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Turning Points in Historiography:
A Cross-Cultural Perspective

Edited by

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Muslims (London: Ithaca, 1979). On Ibn Qurayba, Gérard Lecomte, *Ibn Qurayba: L'homme, son oeuvre, ses idées* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1965). On the other authors mentioned here we still await serious studies.

9. See Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 84, 170-76; Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 128-47; Humphreys, "Ta'rikh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 10, p. 276.

10. Khalidi (*Arabic Historical Thought*, chs. 3-4) connects this shift in historical thought and practice to two rising intellectual trends in the ninth century, *ashb* and *ihkma*, both of which owed much of their impact on Islamic culture to the active patronage of the Abbasid court. This is undeniably an important dimension of the problem, but I do not believe that it contradicts my own interpretation. The new curiosity about all things human (*al-sha'b*) and the concomitant study, absorption, and creative adaptation of the Greek and Indo-Iranian philosophic and scientific tradition (*al-hikma*), certainly did provide historians with new perspectives and tools for dealing with contemporary history. Ironically, these perspectives and tools had little impact on the way early Islamic history was understood; the first century or so remained *tempora sacra*, to be handled within the traditional Covenant-Betrayal-Redemption paradigm.

11. The greatest achievement of this kind was certainly the *Complete History* (*al-Kamil fi al-ah-yikh*) of 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir of Mosul (1160-1233), whose work is unrivalled in the breadth and richness of its sources, its chronological and geographical range and balance, its clarity of language and organization, and its political acuteness.

12. Humphreys, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 10, p. 276, and *Islamic History*, pp. 129ff. The Persian historiographic tradition still lacks a good general study; a concise overview is given by Anne K. S. Lambton, "Ta'rikh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 286-90.

13. Tabari strove to be particularly systematic and rigorous about this; no doubt his immense prestige did much to shape the practice of later historians. On the development of chronology in early Islamic historiography, see Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, pp. 230-48.

14. The finest is no doubt the *History of the World-Conqueror* (*Ta'rikh-e Jahan-gusha*) of Ala-Malik Juvayni (1226-83), fortunately available in a meticulous and literate translation by John A. Boyle (2 vols.; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958). On the Arabic-language side, I know nothing really comparable apart from the remarkable discursus penned by Ibn al-Athir at the time of the first Mongol incursions ca. 1220, but he died before the full impact of the Mongol invasions was felt.

15. On Rashid al-Din Tabib (1247-1318) and his *Collected Histories* (*Jam'i al-tawarikh*), see D. O. Morgan's entry in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 8, pp. 443-44, and Lambton, "Ta'rikh," p. 289. Portions of this great chronicle have been translated into Western languages, but the work as a whole has never received the study which it clearly merits.

16. The literature on this topic can be referenced via Humphreys, "Historiography" in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Modern Islamic World* (gen. ed., John L. Esposito; 4 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 114-20.

7. The Historicization of Classical Learning in Ming-Ch'ing China

Benjamin A. Elman¹

In the middle of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911), the Che-chiang literatus Chang Hsueh-ch'eng (1738-1801) enunciated what became one of the most commented upon slogans in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese intellectual circles: "The Six Classics are all Histories" (*shu-ch'ing chieh shih yeh*).² Since the Han dynasties, the Classics had been referred to as the "sage's Classics" (*sheng-ch'ing*). Together with the Four Books, which became canonical in Sung (960-1280) and Yuan (1280-1368) times, the Classics became the basis for a classical education in late imperial schools and at home. To become an official, study of the five surviving Classics and Four Books was obligatory, and the importance of the former increased after 1787, when the classical specialization requirement was dropped on civil examinations in favor of mastery of all the Classics (see below). History was always prominent in literati learning, but it was customarily considered a subordinate field to the Classics in the "Four Divisions" (*Ssu-p'u*, i.e., Classics, History, Philosophy and Literature) of official knowledge, as exemplified in the catalog of the 1780s Imperial Library shown in table 1.³

Before Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, history usually provided markers for sage-like moral actions and exemplifications of classical learning or their betrayal. We will see this more clearly below in the case of Chu Hsi (1130-1200), the Sung champion of *Tao-hsueh* (lit., "Learning of the Way" or "Neo-Confucianism"). Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528), although a Ming dynasty (1368-1644) critic of Chu Hsi, nevertheless held to the *Tao-hsueh* view that: "History deals with events while a Classic deals with the Way." Even for Wang, however, there was no clear break between them: "Events equal the Way; the Way equals events." Wang concluded: "The *Spring and Autumn Annals* was also a Classic, while the Five Classics were also histories."⁴

In the early Ch'ing, Ku Yen-wu (1613-82) already complained that historical studies had declined during the Sung and Ming dynasties because of excessive concern on civil examinations for literary talent. In his collected essays, Ku noted that his grandfather had been critical of Chu Hsi for basi-

CLASSICS	PHILOSOPHY	HISTORY
Change(s)	Literati/Confucians	Dynastic Histories
Documents	Military Strategists	Annals
Poetry	Legalists	Topical Records
Rituals	Agriculturalists	Unofficial Histories
Spring & Autumn Annals	Medicine	Miscellaneous Histories
Filial Piety	Astronomy & Mathematics	Official Documents
General Works	Calculating Arts	Biographies
Four Books	Arts	Historical Records
Music	Repertories of Science	Contemporary Records
Philology	Miscellaneous Writers	Chronography
	Encyclopedias	Geography
	Novels	Official Registers
LITERATURE	Buddhism	Institutions
Elegies of Ch'u	Taoism	Bibliographies
Individual Collections		Historical Records
General Anthologies		Contemporary Records
Literary Criticism		Chronography
Songs & Drama		Geography
		Official Registers
		Institutions
		Bibliographies & Epigraphy
		Historical Criticism

Table 1. Forty-four subdivisions of the *Ssu-ku ch'ian-shu* (Complete collection in the Imperial Four Treasuries).

cally just changing Ssu-ma Kuan's (1019-86) *Comprehensive Mirror of History* (*Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*) into a condensed version known as the *T'ung-chien kang-mu* (Condensation of the comprehensive mirror),⁵ an issue that we will take up again below. Ku urged restoration of T'ang-dynasty style examination essays devoted solely to history.⁶ By Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's time a century later, the preeminent position of the Classics in literati learning was further diminished. Other late-eighteenth-century literati-scholars such as Ch'ien Ta-hsin (1728-1804), Wang Ming-sheng (1722-98), and Chao I (1727-1814), among others, also stressed historical research and were more eminent than Chang Hsueh-ch'eng. Like Chang, they remained predominantly classicists (*ching-hsueh-chia*) and never framed their scholarly identities purely as historians (*ta-shih-chia*). Nevertheless, they also attempted to restore historical studies (*shih-hsueh*) at the top of what counted for literati learning.⁷

Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's late-eighteenth-century slogan, which became more famous a century later when late-nineteenth-century German style historicism became de rigueur in Republican China, reflected the changing intellectual trajectories between classical studies and historical studies among literati elites. During the late Ch'ing, historical studies gradually replaced classical studies as the dominant framework for scholarly research. In the early twentieth century, the eclipse of classical studies was complete among modern Chinese intellectuals, the heirs of Ch'ing literati historiography. Ku Chieh-kang (1893-1980) and others who participated in the *Ku-shih-shien*

debates concerning ancient Chinese history in the 1920s made the Classics the object of historical study, not the premise for historical studies.⁸

We should be careful, however, not to overstate the functional connection between Ch'ing scholars and modern historiography in China. In terms of 1) applying new empirical methods of source criticism, 2) historicizing the Classics, and 3) in searching for a wider range of source materials for history, scholars such as Chang Hsueh-ch'eng resembled the German historians in the minds of their twentieth-century interpreters, such as Liang Ch'i-chao (1879-1929) and Hu Shih (1891-1962). But in the end, Chang et al. resemble their European Enlightenment contemporaries more than modern "scientific" historians. The historicization of sources in Ch'ing China did not yet equal the "objective" premises of German historicism because Chinese literati did not yet dissolve the Classics fully into the Histories. Disenchantment with the Classics was not yet widely heralded in the eighteenth century. History was important, but the Classics were still Classics. Under the influence of German historicism in modern China, however, the Classics are no longer the Classics. They have been desacralized.⁹

In the eighteenth century, for example, the perennial relationship between classical and historical studies remained an important consideration among orthodox literati. But with the rise in status of historical studies almost to parity with classical studies, the demarcation between the universality of the Classics and the particularity of the Dynastic Histories was again called into question. Such doubts penetrated the imperial civil service examinations. The noted evidential research scholar Lu Wen-ch'ao (1717-96), while serving as a senior examination official at the 1767 Hu-nan provincial examination, prepared one of the five policy questions in which he pointedly asked the *ch'iu-jen* (lit., "raised men," i.e., provincial graduates) degree candidates to reconsider the relationship between the Classics and Histories: "The Histories have different uses from the Classics, but they derive from the same sources. The *Documents Classic* and *Spring and Autumn Annals* are the historical records of the sages, which have become Classics. Later ages honored the latter and divided [the Histories and Classics] into two genres. Can you grasp [how this happened] and then explain it?"¹⁰

Others went even further when they claimed that there was no difference between the Classics and Dynastic Histories. This artificial division of genres, Ch'ien Ta-hsin contended, had not existed in the classical era. Rather, the demarcation of genres had been first used in the *ssu-p'u* (four divisions) system of classification after the fall of the Later Han (A.D. 25-220) dynasty, when the Classics for the first time were demarcated from History, Philosophy, and Literature. On these grounds, Ch'ien rejected the priority given the Classics over History and concluded that both were essential historical sources for retrieving from antiquity the wisdom of the sages. Placed in its own proper historical context, then, Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's often-cited claim that "the Six Classics are all Histories" reflected the growing historicization of literati learning in the eighteenth century.¹¹

This process of historicization of course had its roots, as in the case of Wang Yang-ming above, in earlier trends of literati learning. Indeed, since

the T'ang (618-907) and Sung dynasties, the court and the government had prioritized historical studies within the bureaucracy, in the education of the ruler and his princes, and in the civil examination curriculum. A "History Office" (*Shih-huan*) had been part of the imperial government since the Han dynasties (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). During the T'ang, this office had increased prestige because it was the venue for the collection of documents that were used to produce dynastic histories for each reign period, the "Veritable Records" (*Shih-lu*). Such documents were also used by succeeding dynasties to officialize the history of their immediate predecessor.¹²

During the Sung, "imperial lectures" (*ching-yen*) by senior literati-officials were instituted to create a bond of shared values and modes of policy analysis between the ruler, his princes, and the court's most senior advisors. Robert Hartwell notes that the Northern Sung (960-1126) reform debates began this way. Hartwell adds that the role of history in these lectures carried over to Sung civil service examinations as a pedagogical device to encourage candidates to learn what the dynasty deemed desirable. The incorporation of history as a topic for the Sung civil examinations occurred mainly through the "policy questions" (*shih-wu ts'e*), which during the Northern and Southern Sung were an important part of both the classical and literary tracks to the prestigious *chin-shih* (literatus presented to the emperor for appointment) degree. Hartwell contends that through both the "imperial lectures" and the "policy questions" the Northern Sung government in particular was imbued with an "historical-analogistic attitude" toward solving economic, political, and social problems, although the didacticism of Sung historiography remained intact.¹³

I. History and Policy Questions

Beginning in the Yuan dynasty, when poetry and rhyme-prose were partially eliminated from the civil examinations because of their alleged frivolity, a process that was completed during the early Ming, essays on the Four Books and Five Classics became the mainstay of the late imperial examinations to test classical models for world-ordering.¹⁴ The policy question was retained to test "classical and historical knowledge to be applied in contemporary affairs."¹⁵ Although subordinate to the Four Books and Five Classics over the long run, policy questions were frequently deemed essential and thus highly prized by examiners and scholars as markers of the confluence between classical theory, historical events, and practical affairs.¹⁵

The prestige of policy questions increased during the late Ming Chia-ching (1522-66) and Wan-li (1573-1620) reigns, when policy answers often reached over 3500 characters per answer.¹⁶ During this period, two compilations of outstanding policy questions and answers were undertaken. The first, completed in 1604, was entitled *Huang-Ming ts'e-beng* (Balancing of civil policy examination essays during the Ming dynasty).¹⁷ Arranged by reign period and topic, it contained samples of metropolitan and provincial policy questions between 1504 and 1604. The collection was later enlarged

in 1633 to include questions from sessions two and three of the civil examinations from 1504 to 1631 under the title *Huang-Ming hsiang-hui-shih eh-san-ch'ang ch'eng-wen huan* (Selection of model examination essays from the second and third sessions of the provincial and metropolitan civil examinations during the Ming dynasty).¹⁸

During the early reigns of the Ch'ing dynasty, Manchu emperors, like their Ming predecessors, continually criticized examiners and candidates alike for relegating policy questions to relative obscurity. The Yung-cheng (r. 1723-35) and Ch'ien-lung (r. 1736-95) emperors frequently lamented the overly literary focus in examination essays and tried to encourage attention to more practical matters.¹⁹ In fact, a review of the 1760 provincial examinations by the Hanlin Academy revealed that in Shan-hsi, examiners had not even graded the policy questions from session three. The academicians speculated that other provinces might be guilty of similar lapses.²⁰ Such concerns were transmitted by examiners in the examinations themselves. The Hanlin academician Wu Sheng-ch'in (1729-1803), for instance, headed the staffs of several provincial examinations during the Ch'ien-lung reign. In 1771, he prepared a policy question for the Hu-pai provincial examination in which he asked candidates to review the history of policy questions on civil examinations and to assess the length of such questions. How examiners were using policy questions to reflect their own views was becoming problematic, and attention no longer focused on the poor quality of the graduates' answers alone.²¹

For our purposes here, the decline in importance of policy questions during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties curiously was compensated for when examiners used the third session of both provincial and metropolitan civil examinations to express their own views in a series of relatively long essay questions on a wide range of classical, historical, and practical topics. The examiners' questions represent important historical artifacts for Ming and Ch'ing official views about history that are as interesting culturally as the policy answers by the candidates. As answers by candidates grew shorter, the policy questions by the examiners grew in length. Consequently, the policy question, because it permitted examiners to lead candidates into a variety of directions, informs us of their central intellectual concerns within changing historical contexts.

We are fortunate, for example, in having complete records that allow us to reconstruct the range of policy questions prepared by examiners in Ying-tien prefecture during the Ming dynasty and in Che-chiang province during the Ch'ing dynasty. For Ying-tien provincial examinations, we have complete records covering questions for forty-seven provincial examinations over the 126 years from 1474 to 1600. On Che-chiang provincial examinations we have complete lists of policy questions for ninety-two examinations covering 213 years from 1646 to 1859. The range and probability of policy questions during the Ming and Ch'ing in these two southern regions is summarized in Tables 2 and 3 that follow.

Rank	Probability	Topic	% of Total	Selection in %
1		Learning/Selection	9.6	43.4
2		Tao-hsueh	8.3	37.5
3		Ming rulers	7.4	33.5
4		World-ordering	7.0	31.6
5		Economy/Statecraft	5.7	25.8
6		Ruler-official	5.2	23.5
7		National defense	4.3	19.4
7		Classical studies	4.3	19.4
9		Law	3.5	15.8
9		Military matters	3.5	15.8
11		Literature/Poetry	3.0	13.6
11		Natural Studies	3.0	13.6
13		History	2.6	11.8
13		Agriculture	2.6	11.8
13		Customs/Velues	2.6	11.8

Table 2. Ming Dynasty Policy Questions Classified by Topic: Ying-t'ien Prefecture, 1474-1600, 230 questions, top 15 ranks only.

SOURCE: *Nan-hao hsien-shu* (Record of civil examination success in the Southern Capital Region). Compiled by Chang Chao-jui Ca. 1600 edition.

NOTE: The probability for each policy question is calculated based on the assumption that each of the five selections is mutually independent. If the selection of five questions were mutually dependent, then the probability for each type would be slightly higher. Most "topics" above and below are based on actual Chinese categories. I have added a few, such as "natural studies," which are based on combining categories, such as "astrology," "calendrical studies," and "mathematical harmonics." In the case of "classical studies" versus "philology," which of course are overlapping fields, I have separated them to show the increasing importance of the latter in Ch'ing times.

Rank	Probability	Topic	% of Total	Selection in %
1		Classical Studies	14.1	63.7
2		Learning/Selection	10.7	48.4
3		Economy/Statecraft	9.6	43.4
4		World-ordering	7.8	35.3
5		History	7.4	33.4
6		Tao-hsueh	6.1	27.6
7		Literature/Poetry	5.1	23.1
7		Local governance	5.1	23.1
9		Philology	4.2	18.9
10		National defense	3.8	17.2
11		Law	3.1	14.0
11		Literati training	3.1	14.0
13		Agriculture	2.7	12.2
13		Military matters	2.7	12.2
15		People's livelihood	2.2	9.9

Table 3. Ch'ing Dynasty Policy Questions Classified by Topic: Che-chiang Province, 1646-1859, 460 questions, top 15 ranks only.

SOURCE: *Pen-shiao Che-wei san-ch'ing ch'ian-t'i pai-k'ao* (Complete listing of all questions from the three sessions of the Che-chiang provincial civil examinations during the Ch'ing dynasty). Compiled ca. 1860.

While these results can be read in different ways, they reveal two historical trends. First, classical studies increased in frequency (from 4.3% to 14.1%) and in probability (from 19.4% to 63.7%) as policy questions from the Ming to the Ch'ing, ranking seventh overall in Ming Ying-t'ien and first in Ch'ing Che-chiang. Slipping noticeably in frequency of occurrence and probability from the Ming to Ch'ing were questions concerning "Learning of the Way," which moved from second to sixth. By the eighteenth century, both classical and historical studies had eclipsed *Tao-hsueh* as topics for policy questions, a finding that should not surprise us when we take into account the popularity of Han Learning and *k'iao-cheng* ("evidential research") during the Ch'ien-lung and Chia-ch'ing (1796-1820) reigns.²²

Secondly, questions on history in the third session of the examinations had moved from thirteenth in frequency (2.6%) and probability (11.8%) in Ying-t'ien during the Ming dynasty to fifth in Che-chiang (7.4% in frequency; 33.4% probability) during the Ch'ing. Moreover, 73% of the history questions on the Che-chiang examinations were prepared from 1777 on, thus paralleling the late-eighteenth-century rise in popularity of historical studies among literati such as Chang Hsueh-ch'eng. In other words, of the thirty-three policy questions devoted to history in the Che-chiang examinations for which we have records during the Ch'ing dynasty, only nine were asked between 1646 and 1777 (131 years); twenty-four were asked between 1777 and 1859 (82 years), when the records stop because of the Taiping Rebellion. Indeed, history questions rank a close second in frequency, after classical studies, for the period 1777-1859.

We should qualify our initial findings, however, due to the fact we have complete evidence from only two adjacent provinces in the Yangtzu delta, and because we are only counting the questions given on the third and last session of the provincial examinations. To the first qualification, we can add that even if Chang-su and Che-chiang provinces may not be representative of all other provinces, they are representative of the wealthiest provinces in south and southeast China, such as Fu-chien and Kuang-tung, where the frequency of elite families possessing the financial and cultural resources required to prepare students for the civil examinations exceeded provinces in North China and elsewhere.

Concerning the second qualification, we should reiterate that after 1475 policy questions were unquestionably considered less important than the 8-legged essays on the Four Books for the provincial and metropolitan civil examinations. Consequently, even as the nature of the policy questions on session three changed, "Learning of the Way" remained the core curriculum of the first session. Both examiners and students knew very well that questions on the first session were the key to the final ranking of graduates. Examiners, nevertheless, framed long policy questions to express their classical and historical views and to solicit opinion about problems of the day.

The scholar-official and Han Learning advocate Sun Hsing-yen (1753-1818), for example, recommended early in the nineteenth century that the five topics for provincial and metropolitan policy questions be set so that "practical learning" (*shih-hsueh*), a code for "evidential research" in the

late eighteenth century, would prevail among degree candidates. Sun advocated a series of policy questions that would stress literati techniques for governance (*yu-shu*), classical studies, ancient pre-Han learning (*ch'u-tzu p'ai-ch'ueh*), local geography, and material resources.²³ By the nineteenth century, the evolution of policy questions, both in terms of format and content had evolved into a fluid but still discernable pattern. Based on these results, we can arrive at the following arrangement for the five policy questions on provincial examinations in the late Ch'ing: 1) classical studies, 2) historical studies, 3) literature, 4) institutions and economy, and 5) local geography. This order was not obligatory, nor were these five types of questions always included, but my reading of nineteenth-century provincial policy questions and answers shows these terms and this order to be generally in use. Moreover, historical and institutional questions remained a dominant concern among examiners preparing the policy questions for session three. And with hindsight we know that as Han Learning classicism became the dominant scholarly discourse in the eighteenth century, it brought in its wake a reemphasis on historical studies and the genres of historical writing, which as we will see below were also reflected in changes in the Ch'ing examination curriculum.

II. History in Ming and Ch'ing Civil Service Policy Questions

The changing role of historical knowledge vis-à-vis classical studies is for the most part confirmed when we examine the nature of the history questions and answers found in the civil service examinations during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. Based on Tables 2 and 3 above, we can generally conclude that late-imperial examiners who prepared the policy questions devoted a substantial proportion of them to the study of history, a trend that increased under Ch'ing rule. In addition, most policy questions that did not take history as an object of scholarly focus presumed that candidates would prepare an historical account on whatever topic was asked, whether dealing with institutions, Classics, flood control, local governance, etc.

In addition, two of the Five Classics (the *Documents Classic* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) were essentially historical in format and content. Because candidates before 1787 chose to specialize on either the *Documents* or the *Annals* in relatively large numbers (25-27%), we can conclude that history was also an important part of the first session of the civil examinations, even while the frequency of policy questions focusing on history was increasing from the Ming to the Ch'ing. Around 20% chose the *Documents Classic*, and another 6-7% usually selected the *Spring and Autumn Annals* for their specialization. Consequently, about one-quarter of the provincial examination graduates chose a Classic dealing with history for their specialization, which was roughly equivalent to the number who chose the metaphysics and cosmology of the *Change(s) Classic* (30-35%) or the literature of the *Poetry Classic* (30-35%).²⁴

Below we will address those policy questions on provincial examinations that focused on history as a discipline and historiography as a scholarly prob-

lem. But we should keep in mind that few policy questions remained untouched by the overall literati concern for discerning moral truth and explaining historical change. Moral philosophy and history were virtually inseparable in the policy questions. The issue for examiners was the relationship between moral philosophy and history and the relative priority one might take over the other. Here, we will see that during the Ming and Ch'ing literati weighed this balance differently.

TAO-HSUEH HISTORY IN 1516 CHE-CHIANG POLICY QUESTIONS

As the third policy question on session three of the 1516 Che-chiang provincial examination, the one on history followed two earlier questions, the first on the sage-kings model of rulership, and the second on the "orthodox transmission of the Way" (*tao-t'ung*) and the role of the mind (*hsin-fa*) in the emperor's personal cultivation. We will first examine the question on history and then compare it with the other policy questions prepared in 1516 to further elaborate on the nature of historical knowledge required in the Che-chiang provincial examination. It is unclear how representative the 1516 policy question was. In the 1489 Shan-tung provincial examination, for example, a policy question on history there did not raise any of the *tao-hsueh* issues we will discuss below, whereas one policy question on the 1489 Hukuang provincial examination did raise the Sung roles of Ssu-ma Kuang and Chu Hsi as historians in determining dynastic legitimacy, as did a policy question in the 1502 metropolitan examination.²⁵

The examiners' 1516 question (of some 345 characters) on history opened by defining the chief genres that made up history: "Chu Wen-kung [Hsi] has said that the forms of ancient history can best be seen in the *Documents* [Classic] and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The *Annals* is a chronicle that comprehensively reveals the chronology of events. The *Documents* records each matter separately in order to grasp its beginning and end."²⁶ History was divided according to the long-standing distinction between pure chronologies (*p'ien-nien*), that is "annalistic history," which used the *Annals* as their model, and topical accounts (*chi-chuan*, lit., "imperial annals and official biographies") that were based on the *Documents Classic*.

Hence, lurking within the assumptions that the examiners presented in their question was the view that historical studies could be approached in terms of pure chronology (i.e., in an annalistic format) or discrete topics (i.e., in a topical or biographical format). "Process vs. structure" is an overly modern interpretation of how Ming literati viewed the genres of historiography, but it is clear that in Ming times, scholars and candidates thought about history in light of the nature of change and the role of continuity.²⁷

For the 1516 examiners, both Ssu-ma Ch'ien's (145-90? B.C.) *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shih-chi*) and Pan Ku's (A.D. 32-92) *History of the Former Han Dynasty* (*Han-shu*) represented outstanding historical works, but because neither followed exactly the classical genres of *p'ien-nien* or *chi-chuan* that had preceded them they were criticized by later generations. Implicitly,

the examiners suggested that Han historians had not lived up to classical models. This suggestion became explicit when the examiners described how some considered the *San-kao-chih* (History of the Three States period, A.D. 220-80) that followed the Han histories as "the betrayer of the *Sprung and Autumn Annals*." Candidates were asked to identify the author of the latter and discuss whether or not such charges were right.²⁸

Next the examiners brought up T'ang through Sung dynasty histories, criticism of which candidates were also asked to evaluate. Actually, these questions turned out to be simply a prelude to what the examiners were really getting at in their question, for they then turned to Su-ma Kuang's *Comprehensive Mirror of History* and Chu Hsi's condensed version known as the *Condensation of the Comprehensive Mirror* as historical works. Su-ma Kuang's work was likened to the *Tao chuan* (Tao's Commentary to the *Sprung and Autumn Annals*), while Chu Hsi's condensation was said by some "to have gotten the essential meaning of the *Annals*."

In closing, the examiners brought up for evaluation Hu An-kuo (1074-1138), who had written an authoritative commentary to the *Annals* during the Northern Sung, which was part of the examination curriculum from 1313 until 1793. The examiners also cited prominently later historians who had filled in lacuna in the *Comprehensive Mirror*, such as Chin Li-hsiang (1232-1303). They asked candidates to elaborate on Hu An-kuo's claim that the *Annals* was an "important canon on the transmission of the mind" (*ch'uan-hsin yao-tien*). Finally, the examiners asked: "Today in order to produce outstanding history that aspires to the sages' important canon on the transmission of the mind [that is, the *Annals*], what should those whose minds are set on history follow?"²⁹

In effect, the examiners had dissolved a question on history into a classical framework that equated Confucius' *Sprung and Autumn Annals* with Sung "Learning of the Way" stress on the "transmission of the mind." Moreover, Han and post-Han histories were criticized, while Sung histories were praised. Just as Han and T'ang literati had failed to transmit the essential moral teachings of the sages, i.e., the *tao-t'ung*, they had also failed in their histories to transmit the proper legacy of Confucius' *Annals*. History served moral philosophy, and Chu Hsi became the historian who had best captured the legacy of the *Annals*.

It did not matter to the examiners that Chu Hsi had at times belittled the *Annals* as an irrelevant record of ancient facts and details. Nor were they deterred by the fact, frequently pointed out by later *kuo-cheng* scholars, that the terms usually associated with Sung dynasty theories of the mind did not occur anywhere in the *Annals* but were derived from the Four Books as well as Buddhist and Taoist sources. Moreover, according to some accounts, Chu Hsi had only compiled a brief "*T'ung-chien ti-yao*" (Essentials of the *Comprehensive Mirror*), in which he set the overall guidelines for his followers to compile the detailed *Kang-mu*. As in the case of the *Chia-li* (Family rituals) and *Hsiao-hsueh* (Elementary education), during the Ming dynasty Chu Hsi received credit for works such as the *Kang-mu*, which were substantially completed by his later followers.³⁰

The best policy answer to the history question was written (in about 960 characters) by Kung Hui, a student from the Yü-yao county school who had specialized on the *Poetry Classic* and ranked second overall on the 1516 provincial examination. Over 2200 candidates had competed for the 90 places on the Che-chiang provincial *chi-jen* quota, a ratio of 24 to 1. Of those who passed, 34.4% had concentrated on the *Change Classic*, 17.8% on the *Documents*, 34.4% on the *Poetry*, 7.8% on the *Annals*, and only 6.6% on the *Rites Classic*. Kung Hui was an example, then, of a typical candidate who, although he had not chosen to specialize on one of the historical Classics, still had enough general knowledge of them to compose the best history policy answer.

One of the associate examiners commented that "in testing candidates on history one wanted to ascertain the breadth of their knowledge." One of the two chief examiners noted that this candidate "recorded his knowledge broadly and in harmony; his argumentation was precise and correct [such that it was clear that] he was one who was well-versed in historical studies." Consequently, the best students studied history regardless of what Classic they had chosen to specialize on and regardless of how well they had mastered 8-legged essays on the Four Books.³¹

First, Kung Hui enunciated the underlying principles governing history using a circular argument: "If first one takes the public good of the empire (*tiên-hsia chih kung*) to write history, then one's writings will be transmitted. If first one takes the public good of the empire to criticize history, then the debate will be settled. History is defined as the measure of right and wrong; it is the great model for making the empire serve the public good." These principles gave history an important role in assessing the present in light of the past. Moreover, Kung's essay stressed at the outset that the *Documents* and *Annals*, the first compiled by and the second written by Confucius, represented the greatest public good imaginable: "Therefore, we can say that the *Documents* is a history included as a Classic. The *Annals* is a Classic included as a history. Later historians all have been classified according to the authority of the *Documents* and *Annals*."³²

When measuring Su-ma Ch'ien's *Shih-chi* and Pan Ku's *Han-shu* against these orthodox standards, Kung found that because both had given priority to the Taoist teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Lao-tzu and relegated the Six Classics, their works had immoral implications. Similarly, Ch'en Shou's (233-297 A.D.) *San-kao-chih* had failed to measure properly the political legitimacy (*cheng-t'ung*) of the competing dynasties, thus bequeathing moral confusion to posterity and deserving the epithet of "the betrayer of the *Sprung and Autumn Annals*."³³

Coming to the Sung historical works by Su-ma Kuang and Chu Hsi, prominently identified by the examiners, Kung Hui's essay described how both had been composed by the examiners, Kung Hui's for the 1362 years (403 B.C. to 959 A.D.) up to the Northern Sung. Moreover, because Chu Hsi had faithfully modelled his condensed history on the moral principles of the *Annals*, Chu deserved to be known as the successor to Confucius as model historian. Chu Hsi's predecessor Hu An-kuo had correctly perceived that the "praise and blame" (*pao-pien*) judgments in the *Annals* were equiva-

lent to the heavenly principles and that, accordingly, the *Annals* was indeed an "important canon on the transmission of the mind." In choosing the best models for writing history, Kung Hui contended that Chu Hsi, after Confucius, was the "Grand Historian," not Su-ma Chien.⁵⁴

It is intriguing that Chu Hsi, whom we normally associate with the "Learning of the Way" moral and philosophic orthodoxy of late imperial times, was also considered by the 1516 examiners to have been equally important as a historian. But this surprise is lessened by the fact that the sort of history the examiners were testing candidates on was more akin to what we would today call "moralizing historiography." The historiographic differences between narrative and topical history initially raised in the question were relegated to the background.

We will see in later policy questions on history that the division of history into two different genres would itself become the issue, not just whether both genres served as "mirrors" for moral and political governance. In the 1516 history question, the only "Histories" that really mattered were "Classics." Thus, the *Shih-chi* and *Han-shu* were mere histories reflecting their time; the *Annals* and *Kang-mu* were Histories for the ages. In the 1516 provincial examination, the examiners in Che-chiang were still a long way from granting historical studies an independent status equal to classical studies. The Classics were still sacred and paramount, a position that does reflect Ming literati thought.

If we compare the history policy question to the second policy question immediately preceding it, which focused on the issue of the "orthodox transmission of the Way" and the role of the "transmission of the mind" in enabling the moral mind (*tao-hsin*) to reach its goals of "absolute refinement, singleness of purpose, and allegiance to the mean" (*ching-i shih-chung*), we find similarities in the content and phraseology of the two policy questions. One was devoted to "Learning of the Way," the other to history. Yet, because history was dissolved by the examiners into *tao-hsin*, both questions wound up reflecting similar moral and philosophic concerns. The examiners stressed in their second policy question, for example, that spiritual and mental subtlety were the keys to unraveling the ties between individual self-cultivation of the moral mind and public mastery of the comprehensive handles of government. Study of human nature and principle were presented as the Sung dynasty reconstruction of the mind set of the sage-king Yao who passed on the lesson of the middle way of governance to his chosen successor Shun.⁵⁵

We complete our discussion of the 1516 civil examination by also looking at the first policy question on rulership, since this was, in the eyes of the examiners, the most important question. It was standard in a Ming dynasty civil service examination that the political authority of the ruler should be confirmed in the manner policy questions were presented. The first policy question, for example, asked students to comment on the way the sagely two emperors and three kings of antiquity took upon themselves the concerns of the empire. The question stressed that such concerns could be seen in the present ruler's own mindful efforts to cultivate his virtue, which was based on his seriousness of purpose.

The examiners noted that these ideals had been realized in antiquity, but in subsequent dynasties, such as the Sung, few emperors had lived up to them. Earlier T'ang dynasty rulers had been especially negligent in their duties, the examiners pointed out. The rhetorical flourish at the end of their question, which took the form of an historical narrative of the early Ming dynasty, quickly dispelled any likelihood that the examiner's impartial political criticism would be directed at the present dynasty as well:

Our nation has endured for some 100 years from the Hung-hsi [r. 1425] to Hung-chih [r. 1488-1505] reigns. Five imperial ancestors have successively embodied the realm, and all have preserved seriousness of purpose and imperial majesty. None has been remiss in his concerns for the empire, nor have any failed to preserve and protect the law-models of their predecessors. It is likely that they have matched the [achievements of the] Three Dynasties [of antiquity] in recreating for today the glorious peace and prosperity [of yore].⁵⁶

In asking students, who of course "were more filial and respectful of their ruler than even the examiners," for their opinions, they had successfully narrowed the terms of reply for this policy essay to a literary form of an oath of allegiance to the dynasty. Renowned in later literati-inspired accounts for his alleged profligacy, dabbling in esoteric Buddhism, and lechery, however, the Cheng-te emperor (r. 1506-21) seemed an unlikely candidate for such pompous praise. His reign was dominated by powerful eunuchs such as Liu Chin (d. 1510), against whom literati such as Wang Yang-ming had unsuccessfully mobilized. Wang was jailed, beaten, and exiled in 1506 for his efforts. Eunuch cliques thereafter remained a powerful element in court politics.⁵⁷

Moreover, Wang Yang-ming was a native son of Che-chiang province, who had resided most of his life in Shao-hsing, and passed the provincial examination in Hang-chou in 1492. Both the provincial examiners and local candidates for the 1516 Che-chiang examinations likely were aware of how far the first policy question overpraising Ming emperors had strayed from reality. Was the inflated rhetoric a form of disguised criticism? If so, then under the circumstances in 1516 the stakes were very high. Punishment awaited anyone caught at even veiled criticism of his imperial majesty. Judging by the top answer to the first policy question prepared by Chang Hui (1486-1561), also from Yi-yao county and a specialist in the *Change*, for which the examiners spared no praise, no examination candidate dared to read into the question any explicit suggestion of contemporary imperial impriety. Certainly not the number one ranked *chi-jen*, as Chang turned out to be.⁵⁸

In summary, then, Chang Hui's carefully crafted opening policy essay typified the expectations that students fulfilled in the first three 1516 policy answers. The student's job in the first question was to affirm in the clearest terms possible his personal loyalty to the political system devised by the

ancients and replicated in the present. In the second, the student acknowledged his commitment to the moral philosophy of the "Tao Learning" orthodoxy. For the third, the student followed the examiners' lead in linking historical studies to imperial orthodoxy. The first three policy questions and answers in the Che-chang proceedings were in essence a ritualized exchange of orthodox political, classical, and historical beliefs that legitimated the dynasty and extracted a written oath of loyalty from the student. Given this ceremonial duet between the examiner, appealing to imperial majesty, and the student, affirming that majesty, political criticism was best left implicit. The function of the history policy question was to affirm the classical underpinnings of imperial orthodoxy. If the ruler was presented in the questions as both sage to his subjects and teacher to his examination candidates, Chu Hsi was both moral philosopher and historian without compare.

MORALIZING HISTORIOGRAPHY IN 1594 FU-CHIEN POLICY QUESTIONS

In the 1594 provincial examinations, examiners in Fu-chien province prepared a policy question on *shih-hsunshu*, whose answer in over 3000 characters was selected for inclusion in the *Huang-Ming ts'z-heng*. Unfortunately, we have no information concerning the examiners or the student who composed the policy answer. Nevertheless, this question and answer both show continuity and consistency with the 1516 policy question just discussed, suggesting perhaps that it was selected as a model essay for the *Huang-Ming ts'z-heng* because of its impeccable orthodoxy. In addition to Fu-chien, similar policy questions on history were also prepared for other 1594 provincial examinations, including those in Shun-fien, Shen-hsi, and Ssu-ch'uan.⁴⁹

As the third policy question in Fu-chien, the 1594 history question was preceded by two questions, one on the proper use of talented men for government (*ying-tien*) and the other on ways to end natural disasters (*mi-k'ai*). It was then followed by a fourth question on the equal-field system as a basis for military organization and a fifth on dealing with Japanese pirates. It is interesting that not a single policy question was framed in terms of *shih-hsunshu* or classical studies. In fact, all five of the policy questions in Fu-chien dealt directly or indirectly with the historical aspects of contemporary issues.

The policy question on history opened by broaching the difference between annalistic and topical history and then asked candidates to "point out the strengths and weaknesses of the two genres." Ssu-ma Ch'ien was brought up as the historian who had led the change in ancient historiography from chronicles to topical histories. So much so, the examiners noted, that Ssu-ma Ch'ien's favored genre had become "orthodox history," while chronicles in the style of the *Annals* had virtually died out. Candidates were asked to comment on the aftereffects of this reversal in historical genres.

Revival of annalistic history by Ssu-ma Kuang, according to the examiners, had reversed the earlier trend that had favored topical histories. What advantages did Ssu-ma Kuang's *shen-wen*, the examiners asked, have over Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *chi-chuan*? Finally, the candidates had to discuss what improvements Chu Hsi had brought to Ssu-ma Kuang's *Comprehensive*

Mirror? As an afterthought, or so it may have seemed, the examiners ended by writing that although the chronicles were the most ancient form of historiography, there were many "who today groundlessly contend that besides [Ssu]-ma Ch'ien's [*Shih-chi*] there is no history." The intent behind the 1594 policy question on history was to debunk Ssu-ma Ch'ien as the "Grand Historian." Ssu-ma Ch'ien, for all of his strengths using the *chi-chuan* genre, was taken to task by the examiners and candidates for his moral heterodoxy and his fascination with historical persons of questionable repute.⁴⁹

The policy answer opened by embellishing on the importance of history for the ruler. The ruler had the power to demote the unworthy and promote the worthy, but he relied on history to weigh right and wrong. While the ruler's power had limits, the rights and wrongs of history extended in all directions and provided the ruler with a guide for his policies. "History contained both words and meanings. Meanings harbored both right and wrong." All good historians can use vivid and flowery language to write history, but the words were insufficient in and of themselves. Only sages could capture the "pattern of meanings" (*i-fa*) and "scales" (*chi-wan-heng*) of right and wrong revealed through words.⁴¹

As in the policy question of 1516, a clear distinction was made between historical Classics and mere histories. Sages, according to the 1594 policy answer, had enunciated the principles of history in three Classics: 1) the *Documents*, 2) the *Poetry*, and 3) the *Annals*. The first contained the directives and instructions of the sage kings, but was incomplete. The second supplemented the *Documents* with the songs and chants of ancient people that had reversed trends in immorality. Confucius' explication of the rights and wrongs of history in his account of the history of the state of Lu in the *Annals* had captured the "methods of the mind" (*hsin-fa*) of the sage-kings.⁴²

Although not yet explicitly stated, the author of the answer had placed Confucius' chronicles on a higher historical plane than mere histories, such as Ssu-ma Ch'ien's topical history. The answer then praised Tso Chi-ming, who had aided Confucius by compiling an authoritative commentary to the *Annals* that enabled later ages to grasp the "affairs" (*shih*) and "meanings" (*i*) encoded in the chronicle of events. Tso therefore was the "loyal official of the 'uncrowned king' and the drummer who spread the word of the Unicorn Classic."⁴³ The *Annals*, as annalistic history, exemplified the most ancient ideal of historiography.⁴⁴

According to the candidate, this ancient historiographical tradition had been overturned when Ssu-ma Ch'ien created the topical history as an alternative to the chronicle. In so doing, Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Shih-chi* had become the model for orthodox history from the Han dynasty onwards. Following the lead of the examiners, the student answer rejected this tradition by pointing out that Ssu-ma Ch'ien himself had been guilty of heterodoxy when he had granted the Yellow Emperor and Lao-tzu intellectual priority over Han literati loyal to Confucius and the Six Classics. In addition, he had included in his history accounts of immoral adventurers and tricksters that served to delude rather than edify his readers. The rights and wrongs of history were no longer apparent. More importantly, however, this genre of history had

focused on the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and delineated the ins and outs of historical events without correctly divining the reasons for the rise and fall of the dynasty (*kuo-yuan*).⁴⁴

After the Former Han dynasty, the essay continued, historians such as Pan Ku and Ch'en Shou had emulated Su-ma Ch'ien. Annalistic history had almost disappeared, but there had been some who had kept the genre alive by producing limited chronicles based on a single dynasty—enough so that the author of the policy answer rejected claims made by earlier literati that “after [Tso] Ch’iu-ming there was no history.”⁴⁵ Nonetheless, it was not until Su-ma Kuang completed his *Comprehensive Mirror* in the eleventh century that the *pien-nien* genre revived, thereby illuminating the history of sixteen dynasties over 1362 years and earning Chu Hsi’s praise for being the most important history since the Han dynasties.⁴⁶

Though Su-ma Kuang had followed the model of Confucius’ *Annals*, his massive historical compilation had, however, confused the vital historical issue of the political legitimacy of dynasties during the periods of disunity before the rise of the Han dynasty. The policy answer noted that such oversight, according to some, demonstrated that Su-ma Kuang was morally deficient in his historical analysis and was unclear about the difference between a legitimate king (the Chou dynastic ruler) and illegitimate usurpers (*man-pa chih pien*).

Accordingly, the historian who saved the *Comprehensive Mirror* from its flaws was Chu Hsi. With a penetrating understanding of the classical principles of political legitimacy bequeathed by Confucius’ *Annals*, Chu Hsi prepared guidelines (*fan-shi*) for the *Kuang-mu* condensation of Su-ma Kuang’s work that eventually made it into a textbook of political ethics replete with *Annals*-like “praise and blame” historiography: “I dare to say that Su-ma Kuang used the methods of the *Annals* and at times captured its intent. Chu Hsi got the [full] intent of the *Annals* and also was marvelous in employing its methods. Since the ‘Unicorn Classic,’ this is the only compilation that counts.”⁴⁶

The essay ended by giving a brief account of historiography after the Sung dynasties. Later historians had produced continuations to the *Comprehensive Mirror* that kept it up to date and carried it further back in time. Moreover, during the Ch’eng-hua reign (1465–87) the emperor authorized an imperial supplement that included the Sung and Yuan dynasties and brought the *Comprehensive Mirror* up to 1367. The model for the twenty-two dynastic histories up to the Ming remained the *Annals*, but the essay reached a conciliatory conclusion concerning the two genres of annalistic versus topical histories. According to the candidate, the distinction was a product of Su-ma Ch’ien’s misguided historiography. Previously the two genres had been unified. Consequently, “it was wrong to honor topical history at the expense of annalistic history. But it was equally mistaken to compare annalistic history and overlook topical history.”⁴⁷ What was required of contemporary historians was for them to reunite the two genres and recapture the classical model for historiography that preceded Su-ma Ch’ien.⁴⁷

Overall, the 1516 and 1594 policy answers resonated. Su-ma Ch’ien and his topical historiography were attacked on moral grounds. The *chi-*

chuan genre of historiography placed a premium on style and language, but its authors had missed the forest for the trees. Uninformed by moral vision, historical events became meaningless. Although separated by seventy-eight years, both policy essays stressed that moralizing historiography was the key. And both answers contended that after Confucius only Chu Hsi had recaptured the *cheng-t’ung* of the rise and fall of dynasties. “Political legitimacy” was the historical correlate to the “orthodox transmission of the Way” (*tao-t’ung*), which Tao Learning, leaping over T’ang and Han literati, traced back to Confucius and Mencius. In both philosophy and history, then, literati after the Han had lost their way. Not until the Sung was the moral vision of antiquity restored in classical and historical studies. As a continuator of the Sung vision, the Ming confirmed through such questions and answers that the Sung legacy remained orthodox.⁴⁸

THE REASSERTION OF HAN DYNASTY STYLE HISTORY IN 1654 AND 1685

As we turn now to early Ch’ing policy questions on history, we should recall our earlier discussion of the changing trajectories of historical vis-à-vis classical studies in the eighteenth century. In mid- and late Ch’ing policy questions on history, the earlier focus on *tao-hsueh* historiography increasingly receded into the background and moralizing historiography became less important. In the process, Su-ma Ch’ien and Pan Ku reemerged as historical models who exemplified the best Han models of historiography. Just as Ch’ing dynasty Han Learning classicists stressed Han dynasty classical studies over now suspect Sung and Ming Tao Learning, so too eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Han Learning historians emphasized Su-ma Ch’ien and Pan Ku, rather than Chu Hsi, as exemplary historians.⁴⁹

In the 1654 Kuang-tung provincial examination, for instance, the second policy question addressed the relationship between the Classics and the Dynastic Histories. We know that over 2600 candidates took this examination, of whom only 86 (3.6%) passed. Of the latter, 25.8% specialized on the *Change Classic*, 17.2% on the *Documents*, 43% on the *Poetry*, 6.5% on the *Annals*, and 7.5% on the *Record of Rites*. As estimated above, we find that roughly 25% of the graduates and candidates mastered one of the historical Classics in their preparations for the Kuang-tung provincial examination of 1654. In addition, all students had to answer the policy question raising the issue of the boundaries between historical and classical studies.⁵⁰

In his introduction to the official record of the examination proceedings, the chief examiner Chang Feng-pao, a 1643 *chin-shih* from T’ien-chin, noted that during the Ming dynasty Kuang-tung had produced an outstanding scholar of *tao-hsueh* in Ch’ien Hsien-chang (1428–1500) and a historian of major stature in Ch’ien Chien (1497–1567), suggesting the centrality of classical and historical studies among literati scholars there. Ch’ien Chien had passed the Kuang-tung provincial examination in 1528 but failed twice in the metropolitan examinations. Ironically, his annalistic history of the Ming dynasty up to 1521, entitled *Huang-Ming T’ung-chi* (Comprehensive records of the Ming dynasty), first published in 1555 and in several later editions,

became a handy reference book for examination candidates. In this vein, we should add that all five of the policy questions prepared by Chang Feng-pao and his associates assumed a historical understanding of various policy matters: 1) education for the present young ruler, 2) classics and histories, 3) creating and employing talented men, 4) military structure and agricultural labor, and 5) the need for reform to keep pace with change. As in 1594, we again find no policy question directly questioning students about "Learning of the Way"⁵¹

The 1654 policy question was quite different from the earlier Ming dynasty questions we looked at. Students were asked to discuss in detail the "origins and development" (*yuan-liu*) of the Classics and the "core and branches" (*pen-mo*) of the Histories. Candidates had to delineate the evolutionary pattern of the Classics from six in number originally to thirteen by the Sung dynasty. This completed they were then asked to take up the evolution of historical writing from Tso Ch'ü-ming to Ssu-ma Ch'ien and Pan Ku. Historical and classical studies in effect stood on equal ground, as the examiners noted: "Earlier literati have said that classical studies focused on matters of the mind (*hsin-shu*); historical studies have stressed actual achievements (*shih-kung*)."⁵² Ssu-ma Kuang and Chu Hsi were no longer the focus of attention.⁵²

Chosen as the best policy answer for this question was Ch'en I-hsiung's essay in some 2300 characters. The examiners rated it as "penetrating," "comprehensive," and "elegant," suggesting that they valued both historical knowledge and narrative style. The policy essay opened with the usual general discussion of the importance of history that we have seen in earlier policy answers, but Ch'en noted that the Classics and the Histories taken together represented the proper standard for public well-being: "The Classics are the stars, planets, sun, and moon in the human realm; the Histories are the lofty peaks and the Yangtzu and Yellow rivers of our human realm."⁵³ By "advancing our knowledge through the investigation of things" (*chih-chih ko-wu*) one could master the Classics. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* should be mastered for it contained the "rights and wrongs" essential for public well-being.⁵³

Classical studies were still the provenance of Tao Learning, as the appeal to the doctrine of *ko-wu* demonstrates. Similarly, the *Annals* remained the core of the orthodox moralizing historiography. In this regard, Ch'en's essay was in essential agreement with his Ming predecessors. Moreover, Ch'en contended that while historical circumstances changed, the principles underlying those changes remained eternal, a reassuring theme in a time of dynastic change. The Classics already contained the essentials of the Histories, while the Histories were based on the unified vision informing classical studies. This vision, however, had been lost during the period of disunity after the fall of the Later Han dynasty and not recovered until the great *tao-hsueh* masters of the Sung, best represented by the "original meanings" (*pen-i*) elucidated by Chu Hsi.⁵⁴

In theory, Ch'en I-hsiung's essay diverged very little from earlier essays that dissolved history into the classical philosophy of "Learning of the Way"

But in practice, there were some important differences. First of all, Ch'en was forced by the examiners to detail Han and T'ang dynasty vicissitudes in classical and historical studies, which had been undervalued during the Ming. More importantly, however, Ch'en's essay, although it prominently displayed Confucius' *Annals*, made no significant mention of Ssu-ma Kuang's *Comprehensive Mirror* or of Chu Hsi's condensation, which some Ming examiners and candidates had prioritized as the model for orthodox historiography. The Chu Hsi that appeared in Ch'en's 1654 policy essay was circumscribed. Chu was hailed for his classical studies but ignored for his history. In effect, the question on classical and historical studies revealed a rudimentary but still noticeable distance that the examiners had placed between the two disciplines. Thereafter, Chu Hsi "the historian" receded from Ch'ing policy questions.⁵⁵

In concluding remarks, Ch'en emphasized that historians should base themselves on the "methods of the mind" (*hsin-fa*) of the *Annals*, but this was more formulaic than substantive. In Ming essays, those "methods" had been articulated in light of Ssu-ma Kuang's and Chu Hsi's revitalization of the genre of annalistic history as a textbook for political ethics. Without the latter guidelines, or the earlier premeditated attacks on Han and post-Han historians for their heterodox views, Ch'en's use of the stock terminology of the "Learning of the Way" had lost some of its normative power. His answer had lost the self-righteous conviction that informed Ming essays.⁵⁶

For comparative purposes we can refer to the 1685 metropolitan examination. By this time the K'ang-hsi emperor (r. 1662-1722) had established an office to compile the history of the Ming dynasty, which likely affected thinking about historiographical formats. As part of the 1685 examination, the second policy question also tested candidates on the distinction between classical and historical studies. As in 1654, the examiners asked candidates to describe in detail the evolution of the Thirteen Classics and Twenty-one Dynastic Histories. Along the way the examiners expressed what was then a common position among Ch'ing literati concerning the provenance of the Histories: "The *Annals* is a Classic of history; [Ssu-ma] Ch'ien and [Pan] Ku are the patriarchs of history."⁵⁷ The late Ming exclusion of Han historians from the lineage of orthodox historiography was effectively over.⁵⁷

What concerned the examiners was not the disjunction between annalistic and topical history. Rather they asked students to discuss how orthodox history (*sheng-shih*) had rightly been modeled on the histories by Ssu-ma Ch'ien and Pan Ku. Han and post-Han dynastic historians were now offered to candidates as respectable scholars. This relative openness, when compared to the relatively "closed" Ming policy questions on history, allowed graduates such as Chin Ch'ü-ching, whose essay was selected as the best policy answer for the 1685 question on classical and historical studies, to itemize the Twenty-one Dynastic Histories as individual works. He thereby could exclude some comprehensive histories as Ssu-ma Kuang's *Tzu-chih T'ung-chien* from mention. Chin's model essay also criticized individual histories by T'ang scholars such as Liu Ch'ü-chai (661-721) (conspicuously missing in the 1516 and 1594 and most Ming policy questions), but the aim of such

criticism was not to exclude the dynastic histories from consideration. Rather, the criticism was meant simply to correct or reconsider earlier accounts.⁵⁸

Chu Hsi was discussed in light of the Classics and not the Histories. Both the examiners and Chin Chi-ching made clear that the distinction between annalistic and topical histories was part of the classical legacy itself and not the invention of Su-ma Ch'ien. As Chin noted at the outset of his prized essay, "Ancient histories were also Classics. The *Documents Classic* followed the genre of topically recording [history]. The *Annals* followed the genre of chronicling events." In the process, dynastic history had evolved into the accepted form for "dynastic history" (*tao-shih*). Unlike the Ming views of historiography we have analyzed, the Ch'ing examiners did not think that chronicles should take precedence, as Su-ma Kuang and Chu Hsi had wanted it, over topical histories. In the early Ch'ing, the genre of *chi-chuan* was preferred over *pien-wen*.⁵⁹

The 1685 metropolitan examination question on history had also gone one step further than the 1658 Kuang-tung policy question by dropping all mention of the *tao-hsueh* "methods of the mind" that were still part of the 1658 question and answer on history. Instead, the 1685 examiners gave the "doctrines of the mind" (*hsin-hsueh*) prominence of place in the first policy question devoted solely to the "orthodox transmission of the Way." There, separate from questions of history, *tao-hsueh* orthodoxy still held sway in moral philosophy.

In the policy question on classical and historical studies, however, the scope of "Learning of the Way" had been curtailed. There had been a clear diminution of Chu Hsi as a historian, which was corroborated by Ku Yen-wu's grandfather's late Ming critique of the *Condensation of the Comprehensive Mirror*. No longer was history automatically reduced to the Classics. No longer was historiography simply a question of the proper moralizing historiography. But neither were any of the Classics themselves yet reduced to history. Nor were the historical Classics denied their priority. Changes were brewing, but another century would pass before late eighteenth century literati such as Chang Hsueh-ch'eng would begin to gainsay the priority of the Classics and dissolve classicism into historical studies. Overall, Ch'ing dynasty policy questions on history increasingly reflected the views the examiners enunciated in 1685.⁶⁰

III. The Historicization of Classical Learning in Ch'ing Policy Questions

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Classics and Dynastic Histories were carefully scrutinized by a growing community of textual scholars in Yangtzu delta urban centers.⁶¹ The slow but steady emergence of evidential research studies (*kuo-cheng-hsueh*) in the delta as a self-conscious field of academic discourse was predicated on the centrality of philological research to: 1) determine the authenticity of classical and historical texts, 2)

unravel the etymologies of ancient classical terms, 3) reconstruct the phonology of ancient Chinese, and 4) clarify the paleography of Chinese characters. These trends began in the late Ming, but climaxed under the Ch'ing. All of these philological techniques had important historical components.

Evidential scholars favored a return to the most ancient sources available, usually from the Han and T'ang dynasties, to reconstruct the classical tradition. Because the Han was closer in time to the actual compilation of the Classics, Ch'ing scholars increasingly utilized Han works (here called "Han Learning") to reevaluate the Classics. Frequently, this change in emphasis also entailed a rejection of Sung sources (here called "Sung Learning") to study the Classics because the latter were separated by over 1500 years from the classical era, and because many Ch'ing scholars were convinced that the Tao Learning schools of Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming had unwittingly incorporated heterodox Taoist and Buddhist doctrines and theories into the literati canon.⁶²

THE OLD TEXT DOCUMENTS CONTROVERSY

As a representative example of the growing historicization in Ch'ing evidential studies, many *kuo-cheng* scholars claimed, for instance, that the Old Text portions of the *Documents Classic* (also called in English the "Book of History") were forgeries from the third century A.D., and not the authentic historical records of the sage-kings of antiquity. This textual controversy became a *cause célèbre* among Han Learning scholars, at the same time that the civil examination system used Old Text passages on the "human mind and the mind of the Way" (*jen-hsin tao-hsin*) to test candidates' knowledge of the Sung Learning orthodoxy. Students were expected to memorize the Ch'eng-Chu position on the Classics and elaborate on it for imperial examiners, but even the latter increasingly recognized that many orthodox views were philologically suspect and thus historically questionable.⁶³

Since the Sung dynasty, doubts had been expressed concerning the historical provenance of the Old Text chapters of the *Documents*, but it was not until Yen Jo-ch'i's (1636-1704) research and the definitive conclusions he drew in his unpublished but widely distributed manuscript entitled *Evidential Analysis of the Old Text Documents* (*Shang-shu ku-wen shu-cheng*) that the question was considered settled.⁶⁴ Based on Yen's demonstrations that the Old Text portion was not historically authentic, some officials sent memorials to the throne in the 1690s and again in the 1740s calling for elimination of the Old Text chapters from the official text used in the civil examinations. Each time the proposals were set aside.

Hui T'ung (1697-1758), the doyen of Han Learning in Su-chou, had renewed Yen Jo-ch'i's attack on the Old Text chapters in the 1740s. Hui noted that it had taken several centuries for suspicions concerning the Old Text *Documents* to lead anywhere conclusive. Hui T'ung's Han Learning followers continued research on the Old Text chapters, picking up where their mentor had left off. Chang-chou's Sun Hsing-yen, with his definitive study of the variances between the Old and New Text Documents brought to com-

pletion to the attack on the spurious Old Text chapters.⁶⁵ The Han Learning threat to the historicity of the orthodox Old Text Classics threatened the shared historical consensus enshrined since the early Ming in the civil examination curriculum. Many refused to accept the historical implications of the textual findings of evidential research scholars.

For example, Chuang Ts'un-yü (1719-88), a Hanlin academician and Grand Secretary frequently assigned to supervise provincial examinations, and later a leader in the reemergence of New Text classicism in Chi'ang-chou prefecture, noted while serving as a court secretary to the Ch'ien-lung emperor in the 1740s that if the long accepted Old Text chapter known as the "Counsels of Yü the Great" were impugned, then the cardinal doctrine of the "human mind and mind of the Tao," as well as Kao Yao's ministerial legal injunction to Emperor Shun, which stated "rather than put to death an innocent person, you [Shun] would rather run the risk of irregularity," would be subverted. These were teachings, Chuang contended, that depended on their historical authenticity for their classical sanctions. Accordingly, on ideological grounds, Chuang Ts'un-yü attempted to set limits to the accruing *k'iao-cheng* research in the Han Learning mainstream by insulating the classics from such historical criticism.⁶⁶

Moreover, the provincial and metropolitan examinations continued to cite the passage on the human and mind of the Tao from the Old Text "Counsels of Yü the Great" with no indication of the philological controversy surrounding its historical authenticity. Examiners and students faithfully recapitulated the Cheng-Chu interpretation of the transmission of the mind of the sage-kings as bonafide historical events. However, in the eighteenth century, policy questions on a session three of the provincial and metropolitan examinations became a venue for the philological analysis and historicization of the Classics, unlike the Ming when such questions and answers were usually linked to statecraft and had not yet become critical of the textual basis of the Cheng-Chu orthodoxy.

Classical predispositions began to change in the late eighteenth century, when provincial and metropolitan examiners at times tested technical *k'iao-cheng* topics previously outside the civil curriculum. In chronological terms, however, policy questions based on Han Learning crested in the nineteenth century, a generation after its intellectual triumph among southern literati during the last twenty years of the Ch'ien-lung reign. In the 1810 Chang-an provincial examination for candidates from An-hui and Chang-su, for instance, the first of the third session's policy questions straightforwardly raised the issue of the historical authenticity of portions of the *Documents Classics*.

The examiners opened their query by raising the debate concerning the relation of the "Preface" ("Hsu") to the original hundred-chapter version of the *Documents*, which had long been attributed to Confucius. The examiners asked: "Why hadn't the preface been included in the [original] listing of the hundred chapters?" Next, candidates were asked to explain why during the Former Han dynasty there were discrepancies over how many chapters (28 or 29) of the New Text version of the *Documents* text had survived the Ch'in

"burning of the books" policy. Following this, the candidates were required to explicate the perplexing circumstances whereby K'ung An-kuo (156-74? B.C.), a descendant of Confucius and a Han Erudite of the Classics, had prepared his own "Preface" for a version of the *Documents* that added 29 more Old Text chapters from a recently discovered text of the *Documents* to the earlier New Text version. "Why?" the examiners asked, "had 59 chapters been listed for this version when there should have been only 58?"

After dealing with Former Han sources, the examiners turned to the Later Han dynasty classicist Cheng Hsuan (130-200), the "patron-saint" of Ch'ing dynasty Han Learning, whose scholia listed the 100 chapters in the original but lost *Documents* in a different order from K'ung An-kuo's version. "Why this discrepancy?" the candidates were asked. Subsequently, issues related to T'ang and Sung handling of the *Documents* text were raised. Why had K'ung Yung-ta (574-648), then in charge of T'ang efforts to settle on authoritative texts for the classical examination curriculum, labeled a third version of the *Documents* from the Han dynasty a forgery? Why had Chu Hsi voiced suspicions concerning the unusual phraseology (for Han dynasty writings) of K'ung An-kuo's commentary and preface to the *Documents*?⁶⁷

The organization and content of this query reveal the degree to which the philological discoveries associated with Han Learning and evidential research had begun to filter into the civil examination system and historicize even a Classic of "History." Although still a test of cultural and political loyalty, whereby the Ch'ing reign was praised by the examiners for its nourishing of classical studies, this exploration of the textual vicissitudes surrounding the *Documents Classics* required precise information that would demonstrate to the examiners that the candidate was aware of the historical controversy surrounding this particular Classic. Rather than a test of cultural orthodoxy, however, the question raised potentially corrosive issues that could challenge historical reliability of orthodox "truths." One of the key Old Text chapters now thought by many literati to be a forgery was the "Ta Yü mo," which contained classical lessons on the basis of which the theories of "orthodox statecraft" and "orthodox transmission of the Way" had been constructed.⁶⁸

Such textual concerns might be considered unique to the Yangtzu delta because the academic community there had been pioneers in reviving Han Learning concerns and appropriating *k'iao-cheng* research techniques for classical and historical studies. On the contrary, however, changes in civil examination questioning were occurring empire-wide, principally as a result of the Ch'ing appointments of provincial examiners, who frequently came from the Yangtzu delta and thus were conversant with the latest research findings of classical scholars there. Yangtzu delta scholars had long been the most successful on the metropolitan and palace examinations in Peking and thus were the most likely to gain appointment to the Hanlin Academy and the Ministry of Rites. Most who served as provincial examination officials were chosen from the latter two overlapping institutions in the metropolitan bureaucracy. Examinations held in the culturally peripheral provinces of Shan-tung in the north, Su-ch'uan in the southwest, and Shan-hsi in the northwest all reveal

the magnitude and scope of the scholarly changes promoted by literati examiners that were appearing after 1750.⁶⁹

As might be expected of a dynasty that used Sung *tao-hsueh* rhetoric to defend its cultural legitimacy, changes in policy questions for the metropolitan and palace examinations were slower in coming than in their provincial counterparts. Here, we are witness to dynamic intellectual changes that began in the urban centers of the Yangtzu delta and first influenced local provincial examinations before these new developments filtered up into the capital selection process. Ch'ing currents of classical and historical scholarship were ascending the examination ladder on the strength of those Han Learning and *kuo-cheng* scholars who as examiners were themselves moving up the civil service ladder of success.

As we have seen above, the 1685 metropolitan examination was administered by officials who prepared questions that required mastery of Sung moral and political theory. Although classical issues dealing with texts and their transmission were tested, the overall Sung Learning mind set did not change. In the metropolitan examination of 1730, for instance, the 1685 question on the "human mind and the mind of the Tao" was repeated almost verbatim. In 1737, the question appeared again. In the metropolitan examinations of 1739, 1742, 1748, 1751, and 1752, the first policy question for each characteristically dealt with the topic of "orthodox statecraft" and the "orthodox transmission of the Way."⁷⁰ Examiners in Peking seemed intent on making sure that students got the message: the doctrine of "mental discipline," which enabled students to "grasp the fundamentals of moral principles," was the sine qua non for discussing the "methods of governance of the [Three] Emperors and [Five] Kings."⁷¹

Although questions dealing with textual aspects of the Classics were presented in some of these metropolitan examinations, the mind set the examiners sought to reproduce among the candidates was decidedly in favor of the Sung Learning orthodoxy. This was so much so that in the 1754 metropolitan examination, which became famous as the examination passed by five of the greatest Han Learning scholars of the late eighteenth century (Ch'ien Ta-hsin; Chi Yun; Wang Ch'ang, 1725-1807; Wang Ming-sheng; and Chu Yun, 1729-81), only one of the policy questions dealt with textual issues at all. The first policy question in fact required an orthodox restatement of the premises of the Ch'eng-Chu "school of principle," which the Han Learning scholars-to-be, three of whom would also be distinguished historians, would later attack as "empty and unverifiable" rhetoric (*kuang-t'an*).⁷²

Ch'ien Ta-hsin's 1754 examination essay for the second policy question, which dealt with textual issues concerning the transmission of the Four Books and Five Classics, was selected as the most outstanding answer to the question. Although the examiners had stressed the importance of Chu Hsi's place in classical studies, particularly with regard to arranging the proper order of chapters in the *Great Learning* (one of the Four Books), their question did address technical issues surrounding the Four Books. Ch'ien Ta-hsin's extremely long model answer (indicating that unlike most other candidates in the mid-eighteenth century he took this policy question on session

three seriously) deftly maneuvered through the historical complexities of the classical issues.

Without directly impugning the Sung Learning orthodoxy, Ch'ien pointed out that the Four Books were never referred to as the "Four Books" until the Sung dynasty, when Chu Hsi and his followers had brought the *Annals*, the *Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Doctrine of the Mean* together as a special repository of classical teachings. Although the Four Books had since 1384 taken precedence over the Five Classics, Ch'ien Ta-hsin noted that originally the Four Books had been secondary to and a historical derivative of the Five Classics. According to Ch'ien, "the six Classics were all definitively compiled by the sages," thus suggesting that the later Four Books had less classical authority because they were only authorized by recent Sung literati. In his essay, Ch'ien also raised doubts concerning the historical authenticity of the Old Text portions of the *Documents Classic*.⁷³

Policy questions dealing with the historicity of the classical Canon increasingly moved from obligatory requests of candidates to reproduce Sung Ch'eng-Chu moral discourse to tests of their mastery of classical and historical information. In the 1766 metropolitan examination, for example, candidates were asked a policy question requiring mastery of the Han Learning field of phonology. The examiners pointed out in their question that "because the Han was not very far separated historically from antiquity," the initials and finals (*sheng-yun*) in Han versions of the *Poetry Classic* were likely to be the most accurate ancient pronunciations available. The intertwined histories of classical language and literati thought were being addressed.⁷⁴

Later policy questions prepared during the 1793 and 1823 metropolitan examinations reveal the degree to which Ch'ing classical and historical studies were penetrating the civil examination process. In 1793, students were asked to deal with the controversies surrounding the three orthodox commentaries to Confucius' *Spring and Autumn Annals*, particularly the debate over the reliability of the more historical *Tso chuan*, whose author Tso Ch'iuming (see above) had been regarded as one of Confucius' direct disciples, although this Old Text claim had been challenged by eighteenth-century New Text scholars. In 1792, for instance, Chi Yun had memorialized the throne concerning the various commentaries to the *Annals*, which had included the Sung Hu An-kuo *tao-hsueh* commentary as one of four required commentaries in dynastic schools since the Ming dynasty. Chi requested that this Sung commentary should be removed from the school curriculum because of its more than 1500 year distance from the date of the Classic itself. Chi's request was granted, which symbolized the victory of Han Learning views of both the Classics and Histories at court. Thereafter only the three Han commentaries were regarded as orthodox, and the Hu commentary fell into oblivion.⁷⁵ Later, as chief examiner for the 1796 metropolitan examination, Chi Yun wrote in his preface to the final report that the civil examiners "should make Sung Learning the main line of [doctrinal] transmission but where it was lacking they should supplement it [historical-ly] with Han Learning."⁷⁶

Earlier in 1758 the Hu commentary on the *Annals* had already been attacked as arbitrary. In its place, Han Learning scholars, following Ku Yen-wu's lead, recommended that Tu Yi's (222–84) more historically nuanced commentary to the *Tso chuan* should be used to “recover ancient studies.”⁷⁷ In addition to removing one of the Sung dynasty commentaries to the Five Classics, Han Learning scholar-officials such as Hung Liang-chi (1746–1809) stressed Han masters for each Classic, thus seeking to restore the teacher-disciple erudition model (*chia-fa*) of learning during the early empire and replace the mind-to-mind *tao-t'ung* transmission associated with Tao Learning. Hung regarded Confucius, not Chu Hsi, as the model example for *chia-fa* learning.⁷⁸

In addition, Ch'ing literati in the late eighteenth century attacked the early Ming *Ta-ch'uan* (Great Collection) trilogy, which the Yung-lo emperor (r. 1402–25) had established as the key repository of Sung-Yuan classical commentaries required in the civil examinations for the Four Books and Five Classics.⁷⁹ Sun Hsing-yen, for instance, drafted a memorial to the emperor requesting that the Han-T'ang scholia in the *Spihs-san ching chu-shu* (Scholia for the Thirteen Classics), compiled in the Sung, replace the *Ta-ch'uan* trilogy, which, according to Sun, had elided the true historical face of antiquity: “In the [current] atmosphere inside examination compounds, all that matters is the rise and fall of human talent. If we compel everyone to read the scholia, then the literati will all master the Classics. If the Classics are mastered, then they will also master the dynasty's rules and regulations. The meaning of the Classics will then be translated into useful knowledge.”⁸⁰

Although eighteenth-century evidential scholars in the Yangtzu delta were somewhat insulated from the civil examination system by their specialized work as researchers, historians, compilers, and teachers,⁸¹ their classical and historical views had become mainstream in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many were successful in the changing format of the provincial and metropolitan examinations, which after 1756 and 1787 favored the erudition of *k'ao-cheng* scholars.⁸² In addition to the authenticity of the Old Text *Documents*, mid-Ch'ing examiners also raised other important historical cum textual puzzles. In the 1795 Hu-nan provincial examination, for instance, the second policy question honed in on the delicate issue of the late Ming appearance of an “ancient version of the Great Learning” (*ku-pen ta-hsueh*), which reopened the Wang Yang-ming claim that Chu Hsi had manipulated the original text in Sung times to validate his interpretation of the “investigation of things” as its key passage.⁸³

The 1823 metropolitan examination, for which the distinguished *k'ao-cheng* scholar Wang Yin-chih (1766–1834) served as examiner, included three policy questions that queried students about the historicization of classical studies. In the first, examiners asked candidates about the historical transmission of the Classics. The model answer by Chou K'ai-ch'i, who finished 56th in the metropolitan examination but moved up to third in the palace examination, focused on the role Cheng Hsuan had played during the Later Han dynasty as the key transmitter of the meaning of the Classics to posterity.

For the second policy question, students were asked to describe the origins, evolution, and content of lectures to the emperor by prominent literati since the Han dynasties. Again, the best essay was by Chou Kai-ch'i. The third policy question tested the role of literati in the imperial system. In his prize essay, Lin Chao-fang (n.d.), twenty-sixth on the metropolitan but *optimus* for the palace examination, noted how emperors had variously promoted the teachings of notable literati. Lin described how in 1242 the Ch'eng-Chu school was patronized, whereas Ming T'ai-tsu (r. 1368–98) had for a time promoted the teachings of the Former Han literatus Tung Chung-shu (179?–104 B.C.), who had advised Emperor Wu.⁸⁴

A Han Learning bent to policy questions was solidified in session three of the 1847 and 1852 metropolitan examinations. Prize essays for the initial policy questions by Hsu P'eng-shou, first on the 1847 metropolitan examinations, covered the fields of classical studies, with an emphasis on historical etymology in the first question, and poetic rhymes and cadences in the second. In 1852, examiners who prepared the first policy question for session three asked students to present evidence (*cheng*) concerning textual issues related to the Classics. In his prize essay, Hsu Ho-ch'ing, who was ranked in the third tier of graduates after the palace examination, summarized the contributions made by earlier Han and T'ang literati to the study of the Classics. In a closing rhetorical flourish, however, Hsu revelled in the historical “research” (*yen-chia*) for “mastering the Classics” (*sh'üing-ch'ing*) by Ch'ing scholars, which candidates should emulate.⁸⁵

Consequently, policy questions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries increasingly reflected the changing intellectual context within which the imperial civil service examinations were administered. Although the quotations from the Four Books and Five Classics presented during sessions one and two of the metropolitan examinations remained, for the most part, unchanged in content and governed by orthodox Ch'eng-Chu interpretations (there were stylistic developments as the length of 8-legged essays increased, however), Han Learning trends in historical studies and textual cum historical issues had successfully penetrated both provincial and metropolitan examinations through the policy questions.

IV. *K'ao-cheng* Historiography

Erudition and searching criticism were expected by the mid-Ch'ing literati community of those who pieced together chronology, topography, institutions, rituals, and astronomy in their textual research. In the growing importance attached to epigraphical evidence by evidential scholars, for instance, we can also discern a reform of historical method in the eighteenth century. In addition to references to other scholars and the reworking of historical sources, the citing of bronze and stone epigraphical and archaeological evidence became a major element in *k'ao-cheng* scholarship. Inscriptions on bronze and stone were the two major subjects of study in Chinese archae-

ology before the discovery of writings on bones and shells, pottery and clay, and bamboo and wood at the end of the nineteenth century.⁸⁶

EPIGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Epigraphy (*shih-shih-hsueh*) had developed as a special field of study in the eleventh century. Ou-yang Hsiu's (1007-72) *Chi-k'u lu* (Record of collecting relics), printed in 1061, touched off a remarkable series of works during the Northern Sung that focused on the art of epigraphical copying and collecting. R. C. Rudolph points out that Sung scholars had progressed beyond collecting curiosities and were actively engaged in research concerned with identification, etymology, dating, and interpretation of findings.⁸⁷

During the Ming dynasty, an interest in ancient artifacts as curiosities was evident, but as in so many other fields, the Northern Sung concern for exact scholarship was not continued. Ming collectors were mainly concerned with aesthetic elements of color and shape in their antique collections. No extensive archaeological fieldwork was attempted, with few works on paleographical study. An exception to this tendency, Ts'ao Chao's (*fl.* 1387-99) *K'o-k'u yao-lun* (Essential criteria of antiquities) was one of the earliest comprehensive and systematic treatises on Chinese art and archaeology. Apart from the traditional subjects of calligraphy, painting, zithers, stones, jades, bronzes, and ink-slabs, Ts'ao Chao included discussions of ceramics and lacquer, as well as foreign items. Wang Tso (ca. 1427) made additions to Ts'ao's collection by including findings from the Cheng Ho (1371-1433) expeditions, but he also broke new ground by adding subjects such as imperial seals, iron railies, official costumes, and palace architecture.⁸⁸

Ch'ing scholars rejected the preponderantly aesthetic criteria employed by most Ming collectors and instead kept records of their journeys and findings. As in the Sung, such accounts generally included complete descriptions of important temples, tombs, monuments, and other objects studied. These recordings gave specific locations of discoveries, and frequently transcriptions of epigraphical findings were appended. The scale of collecting also increased dramatically. More than three thousand ancient bronze items were recorded during the Ch'ing compared with 643 during the Sung. In comparison with some twenty known Sung catalogs, there were upwards of five hundred such compilations during the Ch'ing.⁸⁹

Ku Yen-wu was one of the pioneers in the use of bronze and stone relics for research purposes. In the preface to his *Chi-yu-k'u lu* (Record of the search for antiquities), Ku wrote: "Then when I read Ou-yang Hsiu's *Chi-k'u lu* I realized that many of the events recorded in these inscriptions are verified by works of history so that, far from being merely bits of high-flown rhetoric, they are of actual use in supplementing and correcting the histories." Yen Jo-chiu also used the extensive relics to correct errors he discovered in the Classics and Histories. Seventeenth-century scholars such as Yao Chi-heng (1647-1715?) and Chu I-tsun (1629-1709) maintained large collections of relics and rubbings in their libraries. In addition, Chu I-tsun in 1687 com-

pleted a well-known history of Peking and its environs in which he described its archaeological and historical sites of interest.⁹⁰

Interest in epigraphy peaked during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Pi Yuan (1730-97) was credited with epigraphical collections compiled in Shen-hsi in 1781 and Ho-nan in 1787 under his direction. Weng Fang-kang (1733-1818) also was an authority on bronze and stone inscriptions. His well-known *Liang-Han chin-shih chi* (Record of bronze and stone epigraphy in the Former and Later Han) was printed in 1789. While serving as director of education in Kuang-tung from 1764-71, Weng had already described many ancient and contemporary inscriptions from that province in a work entitled *Tsueh-tung chin-shih lueh* (Treatise on bronze and stone epigraphy in eastern Kwangtung).⁹¹

Ch'ien Ta-hsin, who also applied epigraphy to his historical research, noted:

For the most part, writings on bamboo and silk deteriorated rapidly over time. In the process of recopying [these writings] by hand over and over again, their original appearance was lost. Only bronze and stone inscriptions survive from hundreds and thousands of years ago. In them, we see the real appearance of the ancients. Both the writings [of this type] and the affairs [described in them] are reliable and verifiable. Therefore, they are prized.⁹²

Epigraphy received greater attention from *k'iao-cheng* historians because they were committed to the use of bronze and stone inscriptional evidence to verify the Dynastic Histories.

WIDER AND MORE CRITICAL USE OF WRITTEN SOURCES

A pioneer in applying Han Learning techniques to historical research, Wang Ming-sheng, for example, contended that the historian should take into account all possible sources available to him. For Wang's research on the Dynastic Histories, such sources included the pre-Han masters (*shu-tzu*), fiction, poetry, random jottings, literary collections, gazetteers, and writings of the Buddhists and Taoists.⁹³ Yü Ying-shih has indicated that Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, despite his dissatisfaction with the lack of synthesis in *k'iao-cheng* historiography, was also committed to a critical evaluation and use of sources, which he then employed to give a more comprehensive picture of the past.⁹⁴ Tu Wei-yun has described in considerable detail the emergence of specialized *kao-cheng* historiography in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The efforts of Wang Ming-sheng, Ch'ien Ta-hsin, and Chao I placed the historical disciplines in China on a firm base of impartial inquiry. The credo of Ch'ing historiographic scholarship was enunciated by Wang Ming-sheng in the 1787 introduction to his study of the Dynastic Histories:

Historical facts and clues reveal what [should be] praised and what [should be] deplored. Readers of the Histories ideally should not

force the words and arbitrariness draw out [notions of] praise and blame. They must consider the reality to which all facts and clues point. . . . Then they can proceed to record all the variations [of the facts that they can find]. When the discrepancies are analyzed one by one, and there is no [remaining] doubt, then after proceeding in this manner they can praise or blame and [still] remain sensitive in such judgments to fair discussions of the empire. . . . Generally the way of scholarship should be sought in facts and not in empty [speculation]. Discussions of praise and blame are merely empty words. The writing of history is the recording of the facts. Overall the goal is simply to ascertain the truth. Besides the facts, what more can one ask for?⁹⁵

In complete agreement with Wang Ming-sheng's assessment, Ch'ien Ta-hsin also maintained that historical facts themselves should reveal whom to praise and whom to blame. According to Ch'ien, the process of laying blame should be analogous to the deliberations involved in deciding court cases. There must be no forced or self-serving use of the historical evidence to support political and dynastic prejudices. In his use of sources, Ch'ien emphasized the most ancient account of an event to correct the accounts that appeared later.⁹⁶

One of the most prominent features of *kuo-cheng* historiography was the use of *jen-wu piao* (tabulation of personages), supplemental tables, and factual supplements to make the Dynastic Histories more accessible as research tools. Ku Tung-ka'o's (1679-1759) *Ch'in-ch'iu ta-shih piao* (Tables of major events in the Spring and Autumn period, 722-481 B.C.), printed in 1748, served as a model for the collection of chronological, geographical, genealogical, and economic information concerning the pre-Ch'in and Han period. Arranged in tabular form under fifty topics, Ku's tables included supplementary notes by other scholars after each topic whenever there was an element of dispute or doubt. Also attached were maps that included explanations in which the ancient and present forms of place-names were given.⁹⁷

Ch'ien Ta-hsin, Sun Hsing-yen, Hung Liang-chi (1746-1809), Hang Shih-ch'iu (1696-1773), and Ch'ian Tsu-wang (1705-55)—all major figures in Ch'ing historiography—completed important works in these areas in the eighteenth century. In particular, stress was placed on making the *Han-shu* (History of the Former Han) and the *Hou Han-shu* (History of the Later Han) more accessible and accurate. Similarly, Chang Hsueh-ch'eng adamantly insisted that historical writing should include documentation devices that would describe the institutional forms and workings of local government, as well as *jen-wu piao* to facilitate reference.⁹⁸

The use of notation books (*sha-chi ts'ü-tzu*) and inductive methods by evidential scholars indicated that they had rediscovered a rigorous methodology to apply to historiography. Their analysis of historical sources, correction of anachronisms, revision of texts, and addition of commentary and supplements represented a direct application of methods that had first been used

in classical and literary research. Wang Ming-sheng and Ch'ien Ta-hsin made significant contributions to both classical studies and history. Historians focused on resolving textual puzzles or on elucidating ritual and institutional terminology. Chao I, for example, extended his historical inquiry to include topical discussions of such subjects as epigraphical discoveries during the Sung, Ming academics, and Ming institutional weaknesses.⁹⁹

On the other hand, Wang Ming-sheng argued that there remained a difference between the Classics and the Histories: "In ordering the Classics, one absolutely never dares to deny the Classics, whereas in history . . . if there are errors, there should be nothing to stop you from criticizing those errors. Herein lies the difference." Yet Wang relegated this difference to only minor status: "The important consideration, however, is that, although there exists a small difference between them, in general they both reveal a commitment to deal with concrete matters. This [goal] unites them." Ch'ien Ta-hsin went even further, as we have seen above, in his claim that there was no difference between the Classics and the Histories. Ch'ien Ta-hsin rejected the priority given to the Classics vis-à-vis the Histories as the means to reconstruct the classical tradition. Both Wang and Ch'ien were indirectly criticizing classical scholars such as Hui Tung, who worked only on the three Han histories (*Shih-chi*, *Han-shu*, *Hou Han-shu*), and Tai Chen, who had focused his research solely on the Classics, for overlooking the value of all the Histories.¹⁰⁰

RECOVERY OF THE PRE-HAN MASTERS

Textual recovery, collation, and reconstruction occasioned the revival of unorthodox and non-standard texts overlooked for centuries. The reasoning that led Ch'ing scholars back to the Later and Former Han dynasties as sources for the beginnings of the classical tradition also led eighteenth-century scholars back to the pre-Han masters (*shu-tzu*) and their texts from the Warring States period (403-221 B.C.). Seventeenth-century scholars had emphasized use of pre-Han philosophical texts to explicate the Classics, but the full implications of this approach were not worked out until the eighteenth century when Later Han dynasty sources were left behind in favor of Former Han and pre-Han texts. The revival of the *Mo-tzu*, *Hsun-tzu*, and *Kung-yang* texts in particular presented serious threats to the classicism in Later Han sources.

Wang Chung (1745-94) and Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, although usually antagonists, each played a key role in challenging Confucius' supreme position at the heart of the classical culture. A native of Yang-chou, Wang Chung was an admirer of Ku Yen-wu, Yen Jo-chü, Hu Wei, Mei Wen-ting (1633-1721), Hui Tung, and Tai Chen, whom he regarded as the six greatest scholars of the Ch'ing dynasty. Initially, Wang was interested in the *Hsun-tzu* text, and he reconstructed Hsun-tzu's forgotten but important role in classical scholarship during the Warring States period. In addition, Wang Chung initiated a revival of the *Mo-tzu* text at a time when the natural studies in Mohist thought had begun to attract the attention of several *kuo-cheng*

scholars, who saw affinities between the recently introduced Jesuit *scientia* and ancient Chinese learning.¹⁰¹

In 1780 and 1783 prefaces for Pi Yuan's edition of the *Mo-tzu*, collated by Sun Hsing-yen, and others, Wang Chung defended Mohism from charges of herodoxy by linking Mohism and Confucius' followers as related movements during the Warring States period. He also placed Mo-tzu on the same footing with Confucius. What attracted Wang Chung's interest was the statecraft and technical expertise included in Mohist writings. Weng Fang-kang, on the other hand, found Wang's perspective infuriating: "Moreover, [Wang Chung] dares to say that Mencius libeled Mo-tzu in Mencius' accusation that [the Mohist doctrine of] universal love knows no [respect for] the father." Without question this makes him [Wang] a criminal who [goes against] the orthodox teachings.¹⁰²

It is intriguing that revival of the *Hsun-tzu* and *Mo-tzu* texts would arouse such emotional responses. Later, Fang Tung-shu, defender of the Cheng-Chu orthodoxy, took dead aim at those Han-Learning scholars who were returning to the pre-Han masters. He rejected, for example, Ch'ien T'ehsin's insinuation that Hsun-tzu had been closer to Confucius' actual teachings than Mencius had been. It was clear that *k'ao-cheng* scholars were daring to reconsider the Hsun-tzu versus Mencius debate, which had been dormant for so long. To take Hsun-tzu's side after all was to attack Sung Learning and its reliance on Mencius. Fang Tung-shu also attacked Wang Chung for his use of the *Mo-tzu*.¹⁰³

Chang Hsueh-ch'eng located in pre-Han and Former Han sources evidence to show that Confucius was simply the most important of many Warring States philosophers. Confucius' teachings had been only one school among others, and Confucius' role had been limited to transmitting the teachings enunciated by the Duke of Chou centuries before. Chang's research on the pre-Han masters paralleled Wang Chung's efforts to reconstruct currents of thought in the Warring States period. Chang's historical research was part of the retrospective progression of research in evidential scholarship.

Chang's discussion of the different roles played by Confucius and the Duke of Chou revived debates concerning the priority of the *Rituals of Chou* (associated with the Duke of Chou) over the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (associated with Confucius). Such debates had taken place in connection with earlier imperial reform efforts, for example, during Wang Mang's brief reign (A.D. 9-23) and during Wang An-shih's (1021-86) reform program initiated in 1069. The question of who was the major figure in the origin of the literati tradition reflected the growing rejection in the eighteenth century of the *Tao-hsueh* view of the "orthodox transmission of the Tao" (*Tao-t'ung*), which since the Sung dynasty stressed Confucius and Mencius. According to Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, the Duke of Chou, not Confucius, had been the last of the world-ordering sages.¹⁰⁴

Revival of the unorthodox *Kang-yang Commentary* to Confucius' *Spring and Autumn Annals* by the Ch'ang-chou scholars indicates that opposing views concerning the nature of the historical Confucius and the literati tra-

dition were taking shape during the eighteenth century. The revival of interest in the pre-Han masters among Ch'ing Old Text scholars was accompanied by a revival in the *Kang-yang* emphasis on Confucius' central role in the formation of the classical orthodoxy. According to the New Text tradition, Confucius and not the Duke of Chou had been the central figure. From this point of view, Confucius had brought together earlier strands of the tradition and forged the literati vision in a time of war and decline. For the Ch'ang-chou scholars, the *Kang-yang Commentary* was the central text that elucidated Confucius' intentions in composing the *Annals* and compiling the Five Classics.¹⁰⁵

ESTABLISHING THE HSUEH-AN GENRE

Intellectual and cultural history also remained important areas of historical scholarship, particularly among Eastern Che-chang scholars (*Ch'e-tung*). Huang Tsung-hsi's (1610-95) *Ming-yü hsueh-an* (Studies of Ming scholars), completed in 1676, marked the formal emergence of the "studies in scholarship" (*hsueh-an*) genre as an important form of comprehensive analysis and incisive synthesis, according to schools, of the classical scholarship associated with a particular period of time, which as Tom Wilson and Ch'ên Tsu-wu have shown built on earlier biographical collections, *Tao-t'ung* traditions, and accounts of school lineages.

Huang's account included discussions and citations of two hundred Ming literati. The *Sung-Tsuan hsueh-an* (Studies of Sung and Yuan scholars), begun by Huang Tsung-hsi but completed by his son Huang Po-chia (b. 1643) and Ch'ien Tsu-wang, was another important contribution to China's intellectual history and to the analysis of the proliferation of literati schools of learning before the Ming dynasty. As a result of these two pioneering works, the *hsueh-an* became established as the superior narrative form for dealing with classical history and tracing the development of lines of thought in that tradition. This form of intellectual history stressed lines of discipleship, that is, transmission, within schools of thought. The *Sung-Tsuan hsueh-an* was supplemented in a follow-up collection completed in 1841, and the *Ch'ing-yü hsueh-an* (Studies of the scholarship of Ch'ing literati) was compiled in 1928-38 by Hsu Shih-ch'ang (1855-1939) to commemorate Ch'ing classical schools of learning.¹⁰⁶

In writing intellectual history, Ch'ien Tsu-wang in particular was committed to a recovery and preservation of materials concerning southern scholars who had lived during the tragic Ming-Ch'ing transition period, when the Ming dynasty fell to the Manchus. Ch'ien was following in the tradition of the seventeenth-century Che-tung scholar Wan Ssu-t'ung (1638-1702), who tirelessly gathered materials on Ming martyrs. Reflecting a continued interest in the traumatic effects of the Ming collapse, Ch'ien attempted to record for posterity the tragic lives of the Ming loyalists whose heroic deeds he thought were being forgotten in the eighteenth century. Ch'ien's efforts to revive the scholarship of the seventeenth century were closely connected to his perception of late Ming history as an important

record of martyrdom, which he wished to see included in the official *Ming History*.¹⁰⁷

Anthologies of biographies also paralleled the *hsueh-an* collections and were another important form of intellectual history in the eighteenth century, which of course had roots in earlier dynasties. Ch'ien Ta-hsin's biographies of eleven major figures in Ch'ing scholarship, for example, which included biographies of Yen Jo-chü, Hsi Wei, Hui Tung, and Tai Chen, represented this form by focusing on the classical giants in Ch'ing intellectual history. Chiang Fan (1761-1831) later made use of Ch'ien's biographies in his controversial account of the Han Learning school during the Ch'ing dynasty entitled *Kao-ch'ao Han-hsueh shih-ch'eng chi* (Record of Han Learning masters in the Ch'ing dynasty). Chiang also compiled a work entitled *Kao-ch'ao Sung-hsueh yüan-yuan chi* (Record of the origins of Sung Learning during the Ch'ing dynasty), in which he divided the history of Ch'ing Sung Learning into northern and southern schools.¹⁰⁸

Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's own interest in the nature and requirements of historical writing led him to favor the comprehensive history (*t'ung-shih*) genre as the most acceptable form for adequate coverage of the intellectual and cultural history of China. Relying on Cheng Ch'iao's (1104-60) historiographic principles, Chang's notions of cultural history drew on an evolutionary view of political and cultural institutions.¹⁰⁹ In an effort to explain texts by relating them to their historical background, Chang was committed to an interpretation rooted in exhaustive bibliography and precise scholarship. He went further than other *k'ao-cheng* historians in his effort to mold historical materials into a synthetic and well-rounded whole. Chang's *Mei-shih Tung-i* (General meaning of literature and history) was an attempt to reconstruct the successive stages of the literati classical and historical tradition, before there had been any efforts at conventional, that is, orthodox, explanation of the tradition. History, he felt, had become imprisoned by the artificial rules used in the official histories, which were the product of the collaboration of scholar-officials who owed their positions to the dynasty sponsoring the project. Chang's ideal of impartiality forced him to reject the stereotyped judgments that pervaded the official histories after the T'ang dynasty. The historian, according to Chang, should make a personal contribution to historical knowledge.¹¹⁰

These developments demonstrate that Chinese traditional historiography had by Ch'ing times evolved impartial premises for questioning research sources and accounts, which David Nyvson revealed in his precocious 1966 study of Chang Hsueh-ch'eng. In fact, this movement in historical research was transmitted to Korea and Tokugawa Japan (1600-1867). In Japan, *k'ao-cheng* (*kashö* in Japanese) historiography also developed into a rigorous methodology. Through the efforts of Shigeno Yasutsugu (1827-1910), among others, Japanese historians in the nineteenth century learned to apply the methods of German Ranken history by relying on their earlier experience with evidential research.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

In closing, we can refocus on the Imperial Library bibliography, whose categories and sub-categories in the 1780s were summarized in Table 1 above. It was compiled after an empire-wide search for rare books and manuscripts to include in the four branches of the archives in the Forbidden Palace in Peking. The imperially chosen editors summed up their efforts in light of Ch'ing dynasty developments in historiography. They noted in their introductory remarks on the massive "History Section" (*Shih-pu tsung-hsu*) that not only was "writing history a contribution to evidential research," but also "reading history was a contribution to *k'ao-cheng*." In their view, the airy debates and useless discussions of Sung and Ming literati could have been ameliorated by reference to the fifteen precise categories of history books included in the Imperial Library and the wisdom and information therein:

Without historical records, even the sages would have been unable to compile the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Without knowing those historical records, even had the sages read the *Annals*, they would not have understood the reasons underlying whom to praise and whom to blame. Literati like to make great statements emotively saying they can "get rid of the commentaries to seek the Classics." This kind of talk cannot be comprehensive.¹¹²

By 1800, then, historical studies had become the antidote to what was perceived as airy reflection about moral verities. Chang Hsueh-ch'eng's claim that "the Six Classics are all Histories" was less influential in his own time precisely because it was part of the sea change in literati views of the relationship between the Classics and History that climaxed in the late eighteenth century. We should recall that Chang went on to write: "The ancients never departed from [concrete] affairs to discuss [moral] principles. The Six Classics are all the governmental regulations of the early kings."¹¹³ The relationship between moral philosophy and history, and the relative priority between them, had been reversed by 1800. Late Ch'ing literati weighed this creative tension in favor of history.

Although evidential scholars proposed changes in historical research, they reaffirmed the role of classical ideals in the present. For them, classical learning remained the starting point and unquestioned constituent for new beliefs and patterns of historical research. New Text classicists appealed to a radical reconstruction of the past to authorize the present and prepare for the future. They had not yet reached a concept of objectivity in the modern sense or demonstrated a full understanding of what German professional historians called "historicism," but evidential styles of empirical research and New Text notions of historical change and advocacy for practical adjustment of institutions to changing times were important stepping stones to a historicized vision of political and cultural transformation. It is impossible to think of Ku Chieh-kang and China's "New History" in a modernist vacuum. Many of his building blocks came from Ch'ing evidential research, and with them,

he and others in the May 4th era adapted modern European views to unravel the facts posing as truths in imperial history.

The historical and philological consequences of evidential research thus contributed to the emergence, in the decades of the late Ch'ing and early Republic, 1890-1930, of a virulent form of cultural and historical iconoclast and revolution that saw its roots, and hence its legitimization, in such studies. But such perspectives misrepresent the actual motives that Ch'ing scholars clearly laid out in their own writings. In the end, the scholarly intentions and cultural consequences of Ch'ing dynasty evidential research are analytically distinct. Too often we have read the twentieth-century historicist consequences of evidential research anachronistically into the classical intentions of literati-scholars writing during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such a procedure has incorrectly turned scholars such as Chang Hsueh-ch'eng, Wang Ming-sheng, and Ch'ien Ta-hsin into a sort of modern historicist that they never were. They remained committed to classical ideals.

References

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3. See also my *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 563-68.
4. See Wang Yang-ming, *Ch'uan-hsi lu* (Record of transmitted cultivation), in *Wang Yang-ming ch'uan-chi* (Complete works of Wang Yang-ming) (Taipei: Kao-cheng ch'u-pan-she, 1973), p. 8 (#13). I have modified the translation found in Wing-tsit Chan, tr., *Instructions for Practical Living and other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 23.
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6. Ku Yen-wu, "San-ch'ang" (The three examination sessions), in *Jih-chih lu chih-shih* (Record of knowledge gained day by day collected notes) (Taipei: Shih-chieh Bookstore, 1962), 16.385-86, and "Shih-hsueh" (Historical studies), in *ibid.*, 16.391-92. For discussion, see Inoue Susumu, "Rikyōō mīna shi setsu no keifu" (The descent of the thesis that the "Six Classics are all Histories"), in Ono Kazuko, ed., *Mimamashi Shinsho no shakai to bunka* (Late-Ming early-Ch'ing society and culture) (Kyoto: Ming-wen Press, 1996), pp. 535-85, which presents other Ming precedents.
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11. Ch'ien Ta-hsin, "HSU" (Preface), in *Nien-erh-shih k'ao-i* (Examination of variants in the Twenty-two Dynastic Histories) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935-37), p. 1. See also the prefaces to Chao I, *Erh-shih-erh-shih cha-chi* (Notations to the Twenty-two Dynastic Histories) (reprint: Taipei: Kuang-wen Bookstore, 1974).

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14. See Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 25-46.

15. Yuan dynasty policy questions can be found in Huang Chin, *Chin-hua Huang hsten-sheng wen-chi* (Collected essays of Huang Chin from Chin-hua) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*, 1919-37), pp. 191-200. Early Ming policy questions prepared by Su Po-heng (1329-92?) in 1385 can be found in *Huang-Ming wen-heng* (Balancing of essays from the Ming dynasty) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an*, 1919-1937), 23.220-222. See also the 1370-71 provincial, metropolitan, and palace policy answers by the first Ming *optimus* Wu Po-tung in the *Ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu* (Complete collection in the imperial four treasures) (Reprint: Taipei: Commercial Press, 1983-86), 1.233.217-236.

16. For examples, see *Chü-yieh cheng-shih* (Correct models for examinations) (Chia-ching edition), pp. 1a-58b, which gives examples from 1529-53 policy questions, and *Ming Wen-li chih Ch'ung-ch'ien ch'ien hsiang-shih-lu hui-shih-lu hui-chi* (Digest of provincial and metropolitan civil examination records from the Wan-li and Ch'ung-ch'ien reigns of the Ming dynasty) (late Ming edition).

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18. *Huang-Ming hsiang-hui-shih erh-san-ch'ang ch'eng-wen hsuin*, compiled by Ch'ien Jen-hsi (1633 *Pai-sung-t'ang* edition).

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20. See the 1760, tenth month, fifteenth day report by the Hanlin Academy, in the *Li-pu t'i-pen* (Memoranda including memorials from the Ministry of Rites), in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, which indicates that only 8-legged essays on session one were graded in Shan-hsi province that year.

21. See Wu, "Ch'ien-lung san-shih-lu nien Hu-pe'i hsiang-shih ts'eh-wen erh shou" (Two policy questions from the 1771 Hu-pe'i provincial examination), in *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsuin* (Selections of writings on education from the early Ch'ing period), edited by Li Kuo-ch'iu, et al. (Peking: People's Education Press, 1990, 3 vols.), 3/167.

22. See my "The Unravelling of Neo-Confucianism: From Philosophy to Philology in Late Imperial China," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, n.s. 15 (1983): 67-89.

23. See Sun Hsing-yen, "Kuan-feng shih-shih ts'eh-wen wu-tiao yü-hsu" (Preface for observations on trends in five policy questions for testing literati), in *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsuin*, 3/285-86.

24. See my *A Cultural History*, pp. 627-45, "Appendix One."

25. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2643-2830, in *Ming-tai teng-ko-lu hui-pien*, Vol. 5. See also *Shen-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1489: 2/1370-72 (question), 2/1460-67 (answer), *Hsi-kuang hsiang-shih lu*, 1489: 2/1531-33 (question), 2/1628-33 (answer), and *Hui-shih lu*, 1502: 5/2236-38 (question), 5/2361-70 (answer), all in *Ming-tai teng-ko lu hui-pien*, Vols. 2-5. On Su-ma Kuang's (1019-86) views of history, see Peter Bol, "The Culture of Ours": *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 233-46.

26. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2681.

27. Political institutions, social family histories, and economic processes described in Chinese topical histories were never presented in purely structural terms and still stressed the role of human agency in historical change.

28. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2682. The Han histories as examinable texts had been the mainstay of the T'ang civil examination questions on history, thus putting these Ming examiners at odds with their T'ang predecessors; see McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, pp. 197-99.

29. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2682-4.

30. See *Chu Wen-kung wen-chi, hsu chi* (Continuation to the collected essays of Chu Hsi) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* edition, 1934-35), 2.6b. On Chu's limited role in compiling the *Kang-nu*, see Sung Lien § 74*ü*, *Sung Wen-hsten kang ch'uan-chi* (Shanghai: Chung-hua Bookstore, *Ssu-pu pei-yao* edition, 1927-37), 12.14b-15a. See also Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China: A Social History of Writing About Rites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 102-44, 167-87, and M. Theresa Kelleher, "Back to Basics: Chu Hsi's Elementary Learning (*Hsiao-hsueh*)," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and John Chaffee, eds., *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 221-24.

31. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2794-95.

32. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2795-7.

33. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2797-8.

34. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2799-2802. For discussion, see Yves

Hervouet, ed., *A Sung Bibliography* (H.K.: Chinese University Press, 1978), pp. 75-76.

35. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2679-81.

36. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2676-79.

37. *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, compiled by L. C. Goodrich, et al., eds. (2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 308-09, 1409-10.

38. *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1516: 5/2778-80. See also *Ming-Ch'ing chin-shih ti-ming pei-lu so-yin* (Index to the stelae rosters of Ming and Ch'ing chin-shih) (Taipei: Wen-shih-che Press, 1982), 3/2504. Curiously, however, the fourth policy question raised the issue of official remonstrance (*ch'ien*): "the official shows his loyalty through good remonstrance; the ruler shows his sageliness by obeying [such] remonstrance." See *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 5/2684-86. This question indicates that examiners were not imperial lackeys and could use the policy questions to invoke the official's moral high ground vis-à-vis the ruler, even one like the Cheng-te emperor.

39. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, "Mu-ih" (table of contents), pp. 10a-12a. The degree of continuity or consistency should not be overstated, however. For example, the history policy question that Wang Shih-chen (1526-90) answered on his Ying-t'ien provincial examination for the *chin-jen* degree in 1543, not included in his *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, made no mention of Chu Hsi and stressed the incompatibility between the more ancient—and thus better—Han histories by Su-ma Ch'ien and Pan Ku and the more recent Sung histories by Ou-yang Hsiu and Su-ma Kuang. See Wang's policy question and answer in *Ming ching-shih wen-pien* (Essays on statecraft during the Ming dynasty), compiled by Ch'ên Tzu-lung (1608-47) and others (Peking: Chung-hua Bookstore Reprint, 1962), Vol. 5, pp. 3597-99.

40. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.17a. See also 7.54a-59a for the policy question and answer in the 1582 Kwangtung provincial examination that focused on the *Shih-chi*.

41. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.17b.

42. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.17b.

43. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.18a-b. Reference to Confucius as an "uncrowned king" (*su-wang*) and the *Annals* as the "Uncorn Classic" (*Lin-ching*) derive from the *Kuang-yung Commentary*, not the *Tso chuan*, which the essay in a curious way has theoretically elided. For discussion see Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Chang-shou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), chapters 4-7.

44. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.19a-b.

45. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.19b-22a.

46. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.22a-23a.

47. *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 13.23a-25a.

48. Again, the resonance should not be overstated. If one compares the 1594 Fuchien policy question and answer on history with the ones in Shun-t'ien and Shen-hsi the same year, the chief difference one finds among them is that the latter two paid more attention to the two genres of annalistic versus topical histories per se and focused much less or hardly at all on *tao-hsueh* moralizing historiography. See *Huang-Ming ts'ê-heng*, 12.13a-18b, 13.83a-90a. Similarly, the 1582 policy question on history in Kwang-tung province stressed genre issues rather than moralizing history. See 7.54a.

49. See for example the *Shun-t'ien hsiang-shih lu* (Record of the Shun-t'ien civil provincial examination), 1831: 4a-5a, pp. 64a-66b, and *Hsi-shih lu* (Record of the civil metropolitan examination), 1685: 13a-15a, 74b-77a. On the latter, see further below.

50. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1654: "Hsu" (Preface), pp. 1a-5a, and pp. 15a-20a of the record.

51. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu* (Record of the Kwang-tung civil provincial examination), 1654: "Hsu," p. 10a, and pp. 8b-14b of the record. Cf. *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, pp. 148-51 and 153-56.

52. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1654: 10a-11a.

53. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1654: 61b-63b.

54. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1654: 63b-64b.

55. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1654: 64b-69b. Among the many that I have read, I have not seen a policy question on history during the Ch'ing that stresses Chu Hsi's contributions to historical studies the way the Ming questions and answers above did.

56. *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1654: 69a-70a.

57. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1685: 13a-15a.

58. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1685: 74a-76a.

59. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1685: p. 74b.

60. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1685: pp. 11a-13a.

61. See, for example, Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no Kōkai ni tsuite" (On the Society for the Discussion of the Classics in the early Ch'ing), *Tōkyōgaku hō*, 36 (1964): 633-661, and Lynn Struve, "The Early Ch'ing Legacy of Huang Tsung-hsi: A Reexamination," *Asia Major* 3rd series, 1, 1 (1988): 83-122, which draws on a rich Japanese scholarship cited copiously in the footnotes.

62. See Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, Chapter 3. See also Ping-yi Chu, "Ch'eng-Chu Orthodoxy: Evidential Studies and Correlative Cosmology," *Chang Yung and Western Astronomy*, *Philosophy and the History of Science: A Taiwanese Journal* 4, 2 (October 1995): 71-108.

63. See Elman, "Philosophy (*I-ti*) versus Philology (*K'ao-cheng*): The *Jen-hsin Tao-hsin* Debate," *T'oung Pao* 59, nos. 4-5 (1983): 175-222.

64. For recent research, see Liu Jen-p'eng, "Jun Chu-tzu wei-ch'ang i ku-wen shang-shu wei-tso" (Chu Hsi never doubted the authenticity of the Old Text Documents), *Ch'ing-hua hsiieh-pao* New Series, 22, 4 (December 1992): 399-430.

65. For discussion, see Elman, "Philosophy (*I-ti*) Versus Philology (*K'ao-cheng*)," pp. 175-222.

66. See Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, chapters 3-5.

67. *Chiang-nan hsiang-shih ti-ming lu* (Record of successful candidates in the Chiang-nan provincial examination), 1810: 9a-9b, in the archives of the No. 1 Historical Archives, Peking. For purposes of focus, I have not described other important debates, which I have done elsewhere. See for example, my "Ming Politics and Confucian Classicism: The Duke of Chou Serves King Ch'eng," in *Ming-tai ching-hsueh kao-chi yen-t'ao hui lun-wen shi* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1996), pp. 93-171. I have chosen the relatively well-known and representative Old Text versus New Text Documents debate to summarize the changes in examination questions that were occurring in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

68. For discussion, see Elman, *From Philosophy To Philology*, Chapter 2.
69. See Elman, "Changes in Confucian Civil Service Examinations from the Ming to the Ch'ing Dynasty," in Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds. *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 139-40.
70. Elman, "Changes in Confucian Civil Service Examinations from the Ming to the Ch'ing Dynasty," pp. 140-43.
71. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1739: 4a-4b, 36a-38b.
72. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1739: 6a-6b, 1748: 6a-7b, 1751: 6a-8a, 1754: 4a-5a.
73. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1754: 39b-45b.
74. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1766: 3a-4b, 50a-53b.
75. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1793: 15a-17a, 46a-50, and *Huang-ch'iao hsu wen-hsien tung-kao* (Comprehensive survey of state documents during the Ch'ing dynasty, continuation), compiled by Liu Chin-tao (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), p. 8429. See also Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, chapters 5-8.
76. See Chi's preface in *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsuwen*, 3/114-18; 77. See *Ch'ung-t'an* (Everyday discussions on the civil examinations), compiled by T'ao Fu-ü (T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), pp. 14-15, and, for discussion, my *Classicism*, p. 156-57, 166-68.
78. For Hung's views, see *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsuwen*, 3/269.
79. See Elman, "Where is King Ch'eng?: Civil Examinations and Confucian Ideology During the Early Ming, 1368-1415," *T'oung Pao* 79 (1993): 57-61.
80. Sun's draft memorial is in *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsuwen*, 3/278-79.
81. See Elman, *From Philosophy To Philology*, Chapter 4, on the professionalization process.
82. On this phenomenon and how it favored Yangzu delta scholars, see Kai-wing Chou, "Discourse, Examination, and Local Elite: The Invention of the T'ung-ch'eng School in Ch'ing China," pp. 195-205.
83. See *Hsi-nan hsiang-shih lu* (Record of the Hsi-nan civil provincial examination), 1795: second policy question. Cf. Daniel Gardner, *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 27-59, a particularly fine piece of work.
84. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1823: 16a-19b, 61a-72a.
85. *Hsi-shih lu*, 1847: 17a-20a, 62a-70b, 1852: 17a-18a, 62a-65b. See also *Chiang-nan hsiang-shih lu*, 1894: "Hsu" (Preface), pp. 2b-3a, and "Hou-hsu" (Afterword), pp. 2a-b.
86. Tsuen-hsün Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 64.
87. Rudolph, "Preliminary Notes on Sung Archaeology," *Journal of Asian Studies* 22 (1963): 169-177. See also Wang Kuo-wei, "Archaeology in the Sung Dynasty," in C. H. Liu, tr., *Chinese Journal of Arts and Sciences* 6 (1927): 222-231.
88. Sir Percival David, tr., *Chinese Connoisseurship, The K'o Ku Taolun: The Essential Criteria of Antiquities* (London: Faber, 1971), pp. liv-lx. See also Chang Shen, "Ming Antiquarianism, An Aesthetic Approach to Archaeology," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 8 (1970): 63-82, and Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).
89. Rudolph, "Preliminary Notes," pp. 171-172, and Kwang Tsing Wu, "Scholarship, Book Production, and Libraries in China, 618-1644" (Chicago: University of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation, 1944), p. 106n.
90. Ku Yen-wu's remarks are from his "Hsu" (Introduction) to the *Ch'iu-tu lu*, p. 1a, in *T'ing-tai hsien-sheng i-shu hui-chi* (Composite collection of Ku Yen-wu's bequeathed writings) (Shanghai: Chiao-ching shan-fang, 1888).
91. See *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 183, 807, 857.
92. Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen-fang wen-chi* (Collected essays of the Hall of Subtle Research) (8 vols. Taipei, Commercial Press, 1968), 4:367 (*chüan* 25).
93. Wang Ming-sheng, "Hsu" (Introduction), in *Shih-ch'i-shih shang-ch'ueh* (Critical studies of the seventeen dynastic histories) (reprint Taipei: Kuang-wen Bookstore, 1960), pp. 2b-3a.
94. Yü Ying-shih, *Lun Tai Chen yü Chang Hsueh-ch'eng*, pp. 38-39.
95. Wang Ming-sheng, "Hsu," in *Shih-ch'i-shih shang-ch'ueh*, pp. 1a-2a.
96. Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen-fang wen-chi*, 2:224-225 (*chüan* 16).
97. *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, p. 421. Tu Wei-yun, *Ch'ing Ch'ien-Chia*, pp. 11-12, gives a comprehensive list of such supplements.
98. See Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsueh-cheng (1738-1801)* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 195, 216.
99. Chao I, *Erh-shih-erh-shih cha-chi*, pp. 418-419, 616, 629-658.
100. Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen-fang wen-chi*, 2:224-225 (*chüan* 16).
101. Wang Chung, *Shu-hsueh, pu-i* (Discourses on learning, supplement) (reprint Taipei: Kuang-wen Bookstore, 1970), 5b-8a. See also my "T'ung ch'ien hsien-tai te ko-chih-hsueh chih hsien-tai te k'o-hsueh" ("Transition from the pre-modern 'Chinese Sciences' to 'Modern Science' in China), *Chung-kao hsiueh-shu* (China Scholarship) (Beijing), 2 (Spring 2000): 1-43.
102. Wang Chung, *Shu-hsueh, wei-p'ien* (Discourses on learning, inner chapters) (reprint Taipei: Kuang-wen Bookstore, 1970), (inner chapters) (Taipei, 1970), 3:1a-4a. See also Wang Fang-kang, *Fu-ch'u-chai wen-chi* (Collection of writings from the Studio of Return to Beginnings) (1877 edition), 15.9a.
103. See Fang Tung-shu, *Han-hsueh shang-tui* (An assessment of Han Learning) (reprint Taipei: Kuang-wen Bookstore, 1963), 2A.23b-24a, and 2A.32a-34a.
104. See Shinoda Kenji, "Rakushi rei rizei hihan," pp. 140-41, 151. See also Nivison, pp. 147-150.
105. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, chapters 5-7.
106. See Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), *passim*, and Ch'en Tsu-wu, *Chung-kao hsiueh-an shih* (History of the Chinese studies of scholastic genre) (Taipei: Wen-chin Press, 1994), pp. 111-98. See also Tu Wei-yun, *Ch'ing Ch'ien-Chia*, pp. 5, 49-51, 59.
107. See Lynn Struve, "Ambivalence and Action: Some Frustrated Scholars of the Kang-hsi Period," in Jonathan Spence and John Wills, eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 323-65.
108. *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan* (Qing official biographies) (Taipei: Chung-hua Bookstore, 1962), 69.38a.
109. Tu Wei-yun, *Ch'ing Ch'ien-Chia*, pp. 7, 53-58, 90-97, and David Nivison, pp. 60-64.

110. Yü Ying-shih, *Luan Tai Chen*, pp. 45-81, and Nivison, pp. 172-173, 186, 220, 227ff, 297. See also Albert Mann, "Cheng Chiao: An Essay in Re-evaluation," in David Buxbaum and Frederick Motte, eds., *Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture* (Hong Kong: Cathay Press, 1972), pp. 23-57.

111. See Nivison, *passim*, and Jiro Numata, "Shigeno Yasutsugu and the Modern Tokyo Tradition of Historical Writing," in W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank, eds., *Historians of China and Japan*, pp. 264-287. Cf. Elman, "Qing Learning and *Kishiyaku* in Tokugawa Japan," paper prepared for the conference volume *Sagasinos Monks and Bloodthirsty Warriors: Chinese Views of Japan in the Ming-Qing Period*, edited by Joshua Fogel, (Norwalk, CT: East Bridge, 2002), forthcoming.

112. *Ssu-k'u ch'ian-shu tsung-mu* (Catalog of the complete collection of the four treasures), compiled by Chi Yun et al. (Taipei: I-wen Press reprint, 1974), 45.1a-3a. See also R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasures: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Period* (Cambridge: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1987).

113. Chang, *Wen-shih t'ung-i*, 1.1.

PART II