

Under the direction of Anne Cheng and Stéphane Feuillas

All about the *Rites* **From Canonised Ritual to Ritualised Society**

On the Rites in mid-Eastern Han

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- 1 This paper focuses on rituals and ritual masters during Zhangdi's 章帝 (r. AD 75–88) reign in Eastern Han, for which a great deal of roughly contemporaneous source material exists, including the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of Eastern Han) biographies and treatises, the *Bohu tong* 白虎通 (White Tiger Hall Discussions) ascribed to Ban Gu 班固, and Xu Shen's 許慎 controversial *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義 (Rival Readings of the Five Classics), not to mention the scientifically excavated ritual sites in the environs of the capital at Luoyang.¹ By this sharp focus on a single reign of a “good” and apparently effective ruler, the paper aims to move beyond the usual generalities offered about Han ritual to dispute the existence of a “ritual system” in place at the time, or even an especially authoritative set of precedents.² This essay has much larger implications, as we have reviewed the relevant materials from mid-Western Han to late Eastern Han, and believe our conclusions to be valid for the four hundred years ruled by the two Han dynasties, or for long afterwards.
- 2 The essay consists of three parts, with each referring to a different set of sources that are seldom read together. Part I examines the career trajectories, ritual programmes, and theoretical claims of five of the most famous ritual masters at the courts of Zhangdi and his father, including Huan Rong 桓榮 and Cao Bao 曹褒, based on the relevant histories from the *Hou Hanshu*. Evidently, the emperor consulted these ritual masters on a wide range of matters that moderns generally deem far outside the realm of “ritual,” inviting us to rethink the purported boundaries between ritual and politics or law, *wen* 文 and *wu* 武, rewards and punishments, and, ultimately, the sources of classical authority.³ Part II turns to the excavation reports for the chief ritual complex, the Sanyong 三雍, built shortly before Zhangdi's reign in the Eastern Han capital of Luoyang, asking how well the physical remains confirm the early descriptions of the solemn activities performed there. The layout of the Taixue 太學 (Imperial Academy) and the Mingtang 明堂⁴ sites proves particularly interesting, for a review of the early descriptions attached to these two sites, buttressed by the archaeological reports, plainly shows that the Luoyang capital site functioned mainly as a ritual performance centre, even if many academics today imagine a teaching institution transmitting

textual learning, on the model of the ancient Greek academies. Part III analyses the fragments of the controversial literature generated during Zhangdi's reign that still survive. This literature, studied alongside the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu* treatises devoted to the Luoyang court rituals, demonstrates that nearly every ritual, no matter how sacred, was subject to dispute and revision; the objects of worship, the proper liturgical forms, and the place and timing of worship were debated, again and again. "New rituals" were invented and reinvented with surprising alacrity, with reformers, even well into Eastern Han, consciously drawing inspiration from such models of flexible adaptation as the "model of classical learning" (Ruzong 儒宗)⁵ Shusun Tong 叔孫通 in Qin and early Western Han.

On the ritual masters

- 3 To give readers a better idea of the roles that ritual masters played at court, this essay examines the careers of five of the most prominent ritual masters at the courts of Mingdi 明帝 (r. 57-75) and Zhangdi 章帝 (r. 75-88), the second and third emperors of Eastern Han, all of whom participated in ritual controversies, not coincidentally. Each of those ritual masters (Huan Rong 桓榮, Zhao Xi 趙熹, Jia Kui 賈逵, Cao Bao 曹褒, and Ding Hong 丁鴻) bears a distinctive profile, as we will see, and yet four of the five masters cycled in an out of posts requiring expertise in the rites and posts in the military.⁶ (The fifth came to the court in Luoyang at an advanced age that precluded military service.) As we will see, other prominent experts on ritual, including Ban Gu and his patron Dou Rong 竇融, showed themselves to be equally conversant with military matters.⁷
- 4 To put these careers in historical context, we first present an overview of the court rites provided by the official history for Eastern Han. Fan Ye's 范曄 concluding Appraisal (*lun* 論) for the collective biography of some of these ritual masters, echoing an earlier assessment by Ban Gu,⁸ states plainly, albeit with regret, that neither the Western or Eastern Han dynasty ever managed to institute a ritual system, with standardised rites for court ceremonies:

論曰：漢初天下創定，朝制無文，叔孫通頗採經禮，參酌秦法，雖適物觀時，有救崩敝，然先王之容典蓋多闕矣，是以賈誼、仲舒、王吉、劉向之徒，懷憤歎息，所不能已也。資文、宣之遠圖明懿美，而終莫或用。[...] 孝章永言前王，明發興作，專命禮臣，撰定國憲，洋洋乎盛德之事焉。而業絕天筭，議黜異端，斯道竟復墜矣。[...] 修補舊文，獨何猜焉？

When the Western Han first settled the realm, the court regulations followed no discernible pattern. Shusun Tong to some degree (po 頗) chose from the Classics and rites, with an admixture of Qin models and institutions [for the rituals he devised]. Although this suited affairs at the time, and in some respects saved [the ruling house] from utter ruin, there were still many lacunae with respect to the rules for decorum laid down by the Former Kings. For this reason, the likes of Jia Yi 賈誼, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, Wang Ji 王吉, and Liu Xiang 劉向 burned with indignation and heaved repeated sighs.⁹ The far-sighted plans of Wendi and Xuandi were glorious and superb, but, in the end, none were actually put in place... The filial emperor Zhang (r. 75-88) was forever praising the Former Kings; night and day; he instituted new procedures, relying on his ritual masters, whom he commanded to selectively determine the constitution for his ruling house. How vast and far-ranging was the business directed by his full virtues and powers! Yet the

undertaking was cut off mid-stream by that emperor's untimely death [of thirty-one]. And then those who had put forth suggestions were dismissed for employing outlandish explanations (*yi duan* 異端), with the result that this Way [of the Former Kings], finally, once again, collapsed... So, when it comes to repairing and supplementing the old patterns, how can one possibly guess [what may happen next] (修補舊文，獨何猜焉)?¹⁰

5 To reiterate the main points of the Appraisal:

1. Shusun Tong's first suggestions for court rituals were a mishmash of many influences, with no specific guiding principles, aside from the necessity to suit the exigencies of the time.
2. For generation after generation, the classicists, including the five whose biographies we sketch below, sought to have their respective rulers institute ritual reforms, to no avail.
3. While at least three emperors (Wendi, Xuandi, and Zhangdi) committed to undertake major ritual reforms, they failed to implement them, despite the widespread belief that the fortunes of the two Han dynasties, Eastern and Western, should rest upon some firmer "constitution" (set of ritual precedents?) than that provided by the Han founder and his ministers.
4. Given the nature of the rites and music, which have undergone endless emendations since the halcyon time of the Former Kings, it may be unrealistic to believe that any court can achieve a unified ritual system.

6 Multiple sources dating from the two Han dynasties suggest that Fan Ye's Appraisal was accurate and fair. One might note, for example, the repeated statements made by the committed ritual experts Dong Zhongshu, Yang Xiong 揚雄, Xu Shen, and Ying Shao 應劭; living at roughly hundred-years intervals during Western and Eastern Han, each bemoaned the *ad hoc* character of ritual matters, with "each following his own inclinations and ideas."¹¹ *Hanshu* 22, the treatise devoted to rituals, ends on the same discouraging note.¹² Thoughtful advisors were acutely aware that whenever the classicists were asked to devise court rituals, they engaged in seemingly endless disputations to no end, with each making bizarre suggestions supposedly justified by hallowed precedents.¹³ Certainly, during the reigns of Mingdi and Zhangdi, we know that Zhangdi changed the burial rites used for his father. To disobey one's father's dying wishes, in the hopes of legislating better rituals that would foster the long-term welfare of the dynasty –that seems extraordinary, yet it is just the tip of the ritual iceberg, as we will see. For even the all-important rites at the imperial ancestral temple remained "unfixed," as noted in the official histories.¹⁴

7 The ritual masters whose lives are detailed in the *Hou Hanshu* biographies operated in this historical context, as we shall see:

Huan Rong 桓榮 (d. ca. 60)

8 Huan Rong was one of the ritual masters, along with Zhang Chun 張純, who persuaded Mingdi that the Sanyong (Three Rituals' complex) must be built to the south of the capital of Luoyang, to secure the dynastic fortunes of the "restored" Liu clan. The complex was completed in AD 59, and Huan was singled out for honours at the inaugural ceremonies at the complex. Exceptionally for the ritual masters, Huan Rong

held no military post,¹⁵ but he did hold a string of impressive official titles, including Superintendent of Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常),¹⁶ Academician (for an Ouyang Documents reading),¹⁷ Gentleman Consultant (*yilang* 議郎), bureau official on the Chancellor's (*da situ* 大司徒) staff in AD 44,¹⁸ and Junior Tutor (*shaofu* 少傅)¹⁹ for the emperor in AD 52, as well as the courtesy title of "Quintuply Experienced" (*wu geng* 五更) in AD 59. Huan Rong, we learn, was one of the most famous teachers of the Documents classic in Luoyang.²⁰ When Huan in old age was still serving, rather reluctantly, in his capacity as minister in charge of court ceremonials, Mingdi organised a big event at the ministry, where many of the princes of the land were invited, along with the assembled students of the Classics, to try to stump Huan Rong.²¹ More than once, Huan Rong could barely get a word out about his understanding of a passage before Mingdi would thunder, "And the minister in this case is right!"²² Somewhat later, Mingdi urged his officials to offer gifts to Huan Rong's family, as a way of signifying their gratitude for the excellence of his teachings.²³ (It is doubtless significant that Mingdi invited to this gathering Liu Cang 劉蒼, Prince of Dongping, insofar as Mingdi's full brother also enjoyed a reputation as a ritual authority.)²⁴

Zhao Xi 趙熹 (AD 3–80)

- 9 Zhao Xi, like Huan Rong, already appears at the court of the Eastern Han founder, urging Guangwu to undertake the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 ceremonies in AD 54, to signify that peace prevailed throughout the new "restored" empire, and to build the Three Rituals' complex (*Sanyong*) at Luoyang. When the complex was completed, it was also Zhao Xi, among others, who had to persuade Mingdi not to tear down the Taixue as a useless institution that duplicated functions of the Sanyong ritual complex nearby – a very interesting fact.²⁵ It was then apparently Zhao Xi, as Supreme Commander (*taiwei* 太尉), who supervised the obsequies for Guangwu in AD 57, following the final instructions left by the deceased. Zhao Xi rendered an extremely important service to Mingdi, by instituting new palace protocols that placed the emperor at a greater distance from his officials, the other princes, and his old allies in arms. We know that Mingdi was particularly worried about coups by Guangwu's other children, and much of his reign was spent removing them from positions of power, even by trumped-up charges of treason, when necessary. However, Zhao Xi was dismissed in AD 60 for failing to discover and disclose the reports scammed by Xue Xiu 薛脩, Chancellor of Zhongshan, the kingdom of Emperor Ming's half-brother Liu Yan 劉焉, whom Mingdi mistrusted.²⁶ And when Zhangdi ascended to the throne, in AD 75, Zhao assumed the role of Senior Tutor, sharing control of the Imperial Secretariat with the new *taiwei* Mou Rong 牟融, presumably until Zhao's death five years later. Under Zhangdi, we know, Zhao Xi was honoured with the title of "Foremost Aged Person of the Empire" (*Guo yuan lao* 國元老), an epithet similar to Huan's "Quintuply Experienced" title.²⁷ Zhao Xi recommended the classical scholar Lu Gong 魯恭 to his own staff, after which Lu participated in the famous White Tiger debates in AD 79.²⁸
- 10 Much of Zhao Xi's biography styles him as a military man, not as a ritual master. Zhao had served the Gengshi 更始 emperor (as had Guangwu before toppling him in a coup) in a variety of military posts, including Wuwei Detached General (*Wuwei pian jiangjun* 武威偏將軍), General of the Gentlemen of the Palace (*Zhonglang jiang* 中郎將), and Noble of Courageous Deeds (*Yonggong hou* 勇功侯).²⁹ During Guangwu's reign, Zhao served as

Governor of Pingyuan 平原,³⁰ and Supreme Commander, by AD 51.³¹ He continued as *taiwei* under Mingdi for a while, before his dismissal, but by AD 61, he was back in a military post, as Superintendent of the Guards in the palace (*weiwei* 衛尉).³² At one point in Zhao's career, it was due to his skills as military commander that rebels in Pingyuan were put down, and many brought under the control of the commanderies of Chenliu 陳留 and Yingchuan 潁川, Guangwu's strongholds. Presumably because he had switched loyalties to Guangwu in a timely fashion, and then loyally ministered to Mingdi, Zhangdi personally visited Zhao Xi during his final illness, and after his death, wanted to award him a posthumous title.³³ Zhao Xi was touted as an exemplary defender for the Eastern Han palace, in the eulogies.³⁴

Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101)

- 11 Jia Kui, the ninth-generation descendant of the classical master Jia Yi, knew the *Erya* 爾雅, the Han-era *Annals* traditions associated with Zuo Qiuming's 左丘明 teachings, the Xiahou 夏侯 tradition for the *Documents* classic, and possibly a *guwen Shangshu* 古文尚書.³⁵ Because of his erudition, he was asked by Zhangdi to compile a book that would detail the “similarities and differences” (*tongyi* 同異) between the Ouyang 歐陽 version of the *Shangshu*, the two Xiahou versions of the *Shangshu*, and a *guwen Shangshu*. (Note that different *shuo* 說 attached to the Classics were treated as rival traditions).³⁶ Concerned that he should have no distractions from his work, Zhangdi sent a handsome stipend of 20,000 cash to Jia's ageing mother, and appointed Jia Kui commander of the guards in the Northern Palace (*wei shi ling* 衛士令).³⁷ At some point, Jia Kui joined Ban Gu to work in the palace libraries, collating texts.³⁸ So Jia Kui compiled a 3-juan analysis, which he sent to the emperor, and Zhangdi duly approved it.³⁹ He then proceeded to do much the same for the various *Odes* traditions, and also, they say, for the *Zhouguan* 周官.⁴⁰
- 12 Zhangdi supposedly ordered all the classicists (*zhu Ru* 諸儒) to study four texts: the Mao version of the *Odes*, the *Zuoshi chunqiu*, the *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳, and a *guwen Shangshu* (possibly, but not necessarily Du Lin's 杜林 one-juan lacquer piece), and we are told that “from this time on,” these texts became much more in circulation among members of the governing elite.⁴¹ Zhangdi had Jia Kui teach these four texts at the Academy, we are told, although four of these texts (all but the *Guliang*) had had no official Academicians appointed for them previously. Zhangdi in some sense “sponsored” them, since Jia Kui's students did very well in securing advisory posts in the Liu-clan kingdoms. (Apparently, Jia Kui was also allowed to select and teach twenty promising young *Gongyang* 公羊 scholars,⁴² as he thought best.)
- 13 Jia's influence was challenged by Li Yu 李育, the Academician for the *Gongyang*, who wrote a compilation in 41 sections, demonstrating the weaknesses of the *Zuo*, as he knew it, with frequent resort to the apocryphal texts to argue against Jia Kui.⁴³ Readers may recall that Jia Kui had argued the superiority of the *Zuo* by saying that it alone was in agreement with the apocryphal texts, *tu chen* 圖讖, which had caught Zhangdi's attention.⁴⁴ During the White Tiger Hall court conference of AD 79,⁴⁵ Li Yu was deemed the “winner” in every argument against Jia Kui.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, four years later, in AD 83, an edict by Zhangdi expressed continued interest in the *Zuo* teachings, along with other versions of the Classics not awarded Academicians' posts. After AD 85, until Zhangdi's death in AD 88, Jia Kui mainly figures in the records as a calendrical expert;

his knowledge of history was deemed vital to the production of a new calendar –shades of Liu Xin 劉歆, his father’s teacher.⁴⁷ Let us recall Michael Loewe on timing: all ideal dynasties had to change the calendar in use.⁴⁸ Under Hedi 和帝, Zhangdi’s successor, Jia Kui acted mainly as a consultant to the new throne, but in AD 97, in his late sixties, he was appointed concurrently to the palace courtiers, many of whom served as something like the praetorian guards, and then to a post as Cavalry Commandant. Jia purportedly wrote a million words on variant traditions preserved in the Classics, in addition to nine *pian* of praise songs for the dynasty.⁴⁹ Some 175 glosses of Jia’s are preserved in Ruan Yuan’s *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏, which are mainly devoted to the *Zuo*, but also gloss terms in the *Odes*, *Documents*, and the *Rites* canons.

Cao Bao 曹褒 (d. 102)

- 14 Cao Bao, son of Cao Chong 曹充, a famous ritual master whose help the Eastern Han founder had secured in setting up his court rituals, was acutely aware, thanks to his father’s own teachings, that the court rites and music had varied, age by age, during the tenures of the most famous sage kings.⁵⁰ He was also one of the few masters of the *Qing shi li* 慶氏禮 traditions, along with his father.⁵¹ So when Zhangdi promulgated an edict, asking for help in devising new rituals, Cao Bao speedily answered the call, adding that auspicious signs had indicated that there ought indeed to be a change in the court observances of rituals.⁵² Zhangdi then appointed Cao Bao to undertake the task on his own. When several prominent figures at court protested that this would be a mammoth undertaking, too large for any single person to handle –with the *taichang* Chao Kan 巢堪 and Ban Gu, who recorded some of the White Tiger Hall debates, leading the protest– Zhangdi stood his ground, saying that when too many experts got together, nothing was likely to be accomplished in the way of ritual reforms. Evidently, Zhangdi had no intention of “being constrained” by his court officials in such matters, as custom dictated that he accept the decisions made in formal court conferences attended by experts.⁵³ So although Zhangdi issued a second edict asking for help, apparently as a way of appeasing his critics, in the end he confirmed Cao Bao’s appointment to devise his new rituals, likening Cao Bao to Shun’s legendary Music Master Kui 夔.
- 15 Cao Bao proceeded to write 150 *juan* on imperial rituals to guide specific ritual reforms, but Zhangdi hesitated to insist upon Cao’s prescriptions, given his court officials’ opposition; there is some indication that Zhangdi preferred to settle calendrical matters before instituting the ritual reforms tied to the calendar.⁵⁴ Ultimately Zhangdi died before the reforms were implemented, at thirty-one years of age. So far as we know, Cao Bao’s *New Rituals* (*xin li* 新禮), as they were called, were used precisely once: when Zhangdi’s successor, Hedi, came to be capped.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, after Zhangdi’s death, some court officials called for Cao Bao’s execution, and he was lucky to escape with his life.⁵⁶ We know that Hedi refused, when he became an adult, to use Cao Bao’s inventions at his own court, and the text of the *New Rituals* may have fallen into disuse or ruin at that time.
- 16 If we closely examine Cao Bao’s biography, we learn that he served in both explicitly ritual and explicitly military posts: he was Academician and Palace Attendant under Zhangdi, after a mixed record in the provinces; in AD 92, after Zhangdi’s death, he served in two capacities as colonel.⁵⁷

Ding Hong 丁鴻 (d. AD 94)

- 17 Like Huan Rong and Cao Bao before him, Ding Hong was the son of a famous ritual master, Ding Chen 丁綝, and pupil also of Huan Rong. Like Huan Rong and Cao Bao, Ding Hong was also the scion of a noble house, with a fief inherited near the important centre of Yingchuan. In AD 67, Ding was first recommended to the court by a fellow pupil, and due to his expertise in one chapter of the *Documents* classic, he was given robes and caps comparable to those awarded to the Academicians. Soon afterwards, in AD 70, Ding was appointed to the inner circle of imperial courtiers. In AD 79, Ding (then magistrate in Lujiang 廬江, in southern Anhui Province) travelled to the court to participate in the White Tiger Hall discussions, where he exerted a strong voice in the proceedings. As it happens, others, including a military man, were sent to the conference to “stump” Ding.⁵⁸ In AD 85, he accompanied Zhangdi on an imperial progress, during which he presented a memorial praising the emperor’s pastoral care for his subjects and his attention to ritual matters. Ding remained in good standing throughout Zhangdi’s reign. After Zhangdi’s death, Ding Hong served as *taichang* 太常, Superintendent of Ceremonial at ministerial rank for the palace, during the regency of Dowager Empress Dou 竇太后. It was in that capacity that, not long after Hedi’s accession to the throne, he sent a sealed memorial to the throne warning of the ominous signs indicating that Dou Xian 竇憲, the dowager’s brother, was amassing far too much personal power. In response to the memorial, Ding, who had previously served in several military positions, including that of Colonel of Archers in AD 70, was appointed to the concurrent posts of *taiwei* and *weiwei* 太尉兼衛尉, commanding the palace guards in both the Northern and Southern Palaces, and it was Ding who “received” (i.e., confiscated) General Dou’s official regalia, the ribbons and sashes.⁵⁹ Ding was thought to have encouraged the court coup that Hedi carried out, with the help of his eunuchs, to rid himself of the Dous.
- 18 Once again, we see the easy way that those in power switched easily between ritual roles and military appointments. Some modern scholars are wont to remark that it was the Qin custom to make the “men of the law” (i.e., judges) “as models,” arguing that in Han times, legal and military experts were largely supplanted by classicists, if not Confucians.⁶⁰ We would argue instead that military and ritual matters, not to mention classical learning, were never placed in separate categories during Han times, or indeed, in the centuries after Eastern Han.⁶¹ One need only think of Huan Tan 桓譚 (d. 28 BC) who served two masters –Yang Xiong and a sword master– or Wei Lang 魏朗 in Eastern Han, to begin to question the standard narrative about the distant past. Notably, the two earliest historians of China, Sima Qian 司馬遷 and Ban Gu, also came from “mixed family backgrounds,” in the sense that their forebears were known equally for their military exploits and for their classical erudition.
- 19 Just as noteworthy in this regard is the famous ritual scene of instruction under Mingdi, in AD 57, at the establishment of the Sanyong, when copies of the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety) were handed out to the palace guards, presumably so that knowledge of that Classic would strengthen their loyalty.⁶² We no longer need puzzle over the invitation to generals to attend the White Tiger Hall Conference, along with Academicians and courtiers.⁶³ It was as likely that generals would be ritual masters as

not, and ritual practices and indeed, classicism itself, were always at the service of Han legitimacy, which sought backing from its military men.

The main ritual performance sites in Luoyang

- 20 For the casual reader, it may seem impossible at this remove in time to sort out the confusing and seemingly contradictory accounts relating to the Eastern Han “Sanyong” or Three Rituals complex comprising the Mingtang 明堂, Biyong 辟/壁雍/壅 (Circular Moat), and Lingtai 靈臺 (Spirit Tower), let alone the relation between the Sanyong complex and two other sites that frequently appear with it in the early sources, the Taimiao 太廟 (Imperial Ancestral Temple) and Taixue 太學 (Imperial Academy).⁶⁴ Contributing to the confusion are several unambiguous statements in the early sources alleging that the same sites had different names in different eras, depending on function.⁶⁵ Some conflation in the sources between sites in Western Han and in Eastern Han are also at play. That said, careful attention to the archaeological evidence – imperfect at best – for the court-sponsored sites in late Western Han Chang’an and early Eastern Han Luoyang, considered in light of the claims registered in the received accounts, allows us to assess the accuracy of longstanding traditions, and consider what they might reveal about Han court rituals in relation to traditions of learning and emulation.
- 21 There were five major ritual sites in Eastern Han Luoyang or five proper nouns for sites frequently bandied about, at least.⁶⁶ There is no question that the dynasty must have had an imperial ancestral temple (a Taimiao), and yet we know least about its location, either from the histories or from archaeology. One would expect it *not* to be in the southern suburbs of the new capital at Luoyang, but safely nestled within the walls of the capital, and indeed, Hans Bielenstein located it snugly against the northernmost city wall of Luoyang, while admitting some bafflement as to the absence of records specifying its placement.⁶⁷ There is little dispute in Eastern Han or later about the Lingtai, thankfully. We know such a viewing tower did *not* exist in Chang’an, but the Eastern Han founder built it in Luoyang, so that experts might observe the stars as part of the formal rituals. Once we leave these two sites, we immediately confront multiple problems of interpretation. Not the least of them are: can we trust late Eastern Han reports to describe what Zhangdi’s Luoyang was like, and can we trust, as the archaeologists do, that the Wei-dynasty sites were placed more or less on the same sites dating to Eastern Han Luoyang?⁶⁸ At present, we have no alternatives but to do so.

On the Mingtang Ritual Centre

- 22 It is best to begin with the obvious: it is often difficult to tell which Mingtang the early sources are describing.⁶⁹ Hoary legends mention one or more Mingtang erected as early as mid-Western Han – a Mingtang erected near Mt. Tai, on the banks of the Wen 汶 River,⁷⁰ whose construction was said to harken back to the time of the Yellow Emperor, with nods to Yao and Shun and good King Wen of Zhou for good measure.⁷¹ It was not until late Western Han, however, that Chengdi’s 成帝 (r. 33-7 BC) court, propelled by proponents of the *haogu* 好古 (“loving antiquity”) movement, began to discuss building an impressive ritual centre in the southern suburbs of the capital (then at Chang’an). The proximate cause for these discussions was a chance find of sixteen ancient chime

stones, widely interpreted as a sign or even order from Heaven to erect such a ritual site.⁷² Apparently, that ritual centre was not completed for nearly a decade, for in AD 5, some four years before the downfall of Western Han, a single structure, variously called a Mingtang and a Biyong, was readied in the suburbs south of the capital, by which time the site already reflected a dense concatenation of meanings.⁷³ This Chang'an Mingtang-Biyong was evidently a squarish structure topped by a circular roof, in imitation of the cosmic powers of heaven and earth, sitting within a circular tamped-earth space bordered by a moat that is itself enclosed within square walls (see Fig. 1).⁷⁴ The smallish site was built close to a much larger ritual site with more than ten secondary sites within its walls.⁷⁵

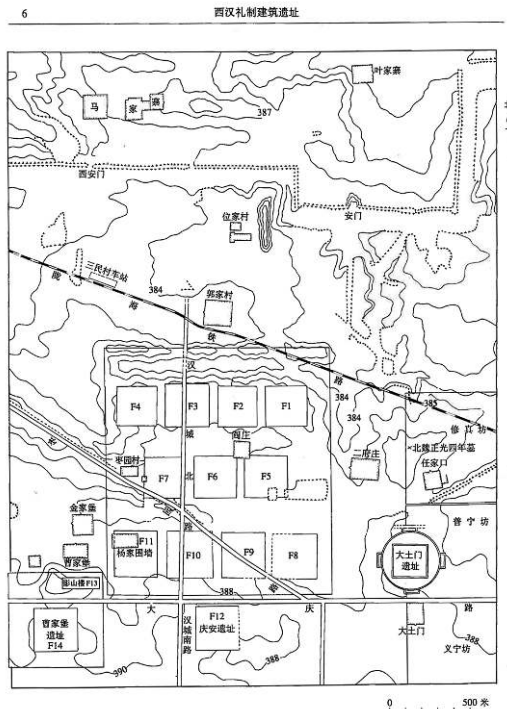
Fig. 1



Michael Nylan had this image generated, based on reconstructions found in *Zhongguo da bai ke quanshu* 中国大百科全书, *kaogu juan* 考古卷 and Steinhardt, Nancy Shatzman. *Chinese Traditional Architecture*. New York City: China Institute in America, China House Gallery, 1984. p 71-72

- 23 The Chang'an site identified as the Mingtang built under the regent Wang Mang 王莽 has an excavation report providing further details (Fig. 2).⁷⁶ Note first that the archaeologists' reconstruction shows not two ritual sites –a Mingtang and a Biyong– but a single structure surrounded by a circular terrace.⁷⁷ The structure had one audience hall, four sides (without walls), judging from the post holes, and it seems to have been thatched, with a connection to water, in that a moat surrounded the walls of the complex. The structure evidently had some sort of tower above the roof from which to observe the sky.⁷⁸ In late Western Han the sense was that the single building was the first ritual site of its kind built in the early empires, for a praise-song spoke of “the Mingtang and Biyong –fallen into disuse for a thousand years, with no one [before this] able to revive them.”⁷⁹

Fig. 2



图一 汉长安城南郊地形及已发掘的礼制建筑遗址

Found in *Xi Han li zhi jian zhu yi zhi* 西汉礼制建筑遗址. Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she 文物出版社, 2003, p 6.

- 24 For present purposes, it suffices to note that the Chang'an ritual site differed markedly from that built at Luoyang during the reign of Guangwu (r. AD 25–57) of Eastern Han,⁸⁰ and in use in the famous Yongping 永平 ceremonies, in AD 59, which figure so prominently in Eastern Han narratives,⁸¹ despite the occasional conflation with the Chang'an site in the scholarly literature. For example, if a recent excavation report is correct (which cannot be taken for granted),⁸² the Mingtang and Biyong occupied two distinct sites in the Luoyang ritual complex, to which a separate Lingtai site was added to the west, along with a separate Taixue to the east. Evidently, the first “restored” Eastern Han court accepted as settled precedent that such a ritual centre should be built to signal dynastic legitimacy. Certainly, in AD 56, soon after the Eastern Han founder had pacified the land, he began building the ritual complex we call the Sanyong comprising a Mingtang, Biyong, and Lingtai.⁸³ Mingdi's use of the ritual complex for a grand ceremony early on *his* reign, in AD 59, signalled that the Sanyong had been completed to his court's satisfaction. Ban Gu's “Eastern Capital *fu*” duly praised Mingdi on that occasion for

御明堂，臨辟雍，揚緇熙，宣皇風，登靈臺，考休徵。(班彪列傳下)

Holding audience in the Mingtang
Visiting the Biyong
Radiating continuous brightness
He promulgates august teaching
He ascends the Divine Tower
Studies the good omens [in the sky]...⁸⁴

- 25 Judging from the excavation reports (one original and one emended), the Luoyang ritual complex contained not one Mingtang-Biyong surrounded by a circular moat, but

four of the five most solemn imperial ritual sites enclosed within a single territory, as seen in the first archaeological report.⁸⁵ The archaeologists believe, in other words, that they have located three separate ritual sites for the Sanyong plus a nearby Taixue (see below), and the building they identify as the Eastern Han Mingtang certainly differs from that erected in late Western Han.⁸⁶ Possibly relevant is the message conveyed by Ban Gu's *Hanshu* treatise on the rites and music: that both types of performances must change over time. But since Eastern Han testimony preserved in the received literature from the period contradicts important aspects of their picture, as do parts of the revised 2010 report on the ritual sites, we wonder how the lead archaeologists can be certain in all of their identification of buildings. The book-length archaeological report *Han Wei Luoyang gu cheng nanjiao lizhi jianzhu yizhi: 1962-1992 nian kaogu fajue baogao* 漢魏洛陽故城南郊禮制建築遺址：1962-1992 年考古發掘報告 offers little to enlighten in this regard. But judging from the excavated remains, none of the four ritual sites in the southern suburbs at Luoyang was especially large.

Fig. 3

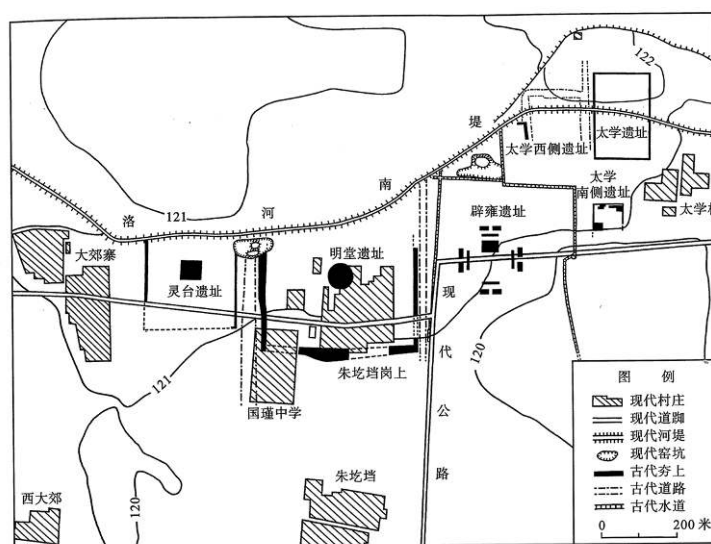


图3 汉魏洛阳故城南郊礼制建筑遗址分布图

Once identified as Eastern Han, these sites are now dated to the Wei dynasty by local archaeologists. The Eastern Han sites may not be identical to those shown.

Found in *Han Wei Luoyang gu cheng nanjiao lizhi jianzhu yizhi: 1962-1992 nian kaogu fajue baogao* 漢魏洛陽故城南郊禮制建築遺址：1962-1992 年考古發掘報告, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010, 3.

- 26 Late Eastern Han accounts register the idea that the Mingtang was the site where the court rituals –including meeting with the nobles– were performed, imperial ancestral sacrifices (*zong si* 宗祀) were offered, and policy measures were propagated (*bu zheng* 布政).⁸⁷ Xu Tianlin's (*fl.* 1205) *Dong Han huiyao* clearly shows us that, from the time of Mingdi onwards, if not earlier, the Mingtang was where some Han emperors –the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu* mention Mingdi, Zhangdi, Hedi, and Shundi 順帝– worshipped the Five Lords with Guangwu, the Eastern Han founder, as coadjutor,⁸⁸ effectively using that site as adjunct to the Taimiao.⁸⁹ Likewise Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78–139) *fu* asserted of

Shundi, “he worships the Supreme Lords in the Mingtang, Honouring Guangwu as coadjutor.”⁹⁰ Perhaps this explains why several reputable Eastern Han sources state definitively that the Mingtang and Taimiao are one and the same site with one and the same function.⁹¹ The Mingtang, at least in such moments, functioned as a worship hall, where *ming* 明 referred to the spirits of the powerful dead.⁹² One key takeaway is that the Lu 魯 learning for the *Odes* equated the Taimiao with the Mingtang, on the basis of the Mao commentary to the *Odes* ascribed to Mao Heng 毛亨.⁹³ Simultaneously, several traditions equated the Mingtang with the Biyong, placing them both south of the capital.⁹⁴

- 27 Michael Loewe has long suspected that “Mingtang” may not be a proper name belonging to a specific site, but rather, more simply, a “worship hall.” Loewe’s theory would certainly account for the looseness found in the Han descriptions of the imperial worship hall built in the suburbs of the capital at Luoyang.⁹⁵ What such a Mingtang might indicate, then, would be a sacred space dedicated to the large civilising project of *jiaohua* 教化, with the emperor modelling correct decorum for his imperial subjects, through a wide range of imperial rituals acknowledging exemplary figures, past and present. Let us recall that Cai Yong’s 蔡邕 famous “Mingtang lun” begins with the assertion: “The Mingtang is the ancestral temple of the Son of Heaven, where the emperor offers cult to his ancestors, as coadjutors to the Lord(s) on High” (明堂者, 天子太廟, 所以宗祀其祖, 以配上帝者也.) At the conclusion of Ban Gu’s “Two Capital *fu*”, there are three short poems, one each for the Mingtang, Lingtai, and Taixue, plus two praise poems detailing two auspicious events confirming Heaven’s favour for the “restored” Eastern Han.⁹⁶ Ban Gu’s rendering of the activities at the Mingtang dovetails nicely with that of Cai Yong. Doubtless, in Ban Gu’s vision of beneficent Eastern Han rule, the Mingtang’s significance and specific activities merged with those of other structures, which collectively and separately conveyed a powerful message affirming the legitimacy of his liege lord.
- 28 But confusion over the Mingtang is hardly a modern phenomenon. The *Beishi* 北史 and *Suishu* 隋書 contains duplicate lengthy descriptions of one Niu Hong 牛弘, Director of the Sui Ministry of Rites, who made a real effort to sort through the previous records regarding the ritual sites, in order to facilitate the process of planning a Mingtang for the court. Niu’s account, which cites multiple experts and documents no longer available to us, concludes that those accounts are too inconsistent to ever be reconciled. Moreover, the sizes ascribed to the sites in remote antiquity are impossibly small, given the complexity of the ceremonies supposedly held in the structure; worse, the most plausible source to provide the necessary information, the “Mingtang yueling” 明堂月令, is of uncertain date, with classical authorities dating it to every dynasty from Xia to Qin! Ultimately, Niu suggests that any plan must privilege statements in the *Rites* classics over other classical sources, no matter how eminent, which, curiously enough, seems to be the first time that such an argument is advanced. Although Niu immediately disregards his own “solution,” in order to cite the authority of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, by narrowing his source base Niu could devise a compromise plan for the Mingtang building, a plausible pastiche of disparate passages drawn from all three *Rites* classics. Nonetheless, the construction of the building was tabled, despite the Sui Court Architect’s construction of a wooden model, followed by a survey and divination of an appropriate site.⁹⁷ A Tang-dynasty Mingtang was eventually constructed, of course, and a reconstruction of it can be seen today in Xi’an. But Niu’s

submission to the throne shows how far Han and post-Han scholars strayed from their immediate tasks as members of the governing elite, to speculate on events, customs, and material artefacts from several millennia before.

- 29 A similar document, dated roughly to 632, was submitted to Tang Taizong 唐太宗 by the eminent scholar Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (581–645). Kong notes that many eminent classicists of his own day envision a tower above a structure,⁹⁸ although no classical authority sanctions such a view. What he proposes in place of a grand structure, in conscious defiance of the luxury-loving court he knows, is a relatively simple structure, a combined ancestral temple and audience hall (*miaotang* 廟堂), whose accoutrements would consist of the simplest and most “natural” (unprocessed and inexpensive) materials: mats made of woven straw, vessels made of clay and gourds, robes made of unhemmed animal skins. For such a structure advertised to all the close connections that the early exemplary rulers forged between heaven and earth. Kong asked, if, by some of the earliest records, the first Han-era Mingtang had no walls on its four sides, how could it have had a tower and five rooms? The Palace Attendant Wei Zheng 魏徵, chief compiler of the *Suishu*, disputed Kong’s arguments, reasoning from quite different premises: the Han through the Six Dynasties courts all built a Mingtang that more or less had the same form and dimensions. Wei urges his emperor to “Create what you will! What need is there to follow the ‘old ways’?” since a thousand years’ worth of court debates has never managed to provide any clarity. It seems to Wei that the sources each detail a different Mingtang under a different ruler, precluding any consensus.⁹⁹
- 30 At Wei’s prodding, Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645) consulted the relevant sources, and what he concluded is that all the experts disagreed down through the centuries, and mostly for selfish reasons. “It remains only for his majesty to build a Mingtang [on any plan he happens to favour], and it will provide a model for later generations.”¹⁰⁰ Yan even found a precedent for advising his emperor to do as he pleased, in defiance of precedents: after all, the classicist Ni Kuan 兒寬 had told Han Wudi to do the same, and only because of that, Yan reasons, the building of the worship sites proceeded and the solemn rites were performed.¹⁰¹ After all the back-and-forth, we discover from the standard histories that the court “had no time to build” the Mingtang, preoccupied as it was with more pressing matters, even when the conceptual hurdles had been cleared for it.
- 31 We suggested at the outset that many of the same issues reoccur, from dynasty to dynasty. Here we see the persistence of the same range of attitudes, Han through Tang, with the urge to “get it done!” for the sake of dynastic legitimacy usually, in the end, trumping disputes over the Classics. Small wonder that Madame Pirazzoli-t’Serstevens once called the Mingtang a veritable “cream puff”: filled with hot air, signifying little, but immensely satisfying to some tastes.¹⁰²

On the Taixue

- 32 Most scholars presume that during the reign of Han Wudi (r. 141–87 BC),¹⁰³ a building for the Chang’an Taixue or Imperial Academy was constructed, even if the foremost experts on the Han dynasties, scholars such as Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123–1195) and Lü Simian 呂思勉 (1884–1957), utterly reject this common view.¹⁰⁴ Turning to Eastern Han, we read in its sources that Guangwu was in some sense “the first” to build a

Taixue, a structure begun in Guangwu's fourth year and finished quickly.¹⁰⁵ It would be some three decades before Guangwu ordered the construction of the Sanyong. The original excavation report shows a Taixue rectangular site measuring about 200 metres on its long N-S sides and roughly 150 metres on its shorter E-W sides, but this turns out to be the dimensions of the Wei-era Taixue.¹⁰⁶ A revised map published in 2010 shrinks the Eastern Han Taixue, while admitting that its exact dimensions cannot be ascertained; presumably, it lies beneath the Wei site.¹⁰⁷ And then we go off the rails. For the *Hou Hanshu* then claims that “probably” “millions” of people “watched attentively and heard” the rituals planned at the suburban ritual complex.¹⁰⁸ The tip-off that these are wildly inflated numbers is subtle but sure: it is the introductory adverb *gai* 蓋, meaning “probably.” Neither the Taixue nor the whole suburban ritual complex had the capacity to house thousands of attendees, let alone millions. The histories claim that as many as 30,000 students or clients were in attendance at the Taixue in mid- to late Eastern Han.¹⁰⁹ Where are the residence halls, or the lecture halls, for that matter, in the excavation report?¹¹⁰ And are we seeing the same role assigned to the “students” at the Taixue, when the enrolment figures explode so quickly?¹¹¹

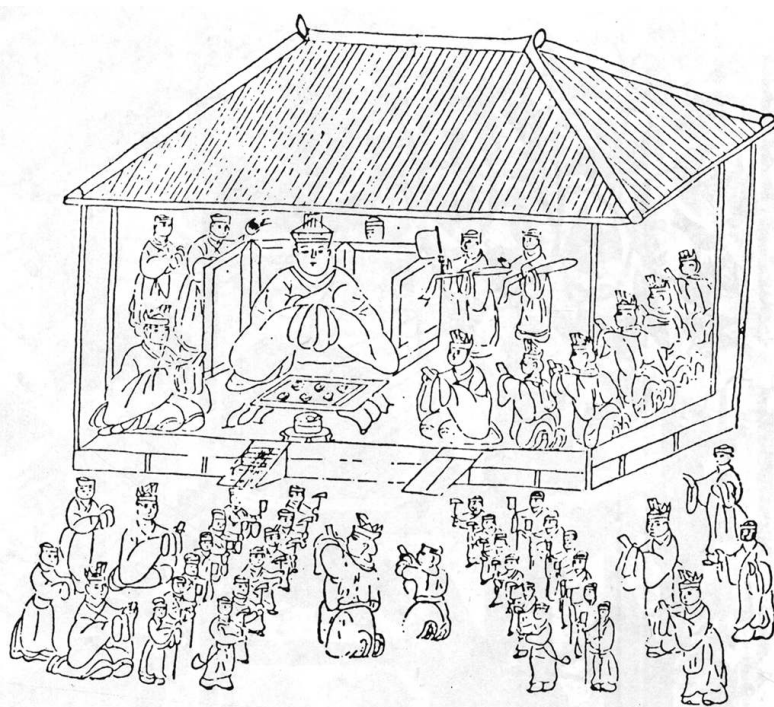
33 Certainly, we can locate snippets of information, although none is easy to assess, let alone put into context. In Han Shundi's era (r. 125-144), for example, a certain Zhai Pu 翟酺, then Court Architect, described a Taixue site gone to wreck and ruin, where animals grassed at will. He saw to it that the Taixue was repaired in AD 131, long after he had left office, and he was rewarded for his efforts with a commemorative stele by his admirers.¹¹² And certainly Lu Ji's 陸機 (261-303) “Luoyang ji” 洛陽記 describes outside the city walls of Luoyang, at a distance of eight leagues from the palaces, a *jiangtang* 講堂 (lecture hall) measuring 10 *zhang* 丈 by 3 *zhang* (i.e., 24.2 x 7.26 metres). Lu Ji does not specify whether his precise dimensions describe one or many lecture halls nor how he came by this information. Since Lu was but a child when the Wei dynasty fell, and living far from Luoyang until 289, he in all likelihood describes the Western Jin buildings he knew so well. For the same reasons, when the anonymous *Sanfu huangtu* 三輔黃圖 (sixth century?) describes a market and a prison next to the Chang'an Taixue, we cannot immediately inscribe this onto the Eastern Han landscape. Scattered clues, however intriguing, do not offer much elucidation.¹¹³

34 Lü Simian, the premier Han historian of the twentieth century, spoke of the “inflated numbers” given for the Taixue students by the *Hou Hanshu*. To the same end, Hans Bielenstein wrote that the extant histories for the entire sweep of the two hundred years of Eastern Han record but forty-nine students or clients at the Taixue, a laughably small number, if the Taixue represented a significant conduit for candidates for office undergoing academic training in one or more of the court-sponsored “explications” (*shuo* 說) for the Five Classics.¹¹⁴ For Lü Simian, it is obvious that the numbers of registered *dizi* 弟子 refer not to genuine students learning hallowed classical texts but to the clients who flocked to the capital to become part of the entourages attending ministers and other high officials.¹¹⁵ The *Han guan yi* 漢官儀, as it happens, proves Lü Simian to be right. The dowager empress Liang 梁 issued an edict, in the first and only year of the reign of Zhidi 質帝 (Liu Zuan 劉纘), to Liang Ji 梁冀, an all-too powerful regent (in power from 141-159), suggesting that the sons of all the nobility and officials down to 600 bushel-rank attend “schools” in the capital.¹¹⁶ Reading this edict, it is hard not to make the connection with the *Guozijian* 國子監 of Ming-Qing Beijing. Apparently, we should resist the temptation, for commentaries in

the *Han guan yi* explain the edict in this way: “[Every year] in the third month of spring and the ninth month of autumn, they practise the Archery rituals, and all those who participate [as onlookers?] in the rites are made ‘students’ of the Taixue.”¹¹⁷ The *Hou Han shu* then details the predictable result, “From this time on, the ‘travelling students’ who came to the Taixue increased until they numbered more than 30,000.”¹¹⁸ Instruction went downhill, we are told, as all manner of unqualified “scholars” pronounced themselves “knowledgeable” enough to discourse on the Classics.¹¹⁹ Judging from this mid-Eastern Han text, dating to a time roughly sixty years after Zhangdi, proven mastery of a curriculum was not needed to style oneself a Taixue “student”: one only had to have witnessed an archery contest in the suburbs of the capital. Lack of qualified students was hardly a new problem, of course, judging from an earlier memorial of 102, which claimed that those attending the Taixue no longer acquired or used the formal training offered there.¹²⁰

- 35 Aside from these hyperbolic numbers, we do well to tarry over a distinctly odd passage that modern scholarship has often ignored, a passage that returns us to Zhai Pu, in Shundi’s reign. Zhai reported that Mingdi had wanted to get rid of the Taixue, since the capital already had a Biyong, but Mingdi faced stiff resistance from his *taiwei* Zhao Xi. Moderns expect lecturing by Academicians to take place in a Taixue, aka an Imperial Academy, and rituals to be performed in the cult sites known as the Mingtang and Biyong. Clearly, however, Mingdi thought the functions of the Taixue and Biyong sites to be identical or nearly identical.¹²¹ Therefore, in all likelihood, the Eastern Han Academicians’ ordinary instruction of their designated disciples (who numbered between one hundred and two hundred students, so far as we know)¹²² did not happen in the suburbs, though we can imagine formal lectures taking place on special ritual occasions before large crowds assembled at the suburban ritual complex, with perhaps several hundred or so in attendance, something that tallies with Lü Simian’s vision.¹²³ Let us recall that instruction in the Classics was mainly oral, as we see from a pictorial stone from Zhucheng 諸城, Shandong (fig. 4), and from several Han anecdotes.¹²⁴ This type of oral instruction is confirmed by numerous passages in the official histories, so it beggars belief that real teaching of the Classics’ *shuo*, in all their complexity, could have been delivered at any one time to many more than a hundred or so disciples, gathered round the master.

Fig. 4



图三五 山东诸城前凉台孙琮墓出土谒见（上计图）画像石摹本

Found in Ren Rixin 任日新. “Zhucheng Han mu hua xiang shi 诸城汉墓画像石.” *Wenwu* 文物 .10 (1981):14-21.

On the Imperial Ancestral Temple

- 36 On the Imperial Ancestral Temple (*taimiao*, or *zongmiao* 宗廟), where one would expect the records to be clearer, the *Hou Hanshu* says merely that one of the early ritual masters, Zhang Chun, a scion of the nobility, deemed the imperial ancestral rites to be in a faulty state during Guangwu's reign, in large part because Shusun Tong, in early Western Han, had instituted an incomplete set of rituals grounded in the Qin rites.¹²⁵ To establish Guangwu's "restored" line as continuous with that of Western Han and fully legitimate, Guangwu promptly, in the second year of his reign, erected a single ancestral temple to Gaozu 高祖, Wendi 文帝, and Wudi 武帝, these being deemed the most illustrious emperors of Western Han, in contrast to the later Western Han emperors, from whom Guangwu descended.¹²⁶ It was Zhang Chun, joined by Huan Rong who decades later, in AD 56, the nineteenth year of Guangwu's reign, succeeded in persuading Guangwu and then Mingdi to rethink and perfect the ancestral rites within the context of building a new ritual centre at Luoyang, called the Circular Moat. Zhang and others pointed out that the old ancestral temple in Chang'an could conduct some of the ceremonies honouring the Western Han emperors, so the ancestral temple in Luoyang could conduct ceremonies in honour of a select few.¹²⁷ Certainly once the main rivals to Guangwu had been suppressed and the empire somewhat pacified, Zhang Chun, in company with Zhu Fu 朱浮, memorialised that their emperor, had "selfishly" pushed forward the worship of his line over the worship of some of the most illustrious emperors of Western Han, and that he should delegate to officials the sacrifices for the members of his own line, rather than personally worshipping his forebears, who were not distinguished enough to merit such attention from the emperor.¹²⁸

- 37 Notably, Zhang Fen 張奮, Zhang Chun's son, ca. AD 97, complains, via a memorial or petition, that the "rites and music" comprising the court liturgies were still incomplete in his time, long after Zhangdi's demise. More significantly, Zhang Fen attributes this disgrace to two factors: first, the imperial intentions to reform the rites and music have repeatedly been hindered by "unthinking" classicists intent mainly upon refuting one another's visions (衆儒不達，議多駁異);¹²⁹ second, successive emperors have been "too modest" to insist upon their own views. Such remarks may represent a posthumous rebuke of Zhangdi, given the two aborted attempts to reform court rituals made during Zhangdi's reign: the court conference at the White Tiger Hall in AD 79, whose results dissatisfied Zhangdi,¹³⁰ and the failure to implement Cao Bao's *New Rituals*.¹³¹ Bold enough to commission Cao Bao to model his court's rites on a different foundation than that advanced in the White Tiger discussions, Zhangdi nonetheless hesitated to put the *New Rituals* in place, and in the end Zhangdi died very young, before Cao's reforms could be put into place.¹³²
- 38 In an irony of ironies, the would-be reformers throughout the ritual debates cited a huge range of precedents to defend the overturning of the dynastic precedents.¹³³ Let us recall that the court controversies grew so heated over proposed changes to ritual protocols that not a few court officials, after Zhangdi's death, called for Cao Bao to be charged with a capital crime meriting the death penalty. Zhangdi's own conduct may have given some ritual experts pause and heightened the conflicts.¹³⁴
- 39 Before closing this section, we would draw the reader's attention to one additional piece of evidence, a stele dated to 280, some sixty years after the official demise of the Eastern Han, which commemorates the Jin-era Sanyong. The stele in many ways confirms the picture we have already built up in this paper: that Academicians and ritual masters were just as likely to be military men as not,¹³⁵ and that attention was paid to both the arts of war, in the form of the Imperial Archery contest, and the arts of peace, via a formal drinking feast, in ceremonies held at three months intervals in the Biyong.¹³⁶ Meanwhile the stele highlights the Jin-era Sanyong as a performance venue designed to underscore imperial legitimacy. Wearing the resplendent axe-patterned clothing, Jin Wudi invited to the site the princes, local lords, and officials, the Academicians and their teaching assistants, those who were known as ritual masters (*zhi li* 治禮), the keepers of precedents, and their disciples and clients, each of whom were to take their assigned places according to rank.¹³⁷ In company with a colonel and his Senior Tutor, the emperor formally announced his commitment to textual learning of the Classics, and his oversight of edifying rites and music. It was someone who could survey the Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties and therefore make the right interventions to keep the cosmic and earthly powers on track who would be able to establish a dynasty that would last "for all time." Last but not least, the stele clearly indicates that a group of ritual experts were to examine and "correlate" (*he* 合) the ceremonial precedents, implying the possibility of further ritual reforms, as well as to transmit the ritual music.¹³⁸

On ritual controversies

- 40 Although modern scholars are wont to assume that there was greater unanimity of thinking in earlier eras, especially in ritual matters, making for a "ritual system" that was increasingly "standardised and sacralised,"¹³⁹ this appears to be wrong. Were this

the case, why would Andi, for example, have let the Taixue site decay, and why did none of the late Eastern Han emperors perform rituals at these sites, so far as we know, after Shundi? And whence the need to address the throne on the multiple failures of the palace examinations, for that matter?¹⁴⁰ If we dig deeply into the materials at hand, it is hard to posit a ritual system in place in pre-unification times, or even during the two Han dynasties. And once we take for granted that any ritual space is a cultural element constitutive of “power,” we may forget to ask the following question: how it is that certain rituals – “ramified so incessantly and thoroughly throughout experience” – come to seem “natural and essential” – so much so that contemporaries *want* and *need* to contend over all aspects of those rituals, including their meanings and functions?¹⁴¹ That need to contend is the subject of this third section of the essay, which focuses on the controversial literature.

41 Given this essay’s preoccupation with the reign of Zhangdi, it will mainly limit its remarks to the first century or so of Eastern Han, in order to demonstrate the stunning lack of a ritual system. Obviously enough, different courts put certain rituals in place, determining the ritual site where they were to be performed, as with the “Entertaining the Aged” ceremonies promoted by the early Eastern Han emperors. Readers will recall that Huan Rong was honoured at one such ceremony as “Quintuply Experienced,” in large part because he had been tutoring for Mingdi when he was still heir. At the same time, the sheer number and scope of ritual controversies is stunning, especially when one considers how little survives from the distant past. Almost certainly, many more controversies rocked the Eastern Han courts. We know almost nothing aside from the court classicism; the views of the provinces and non-elites being out of sight. We lack the very texts the Academicians taught and contended over: the *shuo* 說 (“sayings”, “readings”) attached to the Classics.¹⁴² And we have but a small collection of undated fragments of the apocryphal texts that loomed so large in Eastern Han court debates. The extant apocrypha lines have been excerpted mainly from Song *collectanea*, and hence they are of unknown date, despite their traditional ascriptions to Han figures.

42 One good reason to focus on Zhangdi’s reign, then, is that we have a relative wealth of sources on ritual from around that time. This may not be a coincidence, as Zhangdi received a good education in classical learning, and he, far more than Guangwu, Mingdi, or his successors, had a successful reign, one whose glories were not surpassed by his successors. In this he was like Chengdi, in Western Han, for whose reign we have numerous records.¹⁴³ True, Cao Bao’s 150-juan *New Rituals* is long gone,¹⁴⁴ but moderns have most of the *Bohu tong*, one of several reports about the court conference devoted to ritual in AD 79, and also Xu Shen’s *Wujing yiyi* (Variant Readings of the Five Classics), in addition to fairly lengthy biographies of the multiple ritual masters (e.g., Diwu Lun 第五倫, Jia Kui) alive at the time.¹⁴⁵ Every single piece of evidence that we have alerts us to the controversies of the time, as do later standard histories, for example, the *Liangshu* 梁書:

漢氏鬱興，日不暇給，猶命叔孫於外野，方知帝王之為貴。末葉紛綸，遞有興毀，或以武功銳志，或好黃老之言，禮義之式，於焉中止。及東京曹褒 ... 百有餘篇，雖寫以尺簡，而終闕平奏。其後兵革相尋，異端互起，章句既淪，俎豆斯輟。

When the Han ruling house began, they had no time not taken up in crises, and still [the Han founder] ordered Shusun Tong to come to the capital from outside, so that men would rightly understand the honour attached to the imperial position. In later generations, there was chaos, with some

“restorations” of power and some periods of ruin. Some used military merit to sharpen their wills, and some preferred Huang-Lao theories. The models for the rites were stopped in mid-development, on account of this. When it came to Cao Bao, he compiled more than 100 *pian* on the rites, and even though this was written down on wooden boards and bamboo strips, in the end, it was thought to have lacunae, by critical memorials.¹⁴⁶ Later on, military reverses and coups followed one after another in quick succession, spurring the proliferation of more strange arguments and disparate explanations [among the classicists].¹⁴⁷ Once the *zhangju* 章句 (commentaries by chapter and verse) were in disrepair, there ended [the proper arrangements of] the meat platters and wine vessels [required in solemn sacrifices].¹⁴⁸

- 43 Scholars need not believe in the total collapse of the rituals to see that the extant records, fragmentary though they are, attest the continual eruption of ritual controversies over the course of the two Han dynasties. To offer further proof, we have devised Table 2 on the ritual controversies specific to Zhangdi's reign, drawing mainly from the *White Tiger Hall Discussions* usually ascribed to Ban Gu,¹⁴⁹ Xu Shen's *Wujing yiyi*, and Fan Ye's *History of the Later Han*, but also from fragments from the Western Han Conference held at the Shiqu (Stone Canal) Hall 石渠閣 in 51 BC (SQG), since the Shiqu Conference was often invoked in the controversies of Zhangdi's era. The table lists only instances in which opposing views of ritual matters can be clearly identified. In omitting cases in which only one side of a debate has survived, the table necessarily under-represents the number of controversies included in the foregoing texts. Readers should recall that most of these texts are themselves fragmentary at this point, and despite this, we know of several other attempts to adjudicate between various explanations of the Five Classics, including those by Fan Shu 樊榘 in AD 58, and Huan Yu 桓郁, in AD 72.¹⁵⁰ No fewer than 175 glosses by Jia Kui can be found in Ruan Yuan's 阮元 Qing-era *Shisan jing zhushu* (preface 1815), and we cite some of those, where relevant.
- 44 Because the essay would be way too long, were we to survey all statements about Western and Eastern Han relating to ritual controversies, we give but a short sample of those controversies, specifically, the controversies concerning the all-important *liu zong* 六宗 (Six Origins)¹⁵¹ and the *wusi* 五祀 (Five Sacrifices). Ritual controversies relating to mourning were too numerous to catalogue, even in summary fashion, but an earlier essay alludes to some of those.¹⁵²

On the *liu zong* 六宗

- 45 The *liuzong* are six powerful deities to whom the emperor must offer a cult. The identities of the six are hotly disputed in Han times, however.¹⁵³ The *liuzong* are glossed in the Han sources as (1) heaven, earth, and the four seasons; (2) the four directions plus *yin* and *yang*, signifying the totality of the gods in the cosmos who can help people; (3) whatever lives between the six directions of the cosmos; (4) all the gods roaming “between heaven and earth; (5) the six “offspring” of Hexagrams 1 and 2 of the *Yijing*, said to be water, fire, thunder, wind, mountains, and water; (6) stars (*xing* 星), asterisms (*chen* 辰), water, fire, the Yellow River and the Great Rivers (*he du* 河瀆);¹⁵⁴ (7) the sun, moon, and stars in the sky, plus Mt. Tai, the Yellow River, and the four seas on earth;¹⁵⁵ and (8) the sun and moon, and stars, plus Sizhong 司中 and Siming 司命 and, as one

group, Fengshi 風師 and Yushi 雨師 (the deities of the wind and rain). For the *liu zong*, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Liu Qiyu 劉起釪 list a total of twenty-one different theories,¹⁵⁶ even if the two most important theories in Han were (1) and (2). Theory (1) was promoted by Gao You 高誘 and Ma Rong among others, while (2) was promoted by Ouyang, Xiahou, Wang Chong 王充, He Xiu, Meng Kang 孟康, and others. However, (6) was promoted by Kong Guang 孔光, Liu Xin, Wang Mang, and Yan Shigu and (7) by Jia Kui. In Western Han, at Sweet Springs, Fenyin, they set up altars to worship the *liu zong*, and Chengdi discussed this with Kuang Heng 匡衡, the ritual expert.

- 46 The Eastern Han founder Guangwu hastened to offer sacrifices to the *liu zong* in the very first year of his reign, even if he cannot have been entirely sure to whom he was rendering cult. Zheng Xuan, in commentaries to the *Documents* classic, the *locus classicus* for the practice, emphasises the hierarchy among the gods, as he emphasises hierarchies on earth, but it is hard to see a settled pantheon, even after Pingdi's court, under Wang Mang, saw to it that all the powerful gods of the localities would be worshipped at once in the capital at Chang'an.¹⁵⁷ The *Dongguan Hanji* mentions ongoing controversies over whether blood sacrifices will be offered to the *liu zong*.¹⁵⁸ Judging from the *Guoyu*, "Zhou yu" section, and the *Shuowen*, this worship ceremony, described as a burned offering, included some kind of purification offering.
- 47 Just to complicate matters, over time in Eastern Han there come to be six emperors awarded the prestigious title of *zong*, something like "supreme ancestor" or model.¹⁵⁹ That said, the Eastern Han sources emphasise hierarchy in ranking sacrifices, with the ritual sites duly apportioned. For example, Heaven is above the Five Lords, and the two Han founders surpass their successors, but these powers commune in the suburbs to the south of the capital, while Earth and dowager empress Lü are worshipped in the northern suburbs, showing that male takes precedence over female. In Eastern Han, the dynasty, as if to verify that it is a "restored" dynasty, sets up temples to Gaozu in newly conquered territories.¹⁶⁰

On the *wusi* 五祀, or Five Sacrifices

- 48 Generally speaking, the Han-era texts presume the term *wusi* dates to early Western Zhou.¹⁶¹ Aside from that rare bit of consensus, the objects of cult in the Five Sacrifices are equally mired in controversy, right down to today, as we can see by recent efforts by scholars in the PRC, including Yang Hua, Chen Wei, and Zhang Hequan.¹⁶² Whereas there is no doubt that only the emperor was thought to have the privilege of offering cult to the Six Origins, there was no agreement down through the ages over who could and could not offer cult via the Five Sacrifices. Some texts identify the objects of cult as sage kings of the distant past –all of whom have become astral deities associated with the Five Planets.¹⁶³ Others identify them with the gods on earth.¹⁶⁴ Some modern scholars apparently believe that the Five Sacrifices propitiated wandering ghosts of high-rank who have been unjustly deprived of their lives.¹⁶⁵ Nor is there consensus over what offerings are to be used in each of these sacrifices,¹⁶⁶ or the schedule of when these sacrifices are to be offered, or whether such sacrifices are to be made regularly, with four of them tied to the four seasons, or at irregular times, specifically times of severe illness. Mainly on the basis of excavated Chu manuscripts, recent scholarship in the PRC has often tried to argue that even commoners felt compelled to render such cult, but Chu manuscripts cannot tell us about practices outside of Chu, and their

meaning and scope are often unclear. It is more likely that high-ranking counsellors enjoyed this type of ritual access to the divine, and emperors as well.¹⁶⁷ After all, the first mention of the *Zhouguan/Zhouli* in the *Shiji* speaks of the emperor worshipping the gods of earth (*Dizhi* 地祇) on the summer solstice.

49 If we carefully examine these sorts of controversies, which crop up again and again, this puts the ritual quandaries raised in late Western Han and Eastern Han into better historical context.¹⁶⁸ Then we recall the ritual debates over the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, and over many other affairs of state. Xu Tianlin 徐天麟, in his *Dong Han huiyao* 東漢會要, has compiled a necessarily partial list of the topics debated during court conferences in Eastern Han. These were, by his reckoning,

- debates over the imperial rites for the ruling house (*dian li* 典禮);
- debates over who should succeed as heir, in the case of untimely deaths;
- debates over whether the ritual calendar needed to be changed or not;
- debates over the location of the capital;¹⁶⁹
- debates over whether to establish broadly an Ever-Normal Granary to regulate prices;
- debates over whether to restore the Salt and Iron offices to regulate aspects of the monopoly;
- debates over the weight (and therefore the value) to be assigned imperial coinage;
- debates over the recommendation process by which the commanderies and kingdoms put forward the names of suitable candidates for office;
- fairly continual debates over punishments and adjudicating their use (with Zhang Pu often said to be in trouble); and conferences over border affairs (also continual).

50 Notably, while we might deem many items in this list to be of a purely “practical nature,” all the foregoing had implications for ritual practices at the Eastern Han courts. Xu also drew up a very incomplete list of the most important ritual controversies generated in the first 50 or 60 years of Eastern Han, through Zhangdi’s reign. By his account, these were:

1. The controversy over whether and how to honour Guangwu’s own family in the rites (both imperial and noble); where Guangwu’s father should be worshipped; what he should be called; which member of the imperial family should offer cult to him; and what precedents he was to enjoy; Zhang Chun and Zhu Fu began this debate.
2. The controversy over whether Cao Bao alone could craft and “complete” (*cheng* 成) the imperial rites for the dynasty; objections from Chao Kan 巢堪, Ban Gu, and others.
3. The controversy over whether Dou Rong could be hailed by other officials with the slogan “*wan sui*” 萬歲 (“Long life!”) usually reserved for the emperor.¹⁷⁰

51 To Xu’s list, we must add 4. The controversy over how Mingdi was to be buried by his successor, Zhangdi. Mingdi supposedly left instructions for a frugal burial, and no worship in the imperial ancestral temple. At the same time, at Guangwu’s burial the text of the “*Gu ming*” 顧命 (Testamentary Edict) had been read out at the funeral, and that precedent was important, insofar as the *Documents* chapter envisioned a lavish burial for the ruler.¹⁷¹ Zhangdi, who disapproved of aspects of Mingdi’s murderous reign, was not inclined to bury his father with lavish obsequies. But several of his

ministers after Mingdi's death suggested that it would be wrong to follow his wishes, and that he should be worshipped with full honours along with Guangwu in the ancestral temple, an arrangement to which Zhangdi eventually agreed.¹⁷² From the treatises on the suburban sacrifices found in *Dongguan Hanji* and in *Hou Hanshu*, we glean that the ritual experts of the time saw two outstanding issues before the court: first, how to honour Mingdi while also following his expressed wishes; and second, what music/dance to perform at the offerings. Nothing about ritual was simple, it seems, when the stakes were sufficiently high.¹⁷³

- 52 When we consider why the ritual masters mentioned above should be in such continual contention over so many facets of the liturgies, we must dig below the surface of the official histories and enter into some informed speculation. In contrast to priests in the Christian West, the ritual masters of Western and Eastern Han were not preoccupied with orthodoxy (belief in the efficacy of the correct Word), but rather with orthopraxy (belief in the efficacy of correct performance of the rites). But unfortunately, past performances offered little guidance as to when and why changes in the imperial rites should be instituted. Some were put down to a particular emperor's inappropriate preoccupations (as with Wudi's preoccupation with immortality), but there was no gainsaying that certain rituals, however inappropriate their origins, had acquired the power of precedent, with the result that they could be invoked as models for the present.
- 53 What is equally or more germane to understanding the ritual controversies are these considerations: (1) very few ritual masters in Han times (one can posit Yang Xiong and Zheng Xuan as possible, but not probable exceptions) thought of the Five Classics as a single corpus offering a unified message.¹⁷⁴ (2) Academicians were not appointed to explicate and embody a particular Classic, but rather a particular *shuo* 說 (explications) for that Classic, with competing *shuo* for a single Classic honoured equally. By the rationale of the Western Han court, it was best to "gather as in a net" all the interpretive sayings, given lacunae and interpolations in the Classics, so that wise men might determine the "best" (i.e., most constructive) advice among several competing views, but there was no consensus by which to determine by what method the "best" could be ascertained. (3) Classicists at court were also accustomed to "choosing" from scattered citations to arrive at a solution, and when no ready solution was at hand, to consider current Han practices as a guide to antique rituals.¹⁷⁵ (4) Classicists at court (and probably in the provinces as well), and especially the Academicians appointed at the court and the official Five Classics masters appointed from Chengdi's reign on in the provinces,¹⁷⁶ had a strong vested interest in defending their turf, which gave them palpable privileges in the form of ritual robes, ritual precedence, gifts of meat and brew, at each of the regular ceremonies. To "reform" rituals meant reapportioning those boons, a prospect greatly to be feared. For all the foregoing reasons, idealising talk of "constant rituals" tended to appear in polemical pieces. Contention was the norm, it seems, as ritual experts needed and wanted to promote their own views about when and how to revise rituals.

Final conclusions, on writing the past

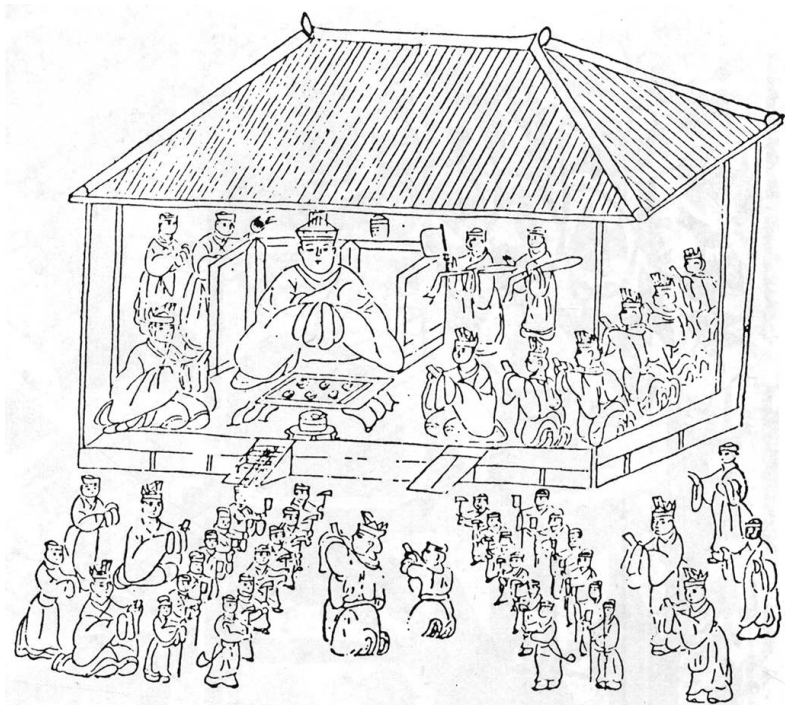
- 54 Had our research focused solely on the *post facto* idealising account given in the *Hou Hanshu* of the events of the second year of Mingdi's reign, which saw the completion of

the Three Sites (*Sanyong*), we might well have been persuaded that the imperial rituals were settled by this time. After all, according to the “Treatise on Ceremonials,” Mingdi “completed” (*bei* 備) in AD 59 the rites and music. However, any examination of the controversial literature relating to ritual from the reign of Mingdi’s successor, Zhangdi –the discussions held at the White Tiger Hall Conference in AD 79, the references to Cao Bao’s compilation of *New Rituals* on Zhangdi’s commission, and Xu Shen’s *Wujing yiyi*–shows that nothing was “completed” or “fixed” (*ding* 定), during Zhangdi’s reign or afterwards. Hence the repeated Han remarks, not all of them lament that the “rites and music” remained “incomplete” (*bu bei* 不備) and never “fixed” (*ding*).¹⁷⁷ What intrigues in the sources is the rhetoric that casts change as a form of constancy, and finds precedents for refusing to be hampered by precedents. We do not think this hypocritical; we celebrate the flexibility that this allows policymakers –a flexibility that modern scholars either do not see or reduce to calculated “pragmatism.”

- 55 Yes, imperial rituals needed at fairly regular intervals to be performed, and so they were duly performed. And court architects had to oversee the building and repair of ritual sites, no matter how mired in controversy the dimensions of the ritual sites were. But the meaning of the rites, the entities to be honoured, and even the venues and timing of rituals continued to be subjects of debate down through the end of Eastern Han, as we can see from multiple chapters in Ying Shao’s *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (compiled ca. AD 203). For this reason, while many, if not most scholars today presume a ritual system (*zhidu* 制度) was in place long before the end of the first century of Eastern Han, we do not. We urge that *lizhi* 禮制 be seen as something akin to a grab bag of “liturgical rules or precedents,” without presuming a well-articulated and stable protocols or consistent liturgical performances. The routine translation of “canons in writing” for *dian* 典 should also be queried, in light of the successive courts’ failures, during both Western and Eastern Han, to achieve consensus on a wide range of imperial ritual regulations; not all *dian* are even written, in our view, as some parts of the collections of precedents evidently drew upon earlier practices. The prevailing assumption that *guoxian* 國憲 should mean something like “national constitution” is no less problematic; we suggest, “regulations binding the members of the ruling house.”¹⁷⁸
- 56 Eastern Han officials (not to mention those in later eras) were all too aware that there could never be any “complete” ritual system, however much they might desire one in theory;¹⁷⁹ many classical scholars conceded that they had no textual basis on which to establish precedents.¹⁸⁰ Paradoxically, review of the precedents showed that different antique sage rulers had devised different rites and music, so that the one true precedent was change.¹⁸¹ With so many changes, said to number in the tens of thousands, the regulations “could not follow every flow and change.” This explains why, in fact, the ruler in each and every age, on the advice of officials, had to make continual adjustments, “adding and subtracting [the rules and institutions].”¹⁸² Officials like Cao Bao, acting on the personal commission from Zhangdi, might write 150-juan works (more than 12 times the length of Shusun Tong’s work for Liu Bang, the Western Han founder), in the hopes of “fixing” the rites and setting them on a new basis. And such *New Rituals* might be written down on strips of the length usually reserved for imperial edicts and/or the Classics. But Cao Bao’s *New Rituals*, as we know, were abandoned by Zhangdi’s successor almost immediately after his succession to the throne.¹⁸³

- 57 We must meanwhile consider the probability that no scenes of instruction on a modern university model ever took place at the Taixue, and that the Taixue was rather a ritual centre,¹⁸⁴ as was the Mingtang and Biyong.
- 58 What are the larger implications of the foregoing? For nearly a century, prominent scholars have repeatedly identified the central marker of Chinese ethnicity as its filial reverence for the ancestral family and related mourning practices, and its devotion to classical education by humanists.¹⁸⁵ This supposedly shared culture, manifested as ritual practices, is traced back to Western Zhou, if not earlier. For instance, responding specifically to Nazi claims alleging the purity of the Aryan bloodline, Qian Mu 錢穆 and Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 –both of whose influence in the Chinese-speaking world has matched that of Fairbank and Levenson in America– asserted in their works that “culture” (*wenhua* 文化), not “bloodline” (*xuetong* 血統), was the sole standard by which the Chinese distinguished themselves from other peoples in remote antiquity, with the result that a “barbarian” who adopted enough Chinese culture would be regarded as Chinese. But if a single, unified culture based in the rites was longstanding and shared, at least among members of the governing elite, it is hard to see why the early empires found it so difficult to agree upon and articulate its main features. The historicity of this rosy, if understandable reconstruction is open to question now, it seems.
- 59 We wonder if the language of “thin coherence,” as defined by William H. Sewell, Jr., would serve here, as that phrase intentionally queries older ideas of culture as self-enclosed, static, coherent, and impervious to challenge or change.¹⁸⁶ Adoption of the term “thin coherence” in relation to Han ritual would signal that it was liable to contestation and negotiation, with the acceptable parameters of debate not very strictly delimited, probably because the cultural logics did not demand that they be so.
- ¹⁸⁷ After all, ritual experts at court paid allegiance to the same range of authoritative sources. That provided a degree of coherence. It was simply that the court found it difficult to adjudicate among authorities which so manifestly disagreed. In arguing for their positions, Han classicists were not so foolish as to assume a unitary past; instead they had to assess the relative merits of a disparate collection of authoritative pasts reflected in writings and practices they knew, to serve their own needs and those of the court in the present and immediate future. Not surprisingly, our sources show that no one classic or textual tradition provided the final word on ritual matters, then. This puts us in mind of a recent remark by John Bercow, the former Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom: “I understand the importance of precedent, but precedent does not completely bind... Things do change.”¹⁸⁸ More weight could be put on pronouncements in the *Documents* or *Annals* than on those excerpted from the *Rites*. The apocrypha, imperial edicts, dynastic precedents, and recent court activities were equally in play. It behoves all good readers of the distant past to expand their inquiries about the rites beyond the three *Rites* classics and the ritual treatises in the court histories, in consequence. As our subjects were broadly learned and supple thinkers, we must become better versed in all the relevant sources, lest we miss the distinctive views of ritual that the members of the Han court upheld, and intended onlookers and readers to register.

Fig. 4



图三五 山东诸城前凉台孙琮墓出土谒见（上计图）画像石摹本

Found in Ren Rixin 任日新.“Zhucheng Han mu hua xiang shi 诸城汉墓画像石.” Wenwu 文物 .10 (1981):14-21.

Table 1		
Name	Expertise/Training	Titles
Huan Rong 桓榮 (d. ca. AD 60)	Ouyang reading of the Documents 歐陽尚書	Offices of the Chancellor 大司徒府
		Gentleman Consultant 議郎
		Academician 博士
		Junior Tutor (to Mingdi) 少傅
		Superintendent of Ceremonial 太常
		Noble of the Interior 關內侯
		Quintuply Experienced 五更

Zhao Xi 趙憙 (AD 3–80)	None recorded in the extant sources	Detached General 偏將軍
		General of the Gentlemen of the Palace 中郎將
		Noble of Courage Deeds 勇功侯
		Magistrate of Huai 懷令
		Governor of Pingyuan 平原太守
		Superintendent of Transport 太僕
		Supreme Commander 太尉
		Noble of the Interior 關內侯
		Superintendent of the Guards 衛尉
		Acting Supreme Commander 行太尉
		Senior Tutor (to Zhangdi) 太傅
Jia Kui 賈逵 (AD 30– 101)	Zuo zhuan 左傳; Xiahou reading of the Documents 夏 侯尚書	Gentleman 郎 in the Lantai Depository 蘭臺
		Prefect of the Guards 衛士令
		(Left) Leader of the Gentlemen of the Palace 左中郎將
		Palace Attendant 侍中
		Commandant, Cavalry 騎都尉

Cao Bao 曹褒 (d. AD 102)	Qing Clan Rites 慶氏禮	Magistrate of Yu 圉令
		Academician 博士
		Palace Attendant 侍中
		Colonel, Archers under Training 射聲校尉
		Colonel of the City Gates 城門校尉
		Court Architect 將作大匠
		Governor of Henei 河內太守
		Palace Attendant 侍中
Ding Hong 丁鴻 (d. AD 94)	Ouyang reading of the Documents 歐陽尚書	Palace Attendant 侍中
		Colonel, Archers under Training 射聲校尉
		Superintendent of the Lesser Treasury 少府
		Superintendent of Ceremonial 太常
		Minister over the Masses 司徒
		Acting Supreme Commander 行太尉
		Superintendent of the Guards 衛尉

Table 2

#	Debated Topic	Positions
1		

	Under what circumstances should a local lord rush 奔 to mourn the Son of Heaven's death? (WJYY p. 196)	1. According to the <i>Gongyang</i>, even if a local lord is mourning a parent's death, he should perform his duties and rush to mourn the Heavenly King. 2. Xu Shen says that all local lords within one thousand <i>li</i> must rush to mourn. If they are farther than one thousand <i>li</i>, then they must rush to mourn only if they have the same surname 姓 as the Son of Heaven. 3. Zheng Xuan says only those within one thousand <i>li</i> should rush to mourn, regardless of surname.
2	When the lady 夫人 of a local lord dies, should ministers wear mourning and attend the funeral? (WJYY p. 201)	1. According to the <i>Gongyang</i>, when a lady of a local lord dies, ministers wear mourning and the lord attends the funeral. 2. According to the <i>Zuoshi</i>, the <i>shi</i> 士 wear mourning and attend the funeral. 3. Xu Shen says they wear mourning only if they have the same surname as the lady. 4. Zheng Xuan says they give the lady the same respect as the lord and wear mourning.
3	Can one conduct a burial when it rains? (WJYY p. 204)	1. According to the <i>Gongyang</i>, one does not perform a burial for the Son of Heaven or local lords when it rains, but does not stop a burial for ministers and counsellors because of rain. 2. The <i>Zuoshi</i> says you divine the day of burial by pyromancy, but do not perform the burial if it rains. Common people do not stop a burial on account of rain. 3. The <i>Guliang</i> says that you do not stop the burial because of rain. 4. Xu Shen agrees with the <i>Gongyang</i> and <i>Zuoshi</i>.
4	Should one divine the day of a sacrifice? (WJYY p. 53)	1. The <i>Gongyang</i> says cast milfoil at the temple, but do not divine by pyromancy. 2. The Archaic <i>Zhou Rites</i> says divine by pyromancy.
5	How many women should the Son of Heaven marry?(BHT 10.469)	1. The ruler and local lords marry nine women. This models the Nine Provinces on earth. 2. The ruler marries twelve women. This models the twelve months of heaven.
6	Should music accompany the capping of a duke 公? (WJYY p. 144)	1. Records of the Duke of Zhou's capping mention no music. 2. The commentary to the <i>Chunqiu</i> says that when the lord is capped there is music of metal and stone. 3. Xu Shen says there is music when the ruler dines. Therefore, it would be against ritual for there to be no music when the ruler is capped.
7		

	What animal should be sacrificed during a blood oath? (WJYY p. 138)	1. The Han version of the <i>Odes</i> says that the Son of Heaven and local lords use oxen and pigs, counsellors use dogs, and common people use chickens. 2. The Mao version of the <i>Odes</i> says that the ruler uses pigs, his subordinates use dogs, and the common people use chickens. 3. Zheng Xuan says that the ruler uses oxen, and those of lower rank use pigs.
8	Should one announce the new moon 告朔 on a <i>runyue</i> 閏月? (WJYY p. 78)	1. According to the <i>Gongyang</i>, one should not announce the new moon on a <i>runyue</i>. 2. Xu Shen, following the <i>Zuoshi</i>, says that one must announce the new moon on a <i>runyue</i>, as one sets the calendar by this month. 3. Zheng Xuan, citing the “Yaodian,” says that one must announce the new moon on a <i>runyue</i>.
9	What should one give as offering to the God of Grain? (WJYY p. 32)	1. Xu Shen says that you do not offer rice and millet. 2. Zheng Xuan, citing the <i>Zhou Rites</i>, says that the God of Grain requires a blood sacrifice.
10	Who offers cult to the Stove God? (WJYY pp. 80–81)	1. Xu Shen, following the “Monthly Ordinances,” says that the king offers cult. 2. Zheng Xuan and the <i>Da Dai Liji</i> say the wife offers cult.
11	When one sacrifices to Heaven, is there a ritual stand-in 屍? (WJYY p. 14)	1. According to the <i>Gongyang shuo</i>, there is no ritual stand-in. 2. According to <i>Zuozhuan shuo</i> and the “Lu suburban sacrifice rites,” there is a ritual stand-in during the suburban sacrifices. 3. Xu Shen follows the <i>Zuozhuan</i>.
12	Are local lords purely subjects 純臣 of the ruler? (WJYY p. 185; BHT 7.320)	1. The <i>Zuoshi</i> and <i>Changes</i> say that they are. 2. The <i>Gongyang</i>, Xu Shen, Zheng Xuan, and BHT say that they are not.

60 (This table presents a small sample of the ritual controversies that the authors have collected from Han sources. For a larger table of ritual controversies, drawn from a wider range of sources, please contact the authors, who would be happy to share their findings.)

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APPENDIX

Sources for Table 2

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BHT: Ban Gu 班固, 1994, *Baihu tong shuzheng* 白虎通疏證, annotated by Chen Li 陳立. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

FOOTNOTES

1. The *Wujing yiyi* is in some sense a response to the documents relating to the earlier Shiqu 石渠 court conference on the Five Classics during Xuandi's 宣帝 reign, part of whose results (now in fragments) are entitled *Wujing yaoyi* 五經要義. The sole subject of the *Wujing yaoyi* today is ritual; although there is talk of thirteen ritual experts attending Shiqu, the chief disputants seem to be a proponent of the Qingshi rites 慶氏禮 tradition, and several adherents of the rival Senior and Younger Dai 戴 traditions. See *Hanshu* 30.1710, 36.1929; also, *Yuhan shan fang yi yi shu*, vol. 2, 1059.1a-1063.7a. We include *Hou Hanshu* compiled in the mid-fifth century in this list of roughly contemporaneous works because it is known to be based largely on earlier histories, and to include many lengthy excerpts from Eastern Han compositions.
2. Underlying this study are queries about certain commonplaces of the field regarding the dominance of "ritual" in Han court life, the status of the Five Classics at court, and the appropriateness of applying the term "religion" to pre-Buddhist China.
3. For example, Ban Gu's conclusion to the treatise on the rites (*Hanshu* 22.1035) says casually, "Today, the ritual ceremonies that Shusun Tong wrote up are recorded along with the statutes and ordinances, and stored in the Judicial Office" (今叔孫通所撰禮儀, 與律令同錄, 藏於理官).
4. The name of this structure has been rendered in so many ways that it seems best not to translate it again. We prefer the translation of "Worship Hall" Michael Loewe uses, but Bright Hall and other translations are in frequent use. See below.
5. Literally, "impressive originator/ancestor."
6. Huan Rong appears to be an exception in this regard, but the list of offices for him may be incomplete. We also see the explicit pairing of military and civil in Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu* 35.1205 of rites and punishments, often thought of as antithetical, as when Fan Ye couples two ritual masters (early and late) with two famous judges (Gao Yao, serving Shun, and Su Fensheng, serving Han). This pairing of civil and military should not surprise us as Shusun Tong, first "inventor" of the Han imperial rites also devised many of the Han statutes. See Yang 2007, 21. Other famous ritual masters who served in a military capacity include Wei Xuancheng, Xiao Wangzhi, Dai Sheng, and Wenren Tonghan.
7. Not surprisingly, we discussed including many other ritual masters in this section of the paper, including Fan Shu 樊噲 (who is mentioned elsewhere in our paper). Fan, like many other ritual masters, had a military background; it was in his capacity as colonel that Fan was asked by Mingdi to "fix" the imperial court rituals. Fan was also consulted when Mingdi was wondering whether to execute his brother for treason. Fan supported execution on the grounds that, "This [the empire] is Gaodi's realm, not your majesty's realm" (天下高帝天下, 非陛下之天下也).
8. See *Hou Hanshu* 35.1205n2, which cites Ban Gu's *Hanshu* 22.1075.
9. The dates for these figures are Jia Yi (200-169 BC, in service to Han Wendi); Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BC, in service to Han Wudi 武帝); Wang Ji (fl. 74-48 BC, in service to Xuandi); and Liu Xiang (79-8/7 BC, in service to Yuandi and Chengdi).
10. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1205. The omitted material at the ellipsis remarks upon the ceaseless changes made to the rites and music since the time of the Former Kings. The binomial *yi duan* has a range of meaning, and it means in some contexts simply "theories based on different premises."

11. For example, Xu Shen, at Zhangdi's time, wrote, "Men all use their private judgment, right and wrong has no standard, while clever opinions and slanted pronouncements have caused considerable confusion among scholars"; and Ying Shao wrote, "Each and every person follows his own mind, and none achieves the proper balance." See Nylan 2008, 721-77, particularly p. 739 n77-81; compare with Nylan 1999, 17-56, particularly p. 22. See also *Hanshu* 78.3278, which records Xiao Wangzhi's 蕭望之 defence that "each follows his own will." *Hou Hanshu* 43.1474 speaks of glossing texts, as one chooses. *Hanshu* 73.3116 notes Wei Xuancheng's 韋玄成 claim that the local lords do not follow the "old rites" (*guli* 古禮) as the court has not promulgated them. There was the expectation that the rites, if once firmly and "thoroughly" were put in place, there would be fewer crimes and misdoings, as in *Shiji* 22.1157: 道德仁義非禮不成, 教訓正俗非禮不備, 分爭辯訟非禮不決. The three official histories for Han repeatedly discuss the "incomplete" (*bu bei* 不備) state of the imperial rites in Han. See, e.g., *Hanshu* 23.1034; 72.3063; 78.3280; 88.3594, etc.

12. *Hanshu* 22.1075.

13. See *Hou Hanshu* 35.1199, citing Zhang Fen 張奮: 眾儒不達, 議多駁異.

14. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1194. The passage says that Zhang Chun, descendant of Zhang Anshi 張安世, "fixed" many (*duo* 多) of the imperial rituals, but not all of them, but we know that Mingdi and Zhangdi then emended the same, and it was these very rituals that came up for debate at the White Tiger Hall discussions. We also know that Zhang Chun was concerned that the Eastern Han founder Guangwu 光武 wanted to honour his own biological relatives in the imperial ancestral temple, which would undercut the dynastic ties to the Western Han emperors.

15. His son Huan Yu 桓郁 held military posts, however.

16. Huan Rong was appointed *taichang* under Guangwu. Before this appointment, one of his clansmen had mocked his ritual study, but once he became *taichang*, he mocked him no more. More or less the same story is told of Xiahou Sheng 夏侯勝, the *Documents* expert, in Western Han.

17. *Hou Hanshu* 37.1250.

18. According to Bielenstein 1980, the position of Chancellor (*chengxiang* 丞相) was changed to Grand Minister over the Masses (*da situ* 大司徒) in 1 BC, then shortened to Minister over the Masses (*situ* 司徒) in AD 51. "Little is known about the particular duties of the Minister over the Masses in Later Han Times. He presumably was still responsible for drawing up the annual budgets, although the sources are silent on this point. He had the same censorial and advisory responsibilities as the other two Excellencies" (p. 14). Loewe styles the *situ* as Chancellor, in order to show that he had the same responsibilities as the Chancellor (*chengxiang*) in Western Han. Possibly Huan Rong served as aide or official in the office of *da situ* Ouyang Xi 歐陽欽, a renowned expert in the *Documents* classics.

19. Note that there was a Senior Tutor at this time, Zhang Yi 張佚, but he is mentioned nowhere else outside Huan Rong's biography, so it seems that Huan was preferred over him in this advisory post. Only Huan Rong was feted by Mingdi as "Quintuply Experienced," judging from the extant records. It is important to remember that, according to the *Hou Hanshu* "Treatise on Officials," in the Eastern Han, the Senior Tutor to the Heir did not manage any of the heir's staff of advisors, but the Junior Tutor to the heir did. See *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi* 志 27.3608. That may mean that Mingdi knew Huan Rong significantly better than he knew Zhang Yi.

20. *Hou Hanshu* 79.2566. We say this based on the number of students he taught. Huan Rong brought with him to Luoyang the commentary of the previous Academician of the Ouyang *Documents*, Zhu Pu 朱普, which he edited down from 400,000 to 230,000 characters while serving as Mingdi's teacher. His son, Huan Yu, then edited the commentary down to 120,000 characters. This became the standard *Commentary by chapter and verse (zhang ju) of the Masters of Ceremonial, Senior and Junior Lord Huan (Huan jun Da xiao Taichang zhangju* 桓君大小太常章句), according to *Hou Hanshu* 37.1256.

21. Significantly, Mingdi invited Huan Rong and his students to lecture on the Classics to those in attendance; and Mingdi served him as one would an elder brother (*xiong* 兄) during the ritual. The *Bo hu tong* specifically enjoined ritual obeisance by the emperor to his tutor; such public displays served to increase the authority of Mingdi's teacher (and by extension Mingdi himself).
22. *Hou Hanshu* 37.1253.
23. Mingdi showed extremely deference to Huan Rong on this occasion, and in several ways showed his respect for his age as well.
24. Constantino wonders whether Mingdi was using Huan Rong in a power play, by making Liu Cang, an authority himself, offer gifts to Huan Rong as supreme ritual master. This is worth consideration.
25. As seen from the excavation reports, the Taixue (as tentatively identified) occupied lands in Luoyang very near the Sanyong ritual complex space, so near that it could appear to be part of the same ritual complex. Strictly speaking, however, the Sanyong was comprised of the Mingtang 明堂, the Hall of the Circular Moat (*piyong* 辟雍) and the Spirit Terrace (*lingtai* 靈臺). For Zhao Xi's views, see *Hou Hanshu* 48.1606.
26. Sometime in the eighth year of Mingdi's reign, Zhao Xi asked to be relieved of his official duties altogether, to carry out the mourning ceremonies for his mother, but Mingdi refused his request, and instead sent lavish gifts for the burial. See *Hou Hanshu* 26.915. At that time, Zhao was acting as "Acting *taiwei*" (Acting Supreme Commander) on behalf of Mingdi.
27. *Hou Hanshu* 3.130n2.
28. *Hou Hanshu* 25.874.
29. *Hou Hanshu* 26.912.
30. Earlier, the ritual master Xiao Wangzhi had served in this post, which may or may not be relevant to our topic. See *Hanshu* 19B.805, 34.3274.
31. He is credited with ridding Chang'an of the Red Eyebrows in *Hou Hanshu* 26.914.
32. *Hou Hanshu* 3.130n2. *Hou Hanshu* 24.853. Under Zhangdi, Dou Rong assumed the position of Supreme Commander (*taiwei* 太尉).
33. See *Hou Hanshu* 2.96n13, though a much later ritual master, Ying Shao, protested that officials should not receive posthumous titles, regardless of their merits.
34. *Hou Hanshu* 26.915 says of Zhao Xi, "Within the palace, Zhao Xi supervised the guards; outside the palace, he performed the duties of chancellor" 意內典宿衛，外幹宰職.
35. The Siku editors believe that because Jia Kui was from the same commandery as Du Lin, he must have been familiar with Du's one-juan so-called *guwen* version. But Jia Kui is chiefly associated with commentary to the Han-era *Zuo*, and he prepared, for Zhangdi, a work on the "similarities and differences between the *Zuo*, the *Gongyang*, and the *Guliang*". We write of the "Han-era *Zuo*" as that work was both reorganised and re-edited in the post-Han period. Jia Hui 賈徽, father of Jia Kui, had studied the *Zuo* under Liu Xin (*Hou Hanshu* 36.1234), and he was the reputed author of a book explaining the *Zuo* entitled *Zuoshi tiaoli* 左氏條例, with expertise in the *Guoyu* as well. Kui compiled an "Explanation and Glosses" (*jie gu* 解詁) for the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 and *Guoyu* 國語, in fifty-one *pian*.
36. This is one of many reasons why it would not be wise to divide Han scholarship into "New Text" and "Old Text," or even Modern Script vs. Archaic Script.
37. *Hou Hanshu* 37.1264n4.
38. *Hou Hanshu* 48.1599; 36.1235. Earlier Jia had copied texts in the Lantai.
39. See Yang 2007, 48.
40. This is curious, as we know of only one version of this work, but perhaps more circulated in Han times (?), and perhaps "Zhou guan" is the name of a classification of writings, rather than a title of a single work.

41. *Hou Hanshu* 36.1223. Judging from the extant sources, his work on the Zuo tradition and the Guoyu was known to many generals. We distinguish the Han-era Zuoshi *chunqiu* from today's Zuozhuan, as the first was heavily emended in the post-Han period.
42. The Gongyang scholars were studying two interpretive traditions: 公羊嚴、顏諸生高才者 (*Hou Hanshu* 36.1239).
43. Li was initially appointed, on Ban Gu's recommendation, to the staff of Liu Cang, king of Dongping and a general at the time. (Note his work with Ban in the palace libraries.) He was considered a client of the Mas, whose prominence began with Ma Yuan, the general, and the Mas went on to become a consort clan.
44. *Hou Hanshu* 36.1237. Jia Kui, in a carefully worded memorial, reminded Zhangdi that Guangwu had favoured setting up an Academician's post for the Zuo, given his fondness for the apocrypha.
45. Jia Kui's biography mentions another court conference, held in the Southern Palace in the Yuntai 南宮雲臺, but we know nothing about it. See *Hou Hanshu* 35.1236.
46. *Hou Hanshu* 79B.2582. The possibility exists, of course, that the adherents of the Gongyang and Guliang were in the majority at the court conference. Later, during the reigns of Huandi 桓帝 and Lingdi 靈帝, another controversy would become famous, that between He Xiu 何休 and Zheng Xuan. But that is outside the purview of this essay.
47. *Hou Hanshu*, zhi 志 2.3025. Apparently, during the Yongping 永平 era, Jia Kui worked with Ban Gu to produce histories for the ruling house. See *Hou Hanshu* 14.588; probably these were something like the Diaries of Activity and Repose.
48. Loewe 1995, 305-28.
49. *Hou Hanshu* 36.1240: 逵所著經傳義詁及論難百餘萬言。
50. Cao Chong was master of the *Qingshi li* 慶氏禮, a text that is now lost. Aside from being an expert in that tradition, Cao Chong is credited with re-establishing this scholastic tradition in Luoyang, when he produced a *zhang ju* 章句 (commentary by chapter and verse) for it. See *Hou Hanshu* 35.1201. Cao Chong uttered the refrain that not even the sagely Five Lords and Three Kings kept to the same rites and music used by their predecessors (五帝不相沿樂, 三王不相襲禮); see *Hou Hanshu* 35.2001. In Cao Chong's understanding, then, these exemplary sage-kings set the precedents for *not* adhering to precedents.
51. Only three ritual masters are named for this tradition: Cao Bao, his father, and a ritual master from Jianwei commandery Dong Jun 董鈞. See Yang 2007, 179, plus Chapter 5.
52. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1203 says, "When Cao Bao examined the edict, he sighed and said to his students: 'Long ago Xisi eulogised Lu, and [Yin] Kaofu sang of Yin. When subjects rely upon duty to make their lords illustrious, using every ounce of their loyalty to commend their rulers, this is excellent conduct!'" (褒省詔, 乃歎息謂諸生日: 昔奚斯頌魯, 考甫詠殷。夫人臣依義顯君, 竭忠彰主, 行之美也。) Whether Cao Bao sighed out of admiration for his ruler or sighed because he knew he might be in for trouble, the passage does not plainly state, but usually such sighs indicate admiration.
53. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1202: 帝知群僚拘攣。
54. *Hou Hanshu*, zhi 志 2.3026.
55. Hedi ascended the throne at the age of 9, so his capping must have taken place after his ascension to the throne. The Basic Annals for Hedi mention him adopting a cap in his third year; see *Hou Hanshu* 3.171, 317n1.
56. *Dongguan Hanji* 東觀漢記 tells us that Zhang Pu 張酺, a *Documents* classic expert, who had studied under Huan Rong and taught himself at the capital's Four Noble Clans' Academy (*sixing xiaohou* 四姓小侯) set up in the South Palace, protested that Cao Bao's rituals were not likely to usher in the much-desired Great Peace, and instead, Cao Bao's regulations were "inauspicious" (非禎祥之特達).

57. Cao Bao was *Shesheng xiaowei* 射聲校尉 (Colonel, Archers under Training) in AD 92, and later, at an unspecified time, but before AD 96, as *Chengmen xiaowei* 城門校尉 (Colonel of the City Gates), with responsibility for the capital defences; in AD 96, he served as Governor, a position that combined military and civil functions.
58. *Hou Hanshu* 37.1264, speaking of Wei Ying who in AD 80 was appointed Governor of Shangdang and also Cavalry Commandant: 使五官中郎將魏應主承制問難.
59. *Hou Hanshu* 37.1267.
60. Kim 2013 cites Yu Ying-shih on this supposed transition in time.
61. See Nylan & Yin forthcoming.
62. See, e.g., *Hou Hanshu* 42.1431n1, 62.2051, 79A.2546; cf. *ibid.* 26.918, 32.1126, 79A.2546. The texts mention the *Xiaojing* “with commentaries in chapter and verse”, but notes to the *Hou Hanshu* repeatedly mention the court’s preoccupation with the apocryphal traditions attached to this classic of elementary learning, which some, following Harry Hsin-i Hsiao, would call “Legalist” in origin. See Hsiao 1973.
63. Wang Weizhen’s 王惟貞 extremely helpful study of early Eastern Han begins by confessing his own confusion concerning the inclusion of the generals at such a meeting (Wang 2007). See also his book, Wang 2011. Wang takes up this “puzzle” in chapter 5, but his answer is somewhat unsatisfactory.
64. The *Bohu tong* gives an elaborate explanation for the graph *yong* 壘, which in the earliest Yuan Dade edition, explains the *yong* as “warding off malformed and destructive persons” (壘天下之殘賊). The same text also explains why the surrounding trench or moat was circular: to symbolise the spreading influence of the imperial charisma to the four corners (於雍水側象教化流行也.) The expression *can zei* 殘賊 apparently comes from Jia Yi’s writings, a passage of which is quoted in *Hanshu* 24.1128. Thereafter, in *Hou Hanshu*, the same expression is deemed ominous. Many have written on the Mingtang, including the classicists Lu Zhi 盧植, Ma Rong 馬融, Zheng Xuan and Cai Yong 蔡邕 (the last authored the “Mingtang lun” 明堂論); the Mingtang also figures largely in the writings of Liu Xiang, Xu Shen, Ban Gu, and the *Xiaojing* apocrypha entitled “*Xiaojing soushen qi*” 孝經搜神契. Liu Xiang’s *Bielu* 別錄 talks of a two-*pian* “Mingtang yinyang ji” 明堂陰陽記. That is lost, but Liu Xin’s “Seven Summaries” mentions a similar/same text that is slotted under the “Ritual Experts” (*Lijia* 禮家). One of the best secondary sources on this issue, aside from the excavation reports themselves and Lü Simian’s work cited below, is Xue 2015, which focuses on Zheng Xuan’s (127–200) ideas. However, Xue barely mentions the *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書, a major source for Han thinking, and she gives credence to the tales (tall tales, in our view) about Zhou and pre-Zhou worship halls, as do, admittedly, some of her sources.
65. See, for example, the apocryphal texts in Yasui & Nakamura 1971–1992, vol. 5, 35, 50–51; vol. 3, 83.
66. This paper will not consider the sacrifices in the northern suburbs of Luoyang, initiated by Guangwu to honour Earth and Gao hou 高后 (aka Dowager Empress Lü of early Western Han), as little is known about them, and they figured less in post-Han imaginaries. See *Hou Hanshu* 1B.84.
67. A map in Bielenstein 1976 places it in the north-east, inside the inner city wall, but his main text, so far as we can judge from the book, which lacks a proper index, omits discussion of the evidence for this placement. Checking *da miao* 大廟 in the electronic databases yields nothing, but Xu 1960, *juan* 22, discusses several ancestral temples erected to illustrious Han emperors, including the Gaodi miao 高帝廟, erected to the Western Han founder Gaozu, and the Guangwu miao 光武廟, erected to honour the Eastern Han founder.
68. For example, Liu *et al.* 2010 says that the dimensions of the Eastern Han Taixue are “hard to ascertain” (*nan yi queding* 難以確定) (p. 242), while the Wei-Jin site measures 150+m east-west, and 220m north-south. Lü 1983 speculates that the original Eastern Han Taixue was inside the palace, and “only later moved outside the city walls, and put in the suburbs” (p. 495).

69. Zhang Heng 張衡, in his “Eastern Metropolis” *fu* (東京賦), lines 241–244, describes what must be the Mingtang, though he never names it (see below). By name, he describes the Circular Moat and Lingtai. At the entire ritual complex, by Zhang Heng’s account, “the various lords arrive from all directions,” as do crowds of officials, and kings of the border states; brilliantly arrayed, the emperor entertains his guests, teaching them through the ceremonial. He is said to worship the high gods and Guangwu, as coadjutor (lines 407–411), which allows the seasons to turn, as do his other ancestral sacrifices (line 416). For an annotated translation of the *fu*, see Knechtges, Xiao 1982:243–310.

70. Often called the Wenshang Mingtang 汶上明堂. Han Wudi or his court had this built in 109 BC.

71. The *Hanshu* tells us that a worship hall (aka a *mingtang*) was built by Han Wudi near Mt. Tai, and possibly by Wudi’s uncle, the Prince of Hejian 河間, in his own kingdom. As Lü 1983, vol. 3, p. states, if Wudi built a Mingtang (here a worship hall) near Mt. Tai, on the banks of the Wen River 汶上 (Shandong Province), and “sat there after descending from the mountain” (降坐明堂), Wudi was certainly worshipping Taiyi 泰一, not heaven-and-earth or his ancestors. Michael Loewe has alerted me to the possibility that *mingtang* here is not a proper noun (personal communication), and Lü’s remarks seem in line with Loewe’s. For further information, compare *Shiji* 130.3296. The *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise (“Yiwen zhi” 藝文志) includes a notice about the King of Hejian’s writings on the Sanyong, and responses to questions on some 30+ issues, in three *pian*. That does not, of course, guarantee that the prince built such a ritual structure in his own kingdom.

72. *Hanshu* 22.1033.

73. *Hanshu* 22.1034–35 says that work began on the Biyong/Mingtang site under Chengdi, but when Chengdi died at a relatively young age in 7 BC, the work was stopped. The phrase “dense concatenation of meanings” is borrowed from Koziol 2002, esp. 388.

74. Note the doubling of round to square, of heaven to earth. The “Kaogong ji” 考工記 chapter of the *Zhouli* insists that the number of rooms the Mingtang should have are nine, a number that supposedly corresponds to the Nine Ministers at court (?), for reasons unknown.

75. As this site has no counterpart to Eastern Han Luoyang ritual sites, and the tentative identification made between it and Wang Mang’s 王莽 Nine Temples is shaky, we say nothing more here.

76. See Fig. 5–18, from Liu *et al.* 2010, 212.

77. The question of one or two sites has been settled, it seems, by this archaeological excavation. So far as we can discover, the Mingtang is never described in the same passage as the Biyong, making it likely that they were one and the same site. The *Shiji* “Treatise on the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices,” associates Mingtang-Biyong with the emperor, but it seems to be a double-name (not two sites), as it may be with Wang Mang, in the *Hanshu*; cf. *Dongguan Hanji*, juan 5. Similarly, the one mention given in the *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論, *pian* 37, may be talking of a single ritual centre, or two parts of the same ritual centre.

78. That this was the “classic” shape for the Mingtang-Biyong-Lingtai we are told by the Western Jin commentator who styles himself “your servant Zan” (*chen Zan* 臣瓚). See *Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan kaogu yanjiu suo* 2003, esp. pp. 211–17.

79. *Hanshu* 99A.4069. The departure from earlier precedent may explain why Wang Mang asked four members of the imperial and *waiqi* clans to superintend the building, Liu Xin, a member of the imperial clan and a leading proponent of the *haogu* movement, and three *waiqi* dignitaries, Ping Yan, Kong Yong, and Sun Qian. The names of the last three are found in the *Hanshu* Table devoted to the *waiqi*.

80. The Chinese reads, 中元元年, 初建三雍.

81. AD 59 corresponds to the second year of the Yongping reign era. In Yongping 8, six years later, Mingdi performed an ancestral sacrifice at the Mingtang, then “nourished the triply aged” (*yang san lao* 養三老) and the *wugeng* 五更 (Bodde’s “quintuply experienced”) in the Mingtang.

Later in the dynasty, the same sacrifices are said to be performed in the Biyong. See Xu 1960, 48. Indisputably, they are two sites in Zhang Heng's "Qi bian" 七辯, in Yan Kejun, *Quan Hou Han wen* 全後漢文, juan 55 [hereafter Yan Kejun, *Hou Han wen*]. I used the advanced search in CHANT to check proximity of the two terms, within four lines of each other.

82. I say this because of the heavy reliance of the archaeologists and excavation reports on their readings of the received literature, so that the report by no means represents independent confirmation of the early received sources. There is an additional problem, in that there are discrepancies between the maps of the sites provided in *Zhongguo kaogu xue* (p. 234) and in *Han Wei Luoyang cheng* (*passim*), and hence between two competing sets of dimensions. For the latter text, see below.

83. *Hou Hanshu* 79.2545 states that Guangwu began building the Sanyong in the first year of the Zhongyuan 中元 period, which corresponds to AD 56, so roughly 30 years after he came to the throne and less than one year before he died. Earlier in his reign, Guangwu was preoccupied with pacifying the territories to which he laid claim.

84. "Liang du fu" 兩都賦, cited in *Hou Hanshu* 40B.1372.

85. Figure 3 comes from *Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan kaogu yanjiu suo* (2010), p. 3.

86. One should note, meanwhile, that *Zhongwen da cidian* (Taipei, 1973), 3 ce, 437, equates the Biyong with the Taixue, saying the Biyong is simply the name for the Zhou dynasty Taixue; also that archaeological reports in respected journals (e.g. that in *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 2014:1, 92-95) base their accounts on this.

87. Zhang 2011, esp. 24, examines the term zongsi as an innovation. By some accounts, including the *Zhouli*, the Mingtang is the place where rewards and punishments would be doled out/announced, and this would make sense if the Mingtang is the ancestral imperial temple, as Du Yu asserts in his commentary to the *Zuozhuan*. For example, the *Bohu tong* states: 明堂上圓下方，八窗四闥，布政之宮，在國之陽。上圓法天，下方法地，八窗象八風，四闥法四時，九室法九州。 In the same vein is Li You's 李尤 "Biyong fu," which contains the lines 神聖班德，由斯以匡。 See Yan Kejun, *Hou Han wen*, juan 50.

88. In some texts, Guangwu is said to be coadjutor to the Five Lords (*wu di* 五帝); others imply he is coadjutor to Heaven (*Tian* 天) itself. In the Eastern Han, Heaven seems to have outranked the Five Lords, although it may be just a name for the collectivity.

89. Xu's compilation dates to Song, but it was based on earlier documents, some of them presumably now missing. We write, "as adjunct," presuming that Hans Bielenstein's siting of the Taimiao is correct.

90. See Zhang Heng's "Eastern Metropolis" *fu*, lines 406-7.

91. Cai Yong and Zheng Xuan concur in this view, for example.

92. Xu 1960, juan 2, 48-49. Compare note 4 above. The identity of the Five Lords (*wu di* 五帝) for whom Guangwu acted as co-adjutant, seems to have been the centre plus the four directions (given the "blue-green" lord), but accounts vary. In one account, recorded in *ibid.*, p. 50, Dai She and Dou Rong spoke of the Five Lords from Xuandi to Pingdi, suggesting that sources deliberately conflated the best Han emperors with the lords of heaven.

93. See Xue 2015, esp. p. 28.

94. It is possible that they are talking of Western Han Chang'an, of course, not Eastern Han Luoyang.

95. Loewe (personal communications, several).

96. These events were the discovery of a precious tripod in AD 63 and the auspicious submission of tribute in the form of a white pheasant in AD 38 or 39, first under Guangwu, then again during Mingdi's reign and also at the very start of Zhangdi's reign. One or more white pheasants, along with white rabbits, were presented in the ninth month of the thirteenth year of Guangwu's reign by a southern group from Nanjiao 南徼 (*Hou Hanshu* 1B.62). This auspicious sign came right after the appointment of Dou Rong 竇融 (Ban Gu's patron) to the post of *da sikong* 大司空, which may

be significant. For Mingdi's omen in his eleventh year, see *Hou Hanshu* 2.114; for Zhangdi, see *ibid.*, 3.145, 40B.1373, 1382, 86.2835, with the last sighting explicitly analogised to the tribute brought by the Yueshang 越裳 to the court of King Cheng of Western Zhou.

97. See *Jiu Tangshu* ("Li yi zhi" 禮儀志) 22.849.

98. One wonders if they have conflated the Mingtang and the Lingtai, but at this remove we cannot know. As Ni Kuan had a very mixed reputation, it is interesting that Yan Shigu takes him as ethical model.

99. *Jiu Tangshu* ("Li yi zhi" 禮儀志) 22.850.

100. *Jiu Tangshu* ("Li yi zhi" 禮儀志) 22.852.

101. *Jiu Tangshu* ("Li yi zhi" 禮儀志) 22.853.

102. Personal communication at the Collège de France. We invoke Madame Pirazzoli with profound pleasure, thinking of her grace and wit.

103. But see below, for an expert raising objections to the consensus view. Possibly no separate building was especially built for this purpose.

104. Cheng 2002, 8.170, says unambiguously, "In the Western capital, there was no Imperial Academy; therefore they set up the great archery contests at the Qu tai." In truth, the *Shiji* ("Ru lin zhuan" 儒林傳) says only that Wudi wanted to erect a Taixue, but in Lü's opinion, such a structure was never built or completed (p. 733).

105. Possibly this means Guangwu was the first to do so in Eastern Han, but the phrasing is odd.

106. See Liu *et al.* 2010, 242.

107. See Liu *et al.* 2010, for the contrasting figures 5–26 and 5–27 (pp. 231, 234). Figure 5–27 is small, but the resized Taixue seems about 90m x 175m (?). See note 82 above for further doubts.

108. *Hou Hanshu* 79A.2545: 儒執經問難於前，冠帶縉紳之人，蓋億萬計。Tang Zhen 唐甄 (1630–1704) criticised them in *Qianshu* 潛書, *juan* 1, p. 6: 眾觀而已，何益之有？See the "Jiangxue" 講學 entry in the book, in <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=418758#%E5%8F%A3%E4%BA%8E>.

109. We say "students or clients" because the term *dizi* 弟子 can mean either. The key point was legal registration to a master.

110. *Hou Hanshu* 48.1606, speaks of housing for the Academicians (*boshi she* 博士舍), but not their "disciples" or "clients." The dimensions of the Eastern Jin Taixue (bigger than the Eastern Han Taixue) are 24.2 x 7.26 m = 175.692 square metres or 0.04344 acres (.0175 ha). For comparison, the UC-Berkeley campus, with about the same number of students, encompasses approximately 1,232 acres (499 ha), though the "central campus" occupies only the low-lying western 178 acres (72 ha).

111. The number of *boshi dizi* 博士弟子 (assumed to be the same as *Taixue sheng* 太學生) increases dramatically, from 200 under Xuandi, 1000 under Yuandi, and 3000 under Chengdi, to the figure of 30,000 given for Shundi's reign in Eastern Han.

112. Very precise figures are given for his repairs, which may or may not be correct: in all, he had built 240 lecture halls, with 1,850 rooms 凡所造構二百四十房，千八百五十室。If the rooms are in the halls, then there are 7.70 rooms/hall.

113. *Sanfu huangtu*, *juan* 5.

114. Students of history often forget that the two Han dynasties did not sponsor, in *stricto sensu*, Academicians' chairs in the Five Classics, but rather chairs in the various readings given those Classics, in the *shuo*. Lü 1983 reckons each Academician was responsible for training about fifty official students, but what that training consisted of we do not know; he writes that those who were "registered" ("on the books") as students were great numbers, but "not very many were actually what we could call 'students'" (p. 736). "Official learning was ever thus" (官學如此). Lü then adds, "it seems as if the disciples were outside [the capital]." Moreover, Lü draws our attention to the fact that "commanderies and kingdoms" also set up Five Classics posts, at the low rank of 100 *shi* 石, who would have drawn locals to their lectures and/or ritual performances. See *Hanshu* 88.3596; *Hou Hanshu* 22.785. In general, Lü greatly complicates these numbers, arguing

that when Ru Chun 如淳 (fl. before AD 280) glosses the *Shiji* “Rulin zhuan,” and speaks of there being certain numbers, (a) this contradicts the *Hanshu* figures, and also (b) conflates several time periods together (p. 737).

115. We think of the Roman empire, where clients of the great were expected to perform the morning salutations for their patrons, in return for which they might receive some consideration. One relevant passage can be found in *Hou Hanshu* 67.2201, which speaks of Li Ying’s 李膺 hangers-on. At the same time, Lü notes, the commanderies and kingdoms appointed aspiring students learning the Five Classics traditions to very low-level posts.

116. *Hou Hanshu* 79A.2547, 2547n6.

117. We do not see how that many people could have participated, but if several hundred looked on twice a year, the numbers can add up.

118. The Chinese reads: 大將軍下至六百石，悉遣子就學，每歲輒於鄉射月一饗會之，以此為常。The *Han guan yi* reads, 春三月秋九月，習鄉射禮，禮生皆使太學學生。

119. *Hou Hanshu* 79A.2547.

120. *Hou Hanshu* 44.1500.

121. See *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi* 8.3177n1-3 for the conflation of the Taixue with the Biyong: 太學者，中學明堂之位也，ascribed to Wei Wenhou’s commentary to the *Xiaojing* 魏文侯孝經; also, the conflation of the Mingtang with the Biyong.

122. The only reliable figures say that Zhaodi had determined that each Academician might register 100 disciples for himself, and that at the end of Xuandi’s reign that number was doubled. There is talk under Chengdi of allowing this number to be raised to 3,000 disciples (in honour of Confucius, whom legend said had that many) but that would simply have been rounding up the number of Academicians’ number of disciples (14 x 200). See Lü 1983, 732ff. Lü Simian cautions us against presuming that these were “disciples” in the sense of “students,” when they were more probably clients, most of them.

123. For these reasons, we discount the characterisation by Yu Ying-shih, writing of the “student movements” “under the Han and Song dynasties” as a fundamental distortion of earlier realities for present political purposes. See Yu 2016, vol. 2, 193.

124. See, e.g., the story told of Ma Rong and Zheng Xuan (teacher and student) in *Hou Hanshu* 35.1207. More examples can be found in Nylan 2001.

125. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1201, 1203, 1205.

126. One should recall that Guangwu was descended from Yuandi 元帝 by a lateral line, rather than the main patriline.

127. By a temporary solution, the emperors Chengdi, Aidi 哀帝, and Pingdi 平帝 were to be worshipped, via seasonable sacrifices, in Gaozu’s temple in Chang’an. Guangwu initially worshipped three emperors himself at Luoyang, but some of his advisors, including Zhang Chun, urged “adding” sacrifices to Xuandi and Yuandi (making a total of five), but this “solution” immediately became problematic upon Guangwu’s death, when Xuandi’s tablet had to be moved to Chang’an as well, to make room for Guangwu’s tablet in Luoyang, as there were a limited number of emperors who could be worshipped at the Taimiao.

128. At issue here is how many emperors were to be worshipped as *zong* 宗 (superior lineage heads) at any one time, four, five, or seven. In AD 59 (Yongping 2), Mingdi worshipped Gaozu, Wendi, and Wudi of Western Han (three emperors altogether), together with Guangwu, in the expectation that he after death would join this illustrious company. He reportedly worshipped Guangwu in the Mingtang as coadjutor to the Five Lords, though the identity of those five was disputed. Two months later, in the Biyong, the Imperial Archery Ritual was held. The Biyong is invariably linked to the archery contest, suggesting that it must refer to the ritual space in the vicinity of the Mingtang. For the disputes over the identity of the Five Lords, one may consult Li 2006, 107. Li Ling believes that these Five Lords mentioned represent the royal/imperial of the Qin, which identification may hold for some texts but not necessarily for all. In the *Hou*

Hanshu 1B.70, 25.883, etc., the Five Lords appear to be five of the most prominent of Western and Eastern Han emperors surnamed “Liu.” See Table 5 in Xue 2015.

129. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1199.

130. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1201 reveals the problem: that the crowds of conferees at the White Tiger conference simply wanted to use their erudition to “constrain him” (帝知群僚拘攣), and a careful reading of the *Bohu tong* supports that view. In particular, many *Bohu tong* passages address the relation of the *Tianzi* 天子 (Son of Heaven) to the *zhuhou* 諸侯 (with many court officials themselves nobles or clients of nobles), and most of those passages support the powers of the *zhuhou* and the view of the emperor as *primus inter pares*. See Tanaka 1990, esp.102ff. Zhangdi also clearly knew that court conferences involving too many people were unlikely to arrive at a consensus that could support definitive reforms. Note 1) *Qun* 群 seems to emphasise their number and 2) this sentiment aligns with Zhangdi’s later statement that “a house built beside the road will not be finished within three years” (作舍道邊, 三年不成). “Too many cooks spoil the broth,” by the English idiom.

131. Here, many examples could be adduced.

132. *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi* 24.3555. We speculated above that Zhangdi thought it best to have his calendrical reform in place before pressing the question of the rites tied to the calendar. But recall that Cao Bao’s *New Rituals* were used at least once for Zhangdi’s successor, Hedi.

133. Cao Bao, for example, says, “The Five Lords did not continue each other’s music, nor did the Three Kings inherit each other’s rites” (五帝不相沿樂, 三王不相襲禮). Here Cao Bao follows the language of his father, nearly word for word.

134. On the one hand, Zhangdi did not wish to bury his father with the full imperial burial rites. On the other, he agreed (we do not know how reluctantly) to have his father called “Xianzong” 顯宗, which flattering title virtually guaranteed that his father would be worshipped alongside Guangwu as a truly great emperor, despite Mingdi’s murderous tendencies. Zhangdi himself would be honoured as “Suzong” 肅宗 by his son and heir Hedi, who was duly honoured after his death as Muzong 穆宗 (a pattern that suggests that the Eastern Han courts were tired of adjudicating who were good emperors). See Wang 2007, 110n44, citing Wang Fuzhi’s 王夫之 *Du Tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論 7.193. In later times, Zhangdi would be excoriated as “unfilial” by the likes of Wang Fuzhi, on the grounds that he introduced many ritual changes very soon after his father’s death. Many have followed Wang, ignoring the question whether the changes were beneficial, after the bloody reign of Mingdi. Wang Fuzhi’s exact words are these: 章帝初立, 鮑昱、陳寵急矯先君之過, 第五倫起而持之, 視明帝若胡亥之慘, 而已為漢高, 章帝聽而速改, 將不得復為人子矣... 為人子者, 奈何其殉之. Ban Gu registers a curious comment (and possibly an oblique criticism) about burial rites in his Appraisal of Yang Wangsun 楊王孫 in *Hanshu* 67.2928.

135. The stele mentions an Academician’s Libationer and Cavalry Commander, Liu Xi 劉熹 from Jinan, along with three other officials, one a Master of Ceremonials (or *taichang*), one a minor noble (*tinghou* 亭侯) of Le’an 樂安, and one an Academician from the capital; these four men were commissioned to “examine and harmonise the liturgies.”

136. Somewhat contrary to our expectations, the feast was held in winter and the archery contest in spring.

137. Hence the writing of many commemorative pieces to honour the occasion. One, ascribed to Fu Yi 傅毅, can be found in Yan Kejun, *Hou Han wen*, *juan* 43, titled “Luoyang du fu” 洛都賦 (*Fu* on capital at Luo).

138. The ritual experts included the Master of Ceremonials, Zhuge Xu 諸葛緒 from Langya 琅琊; the Academician Libationer Cavalry Commander, Liu Xi 劉熹 from Jinan; and the Academician Duan Pu 段熲 from Jingzhao 京兆 (the capital).

139. One egregious example of this tendency (exhibited in an otherwise fascinating book) is Yang 2012. The phrase “standardised and sacralised” comes from Yang 2000, 46. The same assumption underlies Cao 2005, 25–29. Of the post-Mao scholarship, only Mao 1962 acknowledges disputes over many aspects of the record. Lü 1983, 495 chides Zheng Xuan for constructing a ritual system that never was.

140. For Xu Fang’s 徐防 memorial of 102 (under Hedi), see *Hou Hanshu* 44.1500.

141. See Koziol 2002, esp. p. 386. As Koziol argues, we need to see rituals as a coherent, continuous part of a battery of cultural practices specific to the time and place, rather than as social facts in isolation. Nathan Sivin has made the same point when he talks of the “cultural manifold” in his writings.

142. Academicians did not teach the Five Classics themselves, but instead were appointed on the basis of their expertise in one or another of the “sayings” attached to a Classic, as with the Ouyang or Xiahou *shuo* for the *Documents*.

143. Michael Loewe, like Michael Nylan, believes that the dynasty was on a downward trajectory by Hedi’s reign (personal communication, April 2018). By AD 140, the chaos was evident to all men who were well-informed, many of whom then became social critics.

144. It is possible that it was destroyed in mid-Eastern Han by Zhangdi’s successors and Cao Bao’s opponents. Despite stiff opposition, the *Suishu* bibliographic treatise unaccountably treats Cao Bao’s *Xinli* as putting in place ritual rules for Eastern Han (是後相承，世有制作), even as it concedes that the *Xinli* did not resolve ritual controversies. See *Suishu* 33.972. Clearly, by early Tang the *Xinli* was no longer extant. *Jinshu* 21.662 says that Han Shundi used part of the *Xinli* for the capping ceremonies along with another ritual text.

145. As Diwu Lun was a noble of noble descent (from the Tian 田 clan of Qi), who was admired in his own lifetime and afterwards. He served mainly outside the capital of Luoyang, as Governor in Zuopingyi 左馮翊 [near Chang’an], in Shu, and in Kuaiji, prior to his last appointment in the capital, in AD 75, serving as *da situ*, soon after Zhangdi came to the throne. Diwu Lun promptly presented a memorial objecting to the high offices held by the Ma family of the Dowager, and another urging that officials act less harshly. Though it had been appropriate for Guangwu to establish a firm regime after the civil war which followed Wang Mang’s rule, it was time for a more generous policy. Continuing that line, Diwu Lun supported Yang Zhong’s proposal to end the exile of convicts from the southeastern region of the empire at the northern frontier, and argued against further expeditions against the Xiongnu. He retired in AD 86, in old age. We call him a ritual master because he successfully propagated the capital ritual norms in the south, where wizards and diviners had before been in charge of local cults. For Jia Kui, too little survives, aside from brief citations of his views in commentaries to the Classics and official histories. See Lin Zhiqi 林之奇, *Shangshu quanjie* 尚書全解, *juan* 2, for Jia Kui’s ideas on the *liuzong* 六宗. See our “ritual masters” section.

146. Translation tentative for *ping zou* 平奏, based on the *Hanshu* 23.1104 parallel.

147. Translation tentative, but presuming something like the concluding Appraisal of Zheng Xuan’s biography: 異端紛紜，互相詭激 (different theories became muddled, with each giving rise to ever more contradictions). See *Hou Hanshu* 25.1213, glossed as “Learned men each maintained their own views, without being able to clarify matters or understand each other” (學者各守所見，不疏通也.)

148. *Liangshu* 25.379–80. *Nanshi* repeats this account almost *verbatim*. Note that here the *zhangju* are said to represent the last “wall” against the collapse of classical learning, whereas the Han texts occasionally register protests against the *zhangju* as the uninspired and uninspiring products of the court-sponsored learning. See Yang 2007, 192. We have few *zhangju* from the period, but they do not, at this remove, look much different from the writings of those who went on record opposing them.

149. The Siku editors dispute this ascription, on fairly good textual grounds.

150. In *Hou Hanshu* 32.112, we are told that Fan Shu was appointed colonel and then commissioned to set the suburban sacrifices and other rituals, and to use the apocrypha to correct the different interpretations of the Five Classics” (以讖記正五經異說). We considered including Fan Shu among our ritual masters, but his main activity was during the reign of Zhangdi’s predecessor, Mingdi. Fan Shu, who was said, with the help of the ministers and other high-ranking officials, to “fix in a hodgepodge way” (*za ding* 雜定) the court rituals, at the start of Mingdi’s reign, in AD 58. Under Zhangdi, he was appointed Colonel of the Long Waters (*Changshui xiaowei* 長水校尉) (*Hou Hanshu* 3.138) and Colonel of Recovered Lands (*Futu* 復土 *xiaowei*) in AD 59. For his biography, see *Hou Hanshu* 32.1122–1125. Huan was commissioned to edit a commentary on disparate interpretations of the Five Classics (*Wujia yaoshuo zhangju* 五家要說章句) later in Mingdi’s reign, apparently in AD 72. De Crespigny 2017, 75, is certain that this *wujia* 五家 should be changed to *wuxing* 五行 (Five Phases, or Five Elements in his writing). We disagree, thinking that the text refers to Five Experts and hence Five Traditions of classical learning. At this time, for example, there were five, not three traditions for the *Annals* classic.
151. This translation is very tentative, but it seems to get at the reason why cult is to be offered.
152. See Nylan 1996. Yang 2012 takes up the issue of “not speaking for three years” after a ruler’s death, but unfortunately, he fails to consult the official histories for Han, as his focus is on Shang-Yin customs.
153. The *Shiji jijie* for 1.24 offers good notes, as does *Shangshu Zhengzhu*, *juan* 1.7; and *Wujing yiyi shuzheng* 22–24, not to mention *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi* 3157n2.
154. See *Hanshu* 25A.1191, acknowledging the many sayings; *ibid.* 25B.1256, 1267–70.
155. See *Hou Hanshu* 38 (*zhi* 8).3184.
156. Gu, Liu 2005, vol. 1, 124.
157. See Tian 2015, 262–93.
158. *Dongguan Hanji*, *juan* 5.
159. *Hou Hanshu* 5.238n3 implies that the Eastern Han courts welcomed the notion of six earthly *zong* who would be counterparts for the Six Origins. The Chinese reads: 六宗謂孝文日太宗, 孝武日代宗, 孝宣日中宗, 孝元日高宗, 孝明日顯宗, 孝章日肅宗.
160. *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi* 7.3161.
161. See, for example, *Yi Zhoushu*, “Xiao kai jie” (*pian* 23); in *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu*, vol. 1, 227.
162. See, for example, Yang 2012, one chapter of which is devoted to the Five Sacrifices (pp. 379–401), which contains references to Chen Wei and other secondary sources. For Zhang Hequan, see Zhang 2011.
163. See *Zuozhuan*, Lord Zhao, Year 29; cf. *Han jiu yi* 漢舊儀 4.4.22 (CHANT).
164. Zhang Taiyan’s whole theory about the Five Sacrifices was premised on his belief that these sacrifices were offered to the lowly gods of earth.
165. See Yang 2012, 400–401.
166. *Bohu tong*, section 2.81, reveals the nature of these debates.
167. One chapter in the late Western Han compilation, the *Liji* (“Zengzi wen”), explicitly says the emperor makes these sacrifices. The *Zhouli*, “Zongbo” 宗伯 section, has the *Tianzi* offering sacrifices to these with a slightly less impressive ritual cap. In a similar vein, the *Hou Hanshu* treatise on sacrifices says that these offerings are made to the gods of earth by an imperial representative, whereas the emperor himself offered cult to the *liu zong*. Some Han texts, including the *Yantie lun* (*juan* 6, *pian* 29 “San bu zu”) have high-ranking counsellors offering these sacrifices. Zheng Xuan believed that the emperor alone offered Seven Sacrifices, but as this is part of his theorising about the differences between Shang and Zhou ritual practices, his opinion is highly unreliable regarding this topic. It is more likely that Shusun Tong wanted Han Gaozu to offer seven, rather than five, to elevate his position at court. Zhang Taiyan (aka Zhang Binglin, 1869–1936) believed that the Five Sacrifices went back to Anyang, based on a few OBI.
168. These ritual controversies were detailed in Loewe 1974.

169. In this connection, one might note the assertion found in *Shangshu dazhuan*, *juan 6* (“Lüe shuo, xia”) that the term “capital” is reserved for the city that houses an ancestral temple with the tablet of the dynastic founder.
170. See *Dong Han huiyao*, *juan 2*, 52–53; *juan 22*, 233.
171. See De Crespigny 2017, 75.
172. See *Dong Han huiyao*, *juan 2*, 50–51.
173. See Wang 2011, 86, 86n51, citing Wang Fuzhi’s *Du tongjian lun* 讀通鑑論, *juan 7*, 192–194.
174. The difficulty of making those Five Classics cohere underlay Zhu Xi’s decision to elevate the Four Books.
175. See, e.g., *Shiji* 12.473: 儒采封禪尚書、周官、王制之望祀射牛; also Yang 2007, 197, speaking of Zheng Xuan’s method of argumentation.
176. Thanks to Lü 1983, Nylan has found one reference to Academicians’ posts in the provinces, at 100 *shi*: “The commanderies and kingdoms set up officials ranked at 100 *shi*, for the Five Classics” 郡國置五經百石卒史。成帝末，或言孔子布衣養徒三千人 (*Hanshu* 88.3596).
177. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1199, said by the *taichang* (Minister of Ceremonies) Zhang Fen, whose family had served in that post for generations.
178. A preliminary check seems to have this mean something like “rules governing the conduct of the members of the imperial family,” as we learn, for example, that one prince, Liu Mu 劉睦, refused to entertain prospective clients, since the rules governing the imperial clan grew stricter during his lifetime. See *Hou Hanshu* 14.556. The phrase *guoxian* reoccurs in the biographies of Cao Bao and Cai Lun, both of whom were asked by the reigning court to supervise ritual reforms.
179. The *Hanshu* treatise on rites and music ends by saying that, despite concerted efforts by a number of ritual masters beginning with Shusun Tong, Jia Yi, and Dong Zhongshu, the Han imperial rites were always incomplete and overly indebted to corrupt models; see *Hanshu* 22.1075.
180. For example, see Du You 杜祐, *Tongdian* 通典, *juan 80* (“Li dian, yan ge” 禮典, 沿革).
181. Here one recalls the *Changes*, where the only constant is said to be change.
182. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1205: 斯固世主所當損益者也。
183. *Hou Hanshu* 35.1203, 1213. There may be a difference between the two verbs *shou* 授 and *chuan* 傳 (generally treated as interchangeable synonyms, meaning “to confer teachings on others”). Certainly, in some instances, *shou* seems to be reserved for teaching others who do not belong to one’s own household or clan, going outside the *jia ye* 家業 (the “family enterprise”), whereas *chuan* meant “to transmit” to close kin. These boundaries were doubtless blurry, insofar as disciples and clients could register with their teachers and masters, as dependents of the household.
184. Recall that Mingdi wanted to get rid of the Taixue once the Biyong was built, on the grounds that the Taixue was superfluous.
185. See, e.g., Wang Guowei 王國維, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林, *ce* 冊 2, 453–56, on the importance of the ancestral model and the rules for mourning (*zongfa ji sangfu zhi zhi* 宗法及喪服之制).
186. Sewell 2005, 152–174.
187. We believe that strict parameters often impede policy discussions.
188. Bercow, quoted in *The New York Times*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/19/world/europe/brexit-speaker-john-bercow.html> [consulted in spring, 2020].

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