways of knowing, but the artificial constructs of later imperial scholars. That recognition would not have occurred were it not for the particular set of intellectual concerns and assumptions that guided eleventh-century scholars to the study of ancient bronzes. But if those bronzes had not been inscribed with their names—if they had not been nominal things—the subsequent course of Chinese intellectual history would have looked very different. The coincidence between the commemorative inscriptive practices of

Western Zhou elites and the predispositions of eleventh-century *guwen* intellectuals gave inscribed bronzes a remarkable degree of historical agency. They shaped the cultural world that they came to inhabit. In this chapter, I examine the complex constellation of intellectual concerns and cultural practices that made Ouyang Xiu's observation of the self-naming bronze possible. In the next chapter, I consider the consequences of that observation.

Erasure and Its Discontents

Northern Song scholarship on ancient bronzes was premised on a new attentiveness to the materiality of writing. As we have seen, that attentiveness was presaged in Han Yu's "Song of the Stone Drums." But it would not move to the foreground until it displaced another notion of writing that also informed Han Yu. This other, originally more dominant notion, articulated most powerfully in Han Yu's "Tracing the Way," understood writing as part of a continuum of ritual and musical practices that had the capacity to transform the world precisely because their effects transcended the spatially and temporally delimited materiality of the practices themselves. As we have seen in part I, this earlier paradigm regarded names, language, and writing as agentic devices that necessarily remade the world. By rectifying the names of things, scholars denoted the normative nature of these things. By organizing these names into sequences and patterns, they enabled the communication of that nature between human beings. By setting these sequences and patterns down in writing, they extended that communication across time and space. Because they did not labor under the assumption that language was inherently representational, in the sense of being an inherently imperfect imitation of something whose truth lay elsewhere, they were willing to countenance the possibility of continuity between words and reality, and on the basis of that continuity, the idea that the moral telos of a thing was necessarily activated by its name.

We have seen, in Liu Zongyuan's criticism of Han Yu, the inklings of a new sense that names obstructed rather than facilitated the pursuit of moral life, that no matter how they might be rectified, they would never suffice to change the world, and that they therefore needed to be pushed from their reified pedestal and subordinated to the observation of reality on its own terms. The notion that the terms upon which reality existed were *necessarily* distinct from the terms in which humans spoke transformed the understanding of language, suggesting that it was more a medium of translation than a mechanism of transformation, and thereby introduced an anxiety about the gap between representation and reality.[11] This emerging sensitivity to the ways in which words represent things was echoed in and expressed through an increasing concern for the ways in which writing represents words and things represent writing.

It is not a coincidence that this anxiety about representation emerged at roughly the same time that new technologies for the reproduction and dissemination of writing were coming to the fore. The Tang witnessed the development of two distinct but interrelated reprographic technologies—woodblock printing and rubbing. The evidence for the early history of both of these technologies is mostly circumstantial, and it is difficult to know how widespread they were during the Tang. The earliest woodblock prints appear to have been made almost exclusively in Buddhist monastic contexts: the earliest extant dated print hails from 868 CE, but a small number of the impressions recovered from the famous monastic archive at Dunhuang can be relatively securely dated to the eighth century. Textual records suggest that woodblock prints were being made as early as the seventh century. The early history of rubbings is even harder to pin down, in large part because many medieval commentators did not always distinguish rubbed from traced copies in their descriptions of historical works of calligraphy.[12] Nevertheless, it is clear from their respective poems on the Stone Drums that Han Yu and Wei Yingwu were looking at rubbings rather than the inscriptions themselves.

It is also clear that both technologies drew upon much older traditions of reprography that included seals, molded ceramics, and section-mold bronze casting.[13] Asking the unanswerable question of when these technologies were invented is ultimately less interesting and important than exploring the ways in which reprography, defined in the most essential terms as the impression of one surface upon another, gradually colonized an expanding range of material substrates and media domains. The circumstantial evidence of early reprography suggests that this process of colonization had proceeded far enough by Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan's time to have a discernible impact on the experience of reading.

In recent years, literary scholars have come to recognize some of the ways in which print, in addition to expanding literacy and promoting shared bodies of knowledge, also reconfigured the hermeneutics of reading. Building on the insights of historians of European reading practices, scholars of Chinese literature have observed that the expansion of print coincided with increasing anxiety about variation between received copies of the same text.[14] Because readers in manuscript-based traditions experienced writing exclusively in the form of unique transcriptions, they did not approach reading with the assumption of a stable, fixed text standing behind the particular written thing in their hands. But once reprography enabled the dissemination of lexically and graphically identical impressions, it became possible for multiple readers in different places to imagine themselves simultaneously reading or viewing the same thing. The fiction of that shared experience heightened awareness of the distinction between the inscribed object and the dematerialized text. As scholars of both European and Chinese medieval manuscript traditions have demonstrated,

manuscripts retain a tissue of orality that links them to oral storytelling traditions.[15] Like the storyteller's listener, the manuscript's reader experiences the words as an iteration of a narrative with certain figures, images, and scenes. They come to know the story behind the tale through the repeated instantiation of its motifs in multiple oral or manuscript tellings. What distinguishes them from readers in the world of print is that the story they imagine does not presume a specific, stable series of words. The same story could be told in multiple ways and remain recognizably itself. The experience of print, by contrast, encourages the imagination of the story as a fixed series of words. It helps to generate a sense of authorship and to premise the integrity of the work on the stability of its text.[16]

Reprography promoted textuality, but it did not generate it out of thin air. The memorization of canonical scriptures, first Confucian and eventually Buddhist, had been a widespread practice in China since before the dawn of the imperial era. Although the Confucian canon did not circulate in print until the early Song, concern with textual integrity underscored the Han-era debates between "new text" and "old text" traditionalists, and motivated the imperially sponsored stone classics. The early inscription of Buddhist sūtras in stone, such as the Fangshan stone scriptures of the early seventh century CE, similarly encouraged Buddhists to associate the content of the scripture with a fixed series of words. Even though Buddhism in general was characterized by open canons and an approach to interpretation that stressed the principles conveyed through the words rather than the forms of the words themselves, the cultural practices of memorizing scripture and inscribing it in stone nevertheless worked to reproduce the idea of the text.[17] One way to understand the hermeneutic influence of reprography, then, is as one dimension of a complex amalgam of material and intellectual forces that pushed the concern for textual integrity from canonical contexts of memorization to the practice of reading writ large.

The mutual imbrication of the expanding concern for textual integrity and the emerging anxiety about the relationship between words and things becomes apparent when we recognize that an awareness of the distinction between inscription and text is nothing but an awareness of representation. Instead of treating the inscription and the text as if they were the same thing, the reader begins to question the degree to which the inscription accurately represents the text. The same sense of a representational gap between sign and object undergirds both Liu Zongyuan's critique of Han Yu and the broader imagination of the text. As words came to be understood as necessarily contingent representations of things, inscribed things came to be understood as necessarily contingent representations of texts.

When the cultural practices of the eighth century are compared to those of the eleventh, this expanding attentiveness to questions of representation is

readily apparent. As Ronald Egan has observed in his important study of the literary genre "poetry on painting" (*tihua shi*), the essential difference between the treatment of painting in the verses of the High Tang poet Du Fu (712–770) and the Northern Song literati Su Shi (1036–1101) and Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) is their relative attention to issues of representation.[18] Whereas Du Fu's verses focus on the subjects represented in painting, Su's and Huang's focus on the paintings as representations. Like Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan's respective treatments of the relationship between names and things, Du Fu proceeded from the assumption of substitutability between painting and subject, while Su and Huang interrogated the relationship between them. The challenge is understanding the historical processes whereby the problematizing of representation evinced in Liu Zongyuan's critique of Han Yu became a more general mode of cultural practice.

One way to unpack these processes is to trace changing assumptions about the relationship between the visuality and materiality of writing. In parsing these terms, I have benefited from Walter Benn Michaels's razor-sharp distinction between the materiality and the textuality of a work of writing—the materiality being those qualities particular to the work of writing as a physical object, and the textuality being that which is common to multiple copies of the work.[19] The distinction works because Michaels is fundamentally concerned with the *words* represented by the writing, and the implications that the materiality of the writing (i.e., the paper on which it is inscribed and the blots and smudges that mar it) has for the reader's comprehension of those words. But when we think of reading as a visual experience—as a seeing of script that precedes the comprehension of the words represented thereby—we recognize that reprography introduces a visuality that straddles the boundary between the materiality and the textuality of the writing.[20] This visuality resides in those aspects of the visual experience of writing which the viewer of a work can reasonably anticipate sharing with viewers of other impressions of the same work. When the terms textuality, materiality, and visuality are glossed in this way, they can help us identify emblematic moments in the diffusion of the assumption of an inherent representational gap between sign and object through the cultural practices of the two centuries between the death of Han Yu and the birth of Ouyang Xiu. Three moments, all concerning the erasure of inscriptions, trace this growing concern.

The Pacification of Huaixi

In 817 CE, Han Yu's patron, Grand Councilor Pei Du (765–839), oversaw the victory of the Tang army over the forces of Huaixi Circuit, which had resisted imperial authority for more than half a century. Han Yu was called upon to commemorate the victory, and the panegyric that he composed credited much

of the success to Pei Du's leadership. Han's verse, together with his explanatory preface, was then inscribed on a large stone stele.[21] We do not know exactly where the stele was erected, but it is clear that it was sufficiently visible for other members of the court to fume about the message that it sent. Controversy ensued, with Pei Du's detractors arguing that Han had overstated Pei's role in the victory. Persuaded by these criticisms, the emperor commanded that the stele be pulled down and its inscription effaced. Yet despite its physical erasure, the text of Han Yu's "Stele Inscription on the Pacification of Huaixi" (*Ping Huaixi bei*) would survive and go on to become one of his most celebrated works.[22]

The lasting fame of the incident stems in part from a subsequent poem, "Han Yu's Stele" (*Han bei*) written some years later by Li Shangyin (812–858), who was but a child when the events recounted therein occurred.[23] In Li's rendition of the story, the contrast between the physical destruction of the inscription and the survival of the text takes center stage. He begins his verse by recounting "the brigandry of Huaixi" (*Huaixi you zei*) and Pei Du's leadership in bringing the recalcitrant region to heel. He then explains how the emperor extolled Pei's accomplishments and decreed that it was fitting that Pei's attendant Han Yu compose a verse in his honor. Having established the events that gave rise to Han's inscription, Li proceeds to describe, over several richly imagistic couplets, the actual process of writing itself. He explains how Han Yu seated himself in a small chamber, "liberally soaked his great brush" (*ru ran da bi*), and let "the saturation flow" (*lin li*). His choice of terms at this juncture—*lin li* simultaneously conveys the saturation of the brush with ink and the saturation of the poet with meaning—effaces any sense of distinction between the composition of the words and the physical act of writing itself. After celebrating the verse's brilliant manipulation of phrases from the *Classic of Poetry*, Li describes how Han Yu "wrote it out on paper" (*shu zai zhi*) and then, the next morning, unrolled the paper for the emperor's perusal on the "cinnabar steps" (*dan chi*) of the palace. Throughout, the reader is presented with a clear image of the work of writing as both an embodied process and a physical thing.

Li Shangyin then leaps from Han Yu's composition of the work with brush and ink to a discussion of the finished stone stele. Although he avoids discussion of the sculpting and incision of the stele itself, his subsequent lines convey a strong sense of the physicality of its finished form.

> The stele was three yards high, the characters like tadpoles,
> Borne on the back of a numinous tortoise, with dragons coiled round.
> The lines were strange, the diction weighty, few could grasp the sense,
> They maligned him to the Son of Heaven, saying he was biased.
> With a long rope of a hundred feet, they pulled the stele down,

With course grit and hefty rocks, they ground away the words.
This composition of his lordship, was like the primal pneuma,
Well before it had already penetrated people to their marrow.
Tang's basin and Kong's cauldron bore works of writing,
We no longer have their vessels, but their words persist.[24]

The tremendous efforts undertaken to efface the stele—the dozens of grasping hands and straining backs implied by the hundred-foot rope and the laborious process of "grinding it clean" (*mo zhi*) with grit and stone—are matched only by their futility. The censors came too late; Han's readers had already ingested his memorable prose. Like the words inscribed on the basin of King Tang, the legendary founder of the Shang dynasty, and on the cauldron from the ancestral temple of Confucius, which remained widely known even though the basin and the cauldron themselves were long gone, Han Yu's "Stele Inscription" had transcended the materiality of the stele upon which it was inscribed.

Like Han Yu's account of the Stone Drums, Li Shangyin's verse treats the inscription as an emblem of a petrological irony: stone simultaneously preserves words and renders them up for depredation. Whether gradual and erosive, like the storms that lash the drums, or sudden and censorial, like the hands that grind the stele, the will to sustain is dialectically figured in the act of erasure. The differing temporalities of the processes involved matter little in the face of the inherent fragility of the medium. We witness, across the two verses, a consistent transformation of a material thing, vulnerable to the vicissitudes of time and history, into a deathless, lasting presence. When Li Shangyin, in his final couplets, proclaims his desire to preserve Han Yu's panegyric for posterity, he does so not by calling for its reinscription into stone, but by means of what Stephen Owen characterizes as "a figure of textual reproduction and dissemination."[25] Exclaiming his desire to make "ten thousand copies" (*wan ben*) of the inscription and recite it "ten thousand times" (*wan bian*), Li Shangyin announces his ambition to pass it on for generations. The apparitions who watched over the Stone Drums and ensured their preservation "complete in all detail" are echoed here in the spectral presence of Han Yu's enduring text.[26] In both cases, an unseen and immaterial force rescues a work of writing from its precarious existence as a unique, tangible thing.

Like Han Yu, Li Shangyin is attracted to the visceral physicality of writing, and he mobilizes the synesthetic possibilities of that physicality—the feel of the saturated brush in the hand and the sound of grinding stone—to give his narrative a multisensorial sense of immediacy. But this attention to physicality is, ultimately, little more than a literary device. The power of Han Yu's language transcends the physical circumstances of its inscription, and it is ultimately to this power that Li directs the reader's attention. He builds upon Han Yu's attention to materiality by foregrounding the discrepancy between inscrip-

tion and text, but he does not represent this discrepancy as an obstacle to the understanding and transmission of Han Yu's prose. The quality of writing, by implication, is measured through its capacity to be remembered, and thereby transcend its own corporeality.

Recarving a Stele

The century between the death of Li Shangyin and the founding of the Song was cataclysmic. Although the full scope of the devastation will never be known for sure, it is clear that much of the territory of the former Tang empire experienced widespread devastation. The old Tang aristocracy was almost entirely annihilated, and significant tracts of the North China plain were depopulated.[27] The tumult of the Five Dynasties, a series of military regimes that held sway over the North between the fall of the Tang in 907 and the founding of the Song in 960, accelerated the demographic decline of the traditional heartland of Chinese civilization relative to the southern periphery. A series of comparatively stable, regional states in the South—most notably the Southern Tang on the Yangtze, Wu-Yue in the southeast, and Later Shu in Sichuan—nurtured the scholars and artists who would go on to play important roles in reestablishing "this culture of ours" (*siwen*) at the early Song court.[28]

Xu Xuan, the recompiler of Xu Shen's dictionary whom we encountered briefly in chapter 1, was one of these scholar-officials, and when he came north, he brought his family and students with him. One of these students, Zheng Wenbao (953–1013), was the scion of a prominent Southern Tang family. His father had served as commander in chief of the Southern Tang emperor Li Yu's personal guard. Zheng would eventually rise to a respectable position in the Song civil service, but his early career was beset with frustration. In an inscription dated 993, he explains how thirteen years earlier, having traveled to the Song capital of Bianjing to take the civil service examination and failed in the attempt, he consoled himself by traveling east to climb the famous Mount Yi, located at the heart of the ancient state of Zou. Mount Yi was the site of one of the famous stelae of the First Emperor of Qin, and Zheng wished to see it for himself. His beloved teacher Xu Xuan had devoted himself to writing in the formal Qin script of Li Si, and for more than fifty years, there had been none who could match him. But when, late in life, Xu Xuan had obtained a rare copy of the Mount Yi stele, even he had been overcome by the strength of the brushwork and declared that it "achieved the union of Heaven and Man."[29] Thereupon Xu had striven to locate other "old traces" (*jiu ji*) of the work, but discovered that there were none to be found.

Zheng's inscription conveys a yearning for the lost world of readily circulating reproductions that Han Yu and Li Shangyin had enjoyed before the cataclysms of the intervening century. His choice of words is significant; in

explaining how the old traces of the work had been "almost completely burned and discarded" (*fen zhi lüe jin*), he alludes to the fires of war and the abandoned property of refugees in flight. Motivating Xu Xuan is a desire for the accumulation that a culture of paper and copying once made possible. Just as Han Yu's celebration of his friend's rubbings of the Stone Drums as "complete in all detail" presumes knowledge of other rubbings of the same inscriptions, Xu Xuan's desire to obtain other copies of the "Mount Yi Stele" conveys an interest in variable reproductions. Across these examples, we witness a clear recognition that the visuality of writing is less readily reproducible than its textuality, and sense that the best way to access that visuality is by looking through multiple copies of the work. Xu Xuan's interest in multiplicity seems more accumulative than reductive, in the sense that his primary goal is to deepen his appreciation of the calligraphy through the examination of multiple iterations rather than judgments about which copy is the best, but it is possible that both aims are at play. Either way, the consistent assumption is that multiplicity is positive—Xu Xuan's earnest search for additional reproductions echoing Li Shangyin's desire to make "ten thousand copies" of Han Yu's stele. The vision, in sum, is of the possibility of a visuality that transcends the materiality of the inscription and is preserved and transmitted through ceaseless reproduction.

It is the absence of these reproductions that motivated Zheng Wenbao to climb Mount Yi. But after ten days of seeking in vain, he found himself "lamenting beneath the briars and brambles" (*chaochang yu zhenwu zhi xia*) of the overgrown peak. The "divine trace" (*miao ji*) of Li Si's famous calligraphy was nowhere to be found. Despite the disappearance of the stele itself, Zheng was unwilling to accept the possibility that its inscription might forever "be lost to the world" (*jiang zhui yu shi*). A dozen years later, after succeeding in a subsequent effort to pass the civil service exam and assuming an appointment as assistant fiscal commissioner for the western prefectures surrounding the old Tang capital of Chang'an, he finally had the means to do something about it. Using the copy in Xu Xuan's possession as a model, he commissioned a new stele reproducing Li Si's inscription, followed by his own colophon. This colophon is the source of our knowledge of these events. The stele was erected on the prestigious grounds of the former School for the Sons of the State (*Guozijian*) in the old capital, and was preserved nearby in what is now the Forest of Stelae (*Beilin*) museum (Fig. 2.10). Zheng's colophon on the stele reinforces the pedagogical significance of this choice of location, emphasizing that the reproduction of the stele was to help "gentlemen of learning and elegance" (*boya zhi junzi*) apprehend the aspirations of the great classicists of the past (*xian ru*) (Fig. 2.11).

Zheng presents the new stele as a mechanism for preserving and transmitting the appearance of Li Si's inscription, and seems unconcerned about the reliability of the copy upon which it is based. Xu Xuan celebrated the strength

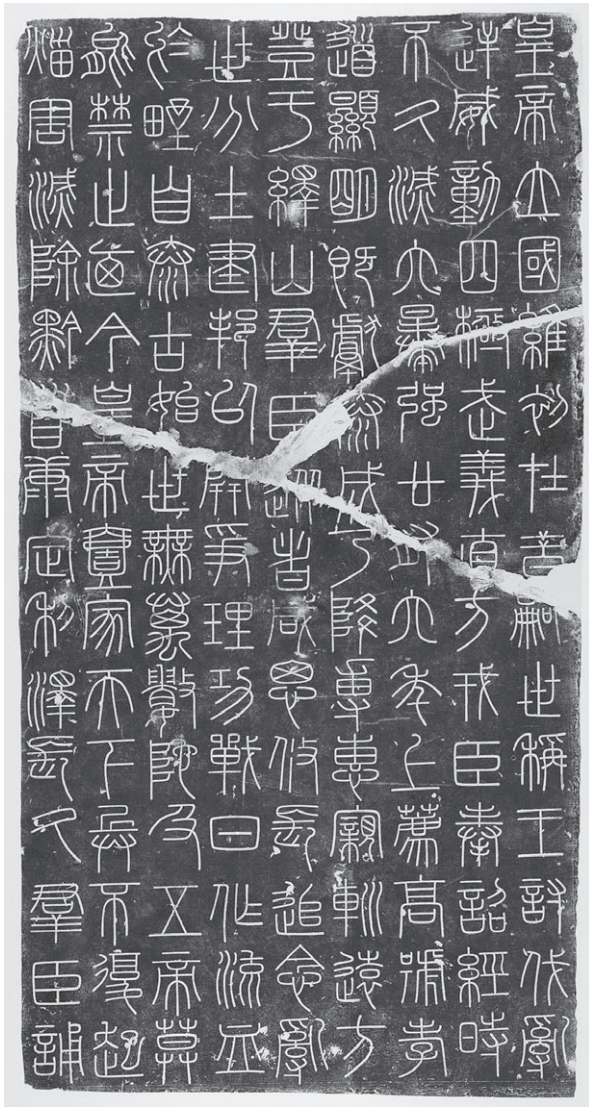


FIGURE 2.10 The front face of the Mount Yi Stele. Modern rubbing of a late 10th-century CE recarving of a handwritten 10th-century CE copy of a lost 3rd-century BCE inscription. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Seymour and Rogers Funds, 1977.

FIGURE 2.11 The rear face of the Mount Yi Stele, showing Zheng Wenbao's colophon, inscribed in standard script, on the left.

of the brushwork therein, and as far as Zheng was concerned, that was enough. Implicit in his account of the stele's recarving is the idea that a meaningful encounter with the work of art is not wedded to the original fabric of the work itself. Just as the textuality of Han Yu's inscription survived in spite of its effacement, the visuality of Li Si's inscription persisted in spite of its disappearance. Both Li Shangyin and Zheng Wenbao celebrate the capacity of the

copy to overcome the inherent impermanence of material things. Paper and ink best stone and chisel.

The essential difference between Li's and Zheng's respective accounts—the fact that one is concerned with words and the other is concerned with script—thus traces the process whereby the celebration of writing's capacity to overcome the materiality of its inscription migrated from the textual to the visual domain. Early reprography, whether practiced in the context of the production of model calligraphies at the early Tang court or the reproduction of Buddhist scriptures, was a matter of dissemination, a spreading of the rule (*fa*), as visual sign or verbal trace, to a wider public. By the late Tang, it had come to be understood as also a matter of preservation, a mechanism for overcoming the forgetfulness of human beings. By the tenth century, the valence of that mechanism had clearly expanded from the verbal to the visual.

At the heart of both Li Shangyin's and Zheng Wenbao's discussions of erasure is the shared assumption that reprography works while inscription fails—that the carving of writing in wood or stone and the inked transfer of the carving to paper effectively transmits all that is essential from the original to the copy, and that this act of reproduction is the most effective way to transmit both the content and the form of writing through time. Both men display an acute sensitivity to the materiality of the medium of writing which distinguishes them from earlier acts of inscription. Unlike the megalomaniacal rulers and millenarian monks of the early imperial and early medieval eras, who had sought to preserve their laws and teachings by carving them in stone, both Li and Zheng assumed that the inscription of words in stone was predisposed to fail. They were latecomers who had witnessed destruction, deterioration, and loss firsthand. They knew the limits of material things, and they were impassioned by the sense that reprography had the capacity to overcome those limits.

Li's and Zheng's will to copy can be seen, more broadly, in all of the major reprographic projects of the tenth century.[30] These include the first printing of the Confucian classics by the state of Later Shu between 932 and 953, and the compilation and reproduction of the manuscript traditions of the Tang—the "Four Great Books" (*Si da shu*) commissioned by the imperial court.[31] Other important examples include the first printing of the Buddhist canon between 972 and 983, a massive undertaking that involved the production of 5048 volumes using a total of 130,000 separately carved woodblocks, as well as the commissioning of the Chunhua model calligraphies by the Song court in 992, a similarly ambitious endeavor which saw the inscription of 420 works by a total of 103 individual calligraphers into wooden blocks.[32] All of these projects, in one sense or another, aimed to restore bodies of knowledge and corpora of visual models that had been fragmented by the destructive interregnum that attended the fall of the Tang.[33] And all of them sought to do so

not by preserving the writing in stone, but by facilitating its reproduction. Whatever materialization in stone or wood occurred in the reprographic process was ancillary—unlike the stelae of the First Emperor or the stone classics and sūtras of earlier eras—the ultimate goal was the copy, not the inscription itself. And as with Li Shangyin and Zheng Wenbao, the legitimacy of those many copies was premised on the assumption that both the textual and visual authority of writing had the capacity, through reprography, to transcend the materiality of the object upon which it was inscribed.

The Reassuring Trace

Zheng Wenbao's recarving of the Mount Yi stele did not enjoy the acclaim that he anticipated. When Ouyang Xiu encountered a rubbing of the recarving half a century later, his reaction was anything but laudatory. Ouyang had taken to collecting rubbings of old stelae and model calligraphies in his later years, and as he collected, he appended a colophon expressing his reaction to each piece.[34] In his colophon on a rubbing of the Mount Yi stele, he laments that the rubbing was not a true impression of Li Si's original work, but merely a copy of a copy. There are, he explains, many transmitted versions of the work in circulation, and "each has its own origin." Since no trace of the stele survived on Mount Yi, there was no way to tell which was accurate. Reiterating Zheng Wenbao's account of his fruitless visit to Mount Yi and subsequent recarving of the stele, he notes that Zheng's recension was the source for many of the rubbings then in circulation.[35]

What Zheng presented as a sincere account of the successful transmission of a revered work of calligraphy becomes, in Ouyang's telling, a wellspring of doubt. The difference between the two writers' respective descriptions of the source copy that Zheng acquired from Xu Xuan is revealing: Whereas Zheng says that he "used a copy that he had received from Xu" (*Xu suo shou moben*), Ouyang asserts unambiguously that Xu Xuan himself was the copyist.[36] They also characterize Xu differently: Zheng stresses his teacher's lifelong dedication to the study of Qin-style formal script; Ouyang emphasizes Xu Xuan's fame as a calligrapher of the script. Nothing in Ouyang's version contradicts the details of Zheng's account, but his subtle shift in emphasis dramatically reconfigures the reader's experience of those details. Whereas Zheng presents Xu as an earnest but silent partner in the successful transmission of Li Si's original inscription, Ouyang calls attention to Xu's intervention. One looks through the rubbing to the hand of Li Si, the other questions how it represents that hand.

The distinction between Ouyang and Zheng's approaches to their respective copies of the Mount Yi stele is indicative of Ouyang's broader intervention into the historiography of Chinese writing. This intervention is preserved in

the form of a collection of four hundred colophons—the *Records of Collected Antiquities* (*Jigulu*)—that Ouyang's son Ouyang Fei compiled from the much larger corpus of more than a thousand colophons that his father wrote about his rubbings.[37] Ouyang's colophons are replete with references to the time-worn faces of the stelae, and they clearly indicate that he valued those rubbings that preserved traces of weathered stone and eroded characters over those that were more pristine.[38] Throughout the corpus, Ouyang displays a keen interest in apprehending the lost, original work of ink on paper, but he recognizes the intervention of the mediums of stone inscription and ink rubbing in the transmission of that originality, and he prioritizes those rubbings that preserve the traces of this transmission.[39]

Ouyang's preference for the deteriorated fragment over the complete reproduction is showcased in his response to another of the First Emperor's famous stelae, the "Stone Inscription of Mount Tai" (*Taishan keshi*). Whereas Ouyang's rubbing of the Mount Yi stele held a complete inscription, the rubbing of the Mount Tai stele captured but a fragment. And yet the handful of chipped and eroded characters that could still be discerned were far "truer" (*te wei zhen*) than Xu Xuan's copy of a copy, because Ouyang knew that they had come from the original stone itself. As he explains in his colophon, his friend Jiang Xiufu (1005–1060) had climbed Mount Tai and found the inscribed fragment high up on the peak. Shocked that the some of the characters could still be made out after more than a thousand years of exposure to the elements, Jiang credited their survival to the extraordinary hardness of the stele. Although the stone seemed "impossible to chisel" (*bu ke juanzao*), somehow the ancient carver had succeeded in cutting the words deep into its surface. Marveling at the astounding skill of the ancients, Jiang made a rubbing of the inscription for Ouyang.[40]

If Han Yu looked to the survival of the ancient inscription on the mountainside as a sign of spectral portent, Ouyang Xiu saw something more prosaic: the labor of a dedicated hand that overcame the resistance of the stone. Ouyang put no faith in omens. Although more than happy to endorse their use as an expedient way of persuading rulers to follow a proposed course of action, he remarked more privately that anomalous movements of astral bodies and strange sightings of animate things had little relation to good government.[41] And yet the oracle remained. Like the Stone Drums for Han Yu, there was nothing there for Ouyang to read. It was the *vision* of the word—the possibility of a direct transmission from an ancient source, damaged and illegible, but uncorrupted—that captivated him. But what exactly was the content of his vision? Ouyang's colophon makes it clear that there was nothing much to learn, in an objective sense, from the inscription on Mount Tai. The fragment was too brief to read and too damaged to serve as a model for calligraphy. And besides, if Ouyang were simply looking for a model for writing in the Qin

style, Xu Xuan's copy would have done just fine. No one, least of all Ouyang, disputed that Xu was a master of the script.

He was moved, rather, by a different kind of sign—one that signaled the possibility of an authentic presence that survived the vicissitudes of time. The weathering of the inscription had degraded its appearance but confirmed its truth. By capturing the phenomenal expression of that sense of endurance, the rubbing gave form to the relationship between timeless principles and temporal things, and, as such, emblematized the constant Way amid the ever-changing world. And in his apprehension of that emblem, Ouyang found the evidence he felt he needed to render judgment. Han Yu cherished antiquity, and he was captivated by its trace, but he did not doubt. He knew that he knew its Way. Ouyang doubted but wanted to believe. He wanted to believe that the histories were not false, and that a minister of Qin had indeed scaled Mount Tai and placed a stele there. And he wanted to believe that his powers of discrimination gave him the ability to determine that truth. For him, the inscription was auratic because it affirmed this desire.

It was this disillusioned yearning for reassurance, this longing for faith from a mind suffused with doubt, that drew ancient bronzes into the light. And it was the capacity of the bronzes to answer that call, to speak back across the ages in affirmation to the question "Were you true?" that persuaded Song literati that they did not yearn in vain. But to understand how that process of call and response actually occurred, we must first situate Ouyang's preference for the eroded fragment within the broader hermeneutic that it encouraged.

The Indexical Hermeneutic

Ouyang's novel attention to the materiality of inscriptions did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. Writing some years later, the scholar and book collector Zhao Mingcheng (1081–1129) observed that Ouyang was the first to "gather and record the vestigial writings of former dynasties" (*jilu qiandai yiwen*).[42] Plenty of earlier writers had collected rubbings—Zhao knew, for instance, that Han Yu had possessed a rubbing of the Stone Drums—but they had principally done so in order to apprehend the visuality of the writing rather than the materiality of the inscribed object. What made Ouyang different is that he collected things rather than texts—impressions of physical inscriptions rather than instances of transcribable writing. The stone of the inscription was ever-present for Ouyang, and the moral that he endeavored to extract from the writing often turned on the discrepancy between the vanity of the immortality-seeking inscriber and the mortality of the rock.

In his colophon on the celebratory biography of a Tang official inscribed on a damaged stele, for example, Ouyang mused on the irony of the fact that the name of the official was not preserved on the surviving fragment. Surely

the official could not have been that praiseworthy, he observed, if the deterioration of a single stele could so easily erase his name from collective memory. Echoing Li Shangyin's celebration of Han Yu's stele, Ouyang remarked that "things with form" (*you xing zhi wu*) inevitably deteriorate, but the Way "lasts forever and never decays" (*jiu er wu bi*). If the official had truly practiced the Way, he would not have needed to inscribe his name, for his reputation would have been transmitted to future generations "as everlastingly as Heaven and Earth themselves" (*yu tiandi er wu qiong*).[43] The nameless official thus figures the discrepancy between hagiographic representation and the actuality of one's moral reputation in terms that Han Yu would have found legible: to separate name from substance is to lose the Way.

The difference is that Ouyang derived this moral from the deterioration of the inscription itself. Although he did not devote much ink to the facture of the rubbing as such, it is clear that his interest flowed from the rubbing's unique capacity to capture a moment in the stone surface's slow but inexorable ruination.[44] Although rubbings always had this capacity, it seems to have emerged as a sustained subject of attention only with Ouyang. Earlier writers were fascinated by the materiality of writing, but none interpreted this materiality in terms of the inscription's ever-changing ground. By engaging with the rubbing's indexicality rather than its visuality—that is, by exploiting the individual rubbing's capacity to reveal the relationship between the writing and the inscription at a particular moment in time rather than the capacity of multiple rubbings of the same inscription to produce a shared visual form—Ouyang embodied the new Song sensitivity to representation. His readings were predicated on his recognition of the inscription as a unique and irreproducible object.

The court scholars like Zheng Wenbao who had overseen the reprographic projects of the late tenth century had contented themselves with using the arts of impression to propagate shared forms—fixed sequences of words in the form of texts and fixed images of words in the form of standard orthographies and calligraphies—and had vested authority in their command of the resources necessary to generate those textual and visual discourses. That Zheng Wenbao waited until he had obtained an official position to commission the recarving of the Mount Yi Stele is symptomatic of the power dynamics of medieval reprography in general; virtually every known reprographic project of the tenth and eleventh centuries was undertaken by individuals occupying formal positions in the administrative apparatus of the imperial state. Ouyang too was a ranking minister who held a number of senior positions and who had been tasked, most famously, with revising the state-sponsored dynastic histories of the Tang and the Five Dynasties. But he studied inscriptions on his own time, and he explicitly characterized their study as a private matter. As with omens, he spoke about old inscriptions in two voices—correcting the

official record on one hand and musing privately about the impermanence of things on the other. His excavation of the rock beneath the writing exposed the subtext of imperial authority beneath the regime of textual reproduction, and although he occupied the highest echelons of power, his attentiveness to the fugitive materiality of the written word helped to establish the antiquarian as a politically erosive figure.[45]

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the efforts undertaken in the first decades of the Song to gather and reproduce the written traces of the Tang played a decisive role in stimulating anxiety about textual variation and encouraging the distinctively Song desire to seek out the true, "authentic" (*zhen*) text.[46] Ouyang's antiquarian writings demonstrate that this sensitivity to the discrepancy between inscription and text extended to the visual domain. His hostility toward the expanding reprographic regime is succinctly encapsulated in his assessment of the *Calligraphic Models of the Eighteen Masters* (*Shi ba jia fatie*), a collection of model calligraphies carved into wooden blocks at the behest of Emperor Taizong (r. 626–649). From Ouyang's perspective, the repeated impression and recarving of the blocks had resulted in a plethora of "reversed images and derivative models" (*zhuan xiang chuan mo*) whose relationship to the original works was altogether impossible to determine. Ouyang singled out the copy of the *Eighteen Masters* that he had obtained from his friend Xue Zhongru as being singularly worthy of admiration because, unlike virtually all other copies in circulation, it had been in Xue's family for generations, and was thus likely to have come from the original set of woodblocks themselves.[47]

Although no impressions of the *Eighteen Masters* survive, the aforementioned impression of a thirteenth-century recutting of *On the Seventeenth Day*, a collection of Wang Xizhi's model calligraphies originally commissioned by the same early Tang imperial office, reveals the marked difference between the ways in which the ground registers in rubbings of smoothly planed wooden or stone model calligraphies versus those of weathered and ablated stone inscriptions (Fig. 2.6). What is most striking about Ouyang Xiu's celebration of Xue Zhongru's copy is that even though that copy registered the ground of the inscription to a far lesser degree than rubbings of stone stelae, Ouyang nevertheless persisted in judging it on the basis of its proximity to the original ground. The indexicality of the rubbing as a direct trace of the incised writing remained the primary determinant of value even when the materiality of the inscription was largely invisible, and ascertaining the rubbing's indexicality meant looking to extravisual factors like the collecting history of the impression. Regardless of the materiality of the object behind the rubbing, Ouyang consistently conceptualized it as a *double-index*: a direct impression of something else that captured a relationship between the lost historical act of writing and the surviving physicality of an inscription.

Thinking in terms of indexicality was one of the most significant ways in which Ouyang Xiu responded to the emerging epistemological conundrum of his day. The proliferation of impressions, as well as the dissemination of the Daoist and Buddhist-inspired sensitivity to the limits of language that we witnessed in Liu Zongyuan's critique of Han Yu, encouraged the notion that all modes of cultural expression—writing, music, art—were necessarily representational and that the gap between expression and actuality (or name and substance) was therefore an inherent aspect of existence rather than an immoral state-of-affairs to rectify.[48] But fully embracing this notion would undermine the logic of much of the argumentation in the classical Confucian canon, as well as the theories of Han Yu that the *guwen* intellectuals of Ouyang's day had mobilized so effectively to advance their position at court. The double-index appealed because it helped Ouyang resist this contradiction and think in both modes simultaneously. It revealed the gap between expression and actuality, but it also facilitated a sense of direct and authentic connection to the presence of that gap. In so doing, it helped Ouyang recognize representationalism all around him without accepting it as the inherent condition for his own responses to the world.

Ouyang Xiu not only sought knowledge of the past from new sources, but endeavored to understand how his contemporaries knew what they thought they knew of the past.[49] His interest in historical epistemology reverberates through his writings on inscriptions, and it is impossible to determine whether the proliferation of rubbings inspired Ouyang to doubt his sources or whether his doubt encouraged him to study rubbings. Whatever the case, it is clear that the changing media landscape of Chinese writing facilitated the spread of Han Yu's characteristically "ancient style" doubt from the narrow domain of scholarship on the Confucian classics to the wider world of writing. We know this because while Ouyang may have been the first and the most famous, he was far from the only eleventh-century intellectual to adopt an indexical approach to the study of texts. His surviving colophons include numerous references to other literati with whom he discussed old inscriptions and exchanged rubbings. Most of these exchanges are lost, but it is clear from what remains that these men agreed that old inscriptions constituted a more reliable record of past events than the writings of later historians. As Zhao Mingcheng remarked a few decades later, "Historical chronicles come from the hands of later men, and as such it is impossible that they are without error. But words carved in stone were established in their own time, and can be trusted free from doubt."[50] The apparent reasonableness of such remarks, and their consistency with the distinctions that modern historians make between primary and secondary sources, should not prevent us from recognizing their novelty in eleventh-century China. There is no inherent reason to favor inscriptions over other texts, and the fact that eleventh-century literati chose to start favoring

them is evidence that Ouyang Xiu's practice of assessing the merits of a text on the basis of the relationship between that text and the material upon which it was written—what we might term his *indexical hermeneutic*—was becoming a wider mode of cultural practice.

Bronzes as Indexical Things

Zhao Mingcheng, writing in the early twelfth century, identified two key figures among the antiquarians of the preceding decades. One was Ouyang Xiu, who was the first to collect "vestigial writings." The other was Ouyang's friend and younger contemporary Liu Chang (1019–1068), whom Zhao credited with inaugurating the "the collection of ancient things."[51] Modern scholars of Song antiquarianism have tended to accept and reinforce Zhao's distinction between the collecting of writing (*wen*) and the collecting of things (*wu*), especially insofar as it seems to anticipate the modern Chinese distinction between epigraphy (*jinshixue*) and "ancient artifact studies" (*guqiwuxue*) and thus signal a distinctive lineage for modern archaeologists and art historians to draw on in distinguishing their art and artifact-oriented scholarship from the predominantly textual focus of the rest of the humanities.[52] But what the distinction between writing and things masks is the fact that both Ouyang and Liu Chang were both motivated by the same indexical hermeneutic. For it was precisely an attention to the ground of the inscribed word that led scholars to bronzes in the first place.

Our earliest evidence that something new was brewing in the portentous bronze cauldrons hails from the traces of an exchange between Ouyang Xiu and Liu Chang. In 1061, Liu Chang left his appointment at the prestigious Hanlin Academy and traveled to the ancient city of Chang'an to take up an official post as military commissioner (*anfushi*) of the strategic northwestern military circuit of Yongxing, which occupied the border between the Song empire and the rival Western Xia empire of the Tanguts. The suburbs of Chang'an overlay the foundations of the early Zhou capital, and the surrounding landscape was replete with the traces of Zhou civilization. Local peasants regularly came across "ancient and peculiar implements" (*guqi qiwu*) while tending their flocks or digging wells amid the "desolate foundations and sundered tombs" (*huangji pozhong*) scattered across the region.[53] Although our sources do not admit as much, there is good reason to believe that at least some of the peasants who were digging wells were not just looking for water. There was clearly some sort of antiquities market operating in Chang'an, as we know that the officials stationed there "purchased" (*gou*) antiquities, and it is likely that demand for antiquities encouraged tomb robbing.[54] The phenomenon was relatively widespread and well-known, as the construction of the tombs

of eleventh-century literati in the Chang'an region suggests deliberate efforts on the part of tomb builders to stymie grave robbers.[55]

Liu Chang was a scholar of ancient scripts, and he took advantage of his position in Chang'an to look for previously unknown examples of writing. Most of those he found were inscribed on ancient bronzes. The practice of casting commemorative inscriptions on bronze ritual vessels had thrived during the Western Zhou, at precisely the moment that the wealth and nobility of the Zhou regime had been centered in the vicinity of Chang'an. Although ancient bronzes could be and were found elsewhere in the Song empire, the vast majority of bronzes bearing inscriptions were discovered in and around the old city. By the time Liu returned to the capital several years later, his "carriage was filled" (*suo zai ying che*) with the bronzes he had collected. He gave two of these bronzes to Ouyang, together with transcriptions of the inscriptions on the others.[56] Ouyang's colophons on these inscriptions, preserved in his *Records of Collected Antiquities*, are the primary source for our knowledge of these events.

There was nothing terribly novel about most of what Liu Chang did with his bronzes. Paleographers had been studying the orthography of bronze inscriptions for centuries; Xu Shen himself had consulted bronze inscriptions in the course of compiling his famous dictionary back in the second century CE. And the bronzes themselves, as we have seen, had long circulated as auspicious signs. But what was new is what Liu chose to do with the collection as a whole. At some point after his return from Chang'an, he commissioned one or more craftsmen (the precise number is uncertain) to draw pictures of eleven of the bronzes, take rubbings of the inscriptions on their surfaces, and then carve both the pictures and the rubbings into stone panels. These were intended, as Liu explained in his preface to the collection, to be used for making impressions to circulate to "elegant gentlemen of great learning who cherish antiquity."[57] He treated these impressions as a coherent set, and collectively titled them the *Records of Ancient Implements of the Pre-Qin Era* (*Xian Qin guqi ji*).

Although no direct impressions of Liu's blocks survive, several of his entries were reproduced three decades later in Lü Dalin's *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*, which also adopted the format of Liu Chang's catalog. These entries feature the same format as the depiction of the vessel discussed above in the preface to part II: a line-drawn image of the object followed by a rubbing-like rendering of the inscription against a black ground, a transcription of the inscription into standard script, and a colophon in which Lü elaborates on Liu Chang's discussion of the vessel's discovery and significance. The entries of the earliest catalogs were most likely mounted sequentially on one or more handscrolls; all surviving examples are mounted on sequential pages in the classical butterfly-bound book format that came into widespread use during the Song.[58]

In devising his catalog, Liu Chang drew upon several important precedents. A decade earlier, Emperor Renzong (r. 1022–1063) had organized an exhibition of the court's collection of ancient bronzes in conjunction with the inaugural concert of the *Music of Great Peace* (*Da an zhi yue*). The concert was the result of a painstaking, multiyear effort on the part of officials in the aptly titled Institute for Deliberating Grand Music (*Xiangding dayue suo*) to reconstruct the ritual music of antiquity.[59] The performance of such music was universally recognized as an essential component of the grand state sacrifices wherein the Song emperor was regularly reinstantiated as the Son of Heaven, and it was therefore central to the practice of political power. Ever since the founding of the Song, successive generations of court scholars had poured over the cumulative proceeds of a millennium of arcane musical treatises in their efforts to ascertain the "correct" musical scale necessary to harmonize all under Heaven. Yet despite their best efforts, the world remained unharmonious. Each successive emperor blamed whatever misfortune befell them on the flawed music of their predecessor, and commanded the scholars at court to try again.

Renzong's efforts differed from those of his predecessors in their attentiveness to ancient things.[60] Whereas the reforms undertaken under the preceding emperors had echoed the approach of Nie Chongyi and focused exclusively on canonical texts and their associated commentaries, the officers in the Institute for Deliberating Grand Music also examined ancient bronzes, most notably a set of oblong bells that had been discovered in 1035, the unusual shape of which had attracted the attention of Ouyang Xiu and others.[61] And just as Ouyang Xiu legitimated early writing by grounding it in the physicality of ancient inscriptions, Renzong endorsed his reformed music by showcasing it alongside the bronzes from which it had purportedly been derived. Following the performance of the music, Renzong bestowed rubbings of the inscriptions on the bronzes to the officials in attendance.[62] He also commissioned the noted paleographer Yang Nanzhong to produce a catalog of ten of the bronzes. Although the catalog itself is lost, citations in later texts indicate that it featured detailed illustrations of each of the ten bronzes alongside Yang's transcription of their inscriptions into formal Qin-style script.[63] Several of these illustrations were reproduced in subsequent catalogs; they constitute the earliest-known examples of the closely observed and finely rendered pictures that became the norm for later antiquarian publications.

Although surviving excerpts of Yang Nanzhong's preface to his catalog suggest that he shared Ouyang Xiu's preference for material traces over transmitted texts, and while his pictures anticipated the "empirical impressions" of later catalogs, his treatment of the inscriptions had more to do with past rather than future ways of knowing. Like Xu Xuan a century earlier and the classical lexicographers before him, Yang was an expert in Qin-style formal script. By

transcribing the archaic bronze inscriptions into that script, Yang effectively erased the complex visual immediacy of the original inscription in favor of a readily legible and lexicographically standardized form. Rather than treating each inscription as a unique sight to behold and capture through the indexical medium of the rubbing, he presented them as texts—coherent, complete texts—for his audience to read.

Liu's essential innovation was to pair Renzong's rubbings with Yang's pictures. Although the step may not seem a great leap in formal terms, it had a profound effect on the epistemological framing of bronzes as objects of knowledge. By featuring the original inscription, he allowed his audience to experience the bronze as a domain of irresolution. The orthography of ancient bronze inscriptions remains a matter of considerable debate among specialists to this day; it was even more the case for Liu Chang, who professed in the preface to his catalog that he was only able to decipher "five or six" out of every ten graphs.[64] But instead of eliding this tentativeness and concealing his interpretive intervention, Liu invited his audience to witness and elaborate upon his halting and unsettled process of decipherment. The production of imperially mandated, authoritative knowledge in the manner of Yang Nanzhong's catalog, the Xu brothers' dictionary, and Nie Chongyi's illustrations demanded the elimination of doubt. But writing privately, Liu Chang welcomed this uncertainty and made it his home.

For uncertainty was not insecurity. Although Liu Chang sensed that much about the bronzes remained unknown, his mode of representation foregrounded hope. By presenting the original inscription alongside an image of the bronze, he made it possible to witness the interdependence of two modes of sagely facture—the physical production of the thing and the graphic visualization of its name—as an immediate, affective presence. Liu trusted the bronze with a commitment that only a skeptical mind that has had its doubts allayed can summon, and his method of presentation provided a mechanism for sharing his overcoming of doubt with others. Though there would always be more to glean from the mysteries of the bronzes, the catalog unequivocally established their fact as self-corroborating, nominal things. It rendered the bronzes as an unassailable source for a circle of intellectuals committed to assailing their sources. This provided a new, singularly authoritative category of evidence for classical exegetes and historians. But more importantly, it revivified the auratic potency of the ancient bronze by redirecting its auspicious portent from the correlative mysteries of the past to the epistemological worries of the present. This allowed intellectuals to recover, through the bronze, the traces of the Way that Han Yu, in a less skeptical and representationalist age, had once found in the rhetorical structure of language itself.

The sense that ancient bronzes enabled direct, embodied access to the Way of the Sages is plainly apparent in Liu Chang's characterization of his catalog.

Although both he and his readers recognized that the actual amount of hard historical information that could be gleaned from a mere eleven bronzes was limited—the name of an ancient noble here, the form of a particular ritual implement there—Liu Chang nevertheless felt confident that one day "ritual experts would clarify their ceremonial order, philologists would rectify their characters, and genealogists would fix the sequence of their generational names."[65] Liu was not blind to the discrepancy between the minor information that could be obtained from his little collection and the grand scope of the comprehensive knowledge he acclaimed, but neither was he hyperbolic. Instead, he seems to believe to have witnessed, through the bronzes, the workings of the Way—and through this Way, the possibility of comprehensively responding to the myriad challenges of the world in the manner that the Sages had responded, by devising the rites, writing, and histories appropriate to the ever-changing circumstances of the present. Elsewhere in his writings, Liu echoes Han Yu in arguing, contrary to the opinion of the influential historian Sima Qian (ca. 145–ca. 86 BCE), that the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties did not succeed one another on the basis of discrete virtues, but because they all did same thing. Those who reiterated the long-standing adage that the Xia rose because they esteemed loyalty (*zhong*), the Shang rose because they esteemed reverence (*jing*), and the Zhou rose because they esteemed civility (*wen*) were all wrong. Each dynasty rose because they recovered the Way that the preceding dynasty had lost, and this Way was always the same.[66] By implication, the act of historical inquiry, from Liu Chang's perspective, was fundamentally focused on locating the common Way that was always a sufficient determinant of success. In the preface to his catalog, Liu makes it clear that the bronzes should not be treated simply as the utilitarian tools that the conventional name that he and his contemporaries used for them—"implements" (*qi*)—suggested, but as unique vessels for the conveyance of the sagely Way from past to present: "Of the myriad accomplishments of the three Kings [the founders of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties], hardly anything survives. Think of all that is recorded in the *Poems* and the *Documents*, and all that the Sage Kings established, over which we sigh in long admiration. And yet we call [these vessels] mere 'implements'?" The famous treasures of the past had not been preserved because they had some immediate utilitarian value, but simply because they hailed from high antiquity (*shanggu*).[67]

Liu Chang's method of cataloging facilitated the sharing of this Way by resuscitating the very reprographic processes that Ouyang had called into question. Neither his representation of the bronze nor his representation of its inscription was indexical in the way that a rubbing taken from the bronze itself would have been. By recarving the inscription in stone, Liu Chang was in effect producing the kind of unmoored visuality that had characterized Zheng Wenbao's recarving of the Mount Yi stele. The pictures similarly reduced the

manifest complexity of the bronzes' patinated surfaces to monochromatic, linear renderings of their molded décor. Although his viewers continued to interact with the bronzes through the peeled layer of the rubbing, that rubbing now registered a flat graphic rendering instead of a timely, weathered body. And yet the combination of picture and inscription in the same graphic register nevertheless regenerated the object that Ouyang's indexical hermeneutic demanded. It moored the inscription to a specific material thing, and by packaging that thing in a paratextual framework that included a distinctive title and a colophon that explained the circumstances of its discovery, it differentiated that thing from all other things. In effect, it provided the same kind of firsthand, eyewitness corroboration that Jiang Xiufu and Xue Zhongru had provided for the rubbings that Ouyang treasured. And by enabling the practice of this hermeneutic through the vehicle of a readily reproducible graphic form, it unshackled viewers from what they might otherwise have experienced as the fundamental imperative of Ouyang's approach—that they needed to touch the thing itself in order to trust it. In an essential sense, Liu Chang's catalog made the materiality upon which the indexical hermeneutic depended endlessly reproducible.

By mobilizing the graphic rhetoric and semiotic logic of indexicality, Liu Chang succeeded in casting a new kind of authoritative knowledge from the fragmentary traces of ancient bronzes. The deciphering of the sign-object relations that his catalog enabled persuaded an intellectual community suffused with doubt about the antiquity of those relations that it was indeed possible to recover the mutual interdependence of name and thing that had made the sagacious order of antiquity possible. Although the bronzes only supplied a few names for a few things, the apprehension of those specific relations gave scholars hope that they might, by thinking with and through the bronzes, ascertain more abstract, general models for aligning their words with their world and thereby restoring names and implements to their classical status as efficacious devices for bringing about social harmony and moral governance. As we shall see, this hope spurred the systematic study of antiquities, and it informed what literati chose to say about them. But far more consequentially, it also endorsed the wider substantiation of name as the dominant mode of empirical practice. Although the empiricists of the next generation did not always highlight bronzes as the justification for their wider investigations of the material world, the fact that the self-denoting quality of those bronzes echoes through the way they talked about mountains and rivers and poetry and painting suggests that the nominal things Liu Chang recovered from the ruins of the Zhou settled themselves in the foundations of empirical thought.

5

Nominal Empiricism

In the years following the correspondence between Ouyang Xiu and Liu Chang, the circle of those involved in the collecting of antiquities expanded. Records indicate that by the 1090s, at least forty literati, representing all major regions of the Song empire, were not only collecting antiquities, but actively deciphering their inscriptions, drawing pictures of them, and exchanging what they learned with one another.[1] There were doubtless many others.

One of these collectors was the Hanlin academician Shen Gua (1031–1095). A polymath who kept careful notes of his observations of natural and man-made phenomena, Shen wrote on everything from engineering and finance to divination and painting.[2] At one point in his career (the precise dates are uncertain), Shen traveled to the antiquities-rich region surrounding the former capital of Chang'an, where Liu Chang, a generation earlier, had commenced his collection and study of ancient bronzes. There he acquired a "an ancient bronze yellow *yi* vessel" (*gu tong huang yi*). Shen was familiar with the image of the yellow *yi* from the reconstructions of Nie Chongyi. But the bronze vessel in his hands did not look anything like the vessel in those pictures:

> The "yellow *yi*" recorded in ritual books is decorated with the painted image of human eyes, which are called "yellow eyes." When I was traveling in Guanzhong, I obtained an ancient bronze yellow *yi* which was completely different. It was incised with complex designs that, on the whole, resembled "twisted official script" (*jiu zhuan shu*) and the breaking waves painted on the panels of balustrades. Within these patterns were two eyes, like large

slingshot pellets, bulging. Gleaming (*huang huang*), they were the so-called "yellow (*huang*) eyes." Upon examining the design, it appeared to represent fangs and horns and a gaping maw. Perhaps one could say that "yellow eyes" refers to none other than this thing.[3]

Shen Gua's account of the vessel is characteristic of the kinds of things that were regularly said about ancient bronzes in the latter decades of the eleventh century. Like Shen, most literati of the time seized upon discrepancies between the image associated with a canonical name in the established exegetical picture and the appearance of a similarly named ancient bronze to condemn the lexical picture in favor of the manifest thing. And they endeavored to work out some sort of correspondence between the formal qualities of the bronze and the phonetic or sematic elements of the received name.

What is perhaps more noteworthy than Shen's empirical critique of received knowledge, however, is the faith that he retains in his classical sources. No scholar, then or now, has ever found a bronze inscribed with the characters *huang yi*. As observed in chapter 2, the "yellow *yi*" was one of the six *yi* vessels named in the *Rites of Zhou*, while the glossing of "yellow" as referring to the vessel's "yellow eyes" derived from second-century exegete Zheng Xuan. Shen's account questions neither the antiquity of the six *yi* classification system from the *Rites of Zhou* nor the accuracy of Zheng Xuan's commentary, and he finds no need to explain why he thought that the vessel he obtained was a "yellow *yi*." Instead, he appears to have concluded that the vessel was a yellow *yi* because it had eyes and because the "yellow *yi*" was conventionally associated with eyes. He resolves the "yellow" (*huang*) with the homophone "to gleam" (*huang*), suggesting that the purported yellowness of the yellow *yi* stemmed from precisely the sort of transcription error that eleventh-century antiquarians, attentive to the materiality of textual recension, were conditioned to observe. In sum, Shen rationalized the name and then silently naturalized Zheng Xuan's interpretation of that name because he needed that interpretation to justify his critique of the established exegetical pictures. What is most striking about all of this is that the very hermeneutic of lexical picturing that he is critiquing on the basis of the bronze derives from precisely the same source as his identification of the bronze itself—the exegesis of Zheng Xuan.

Shen Gua's unawareness of the contradiction implicit in his critique, or at the very least, his sense that it was not necessary to identify and resolve the contradiction in order for his criticism to be persuasive, suggests that something deeper was at work than his understanding of a particular exegetical precedent. Although Northern Song scholars were predisposed to question received understandings of the classics, the manifest inconsistency between excavated *yi* vessels and the sixfold *yi* scheme of the *Rites of Zhou* was never used, here or in any other Song text, to interrogate the authenticity of the *Rites*

as a valid account of Western Zhou ritual practices. Underlying Shen's critique, it seems, was a shared and sustained commitment to the inherent validity of classical names. Characters might have been mistakenly transcribed, passages corrupted, and texts forged, but the names found in classical texts were unassailable traces of sagely signification. As we shall see, the validity of these names was not wedded to the structure or antiquity of the script in which they were inscribed. Rather, it was in the denotative act of signification itself—the determination of meaning that preceded the choice of graph—that Song antiquarians vested authority. The graphs for *huang* and *yi* might be miswritten or misleading, but the name *huang yi* was above reproach.

Shen's discussion of the "yellow *yi*" thus emblematizes the key defining characteristic of Northern Song empiricism—its capacity to simultaneously draw the accumulated exegesis of a millennium of classical scholarship into question, while nevertheless reinforcing the classics themselves as repositories of legitimate models. It also suggests that the distinctively synthetic quality of Song scholarship on the classics arose from something more than the social and ideological changes wrought by the emergence of a new "literati" (*shi*) elite that negotiated their status on the basis of education rather than family lineage, and the concomitant emergence of the classics as the preferred domain of political argumentation.[4] Shen's observation suggests that the bronzes themselves endorsed synthetic approaches to the classics.

To understand why this was so, let us follow, for a moment, the tracks of two of Shen's more evocative images: the "script-like" patterns on the vessel, and the bulging eyes. Both images recur throughout Song writings on ancient bronzes, and they represent two of the more common designs found on the inscribed early Zhou bronze vessels that were discovered in the vicinity of Chang'an: the pattern of hooked spirals and the leering, bestial face. The loose resemblance of the spirals to the lines of the script used in the bronze inscriptions lent credence to the notion that the décor was somehow semasiographic—that it did not represent words directly but nevertheless carried meaning in a writing-like graphic structure. The figural character of the spirals was reinforced by the Song use of the term "tadpole script" (*kedouwen*) as a general epithet for the scripts used in archaic bronze inscriptions. The rounded head and tapering tail gave each line of the script the semblance of a tadpole. The term beautifully alludes to the heightened awareness of reading-as-seeing that the imperfect decipherability of the inscriptions evoked: a teeming mass of tadpoles wiggle their way into a pattern that no tadpoles could know, and for a moment, reveal something other than themselves.

The peering eyes presented a different riddle. Shen Gua's reading might have been plausible as far as the *yi* vessel was concerned, but other scholars with greater knowledge of ancient bronzes were coming to realize that the motif recurred on a wide range of different vessel types whose names car-

ried no associations with eyes. To understand this motif, they turned to other precedents. One involved the figure of the Taotie, a ravenous beast described in early texts.[5] The *Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Lu* (*Lüshi Chunqiu*), an important third-century BCE chronicle widely cited in the Song, recorded that the rulers of the Zhou had cast images of headless Taotie on their cauldrons as an admonition against gluttony.[6] Li Gonglin seized upon this precedent to declare that the leering faces on the sides of his cauldrons were none other than representations of the Taotie. Lü Dalin followed suit.[7] But both men also went a step further, unshackling the Taotie appellation from its specific association with cauldrons and using it as a term for the motif wherever it was found on ancient bronzes.[8]

Using classical sources in this highly selective manner—invoking a name but ignoring its association with a particular vessel type—helped Song antiquarians translate the forms of ancient bronzes into words. The language of the bronzes that emerged from this process walked a line between logography and semasiography. In part, this sense of fungibility between the graphic depiction of words and the visual depiction of things was buttressed by language. One of the Chinese terms for writing (*wen*) is also a term for adornment (*wen*). But there was also something deeper at work, some sense that the relationship between the writing and the patterns held the key to unlocking the Way of the Sages that had brought all of the bronzes into being in the first place.

For example, in his analysis of the *yi* vessel in the collection of the prominent scholar-painter Cai Zhao, the illustration of which we visited in the preface to part II, Lü Dalin found himself drawn to the apparent correspondence between the twin sets of bulging eyes on the outside of the vessel and the slanting, hawklike eyes peering into the vessel from the inscription on its inner wall (Fig. 2.12). Lü reads the inscription as a series of lexical pictures, describing the first half of the inscription and transcribing the second in the cartouche below. First, he writes: "Below two eyes is made the shape of a rhinoceros." Then he transcribes the laterally mirrored graphs comprised of four vertical strokes thrust through a loop as two instances of the character *ce*, which represents "book" as a bound roll of thin bamboo writing tablets. Finally, he transcribes the last two graphs as the characters *zu* and *ding*, meaning "Ancestor Ding."[9] This shift from description to transcription demonstrates an awareness of the distinction between pictures of things and pictures of words. And yet Lü does not seem particularly troubled by the presence of both in the same inscription. In his colophon on the following page, he cites Li Gonglin's characterization of all of the graphs in the inscription as *hua xiang*, a phrase that has been used in Chinese lexicography since at least the second century to describe logographs which visually resemble their referent.[10] Xu Shen had classified such characters as "pictographic" (*xiangxing*) because they "pictured their thing, twisting and turning according to its form" (*hua cheng qi wu, sui ti*

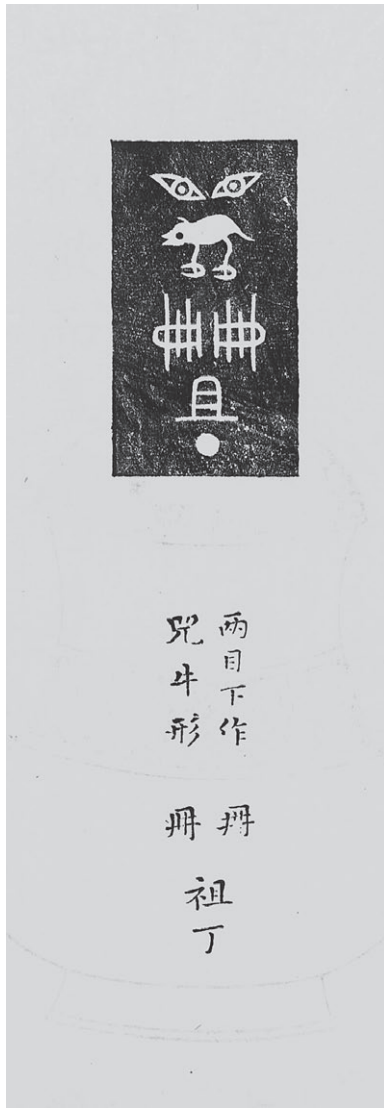


FIGURE 2.12 "*Yi* Vessel of Ancestor Ding" (detail). Lü Dalin, *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (Yizhengtang edition, 1752), 4.22b. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

jie qu).[11] But it does not appear that Lü felt the need to read the inscription as a series of logographs—to determine the words that the pictures represent—in order for it to be legible. He was willing to see the twin eyes as a pair of eyes and the rhinoceros as a rhinoceros without transliterating them into the logograph 眴 (which pairs two "eye" pictographs to represent the word *ju*, meaning "startled") and the logograph *si* 兕, meaning "rhinoceros." In other words, he interpreted the inscription as a semasiographic code or cipher that included both logographs and nonlinguistic symbols.

By accommodating both the symbolic representation of speech and the iconic representations of things within the category of signs that "pictorialize," Lü Dalin effects the same blurring of text and object *within* the inscription

that the larger entry creates *between* the inscription and the illustration. By foregrounding the graphic appearance of *wen* rather than the lexical content of writing, he situates the entirety of the bronze on the same plane of legibility.[12] In effect, he asserts both visually and textually that each aspect of the bronze—its shape, its adornment, its inscription—signifies something beyond itself. These signs are not all words per se, but the work that they do as signs—the referents that they signify and their interpretants (i.e., their meaning or ramification)—is representable in language. Lü Dalin's rendering of the vessel with the peering eyes provides the mechanism for this representation. It transforms the object into a translatable form.

This transformation effectively reverses the logic of the lexical picture. Instead of graphically instantiating names, Lü Dalin nominalizes actual things. In so doing, he inverts the priorities of the lexicographically and ritually systematizing projects examined in part I. Whereas Xu Shen's system of character types and Nie Chongyi's system of ritual forms relied upon the intervention of an external hermeneutic—a logic external to the inherited pictures and classical texts that enabled their selective organization into a graphically coherent system of word-image relations, Lü Dalin takes his lead from the bronze itself. The self-referential nature of the bronze inscription—the fact that the eyes within correspond to the eyes without—presents the bronze as the key to its own decipherment. Because the bronzes are *both* material things and written texts, and because the texts refer to the things on which they are found, they eliminate the threat of the floating signifier. For a world suffused with a fear of empty words, this makes the language of the bronzes uniquely authoritative. The object anchors the word while the word makes the object communicable. Together, they generate the nominal thing.

Conversing with Things

Recognizing the nominal nature of the Song antiquarian's empirical object helps to explain the structure and content of the wider catalog in which Li's and Lü's interpretations are preserved. Although that catalog—*Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*—is attributed to the single author Lü Dalin, and, as I have argued elsewhere, was informed by Lü's distinctive philosophical views,[13] it also represents a more general pastiche of eleventh-century thinking on ancient things. Although Lü claimed to have personally inspected the objects that he included in his catalog, it is clear that much of his information was secondhand. He quotes, at length, the opinions of other prominent antiquarians, including Ouyang Xiu, Liu Chang, and Li Gonglin, and his inconstant attention to the dimensions of the artifacts in the catalog suggests that a number of his illustrations were copied from other sources rather than being the products of direct personal observation. The lengthy publication history and

textual afterlife of the catalog further complicates the text.[14] Yet despite its complexities, *Illustrated Investigations* remains the one eleventh-century catalog to survive largely intact, and given its polyglot nature, it constitutes our best source for reconstructing the picto-textual discourses that surrounded and enveloped bronzes.

The catalog features just under two hundred entries that describe a total of 211 individual bronzes or sets of bronzes, and thirteen jade carvings. Virtually every entry identifies the collection in which the object(s) was located, including several state and imperial collections—the Imperial Archives (*Bige*), the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*Taichang*), and the palace storehouse (*neicang*)—as well as the holdings of thirty-seven private collectors. Lü cites a wide and diverse variety of authorities in his entries; in a few cases, he even cites multiple opinions from different commentators about the same object.[15] The overall character is catholic and accommodating: Lü seems focused on providing as much documentation as he has available, and he characterizes his cataloging as an open-ended and ongoing endeavor. He presents the bronzes not as handmaidens to some other scholarly project, but as objects warranting appreciation in their own right.[16]

The entries are organized typologically. Cauldrons, with their storied reputations and auspicious associations, come first, followed by *li* vessels, *yan* steamers, and so forth, proceeding from objects whose names feature most prominently in the ritual canons to other artifacts of lesser known or uncertain provenance. A single fascicle near the end of the catalog is devoted to jades. Within each category, inscribed vessels are given priority, and their entries are generally longer and more detailed than the rest. Significantly, chronology was not a key factor in determining the order of the entries. It is clear from the colophons that Lü Dalin recognized that some vessels had been cast in the Shang and others in the Zhou, but he did not choose to emphasize this distinction in the titles and arrangement of his entries.[17] The relationship between the artifact and its categorical name was more important than the dating of either the artifact or its name. That temporality would not be foregrounded in a document devoted to ancient things might seem curious, but when the catalog is read closely, this absence becomes sensible. As we shall see, Lü and his contemporaries were far more interested in experiencing each individual artifact as an embodiment of timeless truths than they were in tracing all of the artifacts' shared history.

One of the most illuminating features of the catalog is also its most essential: the titles given to each object. These appear in cartouches on the upper right corner of the first page of each entry. All of these titles employ the same essential format. The final logographs in each title always represent the typological category—cauldron, tureen (*gui*), ewer (*yi*)—with occasional modifiers that subdivide these categories on the basis of shape: round, three-

legged, et cetera. The preceding logographs differentiate the vessel from all other vessels in the category by one of two means. First, if there is an inscription, they borrow one or more logographs from that inscription, often those representing the ceremonial appellation of the person to whom the vessel was dedicated. Although these titles can seem highly descriptive in translation, it is important to recognize that they are lifted almost verbatim from the vessels themselves. For example, of the six logographs used as the title for one of the steamers—*zhong xin fu fang lü yan*—which translated according to its original archaic meaning might read, "the square sacrificial steamer for Ancestor Xin, second in his generation," only a single logograph, *fang* (square), has not been drawn directly from the vessel's inscription (Fig. 2.13). In other words, Lü Dalin did not determine that the dedicatee was the second son or that the steamer was sacrificial from some external source or through a sophisticated process of analysis. He simply borrowed the terms from the vessel's own inscription.[18] A translation that more accurately represented his knowledge would read, "square vessel marked with the words 'second Xin ancestor sacrificial steamer.'"

If there is no inscription, Lü turns to the décor, generally speaking the most prominent and readily distinguishable motif or feature. The leering Tao-

FIGURE 2.13 "The square sacrificial steamer for Father Xin, second in his generation." Lü Dalin, *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (Yizhengtang edition, 1752), 2.17a–b. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

tie face looms large in his titles, as do other features such as "beast-clutched rings" (*shou huan*), "square nipples" (*fang ru*), "vertical handles" (*zhi er*), "dragon patterns" (*long wen*), and so forth. Virtually all of these terms would be repeated in later catalogs with such frequency that they would eventually come to constitute the standard formal vocabulary for classical Chinese bronzes. Most remain in regular use to this day. The naming convention itself—drawing upon the inscription if available and turning to the décor in its absence—has also persisted. So naturalized has this approach to naming become that its presence here, in the earliest of all extant antiquarian catalogs, can seem self-evident. But this apparent obviousness masks the novelty and distinctiveness of Lü Dalin's approach to nomenclature.

When the catalog's titles are read together as a group, it becomes clear that no title repeats, even in those instances in which objects bear the same motifs. Even though eight of the seventeen cauldrons featured in the first fascicle of the catalog are decorated with what Song scholars recognized as Taotie motifs, only one of these cauldrons is labeled "Taotie cauldron" (*Taotie ding*).[19] A modern scholar, accustomed to understanding "Taotie" as a type and its use in a label as a matter of description, would translate the title as if the vessel was an example of a category of things—"a cauldron adorned with Taotie motif," like a Greek urn decorated with an image of Athena, or a blackbird with red-tipped wings. But Lü Dalin is not describing. Nor is he taxonomizing, in the sense of attempting to establish a coherent template of formal features whereby all bronzes could be described. Instead, his names work to distinguish the object in question from every other object in the catalog. The citations from the inscriptions do this naturally by associating the vessel with a named person. In the absence of such citations, he follows the logic of ornament-as-writing and treats the décor as if it were similarly specifying. In the few cases of uninscribed objects with matching décor, he appends a number to the title to distinguish it from the others and suggest that they collectively constituted a set: "The First Urn with Beast-Clutched Rings and Fine Patterns," "The Second Urn with Beast-Clutched Rings and Fine Patterns," et cetera.[20] Whatever the method, the goal is consistent: it is *the* cauldron with the Taotie, not *a* cauldron with a Taotie.

Lü's invocation of décor as a stand-in for absent writing had a powerful impact on the way that décor was understood: it ruptured the formal integrity of the ornament by assigning names to certain elements and thereby isolating these elements from the wider patterns in which they occurred. It created, epistemologically, what Panofsky understood as "motifs"—those elements in a design that prompt recognition and the identification of meaning.[21] In effect, the "reading" of décor for indexable motifs transformed the surface of the bronze into a double-layered stratigraphy of nameable icons and unnamed, undifferentiated ornament. The search for unique names thus created the

conditions necessary for iconography, even though the iconography of the bronzes was the least of Lü's concerns.

Lü's interest in generating a unique designation for each thing helps to explain the two features of the catalog that came in for the most criticism in the eyes of Qing and modern scholars. The first was Lü's fidelity to name over form. Although the graphic cataloging of bronzes made it abundantly clear that a number of the names Song scholars knew from the ritual canon had been used in ancient times to designate ritual vessels in general rather than specific vessel types, Lü persisted in naming and organizing his objects on the basis of the inscribed name, even when the form of the vessel suggested otherwise. For example, he included nineteen vessels under the category of "*yi* vessels" even though their shapes were radically different from one another (Fig. 2.14). Lü's colophons demonstrate that while he was aware of the inconsistency, since their makers had called them *yi*, he would follow.[22] Because the court catalogers of the next generation abandoned this practice, later scholars have tended to dismiss Lü's choice as nothing more than a mistake that would soon be corrected by the court's more expansive and thorough inquiry. But calling it an error shrouds its hermeneutic significance: Lü knew the evidence against him, and still he persisted. The inscribed names, regardless of the forms in which they were manifested, constituted the essential, unimpeachable basis for all classification. The result is a collection of many individual things which

FIGURES 2.14A, 2.14B, AND 2.14C "*Yi*" vessels. Lü Dalin, *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (Yizhengtang edition, 1752), 4.12a, 13a, 20a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

share various traits but nonetheless are each unique unto themselves. Lü is not trying to override the object with a formal taxonomy, but to specify it by tuning his ear to the distinctive voice inscribed in the patterns on its surface and graphs in its belly.

The same desire to give each bronze a discrete name led Lü, at times, to draw out highly speculative associations, both to determine the category to which each bronze should be assigned and to account for graphs in bronze inscriptions that were difficult to understand. The consistent urge to organize classical bronzes according to formal typologies, and to label these types with names derived from the ritual classics, made it possible for a number of these speculations to long survive the passing of the speculative hermeneutics by which they were determined. Few scholars in Qing or modern times would find these interpretations persuasive. But nevertheless, some of these names persisted, even up to the present. A case in point concerns a group of vessels that Lü associated with the name *jue*.

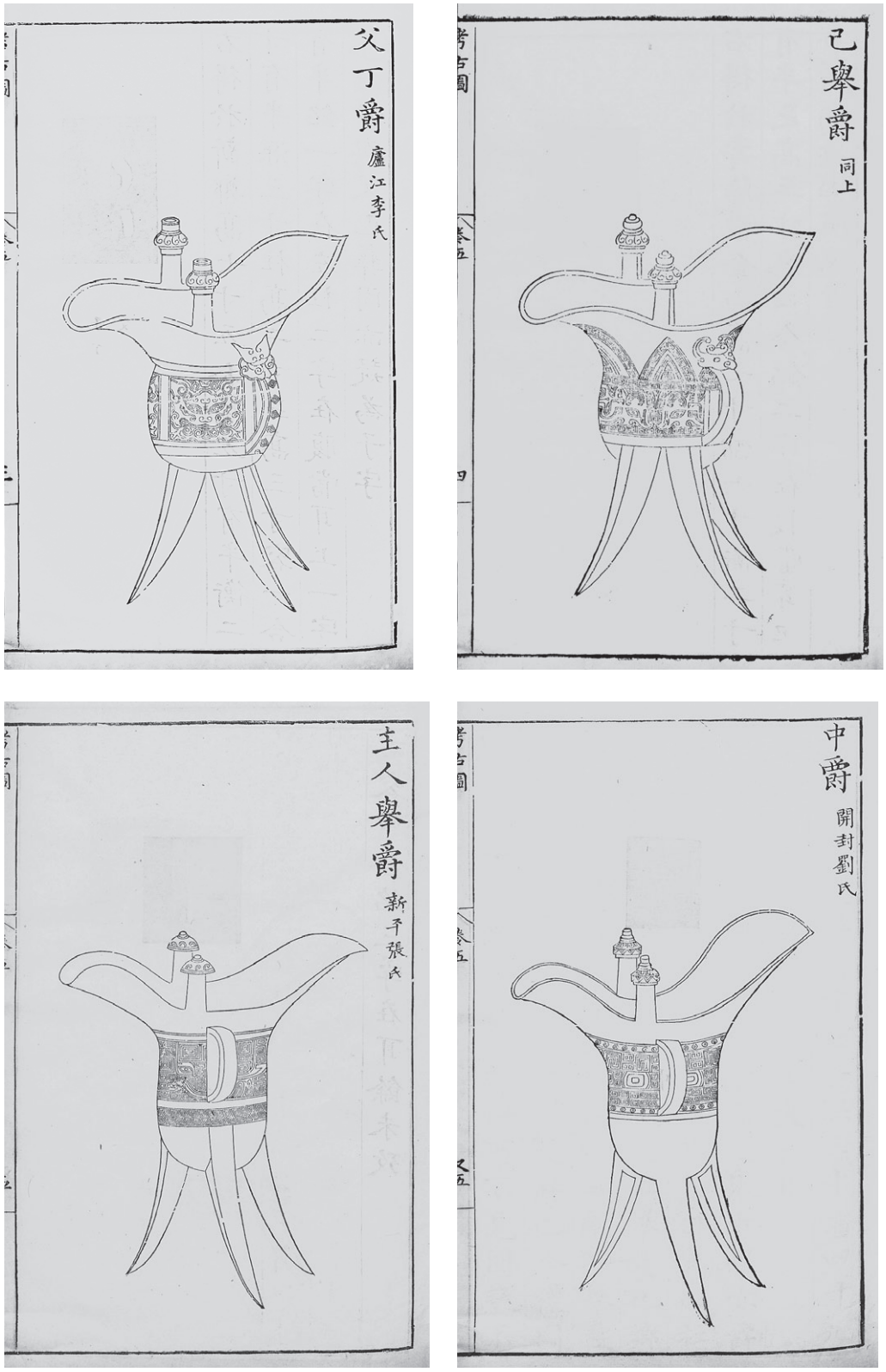
The Sparrow in the Cup

The classical ritual liturgies of the Confucian canon are replete with references to a libationary cup known as a *jue*, which was deemed essential for everything from wedding ceremonies to ritualized archery performances.

Classical exegetes had, ever since the writings of Zheng Xuan in the second century CE, invoked the fact that the logograph for *jue* was also used in early texts to represent the homophone *que*, meaning "sparrow," as the basis for envisioning the cup. Nie Chongyi's illustration of the *jue* reflected what had, by the tenth century, long constituted the established consensus: a sculpted sparrow set on a spherical stand with a cup balanced on its back (Fig. 1.10). By fusing the sparrow with the cup, early exegetes had, in effect, sculpted a homophone.

The problem, from the perspective of eleventh-century antiquarians, is that it was impossible to substantiate this homophonous reconstruction in the material record. The reason was simple: although they had found plenty of cauldrons inscribed with the logograph "cauldron" and tureens inscribed with the logograph "tureen," no one had ever found a vessel inscribed with the word *jue*. In *Illustrated Investigations*, Lü Dalin presented a novel solution, one which encapsulates the wider hermeneutic shift that came into being through dialogue with the bronzes. He began, as he explained in a lengthy colophon appended to the first set of entries in the fascicle dedicated to libationary cups, by observing that among the eight similarly shaped cups he had examined, four closely matched one another in both shape and décor (Fig. 2.15).[23] Each of these four cups bore a slightly different inscription. As was typical of his editorial practice, Lü highlighted this difference by using the inscriptions to create distinctive titles for each cup. Next he observed that the inscriptions on two of the four cups included the character *ju* 舉, which in its most essential sense meant "to lift up with both hands." From this a host of other associated verbal meanings flowed—the term was used in classical texts to mean "to implement" a policy, "to raise" a living thing, and so forth. Lü would have been familiar with most of these meanings. But he was also familiar with the formulaic syntax of ancient bronze inscriptions, and the syntax in this case suggested that *ju* was a self-referential typological noun like "cauldron" or "tureen." The problem was that no vessel with such a name was listed in the classical liturgies, nor, frankly, was there much precedent for using the term as a name for anything at all. Although classical Chinese did not explicitly distinguish verbs from nouns, everyone who was familiar with the term knew that *ju* was something you did, not something that was.

When faced with a similar dilemma on other bronzes, Lü's typical approach was to note the problem, enshrine the questionable logograph in the vessel's title, and leave it for others to resolve.[24] The catalog is filled with recognized but unresolved inconsistencies of this sort; Lü was more than happy to leave questions unanswered. But this time he sensed that there was a solution, and that the key to that solution lay in the *Record of Rites*. Lü was an expert in that particular text, having composed a lengthy commentary elaborating many of its key passages.[25] The *Record* was filled with anecdotes that illustrated the



FIGURES 2.15A, 2.15B, 2.15C, AND 2.15D "*Jue*" vessels. Lü Dalin, *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity* (Yizhengtang edition, 1752), 5.3a, 4a, 5a, 6a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

principles of etiquette and propriety expounded within. One of these stories concerned the drinking cup of a lowly cook named Du Kuai.

The event that occasioned the story was the death of Zhi Diaozi, a prominent Spring and Autumn official at the court of the state of Jin.[26] Shortly after Zhi's death, Du Kuai was entering the court when he heard a bell ring out. Inquiring after the source of the sound, he learned that it came from the quarters of his liege-lord, the powerful Duke Ping. Entering the quarters, he found the duke drinking in the company of the "Instructor" (*shi*) Kuang and the minister Li Diao. Despite the obvious violation of decorum that it represented, Du immediately poured a cup of wine, ascended the steps of the platform upon which the three men were seated, and presented it to Kuang.

"Drink this!" He commanded. Kuang, presumably shocked into submission by the egregious presumptuousness of the lowly kitchen hand, did as he was commanded. Then Du poured a second cupful and presented it to Li Diao.

"Drink this!" He commanded again. Li complied as well.

Then he poured a cup for himself, downed it, descended the steps, and walked from the hall.

Duke Ping paused for a moment, perplexed. Then he summoned Du Kuai back into his chambers. He said that he sensed that Du was trying to tell him something by engaging in this strange conduct, and he wanted to know what it was. "Why did you make Kuang drink?" he asked.

The present day, Du explained, fell on one of the two inauspicious days of the calendrical cycle. On such days, it was inappropriate to play music while a body was lying in state. As the official responsible for such matters, Kuang should have reminded the duke of this fact, instead of allowing him to have music played. So Du had made Kuang drink to call his attention to his error.

"And why did you make Li drink?" Duke Ping continued.

Li was the duke's favorite, Du explained, and in his enjoyment of this favor, he had become lost in revelry with the duke, "drinking as one and eating as one" (*yi yin yi shi*) instead of remembering the status distinctions between them and fulfilling the duties that were his responsibility, as an official, to perform on behalf of his liege. In this case, duty obliged Li to remind the duke of the impropriety of his behavior. Because he had failed to do so, Du had reminded him by making him drink.

"And why did you drink?" the duke concluded.

As a cook, Du explained, it was his duty to provide the duke with matter for his "knife and spoon" (e.g., food), not to remonstrate with the duke's ministers. By calling their attention to their oversights, he, too, had acted outside his station. By drinking a cup, he acknowledged his error.

Thereupon the duke announced that he, too, had seen the error of his ways, and asked Du to pour a final cup for him. Du thereupon rinsed the cup, refilled it, and offered it to the duke. After draining it, the duke instructed his

attendants to preserve the cup as a reminder of Du's admonition. The story concludes by explaining how, from that day forward, whenever wine was poured at the feasts of Jin, they would raise up this cup and announce that it was what "Du offered up" (*Du ju*).[27]

The story of Du Kuai and his cup illustrates the way in which the Confucian canon idealized ceremonial decorum as a kind of normative code, the rupturing of which could be signified by means of a second, more deliberative violation. By behaving in an indecorous manner, Du called attention to the indecorous conduct of his fellows. His action was assertive but not egregious; by refraining from admonishing Duke Ping directly, he did not claim the duties of Kuang and Li as his own. Instead, by overstepping the bounds of his station without assuming the responsibilities of the others, he generated a tension that pulled all four participants toward a new equilibrium. Repeating a pattern that recurs throughout the canon, the story stages ethical reasoning as a trade-off between two conflicting imperatives—the desire to help others live moral lives by fulfilling their duties and the desire to be moral by fulfilling one's own duty—and it presents ritual as a mechanism for harmonizing these imperatives by calling attention to the failure of others and the failure of oneself through the same repetitive gesture. The decision to enshrine this corrective recalibration of normative responsibilities in a physical object was not coincidental; as with the wider notion of the mutual imbrication of names and implements that we examined in chapter 1, the cup constituted the tool whereby Du's rectification of the responsibilities implicated in the name of each man's office could be perpetuated into the future. The "cup that Du offered" would henceforth, in theory, work to reinstantiate the normative substance of the names "ruler" and "minister" that the men bearing those names had, in their enjoyment of one another's company, forgotten.

Such was the overt moral of the story. But Lü Dalin came to it with an entirely different purpose in mind, one that exemplifies the way in which medieval antiquarians prized apart the language of the narrative anecdotes in canonical texts like the *Record of Rites* and *Spring and Autumn Annals* in their search for connections between the formal language of the bronzes and the nominal templates of texts like the *Rites of Zhou* and the *Book of Ceremony and Rites*. For him, what mattered were the specific words used to inscribe Du's cup.

Three terms, in particular, are relevant for understanding Lü's interpretation. When Du presented the cup to Duke Ping, the text says that he "raised up the *zhi*" (*yang zhi*). Then the duke tells his attendants: "If I die, you must not discard this *jue*" (*ru wo si, ze bi wu fei si jue ye*). When the text concludes, a line later, with the collective reference to Du's cup, the adaptations necessary to render the passage in idiomatic English conceal the nominal flavor of the Chinese. Whereas a reasonable English iteration of the passage might read "This *zhi* that was raised up was called 'that which Du offered up'" (*si yang zhi,*

wei zhi Du ju), the Chinese is closer to "This raised *zhi* was called 'Du offer up.'" *Du ju*, in other words, reads more like a proper noun than a verbal clause. So in the space of little more than thirty characters, we are presented with two typological names and one proper name for Du's cup.

Here, in this one citation, Lü had found the solution he was looking for—an instance of the word *ju* used as a noun, rather than a verb, and a nominal association between the word *ju* and a drinking cup, all in the context of a passage that also included a reference to the same name—*jue*—that earlier exegetes had figured as the sparrow cup. With these clues in place, Lü went to work. First, he ignored the use of *zhi* and what it implied about the scope and specificity of the other two terms. Next, he effaced the difference between the proper name and the typological name to suggest that *ju* was used in antiquity to refer not only to the act of offering up with both hands, but also to the thing that was offered up. A more dispassionate reader, unburdened of the need to find formal connections between the outward appearance of vessels and the logographs inscribed within, would be inclined to follow the internal syntax of the passage and to conclude, thereby, that the meaning of *jue* and *zhi* overlapped with one another, in the way that the English nouns "cup" and "chalice," or "plate" and "platter" overlap, and that *Du ju* was a proper name for a specific cup, not a typological name that one would expect to find on multiple cups. But Lü Dalin's need to nominalize overtook this more internally logical reading.

Lü next proceeded to supplement Duke Ping's reference to Du's cup as "this *jue*" with a citation from the chapter on the "District Wine Drinking Ritual" (*Xiang yin jiu li*) in the *Book of Ceremony and Rites*, which stipulated that the ritual officiant should "in all cases offer up the *jue* three times and not walk with the *jue*" (*fan ju jue san zuo er bu tu jue*). This, he concluded, made it clear that what was offered up in this and other such drinking rituals had been known in antiquity as a *jue*. This reinforced the *Record of Rites*' evidence of a semantic connection between the words *ju* and *jue*, without explaining why it was that the ancients had apparently shirked convention and inscribed their drinking vessels with the word *ju* rather than the more logical *jue*.

Having thus established a pair of classical links between the words *ju* and *jue*, Lü turned his attention to the outward appearance of the four vessels. He noted that they were all roughly the same size, with a volume of one *sheng*, roughly equivalent to the supposed volume of the classical *jue*. But most of all, when he looked closely, he realized that they looked like sparrows. Their upcurved spouts resembled beaks, while the wave-shaped protrusions opposite their spouts resembled flared sparrow tails. Their legs, too, were "thin and attenuated" (*xiu er rui*) like those of a sparrow.

In light of all of this inscribed and formal evidence, Lü concluded, it was therefore clear that "*without a doubt*, these vessels can be called *jue*" (*ke wei*

zhi jue wu yi).[28] The emphasis is mine, but it speaks clearly to the tenor of Lü's inquiry: like Ouyang Xiu, he began from a position of skepticism, and associated the production of authoritative knowledge with the overcoming of doubt. What is most striking about the nature of this doubt is how little of it would persist in later scholarship. On the whole, Qing and modern scholars have been happy to accept Lü's conclusion on the basis of the formal and circumstantial evidence alone.[29] Once you accept the notion that the names in the classics correspond to formally distinct objects, it takes little effort to move from the narrow vessel with the flared mouth and slender legs to the name *jue*. Just as the name is ubiquitous in the ritual classics, the vessel is everywhere in the archaeological record. None of these vessels are inscribed with other typological names, nor is the name *jue* found on any other category of vessel. Like the name, the vessels are clearly associated with the serving of liquids in some form. And the vessels do indeed vaguely look like sparrows. Calling these vessels *jue* seems entirely reasonable even without the convoluted digression through the story of Du Kuai and his famous cup. If anything, by raising all sorts of questions about the syntax and semantics of the vessels' inscriptions, Lü's attenuated effort to link the inscribed "ju" to the name *jue* seems to muddy the waters.

The fact that Lü found this effort clarifying—that he found the evidence for the ancients having "named their implements *ju*" (*ming qi qi yue ju*) essential for understanding the vessels—says a great deal about the epistemology of his moment. Lü was neither a classicist in the traditional sense, content to accept the mutual interpenetration of names and forms in the structure of the classics, nor an early modern antiquarian looking to locate classical knowledge in the phenomenal firmament of the world. Instead, he was concerned with finding, in the materiality of the world around him, the substantive agency of language. Only a mind at once consumed with a sense of friction between the actuality of the world and its representation in language, and obsessed with the possibility of overcoming that friction, could attach such potency to a graph that occurred on only a handful of vessels. The valence of the word *ju* assumes an almost mythopoetic power in his telling. As a singular graph that bound the name to the function of the vessel, it embodied the essential power of names writ large. How could one doubt the agency of names to make the world into what they called it to be when here was a vessel that did exactly what it said it was? The distinction between naming, being, and doing utterly dissolved in the belly of the sparrow cup.

The strength of Lü's desire to tease the word *ju* from the archaic graphs on the sparrow-like vessels is evinced by the variety of the graphs that he associated with the word. Whatever the merits of his decipherment from the perspective of contemporary Chinese paleographers, equipped as they are with a millennium of empirical scholarship and tens of thousands of texts, when

FIGURE 2.16 Comparison of standard 11th-century CE "formal script" (*zhuan shu*) version of "ju" (left) with the three graphs that Lü Dalin transcribed as "ju."

one considers the relative paucity of the sources that Lü Dalin had to work with, one cannot but conclude that he was willing to overlook a considerable amount of graphic variation in his effort to find the word *ju*. A total of three of the eight *jue*-labeled vessels featured in *Illustrated Investigations* bear graphs that Lü reads as *ju*, and all three of these graphs differ from one another, each representing mere fractions of the standard Qin form that constituted Lü's principal point of reference (Fig. 2.16). To read all three of these graphs as *ju* required a liberal eye. Once again we witness the indexical hermeneutic at play, for it seems that Lü was not simply deciphering the graph through comparison with other graphs, but indeed by looking carefully at the object upon which the graph was inscribed. Once he had established that the association between the shape of the vessel and the word *ju*, he was predisposed to find the same word in variable graphs on the same shape.

Lü Dalin's willingness to accord great significance to the graphs inscribed on the bronzes, even when the shapes of those bronzes seemed to supply all that was necessary for their categorization, and especially when their shapes seemed to contravene their graphs, is symptomatic of his effort to recognize, in each vessel, a unique and individual voice.[30] Throughout the catalog, those myriad voices resound off the more general, shared forms in and through which they are inscribed. They never harmonize perfectly, and in their cacophony, they sensitize the reader to the tension between language's capacity to distinguish similar things from one another and its equally strong capacity to make different things the same. By ceaselessly announcing the distance between formal categories and particular things that the lexical pictures of earlier exegesis had elided, the catalog encourages its reader to generalize and individuate in equal measure, moving from the particularity of their sensorial encounter with the individual bronze to the schematic principles of its taxonomic categorization, while simultaneously distinguishing every manifestation of a type from every other manifestation of the same type. From Lü Dalin's perspective, such oscillation was precisely the point: "Observing

the implements of the ancients," he announced in his preface to the catalog, "was like seeing the ancients themselves" (*guan qi qi . . . ru jian qi ren yi*).[31] It was, therefore, not simply enough to treat the bronzes as treasured traces of a lost past. One "needed to seek out their reason for being a trace" and to realize that "lodged in their form, measure, design, and scheme was the essential sense of the Sages, that which remained the same in antiquity and the present, unchanged for a hundred generations."[32] Capturing the individual voice of the sagely implement was essential for understanding the way of sagely implementation itself, for beneath the manifest differences of the many implements was the unchanging Way, and as the many differences demonstrated, the function of that Way was to manifest different forms in response to changing circumstances.

By using the language of the classics to articulate the voice of each individual bronze, Lü Dalin reframed the experience of reading the classics themselves. Bronzes supplied the substance of names, and what this substance demonstrated was that names were scalable. When the Sages used the name *ding*, they meant round-bodied vessels with three legs and looping handles. But when they used the name *yi*, they just meant ceremonial vessels in general. Lots of different forms held equal claim to the name. To strive to recover the form from the name—to endeavor, that is, to produce the lexical picture—was therefore fundamentally wrong-footed. Instead, the bronzes demonstrated that names were flexible instruments that the classics at times used in narrow, carefully circumscribed ways and at other times in broad, capaciously categorical senses. Since the scope of its substance was not inscribed in the name, it was not possible to know what the text meant on the basis of the text itself, nor through the intertextual references that defined the glossed explications of earlier exegesis. One had to go back to the root, to understand the principle behind the text, and to read the text as nothing more than a provisional application of that principle to a particular set of circumstances. The anchoring of names in the substance of the world thereby destabilized the notion that those names existed in continuity with that world. They became representations—signs distinguished as much by their distance from their referents as by their proximity. Remarkably, the commitment to the sacrosanctity of classical names that characterizes the empiricism of men like Shen Gua and Lü Dalin worked to undermine the literalism that had invested those names with such authority in the first place. The name remained a trace of sagely signification, but the relationship of the sign to its referent was transformed. No longer could the name claim agency in the making of the world. Instead, it became an echo, a shadow of the world that was, that one needed to look through to find the workings of the Sages that preceded it.

In sum, the synthetic approach to classical hermeneutics that scholars have long recognized as a distinguishing feature of Song thought went hand in hand

with the attenuated interpretations of its nominal empiricism. Speculating, as Lü Dalin did, about whether a particular cauldron was none other than the cauldron cast by the ancient prince of Zheng, or wondering if the "yellow eyes" were in fact those bulging eyes on the vessel, was thus not a marginal, "antiquarian" inquiry external to the mainstream logics of the day, but part and parcel of the process whereby those logics took shape.[33] The very attentiveness to the representational gap between sagely facture and classical text that enabled the synthetic hermeneutics of what would come to be known as the "Learning of the Way" (*Daoxue*) was nurtured and sustained by the effort to translate bronzes into classical names.[34]

How the Bell Tolls

The final decades of the eleventh century are typically remembered as a time of great factionalism among the elite community of classically trained officials who staffed the upper echelons of state administration and populated the bureaucratic and educational institutions in the Song capital. The most famous division was between those who supported the activist state initiatives associated with the New Policies (*Xinfa*) of Wang Anshi (1021–1086) and those who endorsed a more conservative vision of a state that refrained from direct interventions in the economy. This later group, which held sway at court during the Yuanyou-era regency of Empress Dowager Gao, would eventually be blacklisted in 1102 by Emperor Huizong. The fame of the blacklisted "Yuanyou partisans" would survive the reign of Huizong and the collapse of the Northern Song regime to the invading Jurchen in 1127. Exiled in life and banned in death, these figures and their writings would ultimately come to represent the preeminent cultural voices of the era, including such luminaries as the polymath Su Shi, the Neo-Confucian thinkers Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, and the prominent Yuanyou-era chief councilor Lü Dafang. Intellectually speaking, this group was defined more by a shared antipathy to the New Policies than a strong sense of common values. Cheng Yi and Su Shi, for example, formulated radically different approaches to the relationship between literary practice and morality.[35]

The inclusion of Lü Dalin's brother Dafang and teacher Cheng Yi on the Yuanyou blacklist, and the noteworthy absence of purportedly pro–New Policies scholars like Shen Gua from the numerous antiquarians that Lü cites in *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquity*, has led some scholars to interpret Lü's catalog as a political project, and to read echoes of the factionalism of the era in the antiquarian scholarship of Lü and his compatriots.[36] While there certainly appears to have been a measure of overlap between Lü's political and intellectual circles, the nature of what he gleaned from ancient bronzes does not appear to have been significantly affected by his political dispositions. Al-

though he was strongly aligned with Cheng Yi, under whom he studied in the late 1070s, the kinds of questions that Lü raises in *Illustrated Investigations* are largely consistent with the questions asked by Shen Gua, Su Shi, and Cheng's other purported opponents. Ari Levine has demonstrated that both sides of the debate over the New Policies participated in a common moral discourse.[37] Across this community, we witness a similarly shared commitment to nominal empiricism. Regardless of their political dispositions, all of these intellectuals began from the assumption of doubt, questioned the established opinions of earlier scholars, endorsed the classics as repositories of normative values, and sought to confirm the inherited names of the past by locating their referents in the fabric of the world around them. Although some of those predispositions can be found in the writings of late Tang scholars like Han Yu or early Song scholars like Nie Chongyi, their collective conventionalization as the standard template for investigating the world occurred in lockstep with the eleventh-century study of bronzes.

Consider, for example, Su Shi's famous *Record of Stone Bell Mountain* (*Shizhongshan ji*), in which he begins, just as Shen Gua began, with a question about a name. The *Classic of Rivers* (*Shuijing*), Su observed, states: "At the mouth of Lake Pengdi lies Stone Bell Mountain." The fourth-century exegete Li Daoyuan, in attempting to explain the mountain's name, had observed that the mountain descended steeply to the water, and that even the faintest breeze would send waves reverberating against the rocks with a great bell-like toll. But, Su Shi went on, no one believed this explanation. "If one places a bell or a chime in the water, even the strongest waves will not cause it to ring out. How much less so a stone?" Next he turned to the story of the Tang official Li Bo, who discovered a pair of rocks rising from the deep water that resounded with a sharp peal when struck. But this explanation was even less persuasive. Stones everywhere resound when struck, Su observed. Why would someone have named this particular place after something that was true about all places?

Dissatisfied with the existing interpretations, but, notably, not with the historicity of the mountain's name itself, Su Shi decided to resolve the mystery on his own. Having been exiled to the remote southern region of Huangzhou after falling afoul of Wang Anshi, he set out in the company of his eldest son Mai, late in the summer of the year 1084, to Stone Bell Mountain. Upon arriving, a monk at a temple near the mountain sent a boy to help clear their path through the overgrowth. From the jumble of rocks at the base of the mountain, they recovered several stones and knocked them together, but were rewarded with only a dull thud. Su laughed. He knew that Li Bo had been mistaken.

That evening Su and his son set out in a small boat. Precipitous cliffs, bathed in moonlight, rose to the heavens on all sides, and rocks hung over them like ferocious beasts reaching out of the shadows to grasp the travelers

in their claws. The lapping of the oars disturbed a hawk perched high up on the peak, which let out a shrill cry and flew off into the clouds. Uneasy, they contemplated turning back, but their boatman chided them for their fear of a mere bird.

Then all of a sudden a great, gong-like sound, sonorous and enduring like the toll of a bronze bell or the roll of a mighty drum, reverberated across the water. Now even the man at the oars was terrified. But when Su looked closer, he realized that there was a fissure amid the rocks that extended deep into the mountain. When a small wave entered the defile, it sloshed about tumultuously, producing the booming sound.

Having identified the source, they turned back, and on their return, came upon the mouth of a bay flanked by a pair of soaring rock walls. As they passed between these walls, they encountered an enormous stone "large enough to seat a hundred people" (*ke zuo bai ren*) around which the water rushed on both sides. It was hollow inside and perforated with innumerable holes that alternately "sucked in and spat out the wind and water" (*yu feng shui xiang tun tu*). This produced a ringing tintinnabulation that harmonized with the booming toll of the water in the defile, as if the mountain itself contained an orchestra.

Su laughed. "Do you hear it?" he asked his son. "The one that booms is the bell Wuyi of King Jing of the Zhou, and the ones that ring are the song bells of Wei Jiang." At this moment there is an implicit but unmistakable pause in the text, as Su summons his denouement: "The ancients did not deceive us."[38]

Su Shi's account encapsulates the nominal empiricism that emerged in dialogue with the bronzes, and it is not at all a coincidence that he used two famous examples of ancient bronze bells as figures for the symphony of water in the rocks. The reader attuned to literary history experiences these references as a learned flourish, an echo of the early medieval literary practice of invoking storied objects from the anecdotes of the Spring and Autumn era as metaphors for wonders in the present. The traditions of parallel prose composition that the "ancient style" followers of Han Yu most rejected were replete with such references, and their appearance here is indicative of Su Shi's skill at weaving older literary flourishes into the pithy language of *guwen*. But there is also something less literary and more literal in the resonance of the bells. Su Shi was close friends with antiquarians like Li Gonglin, and was familiar with the ancient bells in their collections. He knew the sound of those bells, both from the experience of striking the bells themselves and from the experience of hearing the formal orchestral performances of the archaistic bells recast at court. His invocation of the bells thus anchors the name of the mountain in a direct and shared sensorial experience that, through the persistent materiality of the bells themselves, transcends the distance between past and present. Su trusted the name because he had experienced the same sensation that the

ancients experienced when they devised the name in the first place. By experiencing that sensation, he simultaneously authorized the name and demystified it—having grasped its "substance," he deprived the name of its power. When he was finished, "Stone Bell Mountain" was nothing more than a representation whose value was wholly secondary and derivative. It was no longer a good name because it embodied some act of sagacious perspicacity inaccessible to ordinary human beings, but simply because it was honest to its object. Su was relieved that the ancients had not deceived him, but in voicing his relief, he simultaneously gave voice to a sense of alienation from the text, a notion that the name might conceal as much as it revealed.

When Li Bo visited the mountain three centuries earlier, he experienced a miracle—a pair of stones whose ringing he credited to the "extreme numinosity" (*zhi ling*) of the mountain as an extraordinary amalgamation of elements: "Deep waters suffuse the mountain, and the mountain contains their radiance." Were it not for this, he asserted in his 798 CE *Record of Deciphering Stone Bell Mountain*, then how could the mountain have produced such "marvelous rocks" (*qi shi*)?[39] For Li, the fact that the rocks made a bell-like sound was a sign of a deeper numinosity, and was, in this sense, coequal with the name itself. Both the name and the sound expressed the miraculous substance of the mountain, and if Li had failed to hear the bell, one has the sense that it would have been him, not the mountain, that would have been diminished for it. But for Su, the sound was the substance, and the logic of the name was accessible to anyone who bothered to go and look for themselves. Had he found nothing there, he might not have given up on his search for the substance of the name—a mountain might have been called "Stone Bell" for a host of different reasons—but his own perspicacity would have emerged unscathed. An inability to resolve one's doubts does not mean that the doubts themselves are ill-conceived. Foregrounding the possibility of deception privileges the distinction between sign and substance, for without that distinction, there could be no doubt to overcome in the first place.

By enabling a sense of shared experience between the ancients who composed the classics and the medieval literati who read these classics, bronzes facilitated the extension of their corroborating function from the particular names inscribed on their bodies to the wider panoply of classical names in general. By facilitating the enunciation of doubt and by providing a mechanism for its resolution, they implied that other names in the classics were similarly genuine traces of sagely signification, and they encouraged the empirical search for the substance of names as a worthwhile pursuit. At the same time, by demonstrating the variable ways in which the Sages had used these names, they discouraged the formalism of Xu Shen's graphical lexicography and Nie Chongyi's ritual pictures, or at least forced scholars to recognize that those systems were latter-day creations whose consistent equivalencies be-

tween names and forms did not, and indeed could not, embody the models of antiquity. By showcasing the flexible way in which the Sages had used names, and encouraging scholars to sense the Sages by trusting their own senses, the bronzes helped them believe that sagacity could be found in their own ad hoc responses to world around them.

Zuo Ya has argued persuasively that Shen Gua's empiricism was "unsystematic" in the sense of not being constrained to particular categories or subjects, nor governed by consistent standards of evidence.[40] But what does seem to hold his inquiries together thematically is that whether he is trying to demonstrate, for example, that the Prefecture of Lei is named after the Lei River rather than the frequency of the "thunder" (*lei*) that occurs there, or the fact that a fossilized crustacean belongs to the category of "stone crabs" (*shi xie*), the consistent impulse is to establish a basis for the received names of the past in the phenomenal experience of the present.[41] Indeed, Shen's apparent resistance to systematicity, and his willingness to allow each subject to dictate the terms of his inquiry into its nature, seems entirely consistent with Lü Dalin's attention to the self-naming character of the bronze, and the fact that the nominal nature of the bronze as an object encouraged precisely this sort of engagement suggests that the *yi* vessel that Shen obtained in Chang'an was not simply something to think about, but something to think with. Bronzes asked to be read this way, and by embodying the sageliness of asking to be so read, they encouraged scholars to read other things in the same way.

The writings of the era are replete with traces of the anxieties that such pursuits engendered, from the need that poets like Wang Shipeng (1112–1171) felt to assert that their poems about places were premised on direct, personal observations, to the emergence of a whole genre—the "Remarks on Poetry" (*shihua*)—that provided a forum for writers to share anecdotes that grounded the imagery of earlier poems in the lived experiences of their poets.[42] The pursuit of authenticity that so many scholars have observed as an essential feature of Song literati culture is inseparable from the capacity of bronzes to both demonstrate the inauthenticity of earlier ways of knowing, and to make authenticity seem accessible to anyone who took the trouble to go and look or make it for themselves.

This sense that the models of antiquity were empirically evinced but not formally prescriptive helps to explain how it came to pass that the family of Lü Dalin could be remembered both for reviving what their contemporaries regarded as the strange forms of archaic rituals, and for rejecting formalism as a measure of ritual propriety.[43] In their respective writings on ritual, both Lü Dalin and his older brother Lü Dajun asserted that the forms of ritual—the types, number, and quality of the offertory vessels and ceremonial vestments—would never suffice to make the ritual appropriate and efficacious. What mattered, ultimately, was the sincere intent (*cheng yi*) of the ritu-

al practitioner.[44] The fundamental variability of the relations between names and things revealed in Lü Dalin's catalog of antiquities demonstrated that the inherent sincerity and authenticity of the Sages was not wedded to fixed forms, and in so doing, endorsed an approach to moral life that emphasized the adaptability of abstract principles to changing circumstances rather than the endless reproduction of unchanging forms.

No eleventh-century writer captured the sense of sagacious flexibility embedded in the bronzes better than Ouyang Xiu's and Liu Chang's close friend Cai Xiang (1012–1067). In a comment on the art of calligraphy, he wrote:

> The key to learning calligraphy lies in grasping the spirit. If one imitates the appearance of the script, then though the characters are formally similar, they will be without spirit. This is what people who do not understand calligraphy do. I once saw the Stone Drum inscriptions and adored their archaic quality. Their schematic forms contained residual thoughts [of the ancients]. It was when I obtained the inscription of the *ding* cauldron belonging to Yuanfu [Liu Chang] that I realized that in the formal script of antiquity, one could add to or reduce [the number of strokes], or flip the character left or right, up or down. The appearance was based solely on the writer's intent, and could be refined or awkward. Since the Qin and Han dynasties, the script has been fixed into a single form. Thus what was seen in ancient writings came to an end. What a pity![45]

The graphic systematicity of Li Si's formal script, which had undergirded a thousand years of graphical lexicography and pictorial exegesis, was the wellspring of error, for it had encouraged countless writers, ritualists, and emperors to think that getting it right meant finding the right form. But bronzes revealed that the sentiments of the sagely exceeded the constraints of all formal systems, and that the true model of antiquity lay in the freedom to adapt forms at will. In so doing, they sensitized the men who treasured them to the representational gap between the meanings in their heads and the established literary and visual forms available to express those meanings, and they suggested that by looking more broadly out into the world and into themselves, they could find a deeper and richer vocabulary to articulate what was on their minds.

Such flexibility was invigorating, and it encouraged scholars of all political persuasions to celebrate archaic bronzes. Antiquities became a domain of endorsement for whatever model a scholar sought to propose and whatever direction they found in their heart. This made antiquities both eminently desirable and politically perilous—for in an age of factionalism, flexible implements are factional tools.[46] Eventually, the court would seek to end factionalism by claiming their flexibility for itself.

FIGURE 3.1 Cauldron. Dated by inscription to 1116 CE. Cast bronze. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

PART

III

The Schematic Thing

The cauldron stares impassively (Fig. 3.1). Twin eyes set in a bestial visage attract our gaze but offer nothing back. The face is vacant, a lifeless thing—nostrils flared but breathless, fangs bared in a posed snarl. The taxidermic creature is segmented, its flayed skin coiled into the upper left and right corners of the register like that of a serpent, split down the middle, with its horns and claws separated from the rest of its body and laid out on a floor of dense spiral patterns. The overall effect is formal and composed—a collection of parts, each clearly distinguishable from the others, arranged on a bronzed ground.

The tenor of the sculpted creature becomes audible when we compare it to the forms it purports to emulate. The diminutive cauldron upon which the face rests, standing a mere twenty-three centimeters in height, was cast in 1116 CE at the behest of the Song emperor Huizong (r. 1100–1126). It models, on a reduced scale, one of the most common cauldron designs of the late Shang era (thirteenth to eleventh centuries BCE), examples of which include a straight-sided, tubular-legged cauldron (Fig. 3.2) and a slightly more rounded and complexly adorned example (Fig. 3.3), both of which were excavated from the cemeteries of the last Shang capital at Anyang, Henan. Similar cauldrons are preserved in many museum collections (Fig. 3.4). The Huizong-era "copy" is well-known to scholars of Song antiquarianism, who have regularly cited the vessel as an example of the emerging tendency of the late Northern Song court to manufacture its ritual implements based on close study of ancient bronzes.[1] Although virtually all the ancient bronzes collected by the court are now lost, the catalog of the court collection demonstrates that the casters had

FIGURE 3.2 Cauldron. Late Shang era (ca. 13th to 11th cen. BCE). Cast bronze. Excavated in 1986 from Tomb W1, Guojiazhuang, Anyang, Henan. Collection of the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 2, pl. 19.

FIGURE 3.3 Cauldron. Late Shang era (ca. 13th to 11th cen. BCE). Cast bronze. Excavated in 1992 from Tomb 47, Miaopunandi, Anyang, Henan. Collection of the Anyang Municipal Institute of Archaeology, Anyang, Henan. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 2, pl. 21.

access to close analogues of the Shang vessels (Fig. 3.5). The archaism that the modern scholar witnesses in the proximity between these ancient precedents and their medieval recastings embodies a radical turn away from the models of Nie Chongyi and the liturgical implements of the preceding centuries toward a new paradigm premised on the close study of ancient bronzes. That new paradigm is the subject of these final chapters.

The turn to archaic models witnessed in the imperial cauldron involved more than the revival of ancient forms. Something new was afoot, and the signs of that novelty are preserved in the telltale differences between the medieval copy and its ancient prototype. The most prominent of these differences is the medieval elimination of a feature that was literally central to the ancient design: whereas the bestial visages on the early vessels were typically bisected by a prominent flange, the medieval cauldron presents a unified face.[2] The six prominent flanges dividing the décor into longitudinal sections on the Shang cauldrons are characteristic of the technical style of bronzes cast in the northern heartland of China in the centuries surrounding the turn of the second millennium BCE (Fig. 3.6).[3] Whether they worked in the positive

FIGURE 3.4 Cauldron. Late Shang era (ca. 13th to 11th cen. BCE). Cast bronze. Shanghai Museum. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 2, pl. 29.

FIGURE 3.5 "Pictographic Taotie Cauldron of the Shang Dynasty." *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated* (Yizhentang edition, 1752), 1.35a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

on the body of the clay model or in the negative on the sections of the mold, ancient sculptors anticipated the sectioning of the vessel's surface that occurred during the course of the casting process and divided their ornamentation into vertical registers that matched the mold sections.[4] Instead of attempting to erase the lines of flak that occurred at the juncture between the sections, the sculptors elaborated these accidents of the casting process into the dominant feature of the decorative program. Most iterations of the beastly "theriomorphic" visage found on archaic bronzes of the period are divided at their center by an elaborate, sculpted flange that rises from the surface of the vessel in higher relief than any other feature. Although the flange accentuates the bridge of the creature's nose and reinforces the symmetry of the features on either side, its architectonic character ruptures the zoomorphic continuity of the visage. It echoes the geometric patterning that undergirds and penetrates the organic volumes of the face—a network of spirals at once skeleton

FIGURES 3.6A AND 3.6B Two views of a late Shang cauldron. The detail on the left highlights the role that the vertical flanges play in sectioning the décor into six discrete registers. The image on the right shows the typical alignment of the legs vis-à-vis these registers. Cast bronze. Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris. Photos: Thierry Ollivier.

and tattoo—working in tandem to subordinate the creature to the structure of the vessel.

But the subordination paid dividends, as splitting the face simultaneously animated the archaic figure. By constituting both a line of symmetry and the boundary of a register, the flange encourages the viewer to see two things at once: eyes staring out at them from either side of a face, and two creatures in

profile, confronting one another. The interplay of frontal and profile views is more evident in some cases than others. On the straight-legged cauldron, the fact of the outward-staring face seems plain (Fig. 3.2). On its more bulbous cousin, our perspective is less certain: the lateral stretching of the primary body and the echoing of its reptilian coils in the pairs of rampart figures above suggests both face and face-off (Fig. 3.3). The doubling of views affected by the flange reminds us that even in those cases where the singularity of the peering visage seems certain, the two sides of the creature's body are simultaneously being shown in profile. By accentuating this simultaneity of views, the flange collapses the interval of a moving body in space—turning first toward and then away from a viewer—into a single register.

The elimination of the flange on the medieval cauldron both disambiguates and stills the figure. The two halves of the body remain, but the absence of the twinned, opposing registers discourages oscillation between frontal and profile views and instead invites us to see the image from a single perspective—as a coherent skin spread across a flat surface. Instead of using the cast structure of the bronze to imbue the design with the vessel's three-dimensionality, the sculptor rendered it as a layer of almost uniform depth, not unlike the impressed, two-dimensional trace of the rubbing or woodblock print. Gone are the hooked whorls of the archaic figure's horns and the raised edges of its ears (Fig. 3.2), which had worked in tandem with the flanges to heighten its three-dimensionality. Only the eyes remain, bulging, to remind the viewer of the face's identity as the leering Taotie. Similarly, whereas the flanges literally flowed from the three-dimensional structural framework of the ancient cauldron, the three flanges that remain on the medieval iteration are merely superficial décor, reduced in scale, unadorned, and restricted to the lateral register of the vessel's ornament.

The disambiguation and flattening of the theriomorph is consistent with the other major formal innovation witnessed in the medieval cauldron—the repositioning of the legs so that they are beneath, rather than athwart, the three visages encircling the vessel.[5] The alignment of the legs with the flanges was intrinsic to ancient cauldrons, as the sections of the mold were specifically positioned to bisect and thereby facilitate their removal from the legs, and the flanges followed the sectioning of the mold. Small theriomorphs were frequently cast abreast of the legs, but the dominant figures were only aligned with the legs on vessels with triple-lobed bodies, where the apex of the lobe presented itself as the only rational axis for the face (Figs. 3.7, 3.8). Whether between the legs on cylindrical bodies or above them on lobed bodies, the position of the archaic theriomorph consistently followed the structural parameters of the cast vessel. In rupturing this continuity between body and ornament, the medieval cauldron anticipates a different kind of viewing subject—a reader, whose predilection for legible, nameable images on flat ground invites structures analogous to those of a scroll or book, both of which are organized around implements (rollers, folds, spines) that work to efface the manifest three-dimensionality of the scroll or book's body in favor of the two-dimensional plane of its inscribed surfaces.

The bookish nature of this seemingly unlettered thing becomes apparent when we imagine the manipulation of the cauldron in space. The size of the cauldron, a mere twenty-three centimeters in height, places it on the smaller end of the spectrum typical of ancient cauldrons. Unlike their larger cousins, which could stand up to a meter in height and weigh more than one hundred kilograms, smaller cauldrons were readily handled by a single individual. When we imagine the medieval cauldron in the context of the appreciative

FIGURE 3.7 Lobed cauldron, inscribed "X-fu gui" (*X-fu gui liding*). Late Shang era (ca. 13th to 11th cen. BCE). Cast bronze. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

FIGURE 3.8 Lobed cauldron (*liding*). Late Shang era (ca. 13th to 11th cen. BCE). Cast bronze inlaid with black pigment. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Ernest Erickson Foundation, 1985.

handling (*ba wan*) that occurred with objets d'art in Song scholars' studios, the logic of the repositioned legs becomes clear. If one wants to examine the décor, the most natural way to situate the cauldron is to place it on its side on a table or to hold it in one's hands. The most stable and comfortable position for the cauldron at such an angle is with two legs at the rear and one at the front. At this angle, one of the cauldron's three faces stares directly toward the viewer. Had the medieval sculptor preserved the position of the archaic legs, they would have directed the viewer's attention to the flange between motifs. The repositioning of the legs thus worked in tandem with the disambiguation and flattening of the design to present the theriomorph as a singular, legible motif independent of the vessel on which it was sculpted.

Part II, "The Empirical Impression," explored the ways in which the technologies of linear illustration and woodblock printing worked to reduce the three-dimensional complexity of ancient bronzes to legible, two-dimensional, writing-like images. We have seen how this technological flattening worked in tandem with the transformation of material forms to nameable motifs in antiquarian catalogs, and how both phenomena can therefore be seen as aspects of a coherent representational regime. The disambiguation and centering of the theriomorph on the medieval cauldron is consistent with this new

regime, insofar as it makes it easier to move from the visual examination of the form to the word "Taotie," and vice versa. The flattening of the décor and the elimination of the bisecting flange echo the binary black-and-white forms of the antiquarian illustration. When antiquarian illustrations (Fig. 3.4) are compared to modern photographs of similar bronzes (Fig. 3.5), it is clear that the de-emphasis of the bisecting flange was already underway in the transition from the thing to the picture. The medieval vessel simply culminated the process. In an essential sense, one could say that the cauldron adopted the logic of the catalog.

Part III of this book traces this process of reverse engineering new bronzes from antiquarian representations, and explains why redesigning vessels in this way made more sense to medieval casters and their imperial patrons than simply forging direct copies of ancient vessels. Chapter 6 charts the process by which the catalogers of Emperor Huizong's bronze collection adapted the proceeds of eleventh-century antiquarian inquiry to the unprecedented ritual program of their court. By schematizing bronzes into forms that could be interpreted according to the same logic as texts like the Confucian *Classic of Changes* and systems like the graphical lexicography examined in chapter 1, the catalogers developed the conceptual tools necessary to devise a system that was both demonstrably novel and recognizably ancient. Chapter 7 explores the material traces of these reforms, revealing the ways in which the disambiguation witnessed in Huizong's cauldron came to constitute one of the defining principles of medieval Chinese design.

6

Substance into Schema

> Of the sixty-four hexagrams that make up the *Zhou Changes*, all have schemata (*xiang*). But only the Cauldron [hexagram] is itself called a schema.[1]
>
> *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated* (*Bogutu*)

Among all the subjects to which Song scholars turned their minds, no matter received greater attention than ritual. From the Northern Song period alone, the textual corpus of which is, on the whole, far less well preserved than that of the Southern Song, dozens of commentaries on the Confucian ritual classics survive. Bibliographies indicate that hundreds more once existed.[2] Northern Song historians wrote lengthy treatises on the evolution of state rites, literati drafted guidelines for classicizing weddings and funerals, and influential theorists invoked passages from the ritual classics as precedents and frameworks for moral philosophy. It is not an exaggeration to say that the classical Chinese texts on ancient rites provided the essential frameworks whereby moral authority and political legitimacy in general were negotiated.

Because this ritual discourse was fundamentally archaizing, insofar as it assumed that present practices were flawed and the models for their rectification lay in the distant past, debates about the liturgical details of ancient ceremonies were never merely academic. Every argument about ancient ritual was inherently an argument about present practices. And because those practices were regarded as central to the political, social, and even cosmological order of the day, debates about ceremonial minutiae were far from trivial. How one resolved a problem about the manufacture of a coffin, the volume of a cere-

monial vessel, or the order of an officiant's movements said a great deal about how they proposed to solve problems more generally.

The engine driving this discourse on the ritual texts was internal to the texts themselves. Because the classics claimed that the path to social and political harmony lay in the appropriate performance of rites, the persistence of social and political disharmony encouraged those committed to the classics to look to ritual for solutions. Fidelity to the text mandated that practices be revised until the model of the text was achieved. And because that model was, ultimately, a construct of the text that had never existed in the flesh, ritual demanded eternal reform.

We see this recurrent urge for reform throughout the historical record of Song state ritual.[3] Emperor Taizu's endorsement of Nie Chongyi's rectification of the ceremonial implements of earlier eras was just the first salvo in an extended series of ritual reforms that continued until the end of the dynasty. Virtually every emperor ordered his officials to investigate the rites conducted under his predecessor, found those rites to be deficient, and demanded change.[4] So consistent were these commandments that one could be forgiven for concluding that the reformation of rites was as essential to the practice of Song emperorship as the performance of the rites themselves.

The antiquarian scholarship of the eleventh century unveiled what was, from the perspective of its authors, a potentially vast new archive of material for reformers to draw upon. Liu Chang claimed that the knowledge to be gleaned from ancient vessels would one day "illuminate the forms and measures studied by ritualists," and Lü Dalin asserted that antiquities could be used to comprehensively "correct the mistakes of earlier classicists."[5] And yet despite the ostensible capacity of antiquarian scholarship to usher in a new era of authentically classical rites, no eleventh-century scholar proffered more than minor adjustments to Nie Chongyi's models.[6] To be sure, there was widespread recognition that the implements proposed by Nie Chongyi were largely inconsistent with those recovered from the ground, and there was criticism of the hermeneutic he had employed. Nie's mixture of customary forms, creative interpolations, and arbitrary measures represented precisely the kind of amalgamation that drew the ire of influential figures like Ouyang Xiu, Chen Xiang (1017–1080), and Sima Guang (1019–1086), who criticized earlier Song ritual compendia for invoking customary rites that were not demonstrably based on the classical rites of antiquity.[7] Yet despite Ouyang Xiu's awareness of ancient bronzes, when the time came for him to oversee the editing of the *Cumulative Rites of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices* (*Taichang yin'ge li*; 1065), he accepted Nie's illustrations as practicable models for the manufacture of ritual implements.[8] When the classical scholar Chen Xiangdao compiled his monumental 150-fascicle *Book of Ritual* (*Lishu*) over the course of the following decade, he, too, derived his pictures from those of Nie Chongyi.[9] The

ritual reformers at court likewise consistently accepted the basic parameters of the preexisting system and worked within those parameters by modifying individual ritual implements on a case-by-case basis. Despite the sea change in attitudes and the emergence of a vast new archive of sources, the system proposed by Nie Chongyi remained on the walls of the State Academy, and the hermeneutic that endorsed them persisted. Christian de Pee has demonstrated that the eleventh century witnessed the rise of a radically new approach to interpreting the ritual classics.[10] Why was Nie's hermeneutic so impervious to this approach?

To this day, scholars continue to characterize the persistence of Nie Chongyi's models as evidence of the imperfect dissemination of antiquarian learning.[11] But it was not a lack of knowledge that held eleventh-century ritualists back. Chen Xiangdao's brother Chen Yang was intimately involved in the study of ancient bronze bells, and vessels that contravened Nie's models were displayed at court in the context of Renzong's ritual reforms.[12] The problem was not the availability of antiquarian knowledge, but its nature.

Two into One

Eleventh-century ritualists and antiquarians produced knowledge by pursuing two paradigmatically distinct approaches to the relationship between words, pictures, and things. Ritualists like Nie Chongyi and Chen Xiangdao, who were committed to the project of revivifying classical texts by transforming the words on their pages into physical actions and manifest things, produced lexical pictures. As we have seen, these pictures were not illustrations of actual things in all of their substantive complexity, but visualizations of the definitional function of names. The categorical generality of such pictures was masked by the particularity of the words that they illustrated. Ritual names constituted a technically and socially specialized vocabulary. Just as the English word "chalice" marks its object as belonging to a domain distinct from that of ordinary cups, the Chinese term *ding* (cauldron) designated an object apart from ordinary pots. Virtually none of the names in the ritual classics were used in the course of Song daily life, and we can assume that almost no one save the most literate in Song society would have recognized the logographs used to represent them. Because the word that the picture represented was distinct from the words of everyday life, readers were not regularly confronted with the gap between the schematic representation of the simple picture and the visual impression of the complex thing. Lexical pictures belonged to the realm of writing, and as writing-like images, they were internally coherent and socially sensible.

Antiquarians like Liu Chang and Lü Dalin, who, by contrast, endeavored to transform unique things into replicable words, produced empirical impres-

sions. Because the referents of their images were complex, manifest objects, the images necessitated far greater specificity and attention to detail than lexical pictures. The simplifications necessary to reduce a thing to words were naturalized because they were effected by reprographic technologies whose visual transformations were visually familiar and rhetorically acceptable. The circulation of rubbings of ancient stelae and woodcut impressions of landscapes and human figures had trained Song eyes to accept crisply delineated and sharply contrastive black-and-white images as plausible impressions of actual things in the world. The indexical quality of the impression accorded with the visual template that scholars accustomed to the indexical hermeneutic expected, even if the actual indexicality of the image was, in fact, an illusion. Empirical impressions belonged to the domain of phenomenal experience, and as phenomenal impressions, they too were internally coherent and socially sensible.

To be sure, the two domains spoke to one another. Ritualists integrated the knowledge gleaned from bronzes into their reconstructions, and antiquarians posed questions about ritual implements in their colophons. But they nevertheless proceeded on the basis of different assumptions about the role of images in mediating between the world of words and the world of things. Although the two modes were not quite disciplines in the sense of self-consciously bounded modes of inquiry with consensually recognized standards of argumentation and validity, they nonetheless constituted distinct domains of scholarly and visual practice. The difference between them was not unlike the differences between genres of literary composition or painting subjects, or the divisions between the individual text-focused (e.g., *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Classic of Poetry*, *Revered Documents*) traditions of classical scholarship. An individual might excel in multiple genres or become an expert in multiple classics, but the social recognition of their talent depended upon their recognition of the distinctive formal expectations of the genre or tradition in question and willingness to play by the appropriate rules. Few literary or visual artists articulated a unified voice or style that remained consistent across all genres and traditions. Such subdivision had been characteristic of Tang scholarly and artistic composition, and its persistence into the Song constituted one of the many ways in which the distinctively Song desire to present an authentic self remained shackled by the expectations of genre. No less a figure than Ouyang Xiu, who did more than any other eleventh-century writer to develop the notebook and occasional colophon as a domain of free, unencumbered expression, and who was as invested in antiquarian scholarship as anyone, nevertheless accommodated himself to the hermeneutic assumptions and interpretive operations of ritual scholarship.[13] The eleventh-century articulation of new, generically unconstrained modes of literary expression was a key ingredient in the emergence of antiquarian inquiry, but the persistence of

other scholarly traditions hemmed in the antiquarian voice and constrained its disruptive potency.

And yet as Song scholars grew increasingly sensitized to the problem of representation, the friction between the two domains became increasingly difficult to ignore. It is no coincidence that the figure most associated with breaking down the boundaries between literary genres—the voracious polymath Su Shi—was also one of the first individuals to trouble the boundary between antiquarian and ritual scholarship.[14] In one of his colophons, Su noted that the poverty of descriptive language in the ritual classics and their traditional commentaries made it difficult to use them as models for ceremonial implements.[15] The remark was little more than an aside, but it speaks to an emerging sense that normative facture required more than the rough template of the categorical picture. A similar tone was struck by the court official Fan Zuyu (1041–1098), who in a memorial in the year 1090, recommended Chen Xiangdao's ritual illustrations to the throne on the basis of their being more "finely detailed" (*jingmi*) than the reproductions of Nie Chongyi's illustrations painted on the walls of the lecture hall in the State Academy.[16] Such demand for detail suggests an increasing familiarity with the fine rendering of the empirical impression. Although the correctness of Nie Chongyi's lexical pictures remained largely uncontested, their character was, under the accumulating weight of antiquarian knowledge, coming to seem increasingly inadequate.

The critique remained little more than a dull murmur for the simple, inescapable reason that bronzes could not do what antiquarians claimed they could. The ritual classics were filled with over four hundred discrete names for different types of vestments, vessels, chariots, archery equipment, and other implements. Yet the bronzes and jades that survived into Song times substantiated no more than two dozen of these names. The material culture of Chinese antiquity, like all material cultures, was fugitive. Only a few fragments, crafted from the most durable materials and buried in situations favorable to preservation, survived as an echo of what had been. These traces of antiquity may have been perceived as tracks leading to the abstract Way of the Sages, but they did not embody the ancient world that the classics purported to describe. In this way, they were traces in a more conventional sense—present markers of absent matter.

Eleventh century antiquarians responded to this dilemma by deemphasizing the importance of ritual accuracy. Whereas Nie Chongyi and his contemporaries had asserted that the only way to set straight the present was to reproduce the ritual forms of the distant past, eleventh-century scholars increasingly rested the weight of ritual efficacy on other, nonformal grounds. Chen Xiangdao stressed functionality, emphasizing that the ultimate measure of rites was not their fidelity to the ancient past but their capacity to generate harmony in the present.[17] Lü Dalin and his brothers stressed sincerity, arguing

that because it was impossible for the actual performance of a rite to match the liturgical ideal, the care and commitment of the ritualist mattered more than the precision of the implements they used.[18] And so forth.

Throughout the eleventh century, ritualists treated ancient bronzes as little more than supplements to established practices of scholarly review and revision. The persistence of Nie Chongyi's models suggests an implicit awareness on the part of these ritualists of the danger lurking in these supplements—a concern that if taken seriously and to their logical conclusion, the bronzes might bring the whole edifice of established exegesis crashing down.

At the turn of the twelfth century, that is precisely what happened.

The Novelty of Antiquity

Zhao Ji, the emperor Huizong, assumed the throne in 1100 following the premature deaths of his older brother, Emperor Zhezong, and Zhezong's infant son. After a short period of conciliation toward the officials who had opposed the New Policies of his father, he soon soured on rapprochement, and in 1102, formally blacklisted these partisans in a manner befitting the knowledge and cultural practices the men represented—he had their names inscribed on stone stelae set up throughout the empire.[19] Many of these officials were already dead; the blacklist was as much about establishing whose approaches to learning and governance would hold sway at court as it was about removing active political opponents from positions of power.

Having consolidated authority over the rhetoric of state, the emperor embarked on an unprecedented program of ritual reform. Between 1103 and 1105, he oversaw the casting of a new set of ritual bells and launched the reconstruction of the Luminous Hall (*Mingtang*)—a major ceremonial edifice that classical sources described as the architectural embodiment of the cosmos. He also, spectacularly, recast the famous Nine Cauldrons of antiquity.[20] The act was not entirely unprecedented—China's first and only woman emperor Wu Zetian (r. 690–705) had recast the cauldrons in 697 CE—but it was not a step that was taken lightly. As we saw in chapter 3, because the cauldrons were perceived to embody the Mandate of Heaven by moving in tandem with the virtue of the ruling house, the surefire way for a would-be ruler to demonstrate he was not worthy of them was to go looking for them. *Casting* them, from the perspective of classically educated traditionalists, was truly beyond the pale. Not only was Huizong presumptuously claiming the mantle of the Sages, he was also, more fundamentally, erasing the distinction between the ruler as the Son of Heaven and the cosmic forces of Heaven itself. If the son could create the omens of his own virtue, he was, in effect, acting as heavenly father to himself. By emulating King Yu and creating his own portents, Huizong effectively assumed the heavenly and ancient subjectivities that classically educated scholars looked to for

guidance. This radical fusion was literally embodied: following the precedent of the legendary Yellow Emperor of antiquity, the dimensions of Huizong's fingers were taken as the standard measures for the pitch pipes that were used for tuning the ritual bells.[21]

The megalomania soon extended from cauldrons and bells to the full array of ancient implements. In 1108, the emperor dispatched agents to the homes of known collectors of ancient bronzes. These agents were instructed to make detailed paintings that captured "the appearance and dimensions" of these bronzes, and to send these pictures to the recently established Ritual Revision Bureau (*Yiliju*) for review.[22] At the same time, the court embarked on an unprecedented campaign to collect bronzes for itself. Although evidence of particular transactions is spotty, it appears that a number of bronzes were confiscated or otherwise acquired from private collectors over the course of the following decade. Many more were presented to the court as gifts by officials eager to demonstrate their zeal for reform or excited to reveal another auspicious omen of the emperor's virtue. Records indicate that more than five hundred bronzes had been accumulated by 1113. In the seventh month of that year, the court scholar Huang Bosi (1079–1118) completed a catalog of these bronzes. Named after the hall in which the imperial collection was housed, *Illustrations of the Manifold Antiquities of the Xuanhe Hall* (*Xuanhe bogutu*) was the largest catalog of antiquities that had theretofore been compiled, and it served as the basis for further reforms.

In the same month that the catalog was completed, Huizong established the Ritual Regulations Bureau (*Lizhiju*) to implement a new ritual code that incorporated the knowledge gleaned from ancient bronzes. This new code survives in the form of a massive 220-fascicle text known as the *New Ceremonies for the Five Rites of the Zhenghe Era* (*Zhenghe wuli xinyi*).[23] By providing unprecedented detail and incorporating new rites and rules of decorum, the code substantially expanded the scope of the ritual compendia of the Tang and Song courts.[24] At the same time, it comprehensively abandoned the exegetical traditions of Zheng Xuan and his successors that undergirded those earlier compendia, rejecting a millennium of commentarial debate in favor of new, unprecedented interpretations. In this way, it followed the same pattern of unorthodox hermeneutics showcased by the "new" (*xin*) commentaries on the classics written by Wang Anshi, who despite his death in 1086 remained the principal intellectual influence guiding classical scholarship at Huizong's court.[25]

Nowhere was the novelty of the new program more apparent than in the ritual paraphernalia manufactured to perform the rites. Every surviving and recorded Huizong-era ritual vessel that can be precisely dated was cast during the eight-year period following the promulgation of the new rites.[26] Unlike the vessels proposed by Nie Chongyi and Chen Xiangdao, these new vessels

were unmistakably modeled on ancient bronzes. But as we have seen with the aforementioned cauldron, they were also suffused with a new visual logic premised on formal disambiguation and iconic legibility. To understand the hermeneutics of facture implicated in these vessels, we must first reckon with the broader logic of the "New Ceremonies" in which they were deployed, and the ways in which the court catalogers adapted the scholarship of eleventh-century antiquarians to the demands of the court.[27]

The novelty of the new regime was marked by an unambiguous act of antiquarian iconoclasm. In 1115, Emperor Huizong ordered that the illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics—which had been devised by Nie Chongyi, accepted by Huizong's illustrious ancestor Emperor Taizu, the founder of the Song dynasty, painted on the walls of the State Academy at the behest of his equally illustrious ancestor Emperor Taizong, and preserved for more than a century as an authoritative visual statement of ritual propriety—be struck from the walls and replaced with images based on the new archaistic implements. He also commanded that matching images on the walls of prefectural and county schools throughout the empire be similarly struck and supplanted—evidence both of the widespread dissemination of Nie's models and of the expansiveness of Huizong's desire to see them replaced.[28]

This iconoclasm went hand in hand with a definitive statement, reiterated in the imperial edicts that accompanied each stage of reform, that the "New Ceremonies" were both unprecedented and venerable.[29] Recognizing the logic of this claim—the notion that ritual forms could be, and indeed had to be, novel to be ancient—is essential for understanding the ideology that sustained the new, schematic approach to canonical facture.

Upon promulgating the new orchestration of ritual music—the *Music of Great Brilliance* (*Dashengyue*)—in 1105, the emperor announced:

> In ancient times Yao had the Dazhang (Great Arrangement) and Shun had the Dashao (Great Harmonies). The kings of the Three Dynasties each used different names as well. Now, I have sought deeply into millennia past, and established the [musical] system for our own era. It is thus fitting that I bestow upon it the name Dasheng (Great Brilliance)."[30]

In this telling, both the forms of the orchestration and the name "great brilliance" are simultaneously new and ancient. The music featured novel arrangements but was also based on the study of ancient bells, and its name was both unique and in alliterative harmony with the names of the ancient orchestrations. Huizong echoed the pattern of the ancients by slotting his own names and substances into their categories. The strength of his announcement was grounded on the same sense of continuity between sign and referent that Han Yu had deployed so effectively in his prose. Huizong was taking the action that

eleventh-century antiquarians like Liu Chang had proclaimed possible but whose indexical hermeneutics had rendered impractical.

In an edict addressed to the Ritual Revision Bureau in 1108, the emperor offered a clear explanation of the theoretical principles underlying the archaic novelty of his reforms:

> Rites are systematized according to the needs of the day. Thus the kings of the Three Dynasties not inheriting [the ritual systems] of their predecessors was not because their ritual (*li*) was different, but because times had changed. Antiquity is long past, and the standards for its courts and chariots, vestments and garments, and the functions of the offerings used in its services and sacrifices, weddings and receptions have all assumed varied names and forms over the intervening millennia. Sometimes [these names and forms] were found in antiquity but not in the present, sometimes they were missing in antiquity but are found in the present. It is impossible to find their accordance through investigation. Outlandishly adhering to antiquity is not only disturbing, it also contributes nothing to the handling of affairs.[31]

Huizong's central claim is unambiguous. Rites are supposed to change over time. The differences that one observes (through such evidence as the bronzes) in the ceremonial practices of the Three Dynasties resulted from necessary changes made to ensure the continued efficacy of those practices. Although antiquity represents a storehouse of potential models for ceremony, and although these models can and should be put to use, it is practically impossible, given the inherent confusion of names and forms, to perfectly recreate the implements named in the classics. Nor would it be desirable to do so, for this would imply that one was "outlandishly adhering to antiquity."[32] Citing as precedent a principle from the *Record of Rites*, Huizong reminds his officials that adapting to change (*shibian*) constitutes the very definition of ritual.[33] What this means in practice, as his edict proceeds to explain, is that ancient vessels should provide models in some cases and contemporary folk practices should provide models in others.

Here the new epistemic ground is unmistakable: discontinuity between names and substances is assumed as an inherent condition to think from rather than a problem to rectify. Bronzes had exposed the fly in the exegetical ointment—that it would never be possible to resolve the formal inconsistencies between the inherited textual and material traces of ancient ritual. And like the antiquarians of the preceding century, the emperor responded to this impasse by de-emphasizing the importance of formal accuracy in favor of abstract principles. But whereas earlier thinkers had stressed sincerity and functionality, Huizong fixated on the notion of adaptability. By treating *li* (ritual) as if it was essentially analogous to Han Yu's Way, in the sense of a consistent,

unchanging mode of responsivity that was forever manifesting itself through different formal practices, Huizong claimed to be both timeless in principle and inimitably contemporary in practice. In a phrase that almost perfectly parallels the argument that Liu Chang advanced about the rise and fall of the Three Dynasties being premised not on different virtues but on the loss and recovery of the same essential Way, Huizong asserts that despite the manifest changes in ancient ceremonial practices over time, the "ritual" of the ancients remained unchanged. The difference was that while the Way was intrinsically abstract, ritual had long been associated with the reproduction of specific liturgical forms. Huizong's memorial definitively breaks that association—the efficacy of ritual, in his telling, was entirely dependent on the capacity of the court to articulate new forms that were appropriate for their moment.

In many respects, Huizong's reduction of "ritual" to the essential notion of adapting to change echoes the wider intellectual tendencies of his age. Several years earlier, the influential Confucian theorist and former imperial tutor Cheng Yi had argued that the loss of ancient ritual meant that abandoning the pursuit of formal fidelity to ancient practices and turning to abstract ethical reasoning was the only path to virtue in the present.[34] Rather than treating the classics as a record of imitable forms, Cheng Yi and like-minded scholars had read them as traces of the implementation of timeless principles. But ritual was not so readily abstracted as the Way, coherence (*li*), vital energy (*qi*), number (*shu*), or any of the other cardinal concepts around which the synthetic thinkers of the Song organized their metaphysical arguments. To be sure, Huizong was not the first to associate ritual with adaptability; virtually every major Song commentator who preceded him had interpreted the same passage from the *Record of Rites* to mean that ritual, in the words of Lü Dalin, was about "doing what was suitable for the time" (*shi qi shi*).[35] But he was the first to invoke the passage as a justification for major reforms in ritual facture. Earlier thinkers had tended to treat the passage as a pressure valve for the inherent challenge of meeting strict liturgical standards—a way of accommodating the missed note in a musical performance or tarnished vase in an altar arrangement. As Lü Dalin noted elsewhere in his writings, sincerity meant striving to get the forms right even when formal perfection was inherently unattainable.[36]

By decoupling moral efficacy from formal fidelity to the models of the past, the abstractions of thinkers like Liu Chang, Cheng Yi, and Lü Dalin had made it possible to advance radically new hermeneutics without resolving the hodgepodge of names and implements that collectively constituted the legacy of classical rites. It allowed them, in effect, to be at once theoretically innovative and formally conservative. Huizong and his ritualists, by contrast, embraced both theoretical and formal innovation. For them, adapting to circumstances was not about accommodating minor adjustments to established forms, but proposing a complete arrangement of entirely new implements. By

endeavoring to transform the world by changing ritual forms, they were, in effect, adopting the synthetic abstraction of eleventh-century hermeneutics while rejecting the formal conservatism that had endured in the wake of the retreat of those hermeneutics from the problem of formal reproduction.

Bronzes as Schemata

Huizong's radical departure from established ritual facture was underwritten by a new approach to interpreting ancient bronzes. This new approach mobilized the image-into-word lexicalizations of the preceding century's empirical impressions, but rather than using these lexicalizations to draw attention to the unique particularity of each individual bronze, it endeavored to create a single, coherent taxonomy of forms into which all ancient bronzes could be integrated. Our principal source for this approach is a catalog of the core of Huizong's bronze collection that was completed in 1123. Entitled *The Revised Illustrations of the Manifold Antiquities of the Xuanhe Hall* (hereafter *Manifold Antiquities*), the catalog appears to have been based upon the aforementioned catalog compiled by Huang Bosi a decade earlier.[37] Although the revised catalog was significantly longer than its predecessor, featuring over eight hundred different bronzes and jades, it nonetheless included but a mere fraction of the more than six thousand ancient bronzes that Huizong was said to have accumulated by the time his court was destroyed by the invading Jurchen in 1127.[38]

Like *Illustrated Investigations*, *Manifold Antiquities* categorizes objects by type, first listing *ding* cauldrons, then *zun* vases, *yi* vessels, and so on. Unlike *Illustrated Investigations*, which suggests dates for only some of the objects it contains, *Manifold Antiquities* then systematically divides each typological category into temporal subcategories—Shang, Zhou, and, if applicable, Han and Tang—and assigns every object to one of these categories. Every object can thus be located in a matrix with form as one axis and time as the other. Each typological category is also introduced with a "comprehensive explanation" (*zong shuo*) which elaborates the significance of the name (e.g., *ding*, *zun*, *lei*) that designates the category. *Manifold Antiquities* is also far more systematic and thorough in providing measurements for each and every implement that it catalogs, capturing weight, volume, and dimensions, including such details as the difference between the overall height of a vessel and its depth. The thoroughness and apparent objectivity of this approach, and its similarity to the object typologies and cataloging practices of modern archaeologists and museums, is one of the reasons that the catalog has been interpreted as an improvement on *Illustrated Investigations* and as a harbinger of the "rationality" of Song antiquarianism.[39] But the catalogers used these typologies to advance a paradigm that was far more expansive and all-encompassing than the mere historical evidence that bronzes would come to represent for the "evidentiary"

(*kaozheng*) scholars of the Qing and archaeologists of the twentieth century.

The heart of this system was a particular understanding of ancient bronzes as things that embodied the normative structures and generative processes of the cosmos. This idea echoes throughout the catalog, but it is most explicitly articulated in the comprehensive explanations, especially in the introduction to the first and longest of the categories, that of cauldrons (*ding*). Because the catalog has no paratexts, this introduction also in effect constitutes the introduction to the catalog as a whole. It opens with the definitive statement: "Of the sixty-four hexagrams that make up the Zhou *Changes*, all have *xiang*. But only the Cauldron [hexagram] is itself called a *xiang*."[40] The assertion follows a statement in the *Classic of Changes*—one of the core texts in the Confucian canon and a key authority regularly invoked by the synthetic thinkers of the Song—that of all the sixty-four hexagrams the legendary Sage Fu Xi devised after investigating the patterns of changes that organized the ceaseless transformations of Heaven and Earth, the "Cauldron" hexagram was special. The vast majority of the hexagrams were named after generative forces, transformations, or states of being, such as "Pure Positivity" (*qian*), "Contrariety" (*kui*), and "Diminution" (*sun*). Only three were named after concrete entities: "Army" (*shi*), "Well" (*jing*), and "Cauldron" (*ding*). And only "Cauldron" was named after an implement with distinctive formal features (Fig. 3.9) that could be analogized to the pattern of lines that comprised the hexagram: the broken line at the bottom corresponding to the space between the vessel's legs, the three solid lines above constituting the body, the next broken line representing the two handles, and the final solid line at the top constituting the bar whereby the cauldron was lifted from the fire. This made the cauldron—as a typological name, a graphic hexagram, and a manifest thing—uniquely suited for reflection on the formal relationships between signs and their referents. Were the medieval Chinese to have critiqued the epistemological assumptions of Joseph Kosuth's work of art *One and Three Chairs* (Fig. 3.10), they would have begun from the cauldron.

In its most essential sense, *xiang* refers to that which Fu Xi perceived when he "observed" (*guan*) the heavens, and it is thus parallel to the designs (*fa*) that he saw when he looked down to the Earth. Scholars of Chinese thought typically translate the term as "image" or "figure" to account for this sense of visual apprehensibility, and to accommodate the simultaneous use of *xiang* in classical texts as a verb for making one thing as a "figure" or "image" of something else.[41] But before one assumes that a representational logic is necessarily at play in the *Classic of Changes*, we must first reckon with what modern scholars have observed as "conflation of sign and reality" in the text, whereby its "constituent elements have an unmediated correspondence to the world."[42] An essential dimension of this conflation occurs through the text's use of the term *xiang*—which it describes as being that which the Sages perceived in the

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FIGURES 3.9A, 3.9B, AND 3.9C Cauldron; "Cauldron" hexagram; "Cauldron" logograph.

FIGURE 3.10 Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*. 1965. Wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of "chair." Museum of Modern Art, New York. Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. Digital Image ©The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by Scala/Art Resource, NY.

world around them *and* the process by which they emulated these perceptions *and* all of the hexagrams, writing systems, and other implements of civilization that they "established" (*li*) on the basis of these perceptions.[43]

It is not surprising that Song scholars, sensitive to the presumption of an inherent gap between the signifier and the signified, were troubled by the possibility that the *Changes* might conflate objects with their images, and endeavored to rationalize the text according to the representational logics of their day. The fact that they proposed radically different definitions of the term *xiang* in the process of doing so highlights the degree to which classical uses of the term resisted their hermeneutics. Few Song scholars accepted that *xiang* were simply images or figures. Some associated the term with all sensory phenomena.[44] Others, most notably Lü Dalin and his teachers Zhang Zai (1020–1077) and Cheng Yi, defined *xiang* as the process that one must follow in order to achieve a particular end. In their respective commentaries on the *Changes*, they talk about the way in which the "Cauldron" hexagram embodies both the *xiang* of the cauldron as formal design and the *xiang* of the cooking that one undertakes with the vessel.[45]

To make an implement, these latter scholars argued, one must first have a plan—a sense of the function that the implement is intended to perform and the essential formal features that will enable it to perform that function. This plan is its *xiang*. But what makes the cauldron special, what sets it apart from all other things that also inherently actualize plans, is that it also embeds the general, abstract process of cooking as such in its formal structure. By lifting the vessel off the ground, the legs invite the stoking of a fire below and thereby communicate the fact that cooking occurs when vessels are placed over heat. And by facilitating the removal of the heated metal body from fire, the cauldron's looped handles instantiate the transformation whereby cooking ends and eating begins. And because that transformation is the process by which one feeds their ancestors, and feeding one's ancestors is the process by which one venerates the Way of Heaven, and venerating Heaven is the way that one develops the sagacity to apprehend all designs, they argued, the cauldron effectively encapsulates the process by which all heavenly ordained processes are manifested. Hence its unique status as *xiang*.

I propose "schema" as a translation for Lü and his teachers' understanding of *xiang* because it accommodates this self-referential enfolding of process, visualization, and generalization.[46] A scheme is a plan for achieving a certain goal. It can also be a figure, such as a schematic drawing, that graphically expresses the constituent elements of a material object like a house or processual phenomena like the movement of stars. These meanings interpenetrate; the scheming of a building involves the drawing of a plan. They also scale, capturing the more general work of schematizing whereby all particular plans and processes are articulated in graphic form.

No word is neutral, but *schema* is particularly colored by its history in Western philosophy, especially its use by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*. My invocation of schema echoes only some elements of Kant's definition. For Kant, schemata are those intuitions that verify nonempirical "pure concepts" of the understanding. They objectify these concepts by presenting themselves in form and thereby being accessible to the senses: "All *hypotyposis* (presentation), a rendering in terms of sense, is twofold. Either it is *schematic*, as where the intuition corresponding to a concept comprehended by the understanding is given a priori, or else it is *symbolic*, as where the concept is one which only reason can think, and to which no sensuous intuition can be adequate."[47] From Kant's perspective, the distinction between schemata and symbols turns on the manner of representation. All a priori, pure concepts are "given a foothold" as either schemata or symbols. "Schemata contain direct, symbols indirect presentations of the concept. Schemata effect this presentation demonstratively, symbols by the aid of analogy."[48]

Like Kantian schemata, the *xiang* in this Song reading of the *Changes* constitute direct presentations of concepts. They do not require reasoning and they are accessible to sensuous intuition. They were accessible to the intuitions of the Sages, and the *Changes* is a tool for helping us see them for ourselves. If our Song interlocutors were to speak in Peircean terms, they would say that the *Changes* was an indexical and iconic rather than a symbolic system—that it was organized around phenomenally real relations rather than arbitrary signification. But they would resist both Kant's distinction between pure concepts and sense experience and Peirce's representationalism, and hew to the notion that *xiang* are not mental impressions distinct from real concepts. The "presentation" of the *xiang*, from their perspective, is independent of the human mind and as much a part of reality as the concepts the *xiang* present. Indeed, the two are but one.

Huizong's bronze catalogers elaborated this conceptual precedent to argue that all of the physical features of all ancient bronze cauldrons were designed by the ancients to embody the essential designs and schemata that their sagacious perspicacity had laid bare:

> It must be that the Sages perceived the profundity of all under Heaven, and so sculpted shapes and appearances to schematize the things [there]. For this reason they called them schemata. They proceeded to, in close proximity, find schemata in their bodies and, more distantly, find schemata in the many things. Looking up, they observed them in the heavens, looking down they sought them in the earth. By emulating and schematizing what they found there, they encompassed comprehensively all the multitudinous things, and thus comprehended the virtue of divine clarity, and thereby cataloged the sentiments of the myriad things. Thus they made circles as

> schemata for Yang, squares as schemata for Yin, three legs to schematize the Three Dukes, four legs to schematize the four supporting ministers, yellow handles to schematize for median talent, and metal rings to schematize exceptional talent. Schematizing a Taotie served as a warning against its gluttony. Schematizing a long-tailed monkey served as a lodge for their wisdom. Cloud and thunder [patterns] were made to schematize the merit of good deeds, Kui dragons were fashioned to schematize changing without going awry. As for the ox cauldron, goat cauldron, and pig cauldron, in each case they obtained the schema [of the animal in question] and decorated them with it. Thus when the *ding* was made a vessel, the myriad bodies were complete in it.[49]

The essential argument is that the Sages cast cauldrons to give visible, substantive form to all the normative patterns and entities that they perceived in the fabric of Heaven and Earth. Some were abstract principles immanent in all processes like Yin and Yang. Others were ideal offices associated with good government, such as the Three Dukes and the supporting ministers. Still others were moral principles and admonitions. The semblances that they generated in the process—between the Three Dukes and the three legs, between the admonition against gluttony and the sculpted Taotie, and so forth—were not understood to be arbitrary symbols, but as visualizations of relationships that were already there in the fabric of reality. Taotie *were* ravenous beasts, long-tailed monkeys *were* smart, and the dukes *were* three. Sculpting their forms was simply a way of revealing these associations and thereby making that which was abstract accessible to the senses. How else was one to see "wisdom" if not through the wise? Just as the Nine Cauldrons of antiquity had made rulers of the founders of the early dynasties by designating their moral virtue, the bronzes of antiquity made morality by instantiating the normative order upon which it depended.

Of course, all of these associations were entirely arbitrary. Although eleventh-century antiquarians sometimes suggested that certain forms on certain bronzes had symbolic meaning, no one prior to Huizong's catalogers had ever endeavored to so comprehensively associate every form on every bronze with one, and only one, abstract concept. The catalogers never explained why they associated the three legs of the cauldron with the Three Dukes as opposed to the Three Targets (*san hou*) or the Three Dynasties (*san dai*) of antiquity, or any of the myriad other sets of three in the canons of classical knowledge. *Manifold Antiquities* performs analogy without seeking to justify it. In this sense, it is less an argument for a certain understanding of ancient bronzes than the working out of an operative logic that the catalogers recognized in the *Classic of Changes* and were expected to perceive in the

workings of their court: the Sages observed the normative processes of the moral cosmos, and they sculpted these processes into their implements. In order to be a Sage in the present, one must perceive these processes and manifest them anew. Emperor Huizong, by recasting the cauldrons and reordering rites and restructuring the cosmos, was a Sage. Therefore it followed that he had perceived the normative processes sculpted into the bronzes. The duty of the catalogers was to catalog these perceptions. To allow the forms of the bronzes to remain indeterminate or to countenance their multivalence would be to suggest that the emperor's perceptions were not all-encompassing and perfect. And so they had to find one norm, and only one norm, to associate with each form.

A similar assertion of authority through the performance of systematicity characterizes the "new" commentaries of Wang Anshi that guided the court's understanding of the classics, and it is not a coincidence that Wang grounded much of his political theory on the same normative template that Xu Shen had invoked in his dictionary—the *Rites of Zhou*.[50] Wang too composed a dictionary, the *Explanation of Characters* (*Zishuo*), which together with the *Rites of Zhou* is cited more often than any other text in *Manifold Antiquities*.[51] One of the most striking things about the fragments of this dictionary that survive is that they consistently invoke the notion that the Sages graphically embedded the normative hierarchies of the cosmos in their writing system.[52] To read, according to this view, was not simply about recognizing the words figured by the script, but more foundationally about recognizing the script as a system of pictures that graphically embodied the normative relations in which the words that corresponded to those pictures were embedded. Wang asserts, for example, that the Sages inscribed "husband" (*fu* 夫) using a graph that that was similar to the graph for "Heaven" (*tian* 天) not because of any phonological relationship between the two words, but because the husband was "like Heaven" to his wife.[53] Across his lexicographic and exegetical endeavors, one witnesses the consistent assertion that there is a more abstract, foundational order underlying the manifest words of the classics and the repeated mobilization of the graphic elements of script as a mechanism for "revealing" that purported order.[54] And like the catalogers, Wang does not argue for this order as much as assume its presence. Both the catalog and the commentaries that inspired it constitute the working out of that assumption.

By adapting the lexicalizations of eleventh-century antiquarians to the schematic logic of the *Classic of Changes*, the catalogers of Huizong's bronze collection made it possible to organize the shapes and decorative motifs of ancient bronzes into coherent templates of form and meaning. Instead of struggling against the irresolvable tension between lexical pictures and empirical impressions, they created a new way—a third way—of excavating shared

schemata from the manifest variability of individual bronzes. The results of this process were not writing per se, nor were they hexagrams, but like writing and hexagrams, they consisted of standard one-to-one equivalencies between forms and names. This allowed them to be mobilized as building blocks for a new order that endeavored to revive the inscribed models of the ritual classics in the antiquarian armature of the present.

7

Nominal Casting

Of the hundreds of bronzes cast in conjunction with Huizong's ritual reforms, only a small fraction survive. These include more than twenty bronze bells, two cauldrons, three *zun* vessels, and a pair of *dou* receptacles.[1] Although small in number, these objects are sufficiently consistent to suggest that Huizong's reformation of liturgical implements proceeded according to a unified and coherent approach to design.[2] Like the cauldron discussed at the beginning of part III, all of these objects are archaistic, emulating the basic forms and décor found on the genuinely archaic vessels featured in *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated*. They also depart from these prototypes in subtle but significant ways, providing a clear sense of how the court ritualists and casters pursued the emperor's challenge to produce forms that were simultaneously novel and antique.

The overriding principle witnessed in these bronzes is a clear and consistent attention to legibility. Each bronze does this both specifically, by enunciating an explicit, one-to-one association between itself and the name of a liturgical implement inscribed in the *New Ceremonies for the Five Rites of the Zhenghe Era*, as well as in a more general way by disambiguating the complex, multivalent ornamentation of their archaic prototypes into discrete, nameable motifs and abstract background patterns.

The most obvious way in which this legibility was achieved was through the inscriptions cast into virtually all of the bronzes.[3] On the bells these take the form of short inscriptions on either side of each bell. The inscriptions on one side announce that the bells are "Dasheng" (i.e., instruments of Huizong's

FIGURE 3.11 Bell inscribed "Great Brilliance" (*Dasheng*). Reign of Emperor Huizong (1101–1126). Cast bronze. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

Music of Great Brilliance [*Dashengyue*]) (Fig. 3.11). Those on the other side identify the pitch of the bells, thereby designating their place in the scales of classical musicology. On the other implements, they take the form of longer inscriptions that imitate both the syntax and the script of ancient bronze inscriptions. Consider, for example, the identical inscriptions found on the cauldrons and the *zun* vessels, respectively:

> On the Jiawu day of the eleventh lunar month of the sixth year of the Zhenghe reign (1116.12.10), the emperor ordered the creation of a *xing ding* and presented it to Military Affairs Commissioner [Tong] Guan for the purpose of making offerings to his ancestors. May his descendants treasure it for all time.[4]

> On the Xingchou day of the first lunar month of the third year of the Xuanhe reign (1121.1.25), the emperor investigated antiquity and made a "mountain" *zun* for secondary placement on the square mound [for sacrifices to Earth]. May it be eternally treasured and used for all time.[5]

Portions of both inscriptions, such as the phrase "may his descendants treasure it for all time," are drawn straight from the lexicon of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. The casters also clearly endeavored to reproduce the graphic form of the bronzes' inscriptions as well as they could, utilizing the later forms of Qin formal script only when the available corpus of Western Zhou inscriptions failed to provide a precedent for the character they wished to write.[6] Yet despite these many archaisms, the inscriptions simultaneously announce their vessels' contemporaneity. This makes them seem like perfect instances of what Christopher Wood and Alexander Nagel have termed the "anachronic"—objects that gesture to multiple times simultaneously.[7]

But there is an essential distinction. Whereas Wood and Nagel's understanding of the anachronic is premised on a linear, chronological notion of time, the poly-temporality of the Huizong bronzes is merely a patina, a weathering of their conceptual surface that has transpired in their passage from the mindset of their making to the historicism of our present. Beneath their superficial anachronicity is a more fundamental atemporality grounded on their invocation of liturgical names. While Huizong's court was certainly willing to countenance novelty in the formal mechanisms it used to materialize the written implements in the ritual classics, it never sought to create new nominal categories. At its most fundamental, textual core, ritual remained a conservative endeavor—something to construct out of the lexical masonry of the classics rather than something to build anew on empty ground. Forms could certainly be modified and established names might be excluded, but in its "adapting to change," the Song court never went so far as to countenance the creation

of wholly new names. The assumption that we witnessed in chapter 1—that while the specific phonetic and graphic forms of canonical names were arbitrary, the naturalness of the order designated by those names was certain—remained in place. Whether spoken, written, or sculpted, the forms given to all names changed, but the name itself, in the sense of the category of things that it circumscribed and to which it corresponded, was fixed in the natural order of things. It stood outside of history and linear time in the cyclical, endlessly repeating domain of Heaven and Earth.[8] By inscribing their vessels with the names *xing ding* and *shan zun,* Huizong's court associated these vessels with intrinsic categories of ritual implements that the court understood to be equally essential to all times. The efficacy of these vessels relied on the assumption that the forms into which the court sculpted those names were appropriate for the circumstances of the present, but circumstances had no bearing on the validity of the names as such.

Recognizing the essential atemporality of ritual names recasts the significance of the bronzes' apparent anachronicity. Instead of representing an effort to revive and adapt the forms of the Shang or the Zhou for the needs of the present, as the outwardly archaistic appearance of the bronzes might suggest, the hybridization of ancient and contemporary elements resulted from an effort to be timeless—to generate forms that extended the unchanging constancy of ritual names into the dynamism of the material world.[9] On one hand, the casters were invoking the precedent of ancient bronzes; just as the ancients had cast names into the bodies of their implements, so too would Emperor Huizong. But on the other hand, they were attempting to institute an order that would persist into the future—that would, in effect, extricate the dynasty from the ebb and flow of history and re-center it around the repetitive structure of rites. The fact that ancient bronzes rubbed uneasily against the normative structures of the ritual texts—that it was, as Huizong's 1108 edict declared, "impossible to find their accordance through investigation" (*bu ke kao he*)—implied an explanation for the eventual decline of the great dynasties of antiquity.[10] Huizong and his court would avoid their fate by ensuring that the normative written structures of the texts flowed seamlessly into the physical implements of ritual. This was accomplished, first and foremost, by using the vessels' inscriptions to ensure that there was no ambiguity between name and implement.

The cauldrons' self-identification as *xing ding* unmistakably links them to the ritual classics. The *xing* is identified in the *Record of Rites* as a vessel used for holding stew (*geng*)[11] and referred to in the *Rites of Zhou* as a utensil falling within the purview of the stove attendants (*peng ren*) and stewards (*zhang ke*), who oversaw its use in both general sacrifices and the ceremonial reception of guests.[12] It functions in the *Book of Ceremony and Rites* in rites conducted when receiving guests, feasting high officers, burying common officers, and

making food sacrifices, and in the course of attendant-performed "clearings."[13] These classical references ensured that the *xing* would become the subject of exegetical commentary and be accorded a place in state-sponsored ritual. Zheng Xuan characterized it as "a vessel for vegetables and stew," and the officially recognized *Zhengyi* commentaries of the late seventh century endorsed his views.[14] The *xing* was included among the standard repertoire of sacrificial vessels dictated by the *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era* (*Kaiyuan li*), the epochal High Tang ritual code of 732.[15] Nie Chongyi articulated the vessel in formal terms at the beginning of the Song, describing it as a small, three-legged vessel with a lid and a volume of one *dou*. He also provided what is now the earliest extant visualization of the term, in the form of a simple circular vessel with a conical lid (Fig. 3.12). The same essential form was subsequently reiterated in Chen Xiangdao's *Book of Ritual* (Fig. 3.13).[16]

As far as we can determine from the surviving sources, Chen appears to have been the first scholar to explicitly conjoin the names *xing* and *ding*. Previous ritualists treated the two terms as separate, discrete names for distinct

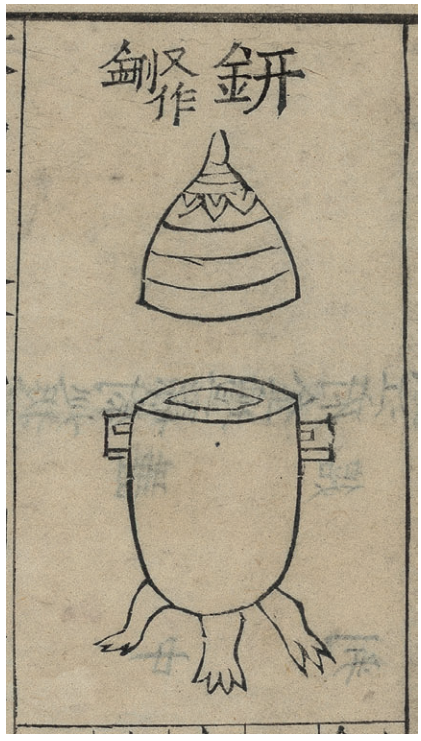


FIGURE 3.12 *Xing*. Nie Chongyi, *Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics* (1175 edition), 13.4a. Woodblock print on paper. National Library of China, Beijing.

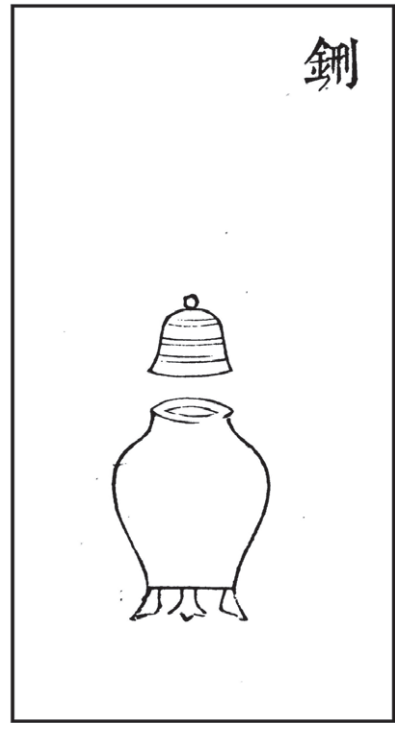


FIGURE 3.13 *Xing*. Chen Xiangdao, *Book of Ritual* (1804 edition), 99.7b. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

vessel types. Although Chen, as observed in chapter 6, does not appear to have been significantly influenced by the new corpus of archaic forms that his antiquarian contemporaries were wresting from the Earth, his combination of the two names reflects the disruption of the garrulous bronzes. The absence of the term *xing* from the emerging corpus of bronze inscriptions left a question mark for ritualists. And unlike Shen Gua's "yellow *yi*" or Lü Dalin's *jue*, antiquarians had not uncovered an obvious and distinct form that seemed particularly relatable to the classical uses of the term *xing*. Treating *xing* as a subcategory of *ding* was an arbitrary, but logical, way out of the conundrum. Nie Chongyi had already identified the *xing* as a vessel that, like the ding, had three legs. And there was a well-established tradition of organizing *ding* into various subcategories: "ox ding" (*niu ding*), "goat ding" (*yang ding*), and so forth. By treating *xing* as a subcategory of *ding*, Chen was able to gesture to a formal precedent that was external to the established corpus of ritual illustrations. The fact that Chen found this necessary speaks to the shifting hermeneutic sands of his moment; no one prior to the advent of antiquarian cataloging would have expected such a gesture.

Huizong's ritualists seized on Chen's precedent to sculpt the *xing* into a form indistinguishable from that of any other cauldron. The only feature that makes the twin cauldrons recognizable as *xing ding*, rather than mere *ding*, is the presence of the words *xing ding* in their inscriptions. But the arbitrariness of that designation was masked by the established hermeneutics of antiquarian naming that we examined in chapter 5, which treated both décor and inscription as a singular spectrum that encompassed both logographic and semasiographic signs. The antiquarian transformation of the bronze décor into a legible surface had made it possible to imagine that emulating an ancient motif was no different from inscribing a classical name. Both modes of translation—reading décor as words and casting words as forms—worked to reduce the friction between the texts of the ritualists and the matter of the antiquarians. Just as the clear and unambiguous presence of the leering face on the surface of the bronzes accorded with the classical understanding of cauldrons as vessels decorated with Taotie, the clear and unambiguous presence of the words *xing ding* in the bellies of the cauldrons facilitated the integration of a classical name into an archaic form. It made the vessel both ritually viable and formally justifiable, and thereby bridged the previously insurmountable division between the lexical picture and the empirical impression.

The same concern with ritual legibility is witnessed in the inscriptions on the *zun* vessels, which similarly associate their vessels with the established name of a ritual implement: that of the "mountain" (*shan*) *zun*.[17] As we saw in chapter 2, the "mountain" *zun* was one of a series of *zun* vessels bearing different subcategorical titles (Fig. 1.14). Instead of assuming, in the manner of Nie Chongyi and the ritualists who preceded him, that the nominal identifiers of

typological subcategories—the "mountains" (*shan*) of the *shan zun* and the "elephants" (*xiang*) of the *xiang zun*—needed to be rendered pictorially on the body of the vessel, the casters mobilized the precedent of the self-naming bronze to relocate the nominal referent to the inscription inside the vessel. This elegant solution allowed them to resolve the ritual demand for a one-to-one alignment of form with name while simultaneously locating that name in the fabric of an empirically observed archaic form. The self-nominalizing inscription conjoined the empirically observed thing to the canonically prescribed text.

But beyond the effort to inscribe the vessel into the textual template of canonical rites, the casters also went a step further, reconfiguring the surface of their models so as to clarify the essential shape of each vessel and disambiguate the primary motifs from the background patterns that constituted their décor. This further "textualized" the vessels: it ensured ready recognition of their essential shape and thus their typological name, and it eliminated uncertainty from the identification of décor, clearly distinguishing those aspects of the design that were figural and nameable, and thus suited for iconographic identification, from those that were merely abstract patterns. This process of disambiguation was witnessed in the cauldrons; it is even more pronounced in the *zun* vessels.

Like the cauldrons, the basic profile of the *zun* matches that of similar vessels cast during the late Shang and early Western Zhou periods. Measuring twenty-nine centimeters in height, each vessel is clearly divided into three lateral sections (Fig. 3.14). The subtly concave wall of the central belly draws inward as it nears the flared foot, while the upper shoulder broadens gradually until it flares more dramatically outward just below the lip. This profile gives the *zun* an air of balanced solidity and stately calm. Comparison with ancient prototypes highlights the contemporary adaptations of the twelfth-century casters. The proportions and profile of the vessels mirror those of Western Zhou examples like the so-called *qi zun* (Fig. 3.15) and *shang zun* (Fig. 3.16). The most striking difference lies in the treatment of the flanges. The Western Zhou flanges are elaborated into high-relief, hooked teeth, whereas the Huizong flanges are more diminutive in profile and simpler in shape. This interpretation reverses the Western Zhou's rather baroque interpretations of Shang relief, with the casters scaling back the high-relief flanges in favor of a design closer to that found on late Shang *zun*. Like the diminished flanges on the cauldron, this reduction facilitates easy recognition of the vessel's profile—the principal referent of the name *zun*—and flattens its surface to a low-relief, readerly plane.

In terms of the general layout of its decorated surface, the twelfth-century *zun* follows the *qi zun* quite closely. Both vessels feature three bands of décor, on foot, belly, and shoulder, each separated into four discrete registers by ver-

FIGURE 3.14 "Mountain *zun*" (*shan zun*). 1121. Cast bronze. Palace Museum, Beijing.

FIGURE 3.15 *Zun* vessel, with inscription including the name "Qi" (*Qi zun*). Early Western Zhou (11th–10th centuries BCE). Recovered in 1976 from a hoard in Zhuangbaicun, Fufeng, Shaanxi. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 5, pl. 153.

FIGURE 3.16 *Zun* vessel, with inscription including the name "Shang" (*Shang zun*). Early Western Zhou (11th–10th centuries BCE). Recovered in 1976 from a hoard in Zhuangbaicun, Fufeng, Shaanxi. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 5, pl. 154.

FIGURES 3.17A AND 3.17B Details of the Western Zhou *Qi zun* (left) and Northern Song "mountain *zun*" (right).

tical flanges and topped with triangular plantain patterns of matching disposition. The designs filling these spaces are composed of raised, thick-lined patterns on fields of low-relief, squared spirals. But when we consider the ways in which these thicker lines are used to articulate motifs, the differences between the vessels become apparent (Figs. 3.17). Working from the top of the vessel down, we observe first that although each leaf pattern similarly features a pair of symmetrical lines running like arteries from base to tip, the integrity of these lines on the Western Zhou piece is undermined by the rich suffusion of hooks and spirals sprouting from their sides. Although the net result remains symmetrical, the structure of the overall design is obfuscated by this prickly patterning. Although fins and hooks sprout from each artery of the leaves on the archaistic *zun*, they are fewer in number and situated symmetrically at the base of the triangle, presenting a more spacious arrangement that helps the eye follow and more easily recognize the parallelism between the arteries and the line of the leaf's outer edge.

Descending to the registers that encircle the base of the uppermost segment, just above the belly, we observe a similar contrast. On the *qi zun*, the hooks and barbs of each register coalesce around a central serpentine form that the eye reads as zoomorphic due to the presence of a raised circle at its "head," which suggests the eye of a creature shown in profile. The catalog of Huizong's bronzes is the earliest extant text to identify this zoomorphic motif as a *kui*—a strange creature from classical legend that was said to have a single

FIGURE 3.18A AND 3.18B "Fangyi" Covered Ritual Wine Vessel with "Taotie" Décor. Late Shang era (ca. 13th to 11th cen. BCE). Cast bronze with gray patina. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, Photo ©President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1943.52.109.A-B.

foot. The invocation of the term reflects the catalogers' desire to translate the ambiguously serpentine form into an identifiable, figural motif. This necessitated the reading of the hooked flange(s) extending from the underside of the form as integral to the representation and, accordingly, as a foot-like appendage. The use of *kui* as a name for the motif presumably did not begin in discussions of the rather ambiguous design found on the *qi zun*, but rather in reference to other vessels where the zoomorphism and one-footedness (Fig. 3.18) of the design are more explicit. The term was subsequently extended to more abstract designs that nevertheless occupied the same general position on the surfaces of analogous vessels and seemed to follow consistent principles of pattern making. In the end, the name stuck, and has remained part of the standard nomenclature of Chinese bronzes to this day.

What is striking is how the court casters chose to handle the motif. Rather than reproducing a *kui* design similar to those seen on the Western Zhou *zun*, they removed all hooked appendages from the motif, including the "foot," and thereby eliminated the possibility of reading the design as a *kui*. Keeping the s-shaped profile of the serpentine form, they added an additional eye and thereby repositioned the viewer into a top-down perspective. The final result, sharply juxtaposed with the field of spiral patterns, is clearly a legless snake or

tadpole—creatures with obvious referents in the empirically observed world of the twelfth century. The revised design was not without precedent: a handful of early Zhou bronzes bear a similar tadpole-like motif (Fig. 3.19).[18] But the examples that we know were available to the court based on the illustrations in the imperial catalog clearly show a more ambiguous *kui*-like design (Figs. 3.20, 3.21). So while it is possible that the designers simply prioritized the tadpole over the *kui* in selecting motifs for the vessel, it would seem that they did so *in spite of* their awareness of the *kui* as a common design for the shoulder of *zun* vessels. Whatever the case, the decision to avoid both the ambiguity of the form and the anomaly of the *kui* suggests a clear willingness on the part of the

FIGURE 3.19 *Zun* vessel, with inscription including the name "He" (*He zun*). Reign of King Cheng (ca. 11th cen. CE). Recovered in 1963 from a site in Maicunzhen, Baoji, Shaanxi. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 5, pl. 152.

court to creatively adapt the precedents of archaic bronzes in order to make them both legible and sensible to the empirical gaze of the Song episteme.

One way to understand the textualization witnessed in the designers' treatment of the *zun* is as a mechanism for taking the formally flexible legibility that scholars like Cai Xiang had observed in the script incised within ancient bronzes and sculpting it into the outer surface of new vessels. In their colophon to the ancient *zun* vessel in the court collection that most closely approximated the twelfth-century *zun* in shape and design (Fig. 3.21), the

FIGURE 3.20 "*Zun* vessel of the Shang dynasty, inscribed with the graph 'grandson' (*sun*) holding knives and 'Father Gui' (*fu gui*)." *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated* (Yizhentang edition, 1752), 6.5a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

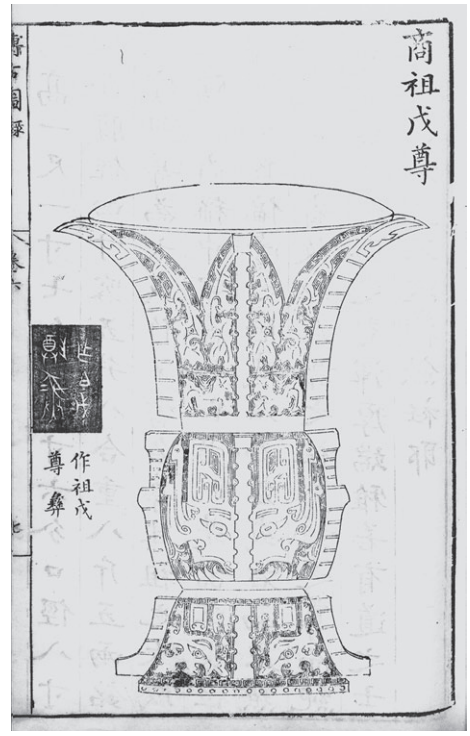


FIGURE 3.21 "*Zun* vessel of the Shang dynasty, inscribed 'Ancestor Wu' (*zu wu*)." *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated* (Yizhentang edition, 1752), 6.7a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

compilers of the court catalog echoed the comment by Cai Xiang discussed in chapter 4: "The strokes of the characters on this vessel are not limited by the deficiency of fixed elements," they observed. "With elements from the left on the right, or from the right on the left, and with strokes variously added and removed," the ancient casters had inscribed the word "ancestor" (*zu*) and the name of the vessel—*zun*—into the body of the *zun*. This gave it a "sense of purity and substance unalloyed by the vulgar habits of the common man"—which, in turn, endowed the vessel with the power to help virtuous men know what was right: "Wholesome and substantial, upright and elegant. How could a literatus who possessed the Way, upon observing this vessel, not change their attitude and straighten their robes [and thereby convey reverence]?"[19] The kind of the conformity of views that the scholars of Huizong's court sought in their politics was thus witnessed in the literal making of the ancient vessel. Reconfiguring the vessel's ornament was a way of ensuring that the morally transformative conjunction between formal flexibility and nominal legibility that scholars could still recognize in the ancient vessel's inscription was manifestly apparent in the new vessel's design. The ancient vessel had been efficacious in ancient days, but times had changed, and now its efficacy was harder to put into words. But the words within the vessel were still decipherable, and they gestured toward its truth. By raising these traces to the surface, the casters renewed the moral agency of the ancient form for minds entangled in the ritual armature of the present.

In sum, the bronzes demonstrate that the court's effort to ease the tension between ritual norms and antiquarian knowledge extended from the explicit practice of inscribing ritual names to a more generally lexical approach to design writ large. Deploying the schematic associations of the court's antiquarian catalogers and the one-to-one word-image correspondences of its ritualists' lexical pictures, the designers of the court's ceremonial implements reduced the complex, multivalent forms of their ancient prototypes into a distinct, tripartite template of shapes, figures, and patterns. Each element in this template was readily nameable: shapes readily aligned with lexical pictures, figures with recognizable zoological and botanical forms, and patterns with fixed, repetitive units. In place of the hook-talons, orb-eyes, and all the other vaguely zoomorphic forms that excite the surface of ancient bronzes with the presence of deep and mysterious beings, the casters left a textualized surface of discrete figures and repetitive structures. They changed the bronze vessel from a powerful thing unto itself into a representation of other things. More than the particularity of the ritual forms they proposed, it was this textualized, figural approach to design that would ultimately come to constitute the principal legacy of Huizong's ritual reforms. That approach would persist and spread, when all else was met with disaster.

Facture after Failure

Huizong's ritual reforms ended in abject failure. In late 1125, less than two decades after the reforms were enacted, and only two years after the completion of *Manifold Antiquities*, the Song were invaded by their erstwhile allies, a tribal confederation to the northeast known as the Jurchen. For the Song, the war went badly from the start. Assuming responsibility for the disaster, Huizong abdicated the throne to his son Qinzong in early 1126, but his gesture did little to restore the dynasty's footing. Over the course of 1126, the Jurchen twice besieged the Song capital at Bianjing. On the second occasion, during the winter of 1126–1127, thousands starved as the city struggled to meet the Jurchen demand for gold and silver. By the time the Jurchen army withdrew, the city had been stripped bare. Huizong and his son, together with hundreds of court officials and over ten thousand princesses, consorts, and other aristocratic women, were transported to the North as hostages of the Jurchen. Most of them, including both former emperors, would ultimately die there in bondage. With their captives, the Jurchen took an estimated 247,600 ounces of gold, 7,728,000 ounces of silver, the contents of the imperial library, the printing blocks from the imperial printing offices, and thousands of bolts of silk. They also seized an extraordinary number of bronze vessels, 25,000 in total, which included the Nine Cauldrons, the emperor's collection of ancient bronzes, and virtually all of the new vessels that had been cast in the course of the ritual reforms.[20]

Although the remnants of the Song imperial family would reestablish the dynasty at the southern city of Lin'an (modern Hangzhou), much of the scholarship associated with Huizong's ritual reforms would die with his court. Wang Anshi's commentaries were largely discredited, and never again would scholars endeavor to systematize bronzes on the model of the *Classic of Changes*. It would be more than six centuries before another ruler, the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1795), would assemble a collection of ancient bronzes that surpassed the scale of Huizong's collection. Most of the objects that Huizong had collected and commissioned would also be lost. Although the Southern Song court would succeed in reacquiring a number of ritual vessels from the Jurchen through special markets on the frontier between the "Southern" Song and Jurchen state of Chin in the North, most of these recovered goods would eventually be lost in the turmoil of the Mongol conquest of the late thirteenth century.[21] Of the more than eight hundred ancient bronzes featured in Huizong's court catalog, no more than two or three are believed to have survived, and the authenticity of even this tiny handful is controversial.[22] As with innumerable metal sculptures elsewhere in the world, the ultimate fate of the vast majority of ritual vessels accumulated and cast at the court of the Northern Song was to be melted down for their raw materials.

And yet, despite the brevity of Huizong's reforms and the geopolitical failure of his regime, the schematic approach that his catalogers adopted would survive the catastrophe of the Jurchen invasion. While the systematic, universalizing claims of *Manifold Antiquities* were abandoned, the notion that the appropriate way to understand a bronze was to unpack its body into a series of discrete, replicable forms and motifs which corresponded on a one-to-one basis with classical names—in short, to investigate it iconographically—was maintained. That approach would be replicated, first through the printed reproduction and dissemination of *Illustrated Investigations* and *Manifold Antiquities*, and eventually in the cataloging of other collections, like those of Emperor Qianlong.[23]

More significantly, the schematization of the bronzes rejuvenated the lexical picture as the preferred medium for visualizing the ritual classics. After the Song court reestablished itself at Lin'an, Huizong's son and successor, Gaozong (r. 1129–1162), renewed his father's effort to standardize forms for the vessels and other implements named in the ritual classics. The ambition was more restorative than creative, insofar as it focused on confirming and reproducing the forms devised by Huizong's court, but like those forms, it was premised on a decisive break from the models of Nie Chongyi and clear invocation of archaic bronze prototypes. Visually speaking, what is most striking about this restoration is that while its source material derived from ancient bronzes, its visual conventions were unmistakably those of the lexical picture. Our best surviving sources for understanding these conventions are a late twelfth-century volume of printed ritual images attributed to the famous Neo-Confucian theorist Zhu Xi and the rubbing of a thirteenth-century stele that once stood on the grounds of a prefectural school in what is today the province of Guangxi. Careful reconstruction of the textual history of both sources has traced their images to designs propagated by the Southern Song court in the mid-twelfth century.[24] All of the images bear a remarkable resemblance to the essential forms of ancient bronzes. And yet they lack the sense of proportion and attention to detail that characterized the empirical impressions of those bronzes. Instead, they present simple, schematic images that convey the essential shape and distinguishing features of the vessel. Unlike the plain, unadorned surfaces surrounding the chickens, oxen, and elephants on the vessel represented in Nie Chongyi's images, the surfaces of many of the vessels represented in these illustrations are covered with patterns. But like Nie's images, the loose handling of these patterns suggests that the pictures were intended to communicate the relative disposition of décor rather than provide a comprehensive visual model for reproduction.

When considered from the perspective of the established conventions of the lexical picture, it would seem that the minor variations between the two pictures of the *dou* vessel (Fig. 3.22), for instance, reflect not a breakdown in

visual transmission but a consistent graphic expression of a generic prescription: "Intersperse squared-off spirals and knobs around the rims of the lid and vessel, decorate the top of the lid with leaves, and cover the neck with patterns." The difference between the patterns on the necks of the two vessels masks their more salient and shared feature—that both patterns are remarkably unpatterned, presenting a mishmash of whorls, diamonds, and notched rectangles without unifying repetitive elements. The fact that the spirals are clearly legible on the rims of both vessels, while the patterns on their necks are variable and muddled, communicates the scope of the prescription—it was the ritualist's way of saying that the presence of the pattern on the neck mattered, but the content of that pattern was up to the sculptor. As with the earlier lexical picture, this studied vagueness facilitated standardization. It helped the artisan achieve the essential features of the *dou* as *dou*, without getting bogged down in the particularities of the vessel's pictorial representation. As long as the basic shape was correct, spirals encircled the rim, and the neck was patterned, the sculptor could rest easy in the knowledge that they had succeeded in creating a proper *dou*. And the ritualist could rest easy in knowing that they had succeeded at instantiating the normative name in the material world. Studied vagueness facilitated formal concordance with textual norms.

The very possibility of establishing the lexical prescriptions embedded in these pictures depended upon the schematizations that Huizong's catalogers constructed out of the textualized antiquarian representations of archaic

FIGURE 3.22 Comparison of *dou* from the 1298 stele (left) and the *Shaoxi Era Illustrations of Confucian Rites for Prefectures and Counties* (right).

bronzes. It was only after the essential shape of the *dou*—a round body, tapered neck, and flared foot—was made recognizable through the repetitive application of the name *dou* to objects sharing those features that it became possible to envision the categorical *dou* of the lexical picture. Similarly, it was only after the squared spiral—what Song antiquarians termed the *leiwen*, or "thunder pattern"—was made recognizable as a "thunder pattern" that it became possible to conceive a design that so explicitly differentiated the spiral from the rest of the patterned surface. Cataloging generated the categories that constituted the defining objects of the lexical picture.

And at the same time that antiquarian schematization enabled the making of these pictures, it also renewed their rhetorical efficacy as viable representations of antiquity. By establishing a template of nameable, repetitive forms into which the manifest variability of archaic bronzes could be sorted, it conveyed a sense that there was an underlying order to these bronzes—that they were not simply a product of history, but manifestations of the sagacious application of a consistent logic of signs to changing circumstances. Schematization made it possible to look empirically into the world and still see the world as a composite of categories. For a tradition wedded to the ontological status of the normative categories expressed through names, this reaffirmed the lexical picture as vehicle of revelatory insight. The empirical impression was merely a picture of a thing, while the lexical picture was a revelation of the structure that tied it to all other things.

Conclusion

Modern scholars of natural history in East Asia, in their effort to understand the mechanisms by which intellectuals generated knowledge about their world, have made several key observations. One of the most significant is that naturalists in early modern East Asia shared a great deal in common with their antiquarian counterparts in Europe.[1] Like the European antiquaries, East Asian scholars were relatively unbounded in their interests, observing plants and animals at the same time that they considered the movements of the stars, the technology of watermills, the aesthetics of inkstones, and the fragments of the past. The categories into which they organized these bodies of knowledge varied, but the generally catholic nature of their inquiries was consistent.[2] Both traditions also endeavored to integrate their empirical observations into revivals of classical knowledge that coexisted in uneasy tension with the Christian and Buddhist doctrines that flourished alongside them.

But one area in which the two traditions differed markedly was in the relationship between the textual and visual techniques they developed to represent these observations. Whereas the techniques that European antiquarians deployed to visualize their investigations of the world developed largely in lockstep with the wider traditions of painting and printmaking in which they occurred,[3] the illustrators of Chinese encyclopedias worked in an idiom that was highly distinct from that deployed by their counterparts in painting workshops (Fig. 4.1). One need only set the finely rendered waterfowl of the court painter Lü Ji (ca. late fifteenth century) (Fig. 4.2) alongside the illustrations in Li Shizhen's (1518–1593) influential *Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu*) (Fig. 4.3) to realize that rather different assumptions of visual sufficiency were at play.

FIGURE 4.1 Lü Ji, *Mandarin Ducks and Cotton Rose Hibiscus*. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of Oscar L. Tang Family, 2005.

FIGURE 4.2 Detail of *Mandarin Ducks and Cotton Rose Hibiscus*.

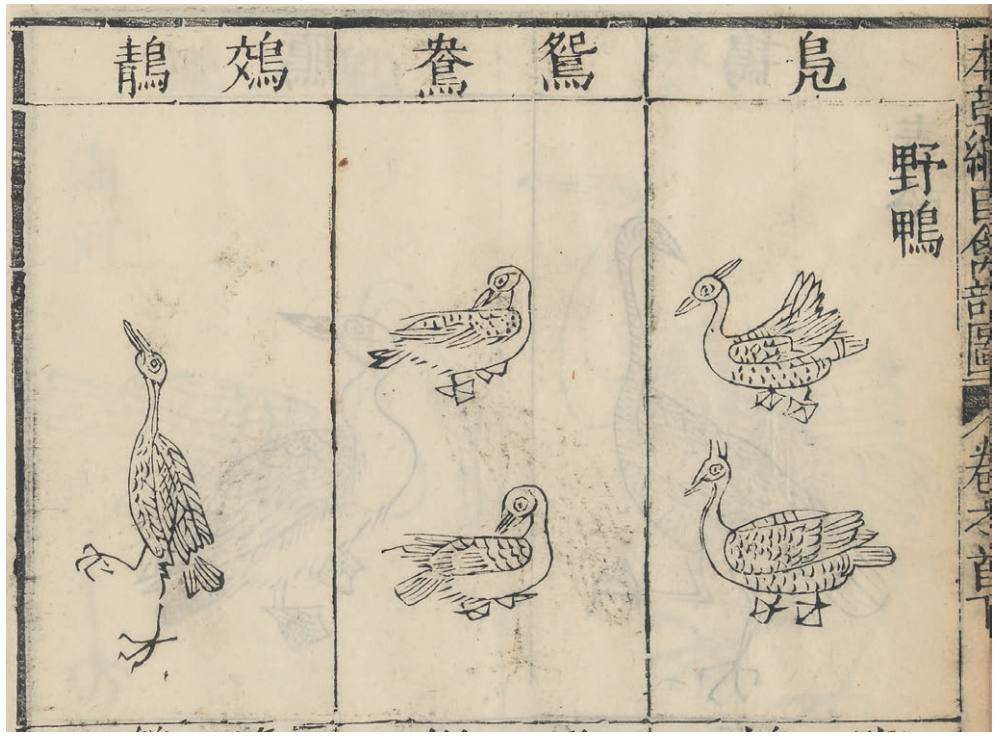


FIGURE 4.3 Detail from Li Shizhen, *Materia Medica* (1658 edition), 2.39a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Part of the reason for the distinction was undoubtedly technological. The development of copperplate engraving and etching in Europe around the turn of the sixteenth century allowed the reproduction of crosshatching and tracery that was far finer than what could be produced using a woodcut, thereby facilitating the translation of painterly effects to the reprographic domain of book illustration.[4] But as we have seen with the illustrations in the antiquarian catalogs of the Song, printmakers were capable of far more detailed illustrations than those that typify early modern Chinese encyclopedias. And the illustrators of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century woodcut painting manuals (*huapu*) proved highly adept at translating the texture strokes of the great medieval landscape painters to the idiom of print.[5] Technical illustrations of the sort found in Song Yingxing's (1587–1666) *Works of Heaven and the Inception of Things* (*Tiangong kaiwu*), while not necessarily concerned with precise measurement and scale, used images in highly sensitive ways to visualize nuances of craft processes that resisted textual representation.[6] So the decision to illustrate in such an abbreviated fashion was not simply a matter of technological limitations, graphic conventions, or period aesthetics.

In his study of early modern Japanese natural history (*honzōgaku*), Federico Marcon has observed that it was only in the eighteenth century that illustrations of flora and fauna first acquired a "precise cognitive function" in facilitating the distinction of species whose differences were otherwise "masked" by homophonous names. Prior to that, Japanese natural history clung to the conventions of Chinese encyclopedias like the *Materia Medica*. The illustrations in this earlier tradition, he observes, "did not add anything to the verbal descriptions. They were not supposed to convey further information about the morphology and anatomy of plants and animals, nor were they attached to help the reader identify the species portrayed. Their function was to accompany, complement, and embellish a self-sufficient text, not to complete it."[7] While a rigorous interrogation of this assertion is beyond the scope of the present study, a brief glance at the pages of *Materia Medica* confirms the essential logic of Marcon's claim (Fig. 4.4). While it is undoubtedly true that the pictures *do* things that the text does not do—clarifying the essential structure of the plants' root systems, conveying a sense of the relative proportion of the flowers to the leaves, and so forth—it is also the case that the picture seems to follow from the categorical assertions of the text rather than the visual sensation of the thing.

In this way, the pictures in *Materia Medica* operate much like visualizations of what Panofsky termed "motifs," Gombrich called "schemata," and Mitchell characterized as "images"—the conflations of variable sensations into the singular form necessary to prompt recognition.[8] But whereas for all three of these modern thinkers that process of conflation occurred in the abstract space of the mind that intervened between sense perception and recognition, the illus-

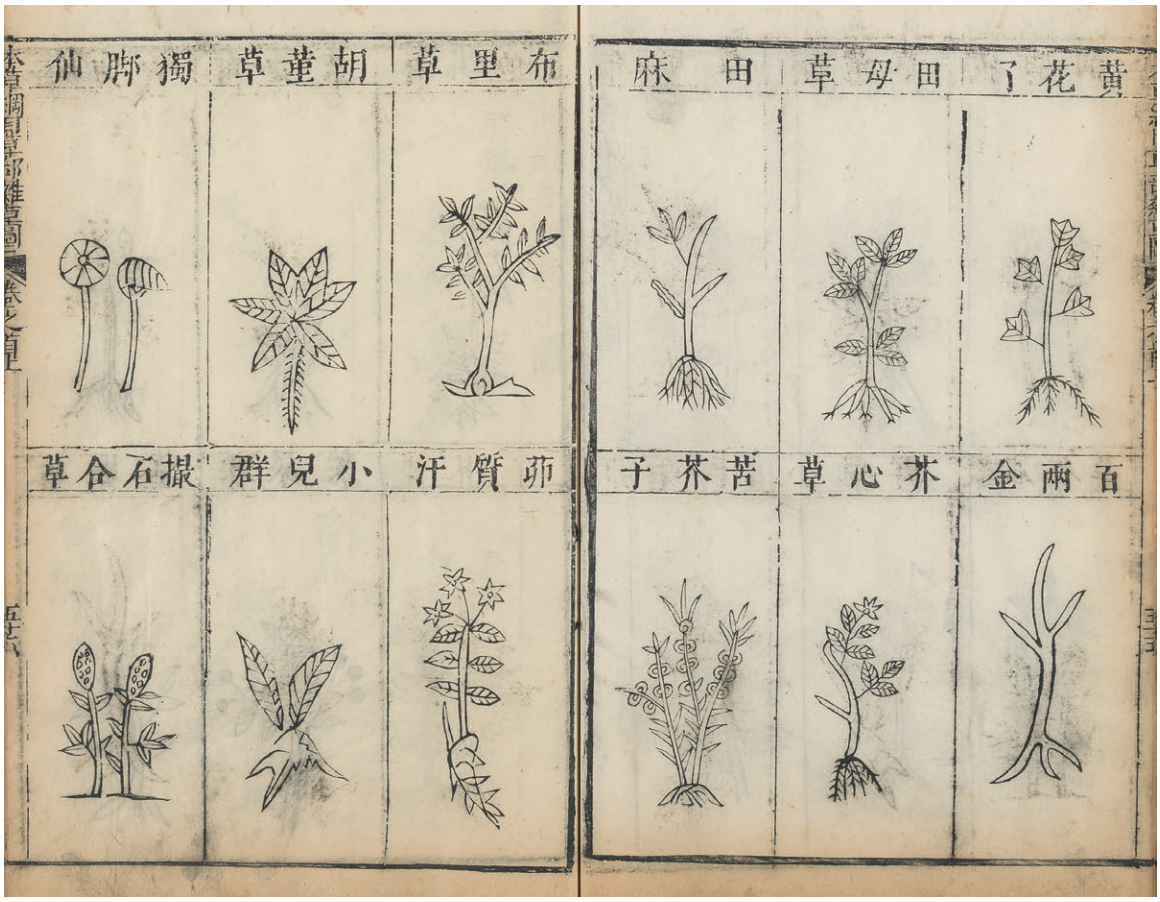


FIGURE 4.4 Li Shizhen, *Materia Medica* (1658 edition), 1.56b–57a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

trators of premodern East Asian pharmacopoeias and natural encyclopedias were drawing for intellectual communities who understood those categories to be *both* external to the mind and beyond the domain of sensory experience. The recognition they were seeking was not a categorical correspondence between a word and a visible object, but a visual expression of the otherwise unseen threads that bound the word to the world.

For these communities, it was demonstrably not the case that the text was understood to be sufficient in and of itself—the emergence of eleventh-century empiricism had ensured that the dominant voices in the Chinese tradition would never again treat the text as if it were coextensive with the world. As we have seen with Song antiquarians and their bronzes, the objects that most appealed to the empirical minds of the eleventh century were precisely those that troubled the continuity between representation and reality. But the *categories* that the words of the text inscribed retained their ontological

authority. What weathered the antiquarian disruption of the eleventh century, then, was not the names themselves, but the possibility of the order toward which all names gestured. The simultaneity of the recognition of a necessary gap between sense perception and reality *and* the assertion that there was an inherent coherence within and among all things prompted a demand for mechanisms to visualize a domain that was recognizably extrasensory. Into this gap between representationalism and categoricalism strode the lexical picture, renewed through its antiquarian interrogation as a device of graphic schematization. Freed from its epistemic dependence on the logographs of the classical text, this mode of visualization mobilized the conceptual rhetoric of hexagrammatic schematization and the graphic rhetoric of antiquarian taxonomizing to infuse its reductive, simple picture with normative authority. In so doing, it gave scholars a mechanism for illustrating their empirical investigations of the world while avoiding what Zhu Xi famously decried as the "the superficiality of that which is seen and heard with eyes and ears" (*ermu jianwen zhi lou*).[9]

It is not a coincidence that the earliest printed illustrated pharmacopoeias, such as Su Song's *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* (*Bencao tujing*; 1062) and Tang Shenwei's *Classified Emergency Materia Medica from the Classics and Histories* (*Jingshi zhenglei beiji bencao*; 1082) were first published in the midst of the Song antiquarian disruption.[10] While the specific graphic relations between the earliest printed imagery in these compendia and imagery of sixteenth-century *Materia Medica* remains to be reconstructed in detail, what is abundantly clear is that the essentially lexico-schematic nature of their illustrations remained consistent.[11] From the first sustained attempts to use print as a tool for systematizing and disseminating empirical knowledge in the eleventh century to the publishing boom of the sixteenth century, no one, to my knowledge, ever tried to illustrate a pharmacopoeia or encyclopedia with pictures that matched the empirical impressions of eleventh-century antiquarian catalogs or the highly naturalistic bird-and-flower paintings of court artists in their attention to detail. Instead, they made pictures out of categories.

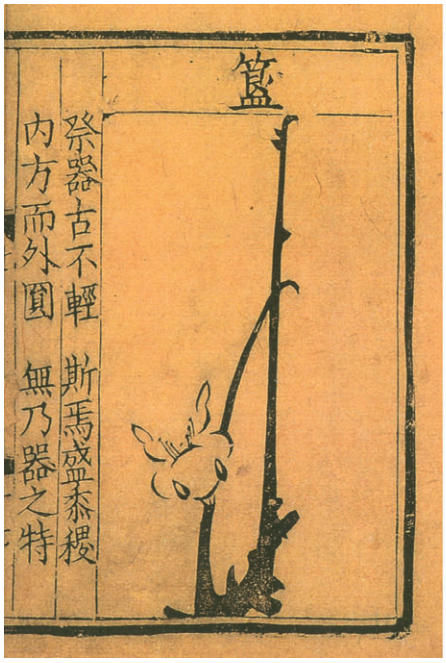
The apparent uselessness of these pictures as visual aids for differentiating two similar plants or animals from one another masks their more fundamental epistemological purpose. They were not merely embellishments for a self-sufficient text, for in their capacity to express the categories that preceded all sense impressions, they endorsed the broader system of knowledge into which scholars sought to locate those plants and animals.[12] For a world that questioned the words used to name and describe these creatures but yearned for the categories that those words inscribed, this made the pictures uniquely essential. Encyclopedias needed their pictures to persuade their readers that they were truly encyclopedic.[13] As Zheng Qiao (1104–1162) observed in his bibliographic *Survey of Illustrated Books* (*Tupulüe*): "Pictures are the warp,

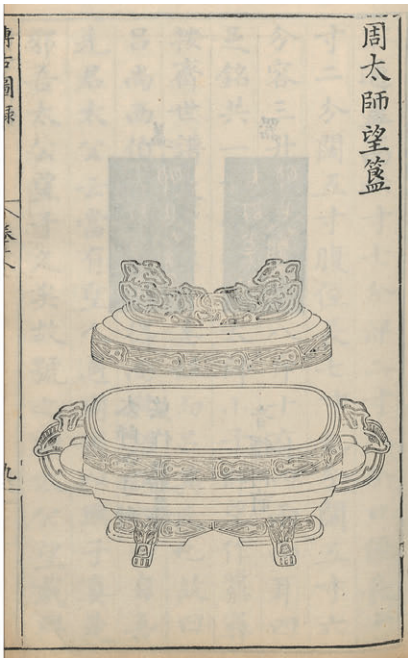
and writing is the weft" (*Tu, jing ye; shu, wei ye*). The two, he acclaimed, were "intermeshed" (*xiangcuo*) and "interdependent" (*xiangxu*).[14]

The preceding chapters have endeavored to demonstrate how the capacity of pictures to perform this encyclopedic function emerged from the antiquarian negotiation of the yawning chasm between the garrulous, multivalent materiality of the bronzes and the normative systematicity of written liturgy. The reinscription of bronzes into the simplified form of the prescriptive ritual pictures encouraged the spread of archaistic forms through the ritual and decorative arts. But it also, more substantially and profoundly, provided a template for keeping the natural and the normative integrated in an age committed to both material empiricism and textual skepticism.

Of all the myriad illustrations one could cite as evidence of this deeper epistemological operation, perhaps no picture better emblematizes the ritual-as-nature continuum of the schematizing image than that of a plum blossom first committed to print in the year 1261. Taken from the pages of Song Boren's *Register of Plum Blossoms* (*Meihua xishenpu*), the picture is one of a taxonomy of one hundred name-image pairings that Song compiled to facilitate poetic appreciation of the richly symbolic flower. In each case, the name refers to an object whose essential schematic form captures the profile of the blossom in question. In this particular case, the object that Song chose was a *gui* vessel—an archaic bronze vessel that was first illustrated and described in the antiquarian catalogs of the eleventh century and then converted into a prescriptive model in the ritual illustrations of the twelfth century (Fig. 4.5).[15] At each stage in its adaptation—from manifest, three-dimensional thing; to descriptive, two-dimensional impression; to prescriptive, schematic picture; and ultimately to the profile of a blossom—the visual referent of the name *gui* was simplified and reduced until it was nothing more than a line. In demonstrating the versatility of that line as a vehicle for rendering the structures beneath sensations into words, the *Register of Plum Blossoms* reveals the extent to which the forms of ancient bronzes had wound their way into the graphic imagination of medieval China.

Song Boren did not set out to demonstrate the foundational role that archaic bronzes played in sculpting the contours of medieval knowledge. He was familiar with the printed illustrations circulating in his day, and because those illustrations included numerous depictions of ritual implements, he included them among the visual templates that he used to differentiate a simple blossom into a hundred discrete, nameable forms. But in performing an operation that his antiquarian forebears first practiced on the bodies of the bronzes, he inadvertently demonstrated the degree to which their mechanism for bridging the distance between the written and material traces of classical rites had become a more general way of negotiating the gap between the verbal and the visual. The same reduction of form to line that enabled the textualization of





the bronze similarly enabled the nominalization of the blossom. The persuasiveness of this operation was premised, in part, on its consistency with the wider assumption of continuity between the normative forms of the Sages and the natural forms of the phenomenal world. The profile of the bronze-cum-blossom was poetically beguiling because it gave the educated literatus a visual corollary to what their learning of the classics had taught them to believe—that they had the capacity to investigate the past and discern among its traces schemata that matched the profiles of the here and now.

Embedded in the story of the bronze that became a blossom, then, is a story about the forgotten power of graphic schemata to sustain in the minds of human beings a sense of continuity between the natural and the normative. We cannot, nor should we, believe that those schemata somehow transcend our ever-so-human ways of seeing. Nor would we follow our medieval forebears in looking to the ritualized hierarchies of antiquity for solutions to the challenges of our time. The lexical pictures that emerged from the Song moment between epistemes are not models for our disjointed and discontented present. No one today would accept the "naturalness" of the categories they inscribe. But immersed as we are in the ebb tide of the Western tradition, and washed in the countercurrents racing against the Enlightenment and its "universal" ways of knowing, perhaps we owe it to ourselves to reach for these pictures as if for a fallen bough—and, resting there amid the swirling

FIGURE 4.5 From right: (1) Ritual vessel. Middle Western Zhou (9th cen. BCE). Cast bronze. Excavated from Tomb 30, Wangfutai Cemetery, Qufu, Shangdong. After *Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji*, vol. 6, pl. 68. (2) "Zhou Dynasty *gui* vessel of Grand Preceptor Wang." *Manifold Antiquities Illustrated* (Yizhentang edition, 1752), 18.9a. Woodblock print on paper. Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (3) *Gui*. Detail of a rubbing of a stele from the Prefectural School of Guilin, Guangxi. Stele dated 1298. Ink on paper. Fu-ssu-nien Library, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. (4) *Gui*. Song Boren, *Register of Plum Blossoms* (1261 edition), 17a. Shanghai Museum.

waters, catch our breath, and reckon the course ahead. For given the pervasive sense of the limits of representation as a framework for adequately *being* in the world, pictures that awaken attention to a life of forms that simultaneously exceeds and integrates the limited perceptual faculties of human beings are potent provocations. They figure continuities between human and nonhuman worlds whose desirability is as current as the pictures themselves are obsolete. Like the bronzes that nursed them into being, these pictures gesture toward a future premised on deep memory but flexible in its adaptation of past forms. Their path is well behind us, and rightly so. But in tracing the margins of our own ways of knowing, they redefine the limits of the possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In seeking to express my gratitude to the many people who helped bring this book into being, I find myself confronted by a profound sense of the poverty of language and overwhelmed by the multitude of names. I hope that all those who gave me time but whom I've failed to acknowledge, as well as those who find years of friendship and conversation summed up in a brief and passing mention, can forgive me.

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Significant portions of this manuscript were written in a cooper's cottage overlooking the Toadsmoor Valley, in the generous company of Michael and Liz Flint and their three inexhaustible hounds. If there is a more salutary place on this Earth to think and write and wander than Bisley, I can say, with assurance, that I have not been there.

The execution of this book was a long process. Rachel Saunders bore witness, in every sense. She was steadfast, and in more ways than I can possibly recount, she helped me see what lay hidden in plain sight. Language cannot possibly capture all that she did, and here, at the end, I am inarticulate. Words inevitably fail.

GLOSSARY

ai gu (cherishing antiquity) 愛古
anfushi (military commissioner) 安撫使
ba wan (to handle appreciatively) 把玩
bai ji (soundly defeated) 敗績
baimiao (fine-line) 白描
banxing (promulgated) 頒行
Beilin (Forest of Stelae) 碑林
ben (root, fundament) 本
Bencao gangmu 本草綱目
Bencao tujing 本草圖經
Bianjing 汴京
Bige (Imperial Archives) 祕閣
biji (notebook) 筆記
Bogutu 博古圖
bu (radical) 部
Cai Xiang 蔡襄
Cai Zhao 蔡肇
Cang Jie 倉頡
Cang Jie pian 倉頡篇
cang li (store ritual) 藏禮
Cao Fang 曹芳
Chang'an 長安
Chen Xiang 陳襄
Chen Xiangdao 陳祥道
Chen Yang 陳暘
cheng (walled settlement) 城
cheng chu hu wo (designations issue from the I who designates) 稱出乎我
Cheng Yi 程頤
Chengzhou 成周
chu (emerging) 出
Chu Zhongdu 褚仲都
Chunguan zongbo 春官宗伯
Chunhua 淳化
ci (song lyric) 詞
cong 琮
Cui Ling'en 崔靈恩
Cui You 崔遊
cun (inch) 寸
Da an zhi yue (*Music of Great Peace*) 大安之樂
Dashengyue (*Music of Great Brilliance*) 大晟樂
Da Tang Kaiyuan li 大唐開元禮
da zhuan (greater official script) 大篆
dao (the Way) 道
Daoxue (Learning of the Way) 道學

Daozhi 盜跖
de (power, virtue) 德
Deng Xi 鄧析
ding (cauldron) 鼎
dingzhen xuma (anadiplosis) 頂真續麻
Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒
dou (*dou* vessel) 豆
Dou Yan 竇儼
Du Fu 杜甫
dui (*dui* vessel) 敦
Elai 惡來
Erya 爾雅
fa (rule, designs) 法
fazhi (rule and measure) 法制
fajia (Legalists) 法家
Fang Ning 范甯
fang ru (square nipples) 方乳
Fangshan 房山
Fan Zuyu 范祖禹
fen wei qi guo 分為七國
Feng Dao 馮道
fu gu (revival of antiquity) 復古
Fu Xi 伏羲
gan (stimulate, stir) 感
Gaozong 高宗
ge (song) 歌
geng (stew) 羹
gewu (the investigation of things) 格物
Gongsun Long 公孫龍
Gongyang 公羊
gou (to purchase) 購
gu (chalice) 觚
guan (to observe) 觀
gui (tureen) 簋
gui bi (tablet disk) 圭璧
guqiwuxue (antiquarianism, ancient artifact studies) 古器物學
guwen (ancient style, ancient graphs) 古文
Guanzhong 關中
Guanzi 管子
Guo Pu 郭璞
Guo Rong 郭榮
Guo Shu 郭叔
Guo Wei 郭威
Guoxue (State Academy) 國學
Guo Zhongshu 郭忠恕
Guozijian (School for the Sons of the State) 國子監
Guo Zongxun 郭宗訓
Guozi Liji boshi 國子禮記博士
Han 漢
Han bei 韓碑
Hanlin 翰林
Han Yu 韓愈
Hanyu Dacidian 漢語大辭典
Haochu 浩初
hou (prince) 侯
honzōgaku (natural history, pharmacology) 本草學
hu 壺
Huang Bosi 黃伯思
Huaixi 淮西
Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅
huang yi (yellow *yi* vessel) 黃彝
huapu (painting manual) 畫譜
huaxiang zi (pictographic characters) 畫象字
Hui Shi 惠施
Huizong 徽宗
jia 斝
Jiang Xiufu 江休復
Jin 晉
jing (reverence) 敬
jing (well) 井
jingmi (finely detailed) 精密
Jingshi zhenglei beiji bencao 經史證類備急本草
jinshixue (epigraphy) 金石學
jiu ding (Nine Cauldrons) 九鼎
jiu tu (old pictures) 舊圖
Jizha 季札
juan (scroll, fascicle) 卷
jue (*jue* vessel) 爵
jun jun chen chen fu fu zi zi 君君臣臣父父子子
Kaifeng 開封

kaishu (standard script) 楷書
Kaiyuan li 開元禮
Kaogutu 考古圖
kedouwen (tadpole script) 蝌蚪文
Khitan/Qidan 契丹
kui (contrariety) 睽
lei (lei vessel) 壘
lei (thunder) 雷
leiwen (thunder pattern) 雷紋
li (ritual) 禮
li (coherence, principle) 理
li (to establish) 立
Libu (Bureau of Rites) 禮部
Li Gonglin 李公麟
Liji 禮記
liqi (ritual implements) 禮器
liqi tu (pictures of ritual implements) 禮器圖
Li Shangyin 李商隱
Li Shizhen 李時珍
Li Si 李斯
Li Sizhen 李嗣真
Lishu 禮書
lishu (clerical script) 隸書
li tu (pictures of ritual) 禮圖
Li Yangbing 李陽冰
Li Yu 李煜
Lizhiju (Ritual Regulations Bureau) 禮制局
Liang Zheng 梁正
Liao 遼
Lin'an 臨安
Ling 靈
Liu Chang 劉敞 liu qi (the six implements) 六器
liu shu (six categories of character formation) 六書
liu yi (the six arts) 六藝
Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠
Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元
long wen 龍紋 (dragon patterns)
Lu 魯
Lu Dian 陸佃
Luoyang 洛陽
Lüshi Chunqiu 呂氏春秋
Lü Dalin 呂大臨
Lü Ji 呂紀
lüe (leave out, elide) 略
maobi (tapered brush) 毛筆
Meihua xishenpu 梅花喜神譜
Mengying 夢英
ming cun shi wang 名存實亡
ming sheng hu bi 名生乎彼
ming wu gu shi 名無固實
ming wu gu yi 名無固宜
mingjia (School of Names) 名家
Mingtang (Luminous Hall) 明堂
mo (that which is dependent) 末
mo fa (destruction of the Buddhist dharma) 末法
Nie Chongyi 聶崇義
neicang (palace storehouse) 內藏
niu ding (ox cauldron) 牛鼎
Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修
pan ying (saddle-girth and bridle) 繁纓
Pei Du 裴度
peng ren (stove attendant) 亨人
Ping Huaixi bei 平淮西碑
qi (vital energy) 氣
Qi 齊
Qi zun 旂尊
qian (pure positivity) 乾
Qianlong 乾隆
Qin 秦
Qin zhuan (Qin official script) 秦篆
Qinzong 欽宗
qiongzhi shiwu zhi li 窮至事物之理
qu ming qiu shi 去名求實
Quanrong 犬戎
quxian (angled rack) 曲縣
ren (human) 人
ren (humane) 仁
Renzong 仁宗
ru (traditionalist, Confucian) 儒
ru xue (classical learning) 儒學
Ruan Chen 阮諶

san dai (the Three Dynasties) 三代
san hou (the Three Targets) 三侯
San li 三禮
Sangfutu 喪服圖
Sanli yizong 三禮義宗
shan zun (mountain *zun*) 山尊
Shang 商
Shang zun 商尊
Shangshu 尚書
Shaoxi zhouxian shidian yitu 紹熙州縣釋奠儀圖
Shen Gua 沈括
shengren zhi ji (traces of the Sages) 聖人之跡
Shennong 神農
shi (the Poems, poetry) 詩
shi (matters) 事
shi (substance, actuality) 實
shi (chronicler) 史
shi (literati) 士
shi (army) 師
Shi ba jia fatie 十八家法帖
shi gu (Stone Drums) 石鼓
shi jing (Stone Classics) 石經
shihua (remarks on poetry) 詩話
Shijing 詩經
shi qi shi (adapt to the times) 適其時
shi xie (stone crabs) 石蟹
Shizhongshan ji 石鐘山記
Sima Guang 司馬光
shou huan (beast-clutched rings) 獸環
shou ming (preserving names) 守名
Shu 蜀
shu (number) 數
shu (the Documents) 書
shu (subcommentary) 疏
shu er bu zuo (transmits but does not create) 述而不作
shu zhe ru ye 書者如也
shuqi (writing) 書契
shun (follow the course) 順
Shuowen jiezi 說文解字
Si 泗
si da shu (Four Great Books) 四大書
siwen (this culture of ours) 斯文
Song 宋
Song Boren 宋伯仁
Song Yingxing 宋應星
Su Shi 蘇軾
Su Song 蘇頌
Su Xu 蘇勗
sun (diminution) 損
Sun Liangfu 孫良夫
suo chen zhi chu (the place where they are displayed) 所陳之處
Taichang 太常
Taichang yin'ge li 太常因革禮
Taishan keshi 泰山刻石
Taiyuan 太原
Taizong 太宗
Taizu 太祖
Tang (founder of the Shang) 湯
Tang (dynasty) 唐
Tang Shenwei 唐慎微
Tao Kan 陶侃
Taotie 饕餮
ti (script) 體
Tiangong kaiwu 天工開物
tie (model calligraphy) 帖
tihua shi (poetry on painting) 題畫詩
Wang Anshi 王安石
Wang Bi 王弼
Wang Shipeng 王十朋
Wang Xizhi 王羲之
Wei 衛
wei (seat) 位
Wei Yingwu 韋應物
weishi zong (Consciousness-Only Tradition) 唯識宗
wen (pattern, cultural forms, writing, adornment, civility) 文
Wen Wang (King Wen) 文王
wenzi (character, lit. pattern-progeny) 文字
wu (things) 物
wu deng jue (five ranks) 五等爵

Wuli jingyi 五禮精義
Wu-Yue 吳越
Wu Zetian 武則天
Xia 夏
Xian Qin guqi ji 先秦古器記
xiang (schema, image, elephant) 象
xiang (to adorn) 襐
Xiangding dayue suo (Institute for Deliberating Grand Music) 詳定大樂所
xianwang shen suo yi gan zhi 先王慎所以感之
Xianzong 憲宗
xiao zhuan (lesser official script) 小篆
xin (heart-mind) 心
Xinfa (New Policies) 新法
xing (innate nature) 性
xing ding 鉶鼎
Xingbu (Bureau of Punishments) 刑部
Xinzhu 新築
Xu Gan 徐幹
Xu Kai 徐鍇
Xu Shen 許慎
xu wei (empty seats) 虛位
Xu Xuan 徐鉉
Xuan Wang (King Xuan) 宣王
Xuanhe bogutu 宣和博古圖
xuanxue (Dark Learning) 玄學
Xue Zhongru 薛仲孺
Xun Kuang 荀況
xungu (explication) 訓詁
Xunzi 荀子
yan bu jin yi 言不盡意
yan (steamer) 甗
yan ziru 言孳乳
yang ding (goat cauldron) 羊鼎
Yang Nanzhong 楊南仲
yi (yi vessel) 彝
yi (ewer) 匜
yi (variance) 異
yi (the Changes) 易
yi (garment) 衣
yi lei xiang xing 依類象形
yi qi yi ye 以其夷也
Yili 儀禮
Yiliju (Ritual Revision Bureau) 議禮局
Yin Zhuo 尹拙
Yindi 隱帝
Yishan (Mount Yi) 繹山、嶧山
Yongxing 永興
You Yu 由余
Yu 禹
Yuan 元
Yuandao 原道
yue (music) 樂
Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘
zhang ke (steward) 掌客
Zhang Yi 張鎰
Zhang Zai 張載
Zhao Ji 趙佶
Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤
Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠
zhen (authentic, true, real) 真
Zheng 鄭
Zhenghe wuli xinyi 政和五禮新儀
zheng ming (rectify names) 正名
Zheng Wenbao 鄭文寶
Zheng Yuqing 鄭餘慶
Zheng Xuan 鄭玄
Zhezong 哲宗
zhi (form) 制
zhi er (vertical handles) 直耳
zhi shi er bu zhi yunyu 知石而不知韞玉
zhong (loyalty) 忠
Zhongshu Yuxi 仲叔于奚
Zhou 周
Zhouli 周禮
Zhoushi wangcheng mingtang zongmiao tu 周室王城明堂宗廟圖
Zhou (Zhou the Chronicler) 籀
zhu (commentary) 注、註
Zhu Xi 朱熹
zhuhou guo (states of the many princes) 諸侯國
zhuan (tradition) 傳
zhuanshu (official script) 篆書
zhuzi baijia (hundred schools of the

masters) 諸子百家
zi (character, progeny) 字
ziran (so-of-itself, natural) 自然
ziru (to multiply) 孳乳
Zishuo 字說
Zong qiu lun 縱囚論
zong shuo (comprehensive explanation) 總說
Zongzhou 宗周
Zou 鄒
zun (*zun* vessel) 尊
Zuo Qiuming 左丘明

NOTES

Introduction

1. [A] Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 12.412.

2. The fact that the term "six arts" could also refer to the six canons of classical learning—Documents (*shu*), Poetry (*shi*), Changes (*yi*), Ritual (*li*), Music (*yue*), and Annals (*chunqiu*)—reinforced the connection between the textually inscribed, imagined materiality of classical antiquity and the contemporary practice of making ritual, musical, and other implements associated with the normative performance of virtue, etiquette, and other classically inscribed values.

3. [B] This comment is attributed to Cheng Yi in Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 90. But it is not included in Cheng Yi's commentary on the passage as recorded in *Er Cheng waishu,* 6.8a–b. "Neo-Confucianism" here, and throughout this book, is shorthand for a body of teachings propounded by Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and their followers that would come to be known as *Daoxue* (Learning of the Way). The term was applied retrospectively, and at times pejoratively, to a series of eleventh- and twelfth-century thinkers who endeavored to ground the moral principles of the Confucian Classics in the ontological patterns of Heaven and Earth. Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 328–330; Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 78–83.

4. [C] Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 90. For a discussion of other interpretations, see Confucius, *Analects*, trans. Edward Slingerland, 61.

5. [D] Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 25.855.

6. On the formation of the Confucian canon, see Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 368–371.

7. Han thinkers clearly understood key aspects of the early Zhou ritual system, but they lacked a comprehensive picture of the various ways in which the materiality of Zhou ritual has been translated, transmitted, and reimagined in text. The essential designs asso-

ciated with certain names, like "cauldron" (*ding*) and "bell" (*zhong*) were always understood. Others, as we shall see, were not. See Falkenhausen, "Archaeological Perspectives."

8. Many medieval commentators linked the literal with the metaphorical interpretations of the conundrum, making an explicit connection between the problem of the "rule" (*fa*), or "rule and measure" (*fazhi*), of the chalice, in the sense of the dimensions and volume of the vessel appropriate to its assigned place in a hierarchy of ritual vessels, and the standards for good governance and ethical conduct in a hierarchal social order. For example, the medieval commentator Chu Zhongdu (fl. early sixth century) remarked: "If you make a chalice without following the rule for the chalice, the chalice will not be a success. If you govern without following the rule for governance, how could your governance succeed?" [E] Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 12.413. The consistent assertion is that the nominal articulation of social and political morality means nothing if does not proceed in tandem with the actual articulation of the social and political forms so designated. The chalice and other ritual implements were effective devices for linking the nominal with the actual because they constituted one aspect of governance that was objectively real, quantifiable, and collectively apprehensible.

9. Scholars in Chinese studies regularly refer to the Six Dynasties (third–sixth centuries) as China's "early medieval" period, while using the term "middle period" for an indefinite period that, depending upon the frame of reference, can stretch from as early as the third to as late as the sixteenth centuries, but which always includes the tenth through the fourteenth centuries. For a recent discussion, see Zhang Ling, "The Matter of Time," 81. For sake of simplicity, I use "medieval" to designate the entirety of the period, from the fall of the Han in the third century to the conquest of the Mongols in the thirteenth. This is intended simply as a temporal shorthand. I make no claims about the comparability of this longue durée to other "medieval" periods in world history.

10. We do not know the exact medium(s) in which these initial illustrations were made. While it is possible that at least some were colored, the fact that exegetes tended to note significant colors in writing suggests that polychromatic illustration was not the primary method by which information about color was conveyed. It is likely that the illustrations were made using the same tools that the exegete used in writing: black ink and a tapered brush on a ground of paper or silk.

11. This distinction between text and practice is inspired by De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*.

12. Louis, *Design by the Book*, 50.

13. Throughout these pages, my analysis is informed by two overlapping domains of contemporary theory. The first is the philosophical investigation of technics, principally in the work of Martin Heidegger, Gilbert Simondon, Bertrand Gille, and Bernard Stiegler. Here I am interested in the notion of human cognition being embedded in "a system of technical objects" that blurs the distinction between mechanics and biology, and the long-running discussion of the relative status of Aristotle's classic four causes—material, formal, final, and efficient—in the structuring of that system. Stiegler's attention to "technics in time," in the sense of chronological processes of change within and across technical systems, is particularly germane to the questions of historical agency that motivate my inquiry. Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 1–27. At the same time, in locating substantive and meaningful technical change in medieval China, I am also quietly resisting the rupture of modernity that most of the modern literature on technics assumes. The second domain is the social-anthropological concern with the social agency of things. On this side, I am particularly informed by the way in which Bruno Latour distributes agency

in his theory of actor-networks, defining an actor relationally as that which is "made to act by many others." Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 46. Alfred Gell's oft-cited *Art and Agency* is also an influence, particularly for its displacement of the "symbolic communication" that dominates so much of recent art historiography, in favor of a concern with "agency, intention, causation, result, and transformation." The Confucian scholars that I examine in these pages would agree, in essence, with Gell's understanding of art as "a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it." Gell, *Art and Agency*, 6.

14. The liquidity of the bronzes could, in this sense, be understood as one aspect of what Christian de Pee terms the circulatory "immanent metaphors" that organized Northern Song understandings of the relationship between financial policy and moral life. De Pee, "Circulation and Flow," 182–188.

15. I am imagining this as an influence on the structuring of relations between cognitive and productive orders, and thus as a dimension of a "technical dynamic" that "precedes the social dynamic and imposes itself thereupon." Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 67. The implications that this assertion carries for Stiegler's theory, which is premised on the notion of this precedence constituting a defining condition of modernity, warrant a much more sustained consideration that is regrettably beyond the scope of the present volume.

16. Here I am echoing Roger Chartier's approach to the materiality of text, especially his refusal "to separate the analysis of symbolic meanings from that of the material forms by which they are transmitted." Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure*, vii.

17. On the "hermeneutics" of the Classics, see Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 1–16. On the synthetic approach to interpretation, see Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 190–217; Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 61–63. For the nonnormative, unsystematizing character of the eleventh-century empiricism of Shen Gua and its "enlarged epistemic community," see Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*, 171–200.

18. Ya Zuo characterizes this divergence as a tension between "system" and "empiricism." Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*, 19.

19. Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 4. Zhu Xi essentially followed Cheng Yi in advancing this understanding of "the investigation of things." Bol, *The Culture of Ours*, 316–327.

20. For a concise overview of what this philosophical vision entailed, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 300–342.

21. The relevant scholarship is legion. For a concise overview, see von Glahn, "Imagining Pre-modern China," 35–70.

22. I am appropriating "technicity" from Simondon's wider "philosophy of the transindividual" and using it to highlight what Simondon characterizes as the reticulated network of techniques that exceeds and sustains individual technical objects and constitutes the web of relations wherein all human action occurs. For an introduction to the concept and thoughtful discussion of its distinctive development in the work of Bernard Stiegler, see Combes, *Gilbert Simondon*, 66–70.

23. My argument here follows Ladislav Kesner's lucid critique of the prospect of an imminent "non-Eurocentric" art history. Kesner, "Is a Truly Global Art History Possible?" 91.

24. The modern transformation of Chinese is charted most cogently in Liu, *Translingual Practice*. See also Kurtz, *The Discovery of Chinese Logic*.

25. Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*, 15.

26. Mitchell, *Image Science*, 16–17. See also Mitchell, *Iconology*, 7–46. For an illuminating

discussion of the Greek origins of the now commonplace distinction that Mitchell invokes between the perceiving and remembering body, see Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 9–10.

27. Mitchell, *Image Science*, 16.

28. Mitchell's is but one of the many definitions of image that have been proposed. Panofsky, for his part, regarded images as conceptually distinct from motifs, suggesting that it was only when motifs and combinations of motifs were connected with themes and concepts, and thereby "recognized as carriers of a secondary or conventional meaning," that they deserved to be called considered "images." Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 29. For a discussion of other possibilities, and an argument that situates images in dynamic relation with media, see Belting, *An Anthropology of Images*, 1–21. While Belting unquestionably endeavors to rescue images from Aristotelian hylomorphism, he nevertheless remains wedded to the idea of the image in and of itself as intangible, something that requires a medium in order to interact with the material world. Although he actively resists the semiotic separation of "the world of signs from the world of bodies" (11), the embodied nature of his approach still requires the possibility of representation as a precondition for the conceptualization of the image. This is particularly clear from his invocation of Jean-Pierre Vernant's observation of the "close links that exist between the history of visual artifacts on the one hand and, on the other, the evolution of Greek thought to encompass, within the concept of the image, notions of symbol, resemblance, imitation, and appearance" (3).

29. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 8–9, 16.

30. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 11.

31. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*; Coole, *New Materialisms*.

32. Mitchell, *Image Science*, 15.

33. Bal, *Reading Rembrandt*, 25–39.

34. Houston, "Writing that Isn't," 21–48; Elkins, *The Domain of Images*.

35. Critical introductions to these topics include Leys, "The Turn to Affect," Brown, "Thing Theory," and Kohn, "Anthropology of Ontologies."

36. Mitchell, *Image Science*, 42–43. For a deeper history of the X as a philosophical figure for Heidegger, see Schwenger, "Words and the Murder of the Thing," 101–102.

37. Kohn, *How Forests Think*, 29.

38. Ziporyn, *Ironies*, 16.

39. Ziporyn, *Ironies*, 16.

40. My synopsis of these two texts follows the insights of Owen, *Readings*, 37–56. The translations follow Owen, with some modifications.

41. [F] *Maoshi zhengyi*, 1.7.

42. [G] *Maoshi zhengyi*, 1.12.

43. [H] *Liji zhengyi*, 37.1262.

44. [H] *Liji zhengyi*, 37.1262–1263.

45. It goes without saying that representational theories of perception and cognition undergird multiple traditions of Buddhist thought, most famously Yogācāra, and were thus present in China no later than the middle of the first millennium CE. While most of these traditions, such as "Consciousness-Only Tradition" (*Weishi zong*) associated with the famous pilgrim and translator Xuanzang, defined representation negatively—in the sense that making the distinction between things in the world and things in consciousness was an affliction to be overcome—they nevertheless began from the assumption that it was fundamental to the experience of ordinary human beings. For brief introduc-

tions, see Buswell and Lopez, *Dictionary of Buddhism*, 297–298, 1033–1044. But there is very little evidence that a distinction between things in the world and their impressions in the mind was explicitly enunciated in earlier Chinese thought, especially in the texts that were eventually canonized as the Confucian classics. The circulation of this idea in Buddhist circles was undoubtedly one of the many factors that contributed to what I characterize in this book as the increasing concern with representation in the wider, non-Buddhist intellectual culture of the Tang and Song. But the force of this influence remains an open question, one that is unfortunately well beyond the scope of the present project. On the nonrepresentational character of early Chinese thought, see Ames, "Meaning as Imaging," 228–231; Frasier, "Knowledge and Error," 128; and Lenk, "Introduction," 5.

46. On the formative role of Song thought in the formation of early modern Chinese encyclopedias, pharmacopoeias, and technical knowledge, especially the "structured homology of words and things" that characterized the Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi, see Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, 38–50.

47. Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, 28–71. Schäfer, *The Crafting*, 138–156.

48. The most cohesive, single-volume treatment of Song antiquarianism is Chen Fangmei, *Qingtongqi yu Songdai wenhuashi*, which compiles a series of foundational essays that Chen wrote on the subject in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For an overview in English, see Sena, *Bronze and Stone*. Hsu Ya-hwei's 2010 dissertation, "Reshaping Chinese Material Culture," is also essential, although many of its insights have since been published in separate articles. Other important contributions include Harrist, "The Artist as Antiquarian"; Li Ling, *Shuogu zhujin*; Han Wei, "Songdai fanggu zhizuo"; and Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 150–203.

49. For a concise overview of the rise of the "ancient style" movement, see Bol, "Reconceptualizing," 670–681.

50. Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi."

51. Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*.

52. de Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*.

53. Nylan, "The 'Chin Wen/Ku Wen' Controversy."

54. So, "Antiques in Antiquity"; Rawson, *Chinese Jade*, 23–27, 43; Wu, "Introduction," 24–25.

55. Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive*.

56. This is the essential argument of Schnapp, *World Antiquarianism*. The "return to antiquity," in this sense, is what Mitchell would refer to as a "repeated narrative figure." See his "Showing Seeing," 173.

Part I

1. For details on the publication history of the text, see chapter 2.

2. Li Zhi, *Sanlitu ji* (996), appended to Nie Chongyi, *Xicheng Zhengshi jiashu chongjiao Sanlitu*, 1b; *Song huiyao jigao*, *zhiguan* 28.1.2972a.

3. Louis, *Design by the Book*, 49.

4. See, for example, Hsu, "*Xuanhe bogutu* de 'jianjie' liuchuan," 10–11, for the assertion that the makers of such images "were unable to grasp" (*wufa zhangwo*) their source.

5. For examples, see Huang, "Media Transfer and Modular Construction."

6. For a detailed discussion of this stele, see Chen, *Qingtongqi yu Songdai wenhua shi*, 197–209.

7. Plato, *Cratylus*, 137.

8. Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, 22.415–416.

9. Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, 40.

10. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 32–47.

11. What I am gesturing toward here is the persistent "undoing yet preserving" that Spivak characterizes as symptomatic of Derrida's approach to all oppositions. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, xxxix.

12. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 7–8.

Chapter One

1. Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Cheng, Year 2, 2. The translation of this and subsequent passages from the *Zuozhuan* are my own. For a complete and alternative translation of the episode, and synopsis, see Durrant et al., *Zuo Tradition*, 701–705, 708–713.

2. Literally "an angled rack," which stood, synecdochally, for the ritual bells and chimes that were suspended from it. I am indebted to Lothar von Falkenhausen for bringing this nuance to my attention.

3. Yang Bojun, *Chunqui Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Cheng, Year 2, 2.

4. Ibid. "Confucius," here, is a figment of the text. There is no evidence to suggest that the actual historical Confucius ever said these words. Instead, what we are most likely witnessing is an example of the widespread Warring States–era practice of enhancing the authority of sentiments deemed consistent with the master's teachings by attributing them to Confucius himself.

5. Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 8.91.

6. [1A] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Duke Cheng, Year 2, 2.

7. Since the Song-Yuan era, scholars of Chinese rhetoric have referred to this as the "thimble and bound hemp" (*dingzhen xuma*) form. In Western rhetoric it is known as anadiplosis.

8. Scholars have long argued that the system of the "five ranks" (*wu deng jue*) was largely an imagined construct that later chroniclers projected onto the Western Zhou, and that actual domains were never as neatly correlated with the ranks of their commanding officers as these chroniclers claimed them to be. But the sense that the Western Zhou had been so organized was widespread in the final centuries of the first millennium BCE, and throughout the imperial era, and it is from this sense that the story of Confucius's response derives its meaning. On the tensions between the historical and historiographic formation of the "five rank" system, see Li Feng, "Transmitting Antiquity." My English translation of these ranks follows Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, xxxvii.

9. Throughout the book, I reserve "traditionalist" for the preimperial and early imperial uses of the term, and the more conventional "Confucian" for later medieval uses, when being a *ru* meant engaging in a mode of learning premised on the Confucian classics. For an introduction to the debates surrounding the term's translation, see Queen, "Introduction," 12–13, and Nylan, "A Problematic Model," 19–20, 37n15.

10. *Analects* 7.1, 3.14.

11. [1B] *Analects* 13.3. Translation after Confucius, *Analects*, trans. Edward Slingerland, 139, with minor modifications.

12. One of the most vexed debates in the historiography of the *Analects* is its date(s). For an update on where the scholarship stands today, see Hunter and Kern, *Confucius and the Analects Revisited*.

13. Boltz, "Language and Writing," 97.

14. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*.

15. Makeham translates the Chinese term *shi* as "actuality," rather than the more common "substance." This works quite well as a translation for Xu Gan's understanding of the term, but can be misleading when used to translate other texts' uses of the term. To avoid misrepresenting Makeham's ideas, I retain "actuality" when discussing his interpretations, while using "substance" elsewhere. The key is that we are both talking about the same Chinese word.

16. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 22.

17. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 7.

18. [1C] Xu Gan, *Zhonglun*, B.6a. Translation from Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 7.

19. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 9.

20. MacKenzie, "Putting the Cratylus in Its Place."

21. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 30.

22. Ashmore, "Word and Gesture," 461; Wagner, *Language, Ontology*, 71, 76.

23. [1D] Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jije* 22.414. Translation from Hutton, *Xunzi*, 236–237.

24. Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, 22.414.

25. Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, 22.415–420.

26. [1E] Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, 22.418.

27. Reddy, "Against Constructionism," 331.

28. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 43.

29. Most of Zheng Xuan's glosses on the ritual classics are not attributed to other commentators. One of the few figures he does cite on several occasions is Xu Shen. For examples, see *Zhouli Zhengzhu*, 40.7b, *Liji zhushu*, 40.4a.

30. O'Neill, "Xu Shen's Scholarly Agenda"; O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory*.

31. Kyle Steinke, "Script Change in Bronze Age China," and David Lurie, "The Development of Writing in Japan," in Houston, ed., *The Shape of Script*, 135–185. See also Saussy, *Great Walls of Discourse*, 35–74.

32. Lurie, "Language, Writing, and Disciplinarity."

33. Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.1–4. In preparing the following synopsis of Xu Shen's postface, I have benefitted from consulting the translations in Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*, 151–165; O'Neill, *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory*, 258–273; and O'Neill, "Xu Shen's Scholarly Agenda," 429–440. The translations are my own.

34. Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 272–278.

35. The term *xiang* is used in a host of different ways in early Chinese texts, and has been variously translated as "image," "figure," and "emblem." Here, I have opted for "schemata" because it best expresses the sense of graphic simplification implied by Xu Shen's visualization of form according to category (*yi lei xiang xing*). I address some of the theoretical challenges implicated in this and other translations of the term in chapter 6.

36. *Fa* is generally translated as "method," "ruled," or sometimes even "law." Here, the term conveys a sense of abstract structures underlying the forms and movements of all earthly things—the methods of nature, so to speak. As with *xiang*, these methods are not immediately accessible to the senses of normal beings. Instead, their perception requires sagely vision. In modern English, "design" conveys a sense of structure and plan, captures the abstraction of the *fa*, and unlike "method," is frequently associated with visible objects like diagrams, layouts, and compositions. For these reasons, it seems closest to the visible abstractions that Fu Xi witnessed in the Earth.

37. As Paul Goldin has demonstrated, there is abundant evidence of early Chinese

creation myths. Goldin, "The Myth that China has no Creation Myth." But the autonomous will of the creator(s) is not foregrounded in early Chinese accounts of the origins of writing. The *xiang* and *fa* are treated as if they were immanent structures rather than messages sent from the creator(s) to the Sages. For an overview of these accounts, see Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 241–286.

38. The knotted cords are typically understood to be analogous to the *quipu* of the cultures of the Andes.

39. Han scholars understood the "choniclers" of ancient China to have been officials who attended the ruler throughout his working day, keeping a record of his pronouncements and managing such matters as sacrifices, divination, and calendrical calculation.

40. I am indebted to Lothar von Falkenhausen for suggesting this approach to translating *zi*.

41. Stephen Houston and Andréas Stauder, "What is a Hieroglyph?," 25–26. On Xu Shen's prioritization of "graphological" concerns, see Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "The *Shuowen Jiezi* Dictionary, 249–252.

42. Boltz, "Language and Writing," 114–123. More generally, see Elkins, *The Domain of Images*, 91, on the impossibility of "purely visual" pictures.

43. [1F] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.1b.

44. Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.1b.

45. Scholz et al., "Philosophy of Linguistics."

46. [1G] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.1b.

47. On the systematicity of the *Shuowen*, see Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "The *Shuowen Jiezi* Dictionary," 254.

48. My characterization of the *liu shu* as "scribal acts" follows Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "The *Shuowen Jiezi* Dictionary," 252.

49. Although Romanized identically, the name of the chronicler, Zhou 籀, is distinct from the name of the Zhou 周 dynasty that he served.

50. [1H] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.2a.

51. [1I] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.4a.

52. [1J] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.4a.

53. Bottéro and Harbsmeier, *The "Shuowen Jiezi" Dictionary*, 255–257. On archaism and its relationship to what he aptly terms "the ethics of orthography" in the Eastern Han, see Leung, "Bad Writing."

Chapter Two

1. [1K] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 278.

2. Borges, *Other Inquisitions*, 101–105.

3. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv.

4. Schaberg, "The *Zhouli* as Constitutional Text."

5. [1L] *Zhouli zhushu*, 18.561–562.

6. This occurred most influentially in the pages for Li Gonglin's lost catalog of jades. See Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 8.1–14.

7. For a recent discussion of the complexities of this "Confucian legacy" of names, see So, *Early Chinese Jades*, 191–194.

8. The closest candidate is a "category" of vaguely zoomorphic jade pendants, which modern Chinese archaeologists have, following Li Gonglin, typically labeled *hu*. But it is far more likely that this represents the retroactive application of the term *hu* to a cross-section of different zoomorphic pendants than a reflection of the name given to these

pendants by their makers. For an example, see Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*, 143n27. For Li Gonglin's usage, see Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu* 8.1a.

9. Rawson, *Chinese Jade*, 23–27, 43. Wu, "Introduction," 24–25.

10. Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese*, 54–55. Bottéro and Harbsmeier argue, by contrast, that it was etymological, but narrowly so, focused on "graphical etymology" rather than "semantic analysis." Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "The *Shuowen Jiezi* Dictionary," 249.

11. In the preface to his recompilation of Xu Shen's dictionary, Xu Xuan highlights the importance of the official scripts of Li Si and Zhou the Chronicler to accessing the teachings of the Sages. "Without characters, one cannot perceive the minds of the Sages. Without the official scripts, one cannot penetrate the meaning of characters." [1M] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15b.6.

12. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 143.2073; Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 3.34b.

13. For Zheng Xuan's commentary on the *Rites of Zhou*, see Plaks, "Zheng Xuan's Commentary."

14. [1N] *Zhouli zhushu* 20.607.

15. Boltz, "Shuo wen chieh tzu," 435–436.

16. The seventh-century *History of the Sui* (*Suishu*) records a total of ten discrete compilations of ritual images surviving in the imperial library of the Sui dynasty (581–618). It also mentions nine other lost compilations that had once been in the imperial library of the Liang. Only one of these compilations, the single-fascicle *Illustrations of Mourning Garments* (*Sangfutu*), attributed to the third-century exegete Cui You, is also listed in the tenth-century *Old History of the Tang* (*Jiu Tangshu*), alongside only two other previously unrecorded compilations. While the discrepancy may be in part attributable to the poorer editing standards of the *Old History*, it is safe to say that a significant portion of the ritual imagery available to Sui and early Tang court scholars had been lost by the time Nie began his project. Wei Zheng, *Suishu*, 32.919–924. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tangshu*, 46.1973, 1975.

17. [1O] Nie Chongyi, *Xinding sanlitu* (Zhenjiang, 1175; reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), postface. Unless otherwise noted, citations of *Sanlitu* hereafter reference the annotated edition: Nie Chongyi, *Xinding sanlitu*, annot. Ding Ning (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2006).

18. *Sanlitu* 14.457, 459.

19. A section in the "Chunguan zongbo" chapter of the *Zhouli*.

20. It is unclear whether these two lines were composed by Nie himself or taken from an unnamed subcommentary. They do not appear in the text of the *Zhouli* or in any of the available early commentaries.

21. A chapter in the *Liji*.

22. [1P] *Sanlitu* 14.448.

23. My use of the term "picto-textual" is inspired by Melissa McCormick's discussion of the "pictoliterary" dynamics of Japanese *ko-e* (small scrolls), and Rachel Saunders's analysis of "picto-textual" *emaki* (illustrated handscrolls). McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu*; Saunders, "Xuanzang's Journey to the East."

24. Tuotuo, *Liaoshi*, 5.59–60. The episode is discussed in Standen, "What Nomads Want."

25. Louis, *Design by the Book*, 15.

26. On rites and imperial legitimation, see Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*; McMullen, "Bureaucrats and Cosmology."

27. Xue Juzheng, *Jiu Wudai shi*, 101.1348; Wang Pu, *Wudai huiyao*, 8.128.

28. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12793. For a detailed account of the events surrounding Nie Chongyi's compilation of the *Sanlitu*, see Louis, *Design by the Book*, 13–38.

29. Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, 291.9496–97; Xue Juzheng, *Jiu Wudai shi*, 113.1499; Louis, *Design by the Book*, 15–16.

30. Although his official biography does not supply the date of the commission, Nie mentions it in the opening of his postface to the *Sanlitu*. See *Sanlitu*, 20.1a.

31. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12793–7.

32. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12795–7.

33. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12795–7. For a more thorough discussion of the debate, see Louis, *Design by the Book*, 30–32, 37n39. See also Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 45–48.

34. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12795–7.

35. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12793–4.

36. Louis, *Design by the Book*, 29.

37. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 431.12794.

38. Louis, *Design by the Book*, 31.

39. *Sanlitu*, preface, 1–3.

40. *Sanlitu*, 20.612.

41. Zhou He, *Lixue gailun*, 84.

42. Wei Zheng, *Suishu*, 32.921, 924.

43. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tangshu*, 46.1984. Nie cites the *Erya* regularly in *Illustrations* but makes no explicit mention of Guo Pu's illustrated commentary.

44. [1Q] *Sanlitu*, 20.612.

45. [1R] *Sanlitu*, 20.612.

46. *Sanlitu*, 1175 ed., 13.6b.

47. This attention to names in isolation rather than action is also consistent with Xu Shen's *Explanation of Patterns and Explication of Progenies*, the "graphic etymology" of which Bottéro and Harbsmeier take care to distinguish from a "semantic analysis" of the meaning of words in relation to one another. Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "The *Shuowen Jiezi* Dictionary," 249.

48. [1S] *Sanlitu*, 20.612.

49. [1T] *Sanlitu*, 6.172.

50. [1U] *Sanlitu*, f. 12–14.

51. *Sanlitu*, 1175 ed., 13.2a.

52. *Sanlitu*, 1175 ed., 14.1a.

53. *Sanlitu*, 1175 ed., 14.5a.

54. [1V] *Sanlitu*, 14.466.

55. [1W] *Sanlitu*, 20.612.

56. [1X] *Sanlitu*, 20.612.

57. [1Y] *Sanlitu* 20.612.

58. [1Z] *Sanlitu*, preface, 2.

59. Louis, *Design by the Book*, 49.

60. McDermott, "The Ascendance of the Imprint."

61. The temple was the site of several important commissions in the early Northern Song. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 105.2547–8; Murray, "The Hangzhou Portraits of Confucius"; Louis, *Design by the Book*, 49–50.

62. [1AA] *Sanlitu*, preface, 1.

63. [1AB] *Sanlitu*, preface, 1.

64. *Sanlitu*, preface, 1.

Part II

1. Here I allude to the long history of psychological interpretations of the *Taotie*. See Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, 49–50, n. 47.

2. This assertion is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

3. [2A] Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, preface.

4. Brown, *Pastimes*, 15–16; de Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 48.

5. Here it is important to stress that while I am using an eighteenth-century edition for the purposes of illustration, the basic qualities of the impression are consistent across almost all known printed images of antiquities produced since the eleventh century, including, importantly, the most proximate recension of the earliest, now lost Northern Song edition of the *Illustrated Investigations*. See Moser, "Ethics of Immutable Things," 261n4.

6. Barnhart, *Li Kung-lin's Classic of Filial Piety*, 19.

7. For examples of the kinds of modification this entailed, see Max Loehr, *Chinese Landscape Woodcuts*, 40–54. Loehr is, on the whole, more interested in the stylistic affinities between the woodcuts and earlier works of landscape painting than in the idea that the carvers substantially changed the style of the landscape in the process of adapting it to the conventions of the woodcut. Nevertheless, he does recognize that features of the prints have "no true analogies in painting" (45).

8. The catalog thus echoes graphically what scholars like Chen Fangmei and others have observed about the transformation of bronzes into objects of knowledge. See Chen, "Songdai guqiwuxue de xingqi," 11.

9. For a more synoptic account of Song antiquarianism, see Sena, *Bronze and Stone*.

Chapter Three

1. Numerous English translations of the essay's title exist, of which perhaps the most widely used is "Essentials of the Moral Way," after Charles Hartman's foundational *Han Yu and the T'ang Search for Unity*. Because Han Yu's essay focuses primarily on identifying the original Way that preceded the obfuscations of other schools of learning, and accommodating a more literal understanding of *yuan* as "origin," or perhaps "wellspring," I prefer to follow Haun Saussy (Saussy, *Great Walls of Discourse*, 36) and read the term as an active verb, meaning "proceed all the way back to the origins of," in the sense that one "traces" a stream when one follows it to the point where it bubbles forth from the Earth.

2. [2B] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 13–14. For an alternative translation, see Hartman, "Essentials of the Moral Way."

3. Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians*, 3–23.

4. [2C] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 14.

5. *Analects* 7.22.

6. Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 18–22.

7. Hartman, *Han Yü*, 13–15.

8. This use of "emotive" follows Reddy, "Against Constructionism."

9. Han Yu's influence was far more keenly felt in the eleventh century than in his own day, when the ideological quality of his writing placed him well outside the intellectual mainstream. For a discussion, see DeBlasi, "Striving for Completeness."

10. [2D] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 17.

11. [2E] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 17.

12. I am indebted to Yang Shao-yun for bringing this dialogue to my attention. For a thorough discussion of the debate between Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan over the "barbarity" of Buddhism, see Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians*, 43–56.

13. [2F] Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 25.673–674.

14. [2G] Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 25.674.

15. Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 160–166, 176–177.

16. [2H] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 13, 18.

17. *Ai* can also mean "to cherish" or "to treasure" something or someone, but the possessiveness implied by that sense of the term is excluded from the "expansive" character of the sentiment imagined here.

18. [2I] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 18.

19. It is important to distinguish the terminological simplicity witnessed in *Tracing the Way* from the notion that Han Yu's prose was "popular" or "colloquial." As Hartman explains, the rhythmic flexibility of *guwen* "allowed for the subtle introduction of contemporary speech rhythms" without the danger of exposure to the charge of vulgarity. This did not, initially, make it easy to write. Han Yu's "ancient style" remained challenging for traditionally educated scholars until it became naturalized into composition training in the eleventh century. But the challenge had more to do with prosody than vocabulary. Hartman, *Han Yü*, 240–241.

20. McMullen, "Han Yü," 604.

21. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning*, 66. Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 32–75.

22. On the "categorical propositions" that underlay the eleventh-century *guwen* discourse of self-righteousness, see Levine, *Divided by a Common Language*, 42–71.

23. Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 124–127.

24. [2J] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 17.

25. [2K] Han Yu, *Han Changji wenji jiaozhu*, 18.

26. McMullen, "Han Yü."

27. The most comprehensive treatment of Han Yu's life and thought in English is Hartman, *Han Yü*. For a briefer survey of his primary intellectual views, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 123–136. The aforementioned review article by David McMullen is also essential.

28. Hartman, *Han Yü*, 74–76.

29. The identity of this acquaintance is contested, we know from Han Yu's short preface that his surname was Zhang, but several of his known acquaintances shared that name.

30. Although it is not clear that Han Yu was familiar with the work of all of these figures, their number suggests that the Stone Drums were familiar, at least by reputation, to most educated Tang scholar-officials. Mattos, "The Stone Drums of Ch'in," 37–39.

31. The discovery and subsequent scholarship on the Stone Drums is thoroughly described in Mattos, 21–50.

32. Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu*, 248.

33. Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu*, 248.

34. [2L] Han Yu, *Han Yu xuanji*, 115. My translation of this and subsequent passages follows Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu*, 248–249, with modifications.

35. For an analysis of the inscriptions and their early historiography, see Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*.

36. Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 339. On the lithologic of the funerary stele tradition, see Brashier, *Ancestral Memory*, 161–164.

37. Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk*, 78–85.

38. For early inscriptive practice on exposed rocks and mountainside, see Harrist, *The Landscape of Words*. For Buddhist scriptoria, see Lee, "Transmitting Buddhism."

39. Consider, for example, the fragments of the monumental tenth-century stele discovered in Zhengding, Hebei. Guo, "Zhengding chutu wudai juxing shigui."

40. Lee, "Transmitting Buddhism," 58–59.

41. Louis, "Cauldrons and Mirrors of Yore," 11–12.

42. De Pee, "The Writing of Weddings," 48.

43. [2M] Han Yu, *Han Yu xuanji*, 115.

44. On antiquities as omens, see Barnard, "Records of Discoveries," 468–491; Louis, "Cauldrons and Mirrors," 2–36.

45. [2N] Han Yu, *Han Yu xuanji*, 115.

46. [2P] Han Yu, *Han Yu xuanji*, 115.

47. Qin Shi Huang's failure to raise the Nine Cauldrons is related by Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 6.248. The account of Tao Kan and the dragon is found in Fang Xuanling, *Jinshu*, 66.1779.

48. Wu, *Monumentality*, 7–8.

49. [2P] Han Yu, *Han Yu xuanji*, 115.

50. Han Yu, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu*, 1.37.

51. Owen, *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yu*, 253.

Chapter Four

1. [2Q] Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 134.2072–3.

2. For a lucid introduction to *biji* and an explanation of some of the challenges involved in defining it as a genre, see Zhang, "To Be 'Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge.'" My rendering of the term as "notebook" follows De Weerdt, "Continuities Between Scribal and Print Publishing."

3. Wang Guowei, "Songdai zhi jinshixue," 45; Needham, *History of Scientific Thought*, 493–495. For a discussion, see Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*, 1–14.

4. Miller, "Comparing Antiquarianisms."

5. Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*.

6. Mittag, "Becoming Acquainted with Nature from the Odes."

7. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2072–3. Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, 376–382.

8. Hofmann et al., *Powerful Arguments*, 1–43.

9. Harrist, *Painting and Private Life*, 13.

10. Rojas, "Archaeophilia."

11. Owen, "The Cultural Tang," 371–372.

12. The earliest explicit evidence in text for the production of rubbings comes from the bibliographic treatise of the *History of the Sui*, compiled between 629 and 636, which lists a number of stone inscriptions and states that "those rubbings made during previous dynasties are still preserved in the imperial collection." It also mentions the existence of such inscriptions in the library of the Liang dynasty (502–556). The Dunhuang corpus contains several examples of rubbings, the oldest of which is dated 654. Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk*, 92–95.

13. On these connections, see Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things*, 139–161.

14. Tian, *Tao Yuanming*, 7–12.

15. Studies of medieval European manuscript practices that have substantially influenced the study of manuscript traditions in medieval China include Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, and Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in*

Medieval Scribal Culture. Key studies of the "fluidity" of medieval manuscript traditions in China include Tian, *Tao Yuanming* and Nugent, *Manifest in Words*. On the relationship between manuscripts and orality in particular, see Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture*, 17, and Tian, *Tao Yuanming*, 4–5. For an important caveat on the limits of "orality," see Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Poetry*, 10–13. Many of the ideas about the distinction between the cultures of manuscript and print that undergird these studies were popularized for an earlier generation by McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 86–90, 130–133, drawing upon the still earlier work of scholars like H. J. Chaytor and E. P. Goldschmidt.

16. On the sense of stability and authorship in an era of print, see McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 130–133. For the link between the affirmation of the author and stabilization of the text, see also Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 25–59. On the author-function of the text in the making of early Chinese poetry, see Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 10, 214–259.

17. On the openness of the Buddhist canons and nonliteral approach to interpretation, see Harrison, "Canon."

18. Egan, "Poems on Paintings," 419.

19. Michaels, *The Shape of the Signifier*, 3.

20. William Ivins famously characterized the visuality I am describing as the "exactly repeatable pictorial statement." Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*, 3.

21. For a summary of these events, see Owen, *The Late Tang*, 445.

22. Owen, *The Late Tang*, 445.

23. For the complete Chinese text of the poem, see [2R]. Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shige jijie*, 828–829.

24. [2R] Li Shangyin, 829. Translation from Owen, *The Late Tang*, 448, with minor modifications.

25. Owen, *The Late Tang*, 450.

26. On the "spectrality" of any media "whose iterability and repeatability anticipate and in some sense forecast our eventual absence, our death," see Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?,* xxxiv.

27. Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*.

28. Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 150–160.

29. My transcription is based on a modern rubbing of the stele in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession #1977.375.7a, b. For the full text, see [2S].

30. Zheng Wenbao's was just one of a whole series of mid-tenth-century stele-carving projects in Chang'an that involved such figures as the Mengying and Guo Zhongshu. Hay, "Guo Zhongshu's Archaeology of Writing," 282–311.

31. On the printing of the Confucian classics, see Cherniack, "Book Culture and Textual Transmission," 19–21. For the "Four Great Books," see Owen, "The Cultural Tang," 367–368.

32. On the first printing of the Buddhist canon, see Wu et al., "The Birth of the First Printed Canon." For the Chunhua calligraphies, see Zhong and Shen, *Gumo xinyan*, and the helpful discussion in Park, *Art by the Book*, 64, 235n85.

33. Another set of examples, closely analogous to that of Zheng Wenbao, are the stele-carving projects associated with Mengying and Guo Zhongshu. See Hay, "Guo Zhongshu's Archaeology of Writing," 278–311.

34. On the textual history of Ouyang's colophons, see Sena, "Ouyang Xiu's Conceptual Collecting," 220–221.

35. [2T] Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2083.

36. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2083. He reiterates this claim in his colophon to the inscription on Mount Tai (134.2084). In this colophon, Ouyang also states that the Mount Yi stele had been recognized as "inauthentic" (*fei zhen*) by both Du Fu and Feng Yan.

37. For a summary of the text's formation and transmission, see Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, 8–10.

38. Examples include *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 140.2243 and 140.2256. For a discussion, see Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, 43–50.

39. Moser, "Learning with Metal and Stone," 144–157.

40. [2U] For the complete colophon, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 134.2083–2084.

41. Skonicki, "Employing the Right Kind of Men," 76n103. See also Davis, Introduction, xlv–lv.

42. [2V] Zhao Mingcheng, *Jinshilu*, 12.215.

43. [2W] Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 136.2135. The passage is discussed in Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, 44. My translations follow Egan, with minor modifications.

44. Wu Hung, "On Rubbings," 34–45.

45. The political implications of Ouyang Xiu's antiquarian research were, in this sense, consistent with his approach to official historiography, which, as Charles Hartman argues, sought to transform the process of writing history "from one directed solely toward the needs of the emperor and court to one that addressed the larger needs of the emerging literati class." Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History*, 82.

46. Tian, *Tao Yuanming*, 7–12, Cherniack, "Book Culture and Textual Transmission," 21–29.

47. [2X] For the full colophon, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 143.2314. For a translation, see Campbell et al., "New Passages from Ouyang Xiu." My identification of Xue Zhongru by his given name follows Campbell, n. 17.

48. For a discussion of the Liu Zongyuan's subtle but unmistakable engagement with aspects of Daoist and Buddhist thought, see Chen, *Liu Tsung-yüan*, 119–126, 159–162.

49. Ouyang enunciated this concern most explicitly, and famously, in his essay "*On Releasing Prisoners"* (*Zong qiu lun*). Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 7.287–288.

50. [2Y] Zhao Mingcheng, *Jinshilu jiaozheng*, preface, 1–2.

51. [2V] Zhao Mingcheng, *Jinshilu jiaozheng*, 12.215.

52. Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi."

53. [2Z] Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2075.

54. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 134.2075, Chen Junmin, ed., *Lantian Lüshi yizhu jijao*, 591–592. For a survey of Song-era tomb robbing, see Wang Zijin, *Zhongguo daomu shi*, 161–169.

55. Shaanxisheng, "Shaanxi Lantianxian Lüshi jiazu mudi," 48.

56. [2AA] Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2075.

57. [2AB] Liu Chang, "Xian Qin guqi ji." For a discussion of this text, see Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 44–45. For a partial English translation, see De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 46.

58. This is suggested by surviving manuscripts of four of Ouyang Xiu's colophons. See He Yanchiuan, "Jigulu ba."

59. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 127.2966.

60. Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 146–147.

61. Yang Zhongliang, *Huang Song tongjian*, 31.1a–26b; Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 127.2968–70; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 126.1923–24. For a more thorough discussion of these events, see Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 68–73. The literature on Song court musicology is extensive. Two of the most significant recent contributions to this literature are Christensen, "The Time-Suturing Technologies," and Zuo, "Keeping Your Ear to the Cosmos."

62. Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 71–72

63. Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 73–75.

64. [2AB] Liu Chang, "Xian Qin guqi ji."

65. [2AB] Liu Chang, "Xian Qin guqi ji."

66. [2AC] Liu Chang, "Sandai tongdao lun," 223.

67. [2AB] Liu Chang, "Xian Qin guqi ji."

Chapter Five

1. This number is derived from the names of collectors cited in Lü Dalin's *Record of Illustrated Antiquities*.

2. For a detailed consideration of Shen Gua's intellectual oeuvre, see Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*.

3. [2AD] Shen Gua, *Shen Gua quanji*, 51.449.

4. To cite the now standard explanation of the relationship between social and intellectual change from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. For a synopsis, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 32–75.

5. Wang, "A Textual Investigation of the Taotie."

6. The earliest text to associate the term *Taotie* with early bronzes is the third century BCE *Lüshi Chunqiu*, 16.2b. For a synopsis of other references to bronze décor in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, see Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 269.

7. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 1.4b. Unless otherwise noted, all references are to the Siku quanshu edition of the *Kaogutu*. For a discussion of Lü's invocation of the term, see Wang, "A Textual Investigation of the Taotie," 114–115.

8. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 2.21a.

9. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 4.31b. In his colophon (4.32a), Lü Dalin quotes Li Gonglin's identification of Zuding ("Ancestor Ding") as the name of the fourteenth emperor (*di*) of the Shang. In his "Annals of the Shang," Sima Qian actually identifies him as the seventeenth ruler.

10. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 4.32.

11. [2AE] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, 15a.1b.

12. Here, I echo and elaborate the claim advanced by Christian de Pee, who argues that "the conviction, among Northern Song scholars, that the ancients had devised their vessels as images and metaphors placed the vessels on the same plane as the written word." De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 48. The question that remains is where this conviction arose from. Part of my aim here is to explain how the formal qualities of the bronzes themselves facilitated their transformation into words.

13. Moser, "The Ethics of Immutable Things."

14. Hsu, "Reshaping Chinese Material Culture," 275–278.

15. Examples include Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu* 1.6–8, 1.9–10, 7.8–10. The one exception is the jades, which were lifted largely in toto from the pages of Li Gonglin's lost catalog of archaic jades. See Harrist, "The Artist as Antiquarian."

16. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, preface.

17. See, for example, the "Taotie cauldron" (*Kaogutu*, 1.30a–31a), which Lü identifies

as a "Shang implement" (*Shang qi*) but lists after several Zhou cauldrons.

18. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 2.20.

19. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 1.30.

20. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 4.64–66.

21. Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 28

22. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 4.1–40. Modern scholars now recognize *yi* as a term that referred in antiquity to ritual vessels in general. Zhu, *Gudai Zhongguo qingtongqi*, 103.

23. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 5.6a-b.

24. A case in point is his treatment of the "Gui ju" vessel, which "resembled the chalices in form" (*yu qian gu xingzhi lüe xiang*), but which, he explained, had a volume that was substantially larger than that recorded in the ritual texts, and was inscribed with a typological name different from those found on other "chalices." For these reasons, he separated it out and "appended it to the end" (*fu yu hou*) of his section on chalices. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 5.17–18.

25. Chen Junmin, *Lantian Lüshi yizhu jijiao*, 187–424.

26. Known in life by the given name Xun Ying, the official was named Zhi Diaozi posthumously. *Liji zhengyi*, 9.336–337.

27. [2AF] *Liji zhengyi*, 9.336–337.

28. [2AG] Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 5.6.

29. Zhu, *Gudai Zhongguo qingtongqi*, 89–90.

30. Strikingly, the individuation that Lü pursued was "voiced" by the relationship between the body of the bronze and the typological name in its inscription, rather than the inscription as a whole. Although a number of bronzes in his catalog bear similar or matching inscriptions, suggesting that they were cast at the behest of the same patron, Lü ignored these textual similarities when he organized the catalog, grouping the bronzes by the typological names in the inscriptions rather than the inscriptions in their entirety. This suggests that he was more interested in the ritual implications of the dialogue between name and form than the "voice" of the historical individual(s) preserved in the bronzes themselves.

31. [2A] Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, preface.

32. [2AH] Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, preface.

33. Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, 1.19b.

34. For an overview of the essential dimensions of this Way, see Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 153–193.

35. Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 254–342.

36. Hsu, "Antiquaries and Politics."

37. Levine, *Divided by a Common Language*.

38. [2AI] For the full text, see Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.370–371. For a translation, see Owen, *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 622. I am indebted to Peter Bol for bringing the importance of Su Shi's denouement to my attention.

39. [2AJ] Li Bo, "Bian Shizhongshan ji."

40. Zuo, *Shen Gua's Empiricism*, 171–222.

41. Shen Gua, *Shen Gua quanji*, 52.458, 53.483.

42. Moser, "One Land of Many Places," 267–269.

43. On the archaicizing rituals of the Lü family, see De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 65–66.

44. Moser, "The Emotive Object," 74–76.

45. [2AK] Cai Xiang, "Pingshu." Harold Mok has demonstrated that this "respect for

archaism and contempt for formalism" was widespread among Song literati. See Mok, "Seal and Clerical Scripts," 178–180.

46. Hsu, "Antiquaries and Politics."

Part III

1. Chen Fangmei, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 55; Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 169; Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 149.

2. Yunchiahn Sena was the first to observe the elimination of the flange on the Huizong cauldron, and to associate it with the disambiguation of the Taotie. Sena, "Pursuing Antiquity," 152–153. She reiterates the observation in Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 108.

3. Bagley, "Shang Ritual Bronzes: Casting Technique and Vessel Design."

4. For an illuminating debate on the relevant evidence for model/mold sculpting in the production of Shang bronzes, see Nickel, "Imperfect Symmetry," and Bagley, "Anyang Mold-Making and the Decorated Model."

5. Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 150. My use of theriomorph follows Ladislav Kesner, "The Taotie Reconsidered."

Chapter Six

1. [3A] Wang Fu, *Xuanhe bogutu*, 1.1a. This and all subsequent references are to the Wenyuange Siku quanshu edition, hereafter *Bogutu*.

2. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 202.5048–5057.

3. One of the more useful introductions to the relationship between scholarship and practice in the production of Song state ritual is Zhang Wenchang, "Tang Song lishu yanjiu," 103–249.

4. Tuotuo, *Songshi*, 98.2421–125.2936.

5. Liu Chang, "Xian Qin guqi ji." Lü Dalin, *Kaogutu*, preface.

6. For a survey of the piecemeal revisions to the *Sanlitu* proposed by eleventh-century antiquarians, see Louis, *Design by the Book*, 59–78.

7. Scholars who recognized the flaws in Nie Chongyi's reconstructions included Shen Gua, *Shen Gua quanji*, 51.449–450 and Lu Dian, whose comments are preserved in Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 2. Both figures are quoted in Han Wei, "Songdai fanggu zhizuo," 288. For Ouyang Xiu, Chen Xiang, and Sima Guang, see De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 22–23, 53–65.

8. Ouyang Xiu, *Taichang yin'geli*, 15.1–9.

9. For references to the *xing*, see Chen Xiangdao, *Lishu*, 81.7b; 83.3a; 86.3a–6a; 111.7b–8b, 12a; 113.6b–7a. The vessel is illustrated and discussed explicitly on 99.6a, 8b–10b.

10. De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*.

11. Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 147.

12. On Chen Yang, see Kojima, "Tuning and Numerology," and Lam, "Huizong's Dashengyue."

13. As Douglas Skonicki has shown, this was not the only place in which Ouyang Xiu knowingly spoke in mutually contradictory voices. Skonicki, "Employing the Right King of Men," 69–70.

14. One of the many reasons for Su Shi's literary acclaim, as the long-standing adage goes, was that he invested the once flighty song lyric (*ci*) with the moral voice of a serious poem (*shi*).

15. Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 71.2251–52. I am indebted to Zuo Ya for bringing this reference to my attention.

16. Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian*, 450.1b–2a.

17. Chen Xiangdao, *Lishu*, 1.10b–12a.

18. Moser, "The Emotive Object," 74–75.

19. The inscribed blacklist was one in a series of purges that began in 1102. For a discussion, see Chaffee, "Huizong, Cai Jing," 43–44. The literature on Huizong's reign is extensive. Two of more useful overviews, in English, are Levine, "The Reigns of Hui-tsung," and Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*.

20. Yang Zhongliang, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian jishi benmo*, 128.6b–10b; Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 141; Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, 166–168.

21. Kojima, "Tuning and Numerology," 210–211; Zuo Ya, "Keeping Your Ear to the Cosmos."

22. Zheng Juzhong, *Zhenghe wuli xinyi*, 1.14a–b.

23. For a comprehensive timeline of Huizong's ritual reforms, see Chen Fangmei, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 104–106.

24. For a full discussion, see Kojima, "Sōdai no kokka saishi."

25. Song, *Traces of Grand Peace*, 97–166.

26. Chen Fangmei, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 101–102.

27. Henceforth I use *New Ceremonies* to refer to the 220-fascicle liturgical code and "New Ceremonies" to refer to the actual rituals enacted on the basis of that code, including the new implements devised for those rituals.

28. Wang Yinglin, *Yuhai*, 56.19a. For a discussion, see Han Wei, "Songdai fanggu zhizuo," 289.

29. De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 68–72.

30. [3B] Yang Zhongliang, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian jishi benmo*, 135.4b–5a. For an alternative translation, see Lam, "Huizong's Dashengyue," 433.

31. [3C] Zheng Juzhong, *Zhenghe wuli xinyi,* 1.9a–b.

32. [3C] Zheng Juzhong, *Zhenghe wuli xinyi,* 1.9a–b.

33. The line in question is *Liji* 1.5: "In observing ritual, follow what is appropriate. In serving as an envoy, follow local custom." [3D]

34. Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *Er cheng ji*, 268. For discussion, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 306.

35. Chen Junmin, *Lantian Lüshi yizhu jijiao*, 189.

36. Chen Junmin, *Lantian Lüshi yizhu jijiao*, 255.

37. Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 139–144. For an overview of the catalog's content, see Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 150–203.

38. Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congtan*, 79–80. Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 144.

39. Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 154–155.

40. *Bogutu*, 1.1a.

41. Peterson, "Making Connections," 80–81.

42. Peterson, "Making Connections," 85–86; Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 262, 265.

43. These claims are made in the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations," A11.28, A12.9, B2.1–7, following Peterson's rendering of Zhu Xi's arrangement.

44. Su Shi, *Dongpo Yi zhuan*, 5.26a–b.

45. Chen Junmin, *Lantian Lüshi yizhu jijiao*, 149; Zhang Zai, *Zhang Zai ji*, 155; Cheng Yi, *Yichuan yizhuan*, 4.26.

46. Wen Fong's characterization of *xiang* as "emblems" gestures toward the range of meanings I am attempting to circumscribe. "To perceive emblems in nature and to project them in painting was to embody archetypal principles rather than merely to describe

form." Fong, "Monumental Landscape Painting," 124.

47. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 179.

48. Ibid. My attention to Kant is in part inspired by Michael Fuller's reflections on the many parallels between Immanuel Kant and Su Shi's respective understandings "of both the constraints of human knowledge and the processes by which one acquires knowledge," in "Aesthetics and Meaning," 314–327.

49. [3E] *Bogutu*, 1.1.

50. For an overview of Wang Anshi's approach to the *Zhouli*, see Bol, "Wang Anshi and the *Zhouli*."

51. Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 181.

52. Bol, "Wang Anshi and the *Zhouli*," 237–243.

53. Wang Anshi, *Linchuan xiansheng wenji*, 84.879; Ke Changyi, *Wang Anshi pingzhuan*, 242–47; Winston Lo, "Philology"; Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 232; Song, *Traces of Grand Peace*, 109–116.

54. Bol, "Wang Anshi and the *Zhouli*," 242–243.

Chapter Seven

1. These implements are surveyed in Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 95–99; and Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 145–152, 169.

2. On the close collaboration between Huizong and the artists of the court workshops, see Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 173–176.

3. For the text of these inscriptions, see Chen, *Qingtongqi yu Songdai wenhuashi*, 59–62.

4. [3F] Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 102.

5. [3G] Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 102.

6. Chen, "Song guqiwuxue de xingqi," 78.

7. Nagel and Wood, "Toward a New Model"; Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*.

8. Huizong's court shared this atemporal understanding of ritual with influential eleventh-century scholars like Sima Guang and Chen Xiang. De Pee, *The Writing of Weddings*, 55.

9. The bronzes, in this sense, echo Peter Bol's assertion about the New Policies in general, that they ". . . approached antiquity not as a repository of models to be imitated . . . but as a period and a set of texts from which to derive general principles for systematic and planned institutional action in the present." Bol, "Emperors Can Claim Antiquity Too," 202.

10. [3C] Zheng Juzhong, *Zhenghe wuli xinyi*, 1.9a–b.

11. *Liji zhengyi*, 30.899.

12. *Zhouli zhengyi*, 8.8a, 73.5a–6a.

13. *Yili zhushu*, 21.651–7; 25.776–782; 26.800, 806–811; 42.1271–44.1368.

14. *Yili zhushu*, 21.656.

15. Xiao Song, *Da Tang kaiyuan li*, 1.16a-b.

16. For references to the *xing*, see Chen Xiangdao, *Lishu*, 81.7b; 83.3a; 86.3a–6a; 111.7b–8b, 12a; 113.6b–7a. The vessel is illustrated and discussed explicitly in 99.6a, 8b–10b.

17. Zhou Zheng, "Xuanhe shanzun kao." For reproductions, see Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 170, figs. 6–11; Du Naisong, *Qingtong shenghuoqi*, 212. Two other *zun* of matching design have been found in China. One is presently in the collection of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum; the top half of the other was uncovered in Pengzhou, Sichuan. See Hsu,

"Antiquities, Ritual Reform," 150–151.

18. For another example, see Rawson, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes*, 350–351.

19. [3H] *Bogutu*, 6.8a.

20. For a detailed narrative of these events, see Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, 449–474.

21. Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 323–330.

22. Tao Wang, "Lost Archaeology," 95–97. See also Ebrey, *Accumulating Culture*, 152.

23. *Illustrated Investigations* appears to have been printed as early as the Northern Song. The earliest extant edition dates to 1299. *Manifold Antiquities* was first published in 1308–11. The reproduction of both catalogs accelerated with the printing boom of the sixteenth century. For details on their publication history, see Hsu, "*Zhida chongxiu Xuanhe bogu tulu*," and "Reshaping Chinese Material Culture," 275–278; Moser, "The Ethics of Immutable Things," 261n4. On the cataloging of Qianlong's bronze collection, see Yu Hui-chun, "Bronzes from Afar."

24. Hsu, "*Xuanhe bogutu* de 'jianjie' liuchuan," and "Nan Song jinshi shoucang." Chen Fangmei, "Yu sandai tongfeng."

Conclusion

1. Miller and Louis, "Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life," 1–24.

2. Miller and Louis, "Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life," 9.

3. Neri, *The Insect and the Image*, ix–xxvii. See also Lincoln, *Brilliant Discourse*, 10–11.

4. Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking*, 31–70.

5. On the *huapu* genre, see Park, *Art by the Book*, 27–83.

6. Schäfer, *The Crafting*, 138–156.

7. Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, 232.

8. Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 28; Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 87–90; Mitchell, *Image Science*, 16–17.

9. [4A] Zhu Xi, *Huian ji*, 41.16a.

10. On the history of *Materia Nedica* illustration, see Wang and Fuentes, "Chinese Medical Illustration," 33–38.

11. On the essentially derivative nature of illustrations in Li Shizhen's late sixteenth-century *Bencao gangmu*, see Nappi, *The Monkey and the Inkpot*, 18–19, 52–53. Nappi makes the striking observation that although Li "paid close attention to the images depicted in classic collections of *Materia Medica* and carefully evaluated their quality and effectiveness" in helping readers identify the object in question (18), he "most likely had no intention of including images in his work" (52). One has the sense of a man trapped in a graphic regime and struggling to find a way to make pictures do what they were not predisposed to do. That he ultimately decided to forego images reinforces the essentially non-identificatory, lexical nature of the pictures at his disposal. That his sons decided to include them in their eventual publication of his magnum opus (18–19), in turn, demonstrates the persistent desirability of such images on the part of the wider reading public.

12. Schäfer, *The Crafting*, 143.

13. For late imperial arguments for the necessity of illustrations, see Hofmann, "The Persuasive Power of *Tu*," 177–187.

14. [4B] Zheng Qiao, *Tongzhi*, 72.1b.

15. Cao, "Schematizing Plum Blossoms," 80–81. For an alternative interpretation of the significance of the bronze-as-blossom, see Chen, *Qingtongqi yu Songdai wenhuashi*, 121–124.

CHINESE TEXTS

The following are all of the Chinese passages directly quoted in the book. To the extent that space allows, I have also endeavored to include those portions of the texts that I paraphrase. All commentaries, annotations, and variants from the critical editions of these texts have been removed.

A 觚不觚，觚哉，觚哉。

B 故君而失其君之道，則為不君；臣而失其臣之道，則為虛位。

C 人而不仁則非人，國而不治則不國矣。

D 君君臣臣父父子子。

E 作觚而不用觚法，觚終不成，猶為政而不用政法，豈成哉。

F 情動於中而形於言，言之不足，故嗟歎之，嗟歎之不足，故永歌之，永歌之不足，不知手之舞之、足之蹈之也。

G 先王以是經夫婦，成孝敬，厚人倫，美教化，移風俗。

H 人生而靜，天之性也；感於物而動，性之欲也。物至知知，然後好惡形焉。好惡無節於內，知誘於外，不能反躬，天理滅矣。夫物之感人無窮，而人之好惡無節，則是物至而人化物也。人化物也者，滅天理而窮人欲者也。於是有悖逆詐偽之心，有淫泆作亂之事。是故強者脅弱，眾者暴寡，知者詐愚，勇者苦怯，疾病不養，老幼孤獨不得其所，此大亂之道也。是故先王之制禮樂，人為之節；衰麻哭泣，所以節喪紀也；鐘鼓干戚，所以和安樂也；昏姻冠笄，所以別男女也；射鄉食饗，所以正交接也。禮節民心，樂和民聲，政以行之，刑以防之，禮樂刑政，四達而不悖，則王道備矣。

1A 唯器與名，不可以假人，君之所司也。名以出信，信以守器，器以藏禮，禮以行義，義以生利，利以平民，政之大節也。若以假人，與人政也。政亡，則國家從之，弗可止也已。

1B 子路曰：「衛君待子而為政，子將奚先？」子曰：「必也正名乎。」子路曰：「有是哉，子之迂也。奚其正？」子曰：「野哉由也！君子於其所不知，蓋闕如也。名不正，則言不順；言不順，則事不成；事不成，則禮樂不興；禮樂不興，則刑罰不中；刑罰不中，則民無所措手足。故君子名之必可言也，言之必可行也。君子於其言，無所苟而已矣。」

1C 名者，所以名實也。實立而名從之，非名立而實從之也。故長形立而名之曰長，短形立而名之曰短，非長短之名先立而長短之形從之也。

1D 故王者之制名，名定而實辨，道行而志通，則慎率民而一焉。故析辭擅作名，以亂正名，使民疑惑，人多辨訟，則謂之大姦。其罪猶為符節度量之罪也。故其民莫敢託為奇辭以亂正名，故其民愨；愨則易使，易使則公。其民莫敢託為奇辭以亂正名，故壹於道法，而謹於循令矣。如是則其跡長矣。跡長功成，治之極也。是謹於守名約之功也。

1E 單足以喻則單，單不足以喻則兼。

1F 百工以乂，萬品以察。

1G 封于泰山者，七十有二代，靡有同焉。

1H 田疇異畝，車涂異軌，律令異法，衣冠異制，言語異聲，文字異形。

1I 蓋文字者，經藝之本，王政之始。前人所以垂後，後人所以識古。

1J 萬物咸睹，靡不兼載。

1K 彝：宗廟常器也。从糸；糸，綦也。廾持米，器中寶也。𠂤聲。此與爵相似。《周禮》：「六彝：雞彝、鳥彝、黃彝、虎彝、蟲彝、斝彝。以待祼將之禮。」

1L 以玉作六器，以禮天地四方。以蒼璧禮天，以黃琮禮地，以青圭禮東方，以赤璋禮南方，以白琥禮西方，以玄璜禮北方。

1M 非文字無以見聲人之心，非篆籀無以究文字之義。

1N 司尊彝掌六尊、六彝之位。

1O 名義多而舊圖略。

1P 黃彝盛鬱鬯。《司尊彝》云：「秋嘗冬烝，祼用斝彝、黃彝，皆有舟。」王以圭瓚酌獻尸禮神，后以璋瓚亞獻。後鄭云黃彝謂黃目，以黃金為目也。《郊特牲》曰黃目，鬱氣之上尊也。黃者，中也，目者，氣之清明者也，言酌於中而清明於外也。其彝與舟並以金漆通漆。

1Q 舊圖十卷，形制闕漏，文字省畧，名數法式上下差違，既無所從，難以取象，蓋久傳俗，不知所自也。

1R 其或名數雖殊，制度不別，則存其名而略其制者，瑚簋車輅之類是也。

1S 其名義多而舊圖略、振其綱而目不舉者，則就而增之，射侯喪服之類是也。

1T 凡侯：天子熊侯，白質；諸侯麋侯，赤質；大夫布侯，畫以虎豹；士布侯，畫以鹿豕。

1U 周之禮，飾器各以其類。

1V 前代垂範觀象以制器服，義非一揆，或假名全畫其物，或取類半刻其形，則雞鳥已下六彝，禕、褕（上音揮下音搖）青素二質，是全畫其物，著於服器者也。玉爵、柄尺之類，龍勺、蒲勺之倫，是半刻其形，飾於器皿以類取名者也。以此而言，犧、象二尊，自然畫飾，至於夏之九鼎，鑄以象物，取其名義亦斯類也。

1W 有其名而無其制者，亦略而不圖。

1X 凡所集註，皆周公正經，仲尼所定，康成所註，傍依疏義。

1Y 至大宋建隆二年四月辛丑，第叙既訖，冠冕衣服見吉凶之象焉，宮室車旗見古今之制焉，弓矢射侯見尊卑之別焉，鐘鼓管磬見法度之均焉，祭器祭玉見大小之數焉，圭璧繅藉見君臣之序焉，喪葬飾具見上下之紀焉。舉而行之，易於詳覽。

1Z 遵其文，譯其器，文象推合，略無差較，作程立制，昭示無窮。

1AA 或沿或革，從理以變，惟適其本。

1AB 上之化下，下必從焉。

2A 觀其器，誦其言，形容髣髴，以追三代之遺風，如見其人矣。

2B 博愛之謂仁，行而宜之之謂義。由是而之焉之謂道，足乎己無待於外之謂德。仁與義為定名，道與德為虛位。故道有君子小人，而德有凶有吉。老子之小仁義，非毀之也，其見者小也。坐井而觀天，曰「天小」者，非天小也。彼以煦煦為仁，孑孑為義，其小之也則宜。其所謂道，道其所道，非吾所謂道也。其所謂德，德其所德，非吾所謂德也。凡吾所謂道德云者，合仁與義言之也，天下之公言也。老子之所謂道德云者，去仁與義言之也，一人之私言也。

2C 周道衰，孔子沒，火於秦，黃老於漢，佛於晉、魏、梁、隋之間。其言道德仁義者，不入於楊，則入於墨。不入於老，則入於佛。入於彼，必出於此。入者主之，出者奴之。入者附之，出者汙之。噫！後之人其欲聞仁義道德之說，孰從而聽之？

2D 子焉而不父其父，臣焉而不君其君。

2E 孔子之作《春秋》也，諸侯用夷禮，則夷之。進於中國，則中國之。

2F 浮圖者，反不及莊、墨、申、韓之怪僻險賊耶？曰：「以其夷也。」果不信道而斥焉以夷，則將友惡來、盜跖，而賤季札、由

余乎？非所謂去名求實者矣。吾之所取者與《易》、《論語》合，雖聖人復生不可得而斥也。

2G 退之忿其外而遺其中，是知石而不知韞玉也。

2H 博愛之謂仁，行而宜之之謂義。由是而之焉之謂道，足乎己無待於外之謂德。

2I 其文，《詩》《書》《易》《春秋》，其法，禮樂刑政，其民，士農工賈；其位，君臣父子師友賓主昆弟夫婦；其服，麻絲；其居，宮室；其食，粟米果蔬魚肉。

2J 帝之與王，其號名殊，其所以為聖一也。夏葛而冬裘，渴飲而饑食，其事雖殊，其所以為智一也。

2K 堯以是傳之舜，舜以是傳之禹，禹以是傳之湯，湯以是傳之文武周公，文武周公傳之孔子，孔子傳之孟軻。軻之死，不得其傳焉。

2L 鐫功勒成告萬世，鑿石作鼓隳嵯峨。從臣才藝咸第一，揀選撰刻留山阿。

2M 雨淋日炙野火燎，鬼物守護煩捣呵。

2N 年深豈免有缺畫，快劍斫斷生蛟鼉。鸞翔鳳翥眾仙下，珊瑚碧樹交枝柯。金繩鐵索鎖鈕壯，古鼎躍水龍騰梭。

2O 辭嚴義密讀難曉，字體不類隸與蝌。

2P 陋儒編詩不收入，二雅褊迫無委蛇。孔子西行不到秦，掎摭星宿遺羲娥。嗟予好古生苦晚，對此涕淚雙滂沱。

2Q 初莫知為敦也，蓋其銘有「寶尊敦」之文，遂以為敦爾。

2R 元和天子神武姿，彼何人哉軒與羲。誓將上雪列聖恥，坐法宮中朝四夷。淮西有賊五十載，封狼生貙貙生羆。不據山河據平地，長戈利矛日可麾。帝得聖相相曰度，賊斫不死神扶持。腰懸相印作都統，陰風慘澹天王旗。愬武古通作牙爪，儀曹外郎載筆隨。行軍司馬智且勇，十四萬衆猶虎貔。入蔡縛賊獻太廟，功無與讓恩不訾。帝曰汝度功第一，汝從事愈宜爲辭。愈拜稽首蹈且舞，金石刻畫臣能爲。古者世稱大手筆，此事不繫於職司。當仁自古有不讓，言訖屢頷天子頤。公退齋戒坐小閣，濡染大筆何淋漓。點竄堯典舜典字，塗改清廟生民詩。文成破體書在紙，清晨再拜鋪丹墀。表曰臣愈昧死上，詠神聖功書之碑。碑高三丈字如斗，負以靈鼇蟠以螭。句奇語重喻者少，讒之天子言其私。長繩百尺拽碑倒，麤沙大石相磨治。公之斯文若元氣，先時已入人肝脾。湯盤孔鼎有述作，今無其器存其辭。嗚呼聖皇及聖相，相與烜赫流淳熙。公之斯文不示後，曷與三五相攀追。願書萬本誦萬遍，口角流沫右手胝。傳之七十有三代，以爲封禪玉檢明堂基。

2S 秦相李斯書《繹山碑》，跡妙時古，殊為世重。故散騎常侍徐公鉉酷耽玉著，垂五十年，時無其比。晚節獲《繹山碑》摸本，師其筆力，自謂得思於天人之際，因是廣求巳之舊跡，焚擲略盡。文寶受學徐門，粗堅企及之志。太平興國五年春再舉進士，不中。東適齊魯，客鄒邑，登繹山，求訪秦碑，邈然無睹。逮於旬

浹，怊悵于榛蕪之下，惜其神蹤將墜於世。今以徐所授摸本，刊石于長安故都國子學，庶博雅君子見先儒之指歸。淳化四年八月十五日承奉郎守太常博士、陝府西諸州水陸計度轉運副使、賜緋魚袋鄭文寶記。

2T 右《秦嶧山碑》者，始皇帝東巡，群臣頌德之辭，至二世時丞相李斯始以刻石。今嶧山實無此碑，而人家多有傳者，各有所自來。昔徐鉉在江南，以小篆馳名，鄭文寶其門人也，嘗受學於鉉，亦見稱於一時。此本文寶云是鉉所摹，文寶又言嘗親至嶧山訪秦碑，莫獲，遂以鉉所摹刻石於長安，世多傳之。余家《集錄》別藏泰山李斯所書數十字尚存，以較摹本，則見真偽之相遠也。治平元年六月立秋日。

2U 余友江鄰幾謫官於奉符，嘗自至泰山頂上，視秦所刻石處，云「石頑不可鐫鑿，不知當時何以刻也？然而四面皆無草木，而野火不及，故能若此之久。然風雨所剝，其存者才此數十字而已」。本鄰幾遺余也，比今俗傳《嶧山碑》本特為真者爾。

2V 蓋收藏古物，實始於原父，而集錄前代遺文，亦自文忠公發之，後來學者稍稍知搜抉奇古，皆二公之力也。

2W 右漢《郎中王君碑》，文字磨滅，不復成文，而僅有存者，其名字、官閥、卒葬年月皆莫可考。惟其碑首題云《漢故郎中王君之銘》，知君為漢人，姓王氏，而官為郎中爾。蓋夫有形之物，必有時而弊，是以君子之道無弊，而其垂世者與天地而無窮。顏回高臥於陋巷，而名與舜、禹同榮，是豈有托於物而後傳邪？豈有為於事而後著邪？故曰久而無弊者道，隱而終顯者誠，此君子之所貴也。若漢王君者，托有形之物，欲垂無窮之名，及其弊也，金石何異乎瓦礫？治平元年四月晦日書。

2X 故人間尤以官法帖為難得，此十八家者 ， 蓋官法帖之尤精者也。余得自薛公期，云是家藏舊本，頗真。今世人所有，皆轉相傳摹者也。

2Y 蓋史牒出於後人之手，不能無失，而刻詞當時所立，可信不疑。

2Z 原父博學好古，多藏古奇器物，而咸、鎬周秦故都，其荒基破塚，耕夫牧兒往往有得，必購而藏之。

2AA 歸自長安，所載盈車，而以其二器遺余。

2AB 先秦古器十有一物，制作精巧，有欵識，皆科斗書。為古學者，莫能盡通，以他書參之，迺十得五六。就其可知者校其世，或出周文武時，于今盖二千有餘歲矣。嗟乎。三王之事，萬不存一，詩書所記，聖王所立，有可長太息者矣，獨器也乎哉。兑之戈、和之弓、雝磬、崇鼎，三代傳以為寶，非賴其用也，亦云上古而已矣。孔子曰：多見而識之，知之次也。衆不可概，安知天下無能盡辨之者哉。使工模其文刻于石，又并圖其象，以俟好古博雅君子焉。終此意者，禮家明其制度，小學正其文字，譜牒次其世諡，迺為能盡之。

2AC 古者有言：「夏后氏尚忠，忠之敝，小人以野，救野莫如敬。商人尚敬，敬之敝，小人以鬼，救鬼莫如文。周人尚文，文之敝，小人以僿，救僿莫如忠。三王之道若循環。」此非君子之言，好事者飾之也。聖人之道同，而王者之政一。同也，故能同不同；一也，故能一不一。同者，道也；不同者，物也。一者，德也；不一者，俗也。故自伏羲氏、神農氏、黃帝氏、少昊氏、顓頊氏、高辛氏、陶唐氏、有虞氏，天下之生久也，一盛一衰，一亂一治，然而所以聖者常同，所以治者常一。

2AD 禮書所載黃彝，乃畫人目為飾，謂之「黃目」。余遊關中，得古銅黃彝，殊不然。其刻畫甚繁，大體似繆篆，又如闌盾間所畫回波曲水之文。中間有二目，如大彈丸，突起。煌煌，所謂黃目也。視其文，髣髴有牙角口吻之象。或說黃目乃自是一物。

2AE 象形者，畫成其物，隨體詰詘，「日、月」是也。

2AF 知悼子卒，未葬，平公飲酒，師曠、李調侍，鼓鐘。杜簣自外來，聞鐘聲，曰：「安在？」曰：「在寢」，杜簣入寢，歷階而升，酌，曰：「曠飲斯。」又酌，曰：「調飲斯。」又酌，堂上北面坐飲之。降，趨而出。平公呼而進之，曰：「簣，曩者爾心或開予，是以不與爾言；爾飲曠何也？」曰：「子、卯不樂；知悼子在堂，斯其為子、卯也大矣。曠也大師也，不以詔，是以飲之也。」「爾飲調何也？」曰：「調也君之褻臣也，為一飲一食，亡君之疾，是以飲之也。」「爾飲何也？」曰：「簣也宰夫也，非刀匕是共，又敢與知防，是以飲之也。」平公曰：「寡人亦有過焉，酌而飲寡人。」杜簣洗而揚觶。公謂侍者曰：「如我死，則必無廢斯爵也。」至于今，既畢獻，斯揚觶，謂之杜舉。

2AG 以上四器，形制、文飾相似，謂之舉者。舉亦爵觶之名，因獻酬而舉之，故名其器曰舉。如杜簣洗而揚觶以飲，平公因謂之「杜舉」是也。《鄉飲酒》記「凡舉爵三作而不從爵」知獻必舉爵也。主人舉者，主人所舉獻賓之爵也。今禮圖所載爵皆于雀背負珓，經傳所不見，固疑不然。今觀是器，前若嘴，後若尾，足脩而銳，其全體有象于雀，其名又曰舉，其量有容升者，則可謂之爵無疑。

2AH 稽之好之者，必求其所以迹也。制度法象之所寓，聖人之精義存焉。有古今之同然，百代所不得變者。

2AI 《水經》云：「彭蠡之口，有石鐘山焉。」酈元以爲下臨深潭，微風鼓浪，水石相搏，聲如洪鐘。是說也，人常疑之。今以鐘磬置水中，雖大風浪不能鳴也，而況石乎！至唐李渤始訪其遺蹤，得雙石於潭上，扣而聆之，南聲函胡，北音清越，桴止響騰，餘韻徐歇。自以爲得之矣。然是說也，余尤疑之。石之鏗然有聲者，所在皆是也，而此獨以鐘名，何哉？元豐七年六月丁丑，余自齊安舟行適臨汝，而長子邁將赴饒之德興尉，送之至湖口，因得觀所謂石鐘者。寺僧使小童持斧，於亂石間擇其一二扣之，硿硿焉。余固笑而不信也。至莫夜月明，獨與邁乘小舟，至絕壁下。大石側立千尺，如猛獸奇鬼，森然欲搏人；而山上棲鶻，聞

人聲亦驚起，磔磔雲霄間；又有若老人咳且笑于山谷中者，或曰此鸛鶴也。余方心動欲還，而大聲發於水上，噌吰如鐘鼓不絕。舟人大恐。徐而察之，則山下皆石穴罅，不知其淺深，微波入焉，涵淡澎湃而爲此也。舟回至兩山間，將入港口，有大石當中流，可坐百人，空中而多竅，與風水相吞吐，有窾坎鏜鞳之聲，與向之噌吰者相應，如樂作焉。因笑謂邁曰：“汝識之乎？噌吰者，周景王之無射也；窾坎鏜鞳者，魏莊子之歌鐘也。古之人不余欺也！”

2AJ 《水經》云：「彭蠡之口，有石鐘山焉。」酈元以為下臨深潭，微風鼓浪，水石相搏，響若洪鐘，因受其稱。有幽棲者，尋綸東湖，沿瀾窮此，遂躋崖穿洞，訪其遺蹤。次於南隅，忽遇見雙石，欹枕潭際，影淪波中。詢諸水濱，乃曰石鐘也，有銅鐵之異焉。扣而聆之，南聲函胡，北聲清越，桴止響騰，餘韻徐歇。若非潭滋其山，山涵其英，聯氣凝質，發為至靈，不然則安能產茲奇石乎！乃知山仍石名舊矣。如善長之論，則瀕流庶峰，皆可以斯名冠之。聊刊前謬，留遣將來。貞元戊寅歲七月八日，白鹿先生記。

2AK 學書之要，唯取神氣為佳。若模象體勢，雖形似而無精神，乃不知書者所為耳。嘗觀石鼓文，愛其古質，物象形勢有遺思焉。及得原叔鼎器銘，又知古之篆文或多或省，或移之左右上下，唯其意之所欲，然亦有工拙。秦漢以來，裁得一體，故古文所見止此，惜哉！

3A 周易六十四卦，莫不有象，而獨於鼎言象者。

3B 昔堯有大章，舜有大韶。三代之王，亦各異名。今追千載而成一代之制，宜賜名曰大晟。

3C 禮因時而制，故三代之王皆不相襲，非禮不同，時異故也。去古既遠，其宮車衣服之制，祭祀昏聘幣帛之用，循沿千載 ， 名殊制異，或古有今無，或古無今有，不可考合，希奇膠古，不惟駭聽，亦無補于事。

3D 禮從宜，使從俗。

3E 聖人蓋有以見天下之賾，而擬諸形容， 象其物宜， 是故謂之象，至于近取諸身、遠取諸物，仰以觀於天，俯以察於地，擬而象之百物咸備，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情，故圜以象乎陽，方以象乎陰，三足以象三公，四足以象四輔，黃耳以象才之中，金鉉以象才之斷，象饕餮以戒其貪，象蝄蜽形以寓其智，作雲雷以象澤物之功，著夔龍以象不測之變，至於牛鼎、羊鼎、豕鼎，又各取其象而飾焉，則鼎之為器，衆體具矣。

3F 隹政酥六年十又一月甲午，帝命作鉶鼎，易領樞密院事貫，以祀其先，子孫其永保之。

3G 隹宣酥三年正月辛丑，皇帝考古，乍山尊，[豐弟]於方澤，其萬年永寶用。

3H 是器字畫位置不拘於偏旁之陋，或左而右，或右而左，點畫或繁或省，故以X謂之祖、Y謂之尊，而純質未鑿於世俗之習。渾厚端雅，若有道之士觀是器者，豈不改觀斂衽耶。

4A 耳目見聞之陋。

4B 圖，經也。書，緯也。一經一緯，相錯而成文。圖，植物也。書，動物也。一動一植，相須而成變化。

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