



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name:</i> Meicheng Ji	
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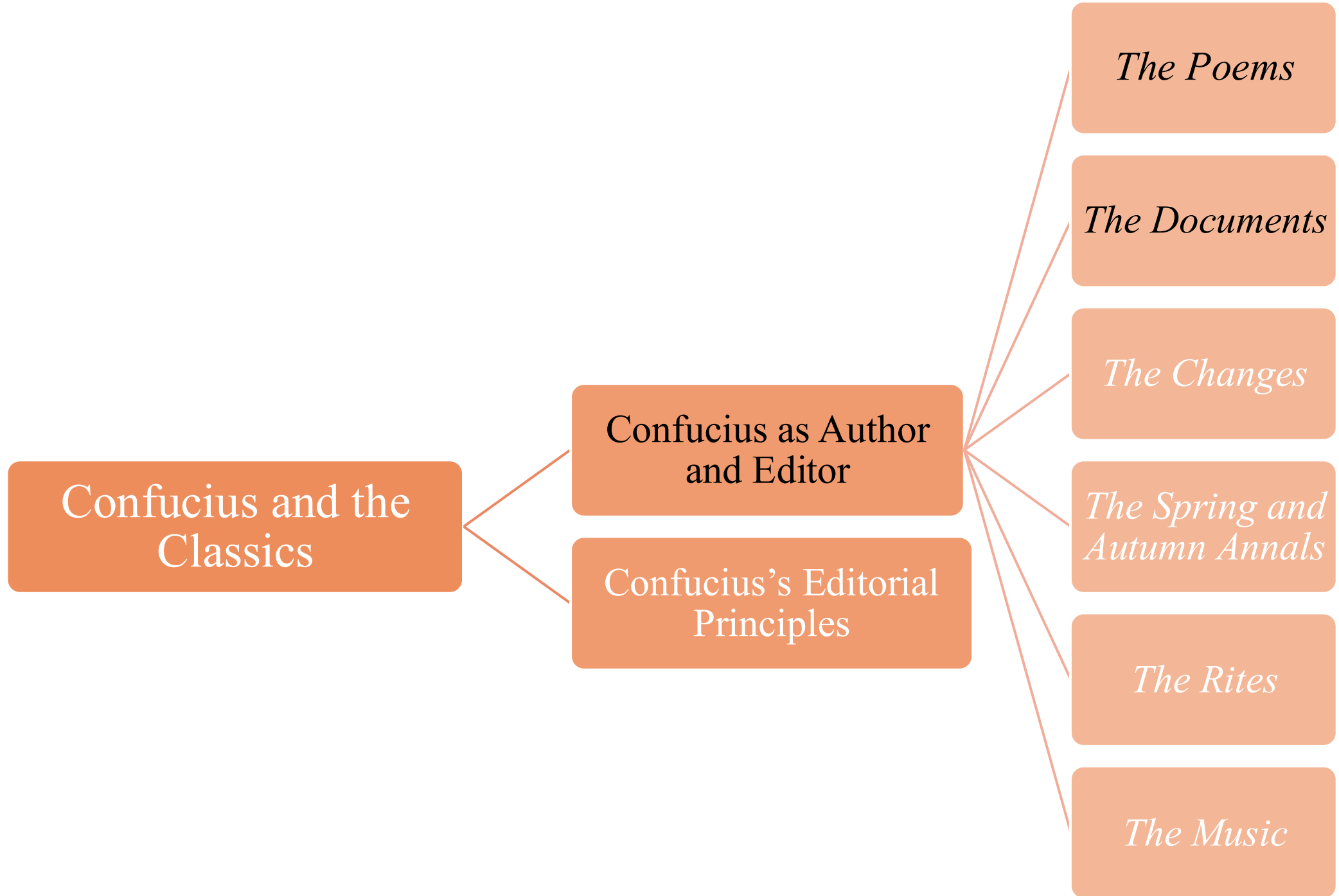
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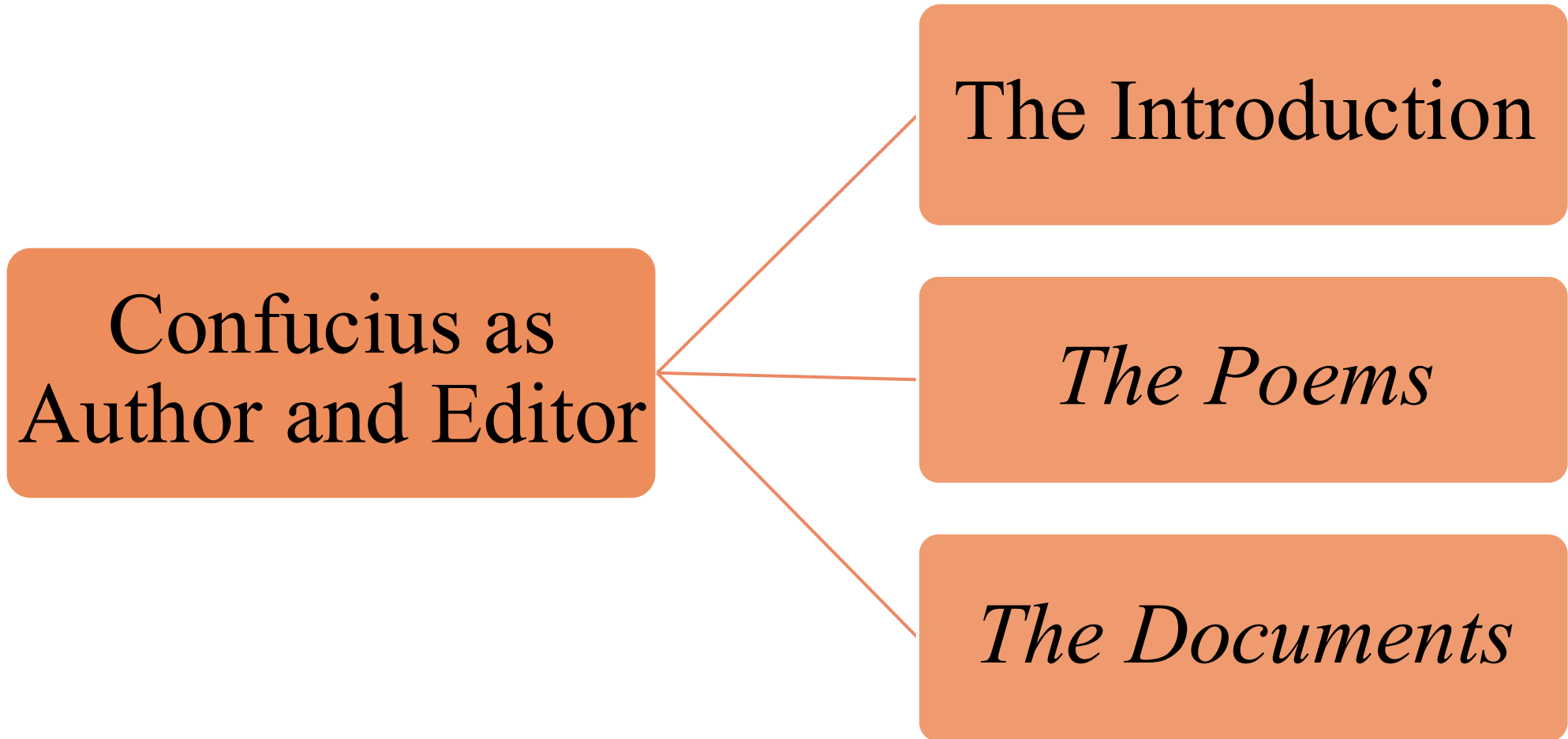
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The Introduction

The background

Confucius

Qufu

Cultural heritage

archives/manuscripts

Shiji

Introduction

The first trip

Laozi

Original reason

The production of the Six Classics

Confucius admitted that he still had not gained enlightenment even though he had been “working on ” the Six Classics for a long time; **he enumerated each of these texts by name, all subsumed under the rubric of the Six Classics. --Zhuangzi**

Issue: Did Confucius actually edit the *Poems*?

Yes

- **Sima Qian (Han):** eliminating duplications and selecting those suitable for use in the rites and their performances.
- **Cheng Boyu (Tang):** paraphrased the phraseology of Sima Qian.
- **Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修:** Credits Confucius with an extremely active role as editor.

Several twentieth-century authorities concede the reality of Confucius's editorial work in general.

textual mastery

open-minded

suspicious

- **Zhang Shunhui** 張舜徽
- **Qian Mu** 錢穆
- **Zhou Yutong** 周予同

They agree with the consensus of Confucius as editor

But they are so objective:

- **Notes the difficulty**
- **Open question**

Jiang Boqian

He is more skeptical of Confucius's role of editor of all the classics, **but he does concede this function in the case of the *Poems* and *Music*.**

“The Master said: ‘After I returned from *Wei*, the *Music* was corrected, and the “Elegentiae” and “Eulogia” **gained their proper places**’.”

「子曰：吾自衛反魯，然後樂正，《雅》、《頌》各得其所。」



Traditional thought:

Has been used as proof to support the view of Confucius as textual editor.

Alternate reading:

“The Master said: ‘After I returned from *Wei*, the *Music* was corrected, and the “Elegentiae” and “Eulogia” **gained their proper places**’.”

「子曰：吾自衛反魯，然後樂正，《雅》、《頌》各得其所。」

- Jiang Fan 江藩(1761-1831): as an **arranger** of music rather than as an editor of texts
- He Dingsheng 何定生: as an **interpreter** rather than editor

- **James Legge: Confucius merely adopted an existing compilation of some three hundred poems and did no textual intervention at all.**

In conclusion

It is impossible to detect the level of editorial attention paid by Confucius to the textual remains of the early Zhou period.

But we can notice that most of the authorities concede that Confucius indeed plays a role in editing the Poems.

Issue: Did Confucius actually edit the *Documents*?

Yes

- **Zheng Xuan: *Shulun* 書論**

He extracted (*shan* 刪) 100 chapters to comprise the *Documents* and 18 chapters to comprise the *Zhonghou* 中候.

- **The bibliographical monograph in the *Suishu* 隋書·經籍志**

He extracted the good ones.

He compiled one hundred fascicles, editing them and providing prefaces.

Issue: Did Confucius actually edit the *Documents*?

Yes

- The bibliographical monograph in *Hanshu* 漢書·藝文志

Confucius prefaced (*xu* 序) the *Documents* after compiling (*zuan* 纂) them.

Issue: Did Confucius actually edit the *Documents*?

No

- **Sima Qian: *Shiji* 史記**

Confucius “ordered and arranged the events ” 編次其事 of the *Documents*.

- **Speculation of the apocryphal *Shangshu wei xuanji qian* 尚書緯璇璣鈴**

- ***Analects* does not mention, nor does Mencius notice this.**

Issue: Did Confucius actually edit the *Documents*?

No

- In the *Analects* Confucius only directly cited the *Documents* at two points.

Yishu 逸書

Yizhoushu 逸周書

And nowhere in the *Analects* does Confucius enjoin his disciples to study the *Documents*.

- The Kong family Master's Anthology (*Kong Congzi* 孔叢子)

Issue: Did Confucius actually edit the *Documents*?

No

Morden expert

- **Cheng Yuanmin 程元敏**

Confucius had nothing to do with the received Modern Text version in circulation today.

This version descended by the mouth and hands of Fu Sheng, he dictated twenty-eight chapters of the text from memory.

The author doesn't elaborate much his own view

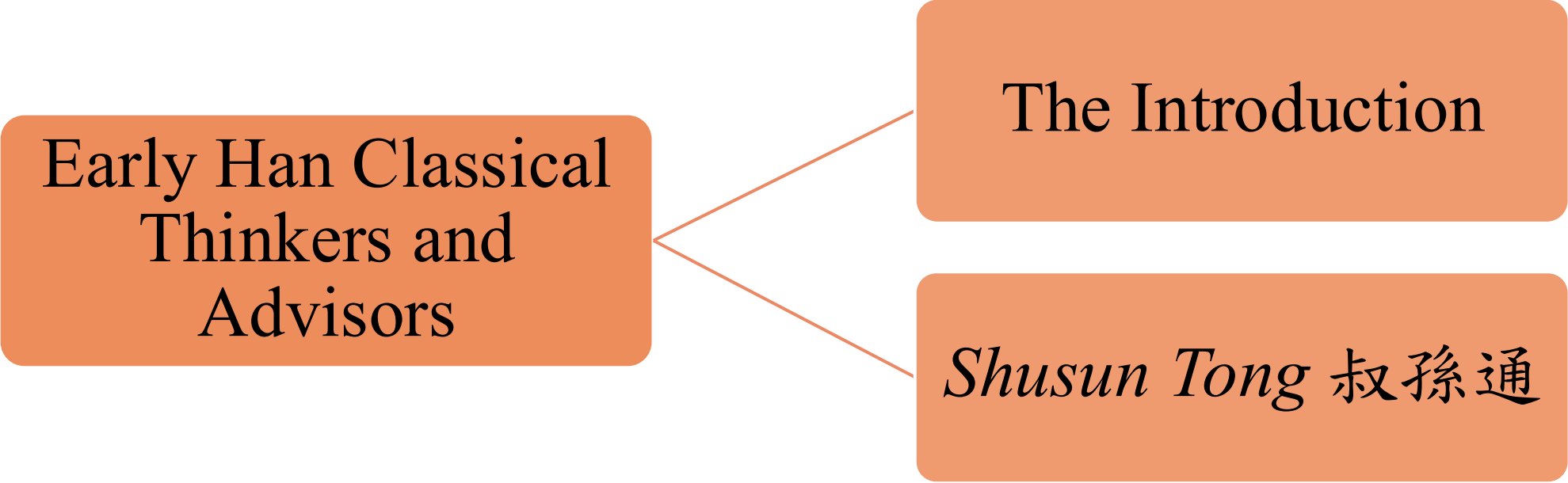
Integrate and compare various documents and find different perspectives

Open question

Also has been argued nowadays

Presentation 2

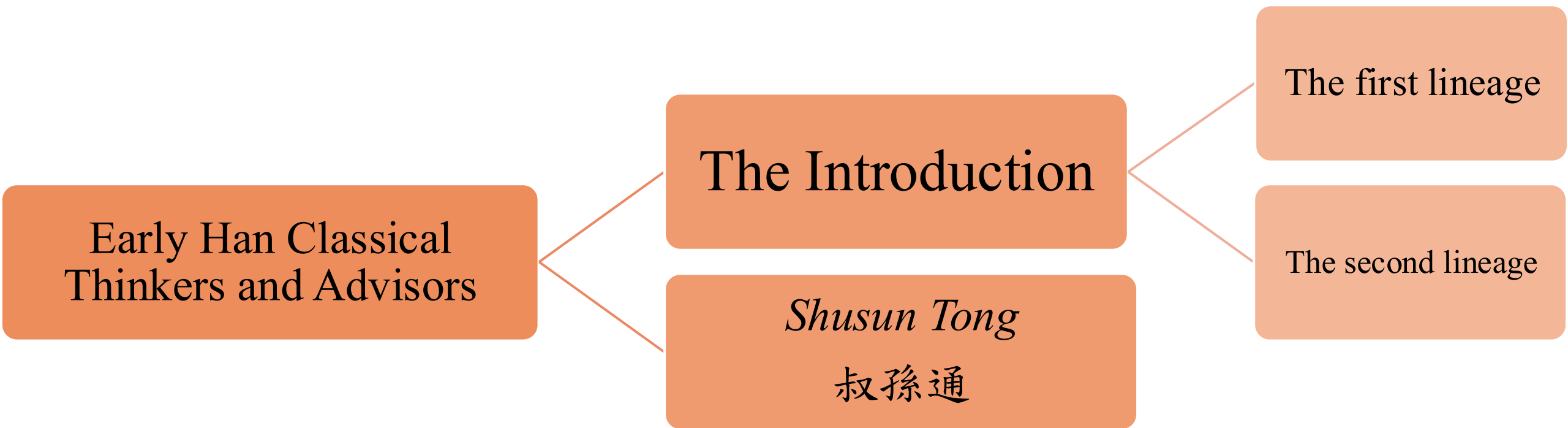
Early Han Classical
Thinkers and
Advisors



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graph LR; A[Early Han Classical Thinkers and Advisors] --- B[The Introduction]; A --- C["Shusun Tong 叔孫通"]
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The Introduction

Shusun Tong 叔孫通



Chapter Two

Pre-Canonical Confucians: Early Han Classical Thinkers and Advisors

Ban Gu 班固 (32-92AD):

historian

breadth

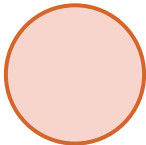
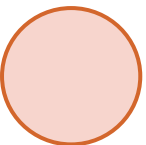
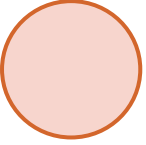
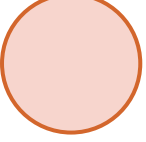
lineage



After Confucius, those gentlemen who composed texts were legion, but really only the several masters **Mencius, Xunzi, Dong Zhongshu, Sima Qian, Liu Xiang, and Yang Xiong** were broadly versed and widely learned, and who **penetrated the ancient and understood the modern**. Their words benefit the ages.

自孔子後，綴文之士眾矣，唯孟軻、孫況，董仲舒、司馬遷、劉向、揚雄。此數公者，皆博物洽聞，通達古今，其言有補於世。

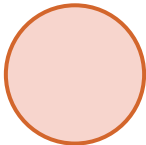
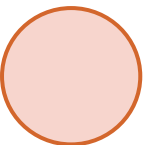
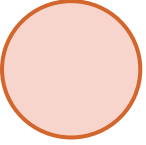
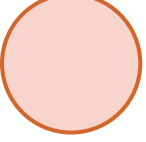
Of the Western Han figures isolated by Ban Gu, each had his strength in one or more major aspects.

	Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104BC)	Chief intellectual architect of the Confucius synthesis
	Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145/135-86BC)	Create the genre of universal history. Provide the format for Ban Gu.
	Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6BC)	Collate the scattered manuscript
	Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53BC-AD13)	work exemplified the universalist trends of the age

The Introduction

The second lineage

Modern scholar Xu Kangsheng suggests an **alternative line** of early Han scholars that elegantly. If inaccurately, **focuses on masters of specific classics.**

	Shusun Tong 叔孫通 (d.ca.188BC)	<i>Rites of Zhou</i> devised the ritual system
	Lu Jia 陸賈 (d.170BC)	<i>Guliang Commentary</i> and <i>Spring and Autumn Annals</i>
	Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-169BC)	<i>Mr. Zuo's Commentary</i> and <i>the Documents</i>
	Han Ying 韓嬰 (ca.200-ca.130BC)	specialized <i>in the Poems</i> and had mastered <i>the Changes</i>

Two reasons

It is this symmetrical, but not necessarily philologically.

The framework of the author treatment of classical scholarship during the early Western Han **will according to the Xu Kangsheng's lineage.**

Chapter Two

Pre-Canonical Confucians:

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Shusun Tong 叔孫通

From Rite to Text

adapt to the times
順應時勢

from Rite to Text

Shusun Tong 叔孫通

Shusun Tong (d.ca. 188BC)

Meitorious minister

Formulated administrative policy and standardized procedures in several broad areas

- Ban Gu: Shusun Tong established the rites and etiquette
- Xu Kangsheng: His expertise in law that made him attractive as a counselor at court

adapt to the times

Shusun Tong was a Confucius scholar who can adapt to the times.

1. He made the effort to flatter the King of Qin to preserve himself.

A rebellion led by Chen Sheng 陳勝 (d. 208BC) broke out in 209BC. Shusun countered the consensus and downplayed the rebellion, characterizing it as **a mere act of brigandage**, his advice was to leave it in the hands of the **local commandant**.

He was rewarded and the Second Generation of Qin 秦二世(r. 230-207BC) with silk, clothing and assignment as erudite awaiting appointment.

adapt to the times

Shusun Tong was a Confucius scholar who can adapt to the times.

2. He can know the time whether was ripe to promote Confucius values during the Han dynasty.

Joined Xiang Yu 項羽
(232-202BC)

Submitted to Liu Bang 劉邦, the future
Eminent Ancestor 高祖 (r. 202-195BC)

The emperor desired simplicity and abolished the more severe of the Qin regulations, so Shusun Tong **did not try to advance any of his Confucius followers in office**. He knew the time was not ripe to promote Confucius values.

adapt to the times

Shusun Tong was a Confucius scholar who can adapt to the times.

2. He can know the time whether was ripe to promote Confucius values during the Han dynasty.

Shusun **changed to Chu habiliments** and kept his peace in order to avoid distasting of the emperor. But when the need arose to curb the casual and crude behavior, **Shusun perceived his opening** and offered to devise courtly rites to govern deportment and preserve the royal dignity

adapt to the times

Shusun Tong was a Confucius scholar who can adapt to the times.

3. He dismissed those masters who insisted that the ancient rituals should not be modified.

“You are truly vulgar Confucius, you don’t realize that times change.”

In 196BC, the first formal ceremony was held in the Chang Palace.

Shusun Tong presented a memorial that asked that his disciples be appointed to official.

Because Shusun Tong can adapt the times, so he can create a ritual system for the new dynasty.

Sima Qian praised him as the “Founding Progenitor of the House of Han” 漢家儒宗

from Rite to Text

Shusun Tong's own merit as a specialist in the **rites, but there is no evidence that he was a classical scholar in the terms of studying and explicating **ritual texts**.**

Sima Qian does not mention this textual basis of his teaching program. Instead, he portrays **early Confucians as experts in ritual performance**, including music, **not as involved in the study of ritual texts**.

(The author listed out two main evidence to proof that Shusun Tong played a role in textual research.)

from Rite to Text

Grove of Confucian Scholars 儒林外傳:

- During the waning years of the Qin, it burned the Poems and Documents, and buried the scholars of techniques. From this time forth, the Six Arts were defective.

及至秦之季氏，焚詩書，阬術士，六藝從此缺焉。

They were unable to study due to their defective

A strong motivation for later specialists to assume the roles of **textual critics** to reconstitute such works.

from Rite to Text

Shiji 史記:

- Formerly the Han rose up, and later on the various Confucians were finally able to **restore their classical arts**, and perform the district archery and drinking rites.

故漢興，然後諸儒始得修其經藝，講習大射鄉飲之禮。

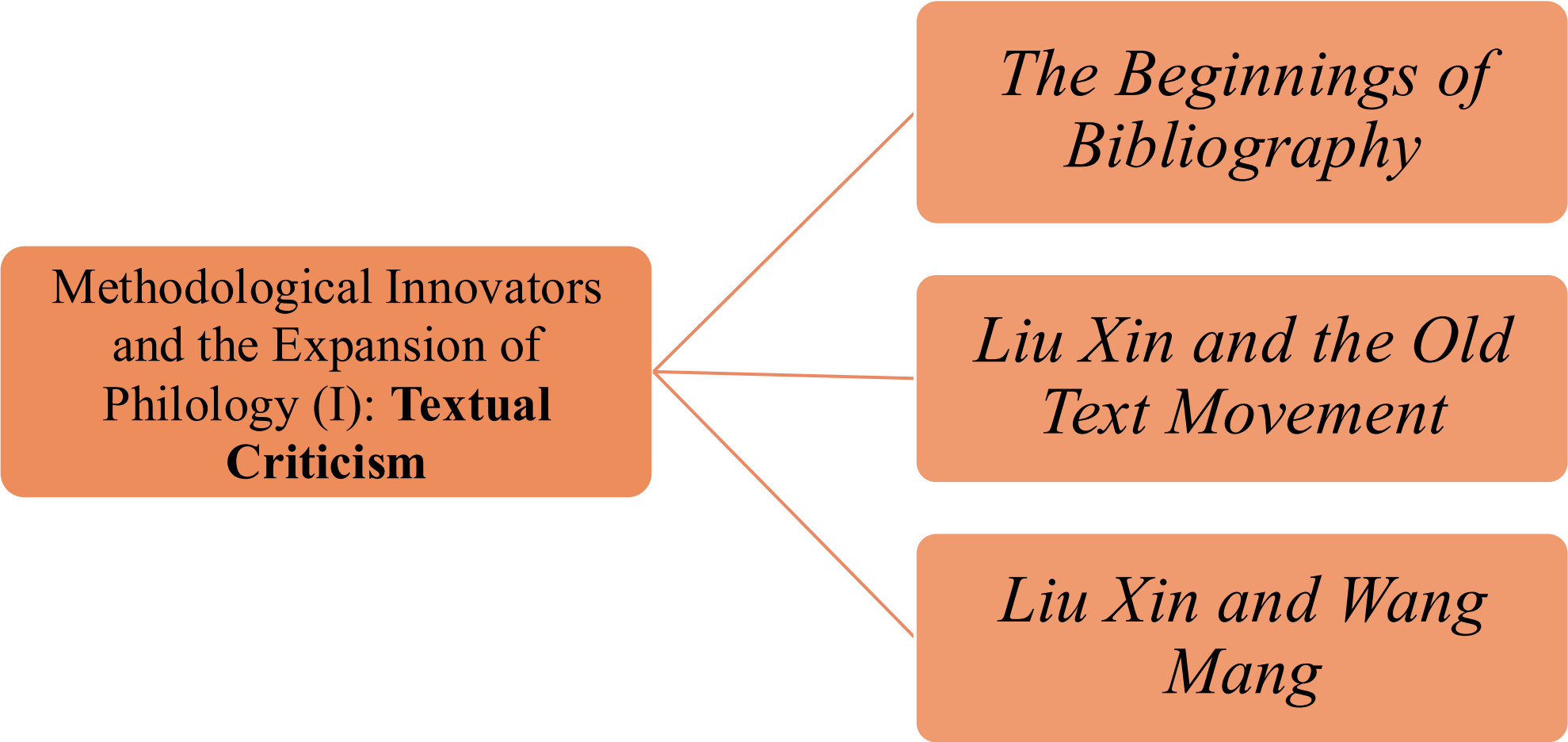
The phrase “**restore their classical arts**” could indicate either more widespread usage of ritual, the **recovery and preparatory study of ritual texts**, or both.

Still, a general term denoting study (*xue* 學) was used to conclude the ritual career of Shusun Tong.

Shusun Tong is indeed served more as [political advisor](#)
He was steeped in traditional cultural values and
textual traditions.

Presentation 3

Methodological Innovators
and the Expansion of
Philology (I): **Textual
Criticism**



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graph LR; A[Methodological Innovators and the Expansion of Philology (I): Textual Criticism] --- B[The Beginnings of Bibliography]; A --- C[Liu Xin and the Old Text Movement]; A --- D[Liu Xin and Wang Mang]
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*The Beginnings of
Bibliography*

*Liu Xin and the Old
Text Movement*

*Liu Xin and Wang
Mang*

*The Beginnings of
Bibliography*

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graph LR; A["The Beginnings of Bibliography"] --> B["The origins of Western bibliography"]; A --> C["The development and evolution of ancient Chinese bibliography"]; C --> D["Liu Xiang 劉向"]; C --> E["Liu Xin 劉歆"]; C --> F["Xun Xu 荀勗"]; C --> G["Fan Xun 樊遜"]; C --> H["Ban Gu 班固"];
```

The origins of **Western**
bibliography

The development and
evolution of ancient
Chinese bibliography

Liu Xiang
劉向

Liu Xin
劉歆

Xun Xu
荀勗

Fan Xun
樊遜

Ban Gu
班固

The origins of **Western** bibliography

- **Zenodotus** (ca. 325–269BC), was the first librarian at Alexandria, who pioneered the first procedures and technical terminology for collating and emending texts.
- **Callimachus** (310/305–240 BC), was his younger contemporary, who compiled the first annotated library catalog.
- **An unknown author**, the rival library at Pergamum also produced its own Pinakes (Lists) under an unknown author.

The prerequisite for these scholarly enterprises, in both the East and West, was the broad collection of written manuscripts stored in a central location.

The development and evolution of ancient **Chinese** bibliography

- **Liu Xiang** *Separately Compiled Registers* 《別錄》 (*Qilue Bielu* 七略別錄)

Constitutes the **first formalized library catalog** in China.

Technically, it is described as the **first comprehensive bibliography**.

- **Liu Xin** *Seven Epitome* 《七略》

Termed the **first “categorized and comprehensive bibliography”**

More strictly organized and ordered.

The development and evolution of ancient **Chinese** bibliography

Zhou Shaochuan evaluates the significance of these pioneering bibliographies as follows.

- ① Determined the set of procedures
- ② Determined the format of bibliographies
- ③ The experience gained by these sets of procedures was absorbed and utilized by later bibliographers
- ④ **Later bibliographers** adopted the scholastic viewpoints and conclusions of Liu Xiang and Liu Xin

Two examples from famous bibliographers who followed in their footsteps are presented next

The development and evolution of ancient **Chinese** bibliograpy

- **Xun Xu** *New Catalogue of the Classics from the Central Archives* 《中經新簿》

It was for this massive project, in some 29,945 scrolls, that Xun devised his famous and definitive **four-part classification system** of **classics, histories, masters, and belles lettres**.

According to the model of *the Separately Compiled Registers* of Liu Xiang

- **Fan Xun** *To catalog and emend the imperial holdings*

Recommended that the precedent of Liu Xiang and the **same procedures pioneered by Liu Xiang be followed**.

- **Ban Gu** To Compiled his own bibliographical monograph

on the basis of Liu Xin's *Seven Epitomes* by “redacting down to the essential in order to supply information on written works” 刪其要，以備篇籍。

the works of father and son have come down to us.

Liu Xin and the Old Text Movement

There was no clear demarcation between Old Text and New Text camps.

Argumentation:

1. The origin and rise of Old Text School

2. Distinguishing between Lu and Qi schools within the New Text camp

3. Blend of Lu and Qi learning

4. Blend of Old Text and New Text works

1. The origin and rise of Old Text School

- When Xin began to collate the books in the central archives, he saw the Old Text *Mr. Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* and developed a great liking for it.
- Wang Mang's adoption of the *Offices of Zhou* under its renamed title *Rites of Zhou*

An Old Text school can be said to have appeared.

1. The origin and rise of Old Text School

- He cited the text of this commentary to explain the classic. 引傳文解經
- Liu Xin sent a letter to the erudites because he desired to gain official status for certain texts.

New Text classics were not complete works

New Text classics were unreliable

Old Text classics are the best versions

Old text classics agree with the oral versions

The rise of Old Text School Movement of Old Text classical scholarship 古文經學運動

2. Distinguishing between Lu and Qi schools within the New Text camp

- **Lu school**

Poems, Spring and Autumn Annals (Guliang), Changes, Rites

Drawing moral and ethical lessons

Intuitive apprehension

- **Qi school**

Poems, Spring and Autumn Annals (Gongyang), Changes, Documents

Heaven and Man, *Yin Yang*, Five Phases

Empiricism with logic

3. Blend of Lu and Qi learning

1. By the mid-Western Han period, **some scholars had blended Lu and Qi learning**, mixed with what was called the ritual school of Mr. Hou 后氏 (Hou Cang 后仓), all making selective use of the Old Texts versions

- **Dai De 戴德** *Greater Dai's Records of Ritualists*
- **Dai Sheng 戴圣** *Records of Ritualists*

Collected their anthologies based on the macaronic mixture of Old Text ritual-text remains.

- **Kuang Heng 匡衡** **Guiding force behind the religious reforms**
Mr. Zuo's Commentary

3. Blend of Lu and Qi learning

2. Another manifestation of this blend of Lu and Qi learning, with Mr. Hou's ritual school plus Old Text textual admixture was:

- **Xu Shen 許慎** *Differing Interpretations of the Five Classics* 五經異義

Remaining fragments indicate that this work incorporated citations from *Gongyang's Commentary*, *Guliang's Commentary*, *Mr. Zuo's Commentary*, *Records of Ritualists of Greater Dai*, *Rites of Zhou*, and Ouyang and Xiahou on the Esteemed Documents.

4. Blend of Old Text and New Text works

- **Zheng Xuan 鄭玄** Comprehensive Erudition (tongxue 通學)

Liu Xin and the Old Text Movement

- Wang Baoxuan makes the distinction between Old Text themselves and the later development movement of Old Text classical scholarship

Threatened the monopoly of New Text Classics over the official curriculum

- Michael Nylan's: classicists of both camps made free use of each other's texts



There was no clear demarcation between Old Text and New Text camps.

The symbiotic relationship between Liu Xin and Wang Mang

- **Wang Mang 王莽**

Was oriented toward the rites in his initial studies of the classics.

His allegiance to Old Text values was apparently inspired by practical, non-scholarly concerns.

Founded a short-lived dynasty called the New 新 dynasty.

- **Liu Xin 劉歆**

Wang's reliable supporter and advisor in ritual matters in his rise to power had been Liu Xin.

Helped manufacture public support with his propaganda work.

The symbiotic relationship between Liu Xin and Wang Mang

Michael Loewe:

- Both men had been out of favor
- Both supported the ideas of the Reformists (the one by reason of sincere intellectual conviction, the other perhaps because he could exploit those ideas to gain political support)

Liu Xin: He could hope that a new dispensation, Wang Mang can help him to introduce certain books such as *Zuozhuan* into the canon.

Wang Mang: He could hope that the new books and written authority which Liu Xin sponsored would rally to his cause the solid support.

The symbiotic relationship between Liu Xin and Wang Mang

Xu Xingwu:

- These reforms were powerful inducement to Liu.
- Alignment with the powers that be fulfilled Liu's private desire for personal stability and enrichment, and participating in the contemporary reform movement conformed to Liu's cultural ideals.

The symbiotic relationship between Liu Xin and Wang Mang

- Liu Xin personally allied himself with Wang Mang through family ties of allegiance when his daughter married one of Wang Mang's sons.
- When Wang Mang officially assumed the throne in his own name, he appointed Xin the Master of the State.

A change in the relationship

- **Wang Mang's interest in the Offices of Zhou**

Liu Xin's intellectual interests bifurcated from those of Mang, since Xin was devoted to a real ritual text, the *Rites*-not *the Offices of Zhou*, a text only loosely connected with ritual.

- **Xin's support may have been lukewarm all alone**

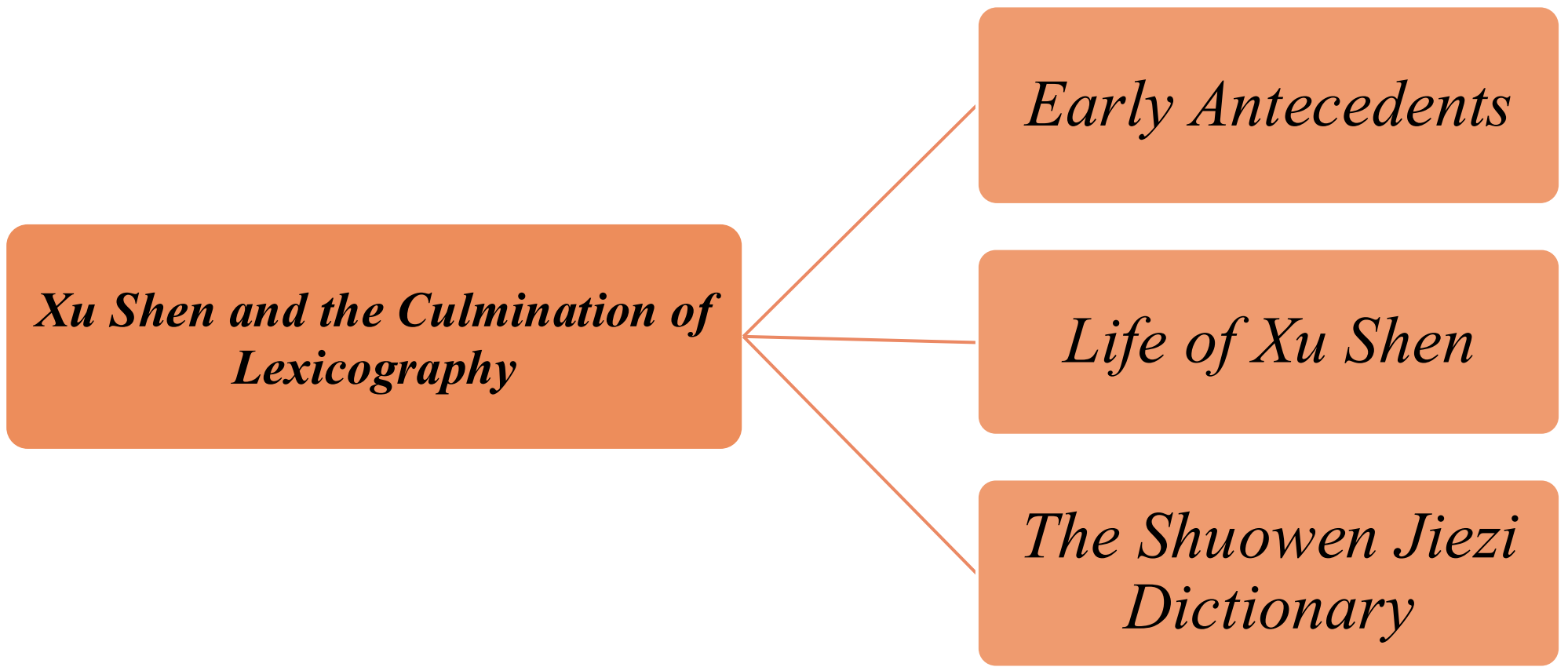
Self-promotion and preservation than of heartfelt intellectual allegiance

- **Xin ultimately turned from Mang**

Favoring a restoration of the house of Liu

Presentation 4

*Xu Shen and the Culmination of
Lexicography*



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graph LR; A["Xu Shen and the Culmination of  
Lexicography"] --- B["Early Antecedents"]; A --- C["Life of Xu Shen"]; A --- D["The Shuowen Jiezi  
Dictionary"];
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Early Antecedents

Life of Xu Shen

*The Shuowen Jiezi
Dictionary*

The early development of lexicography

Western Han

- **Four – character primers** 四字啟蒙讀物: indirectly taught the meanings and the newly simplified orthography of characters in the context of rhymed passages.

The preface of the *Cangjie Fascicle*

Definitions were not utilized in these early primers

- *Close to Elegance* 爾雅: a collection of glosses on the classics and various works

It contains nineteen thematic section, with lists of synonyms defined by the last entry.

The early development of lexicography

Eastern Han

- **Xu Shen's great innovation:** a new format was developed

A step that divorced pedagogy from poetry, changed the focus of learning from recitation to consultation, and inserted characters into a new field for adult education and scholarly research, the field of **lexicography**.

Reformulation of the **Six Forms** (*xiangxing* 象形, *zhishi* 指事, *huiyi* 會意, *xingsheng* 形聲, *zhuanzhu* 轉注, *jiajie* 假借)
dissected the component parts of individual characters into **graphic**(形), **phonetic**(音), **semantic**(義) elements

A new scientific system of radicals (部首)

1. Historical Background and the Life of Xu Shen

2. Classical orientation of Xu Shen

3. The ecumenical, broad-minded scholarly approach of Xu

1. Historical Background and the Life of Xu Shen

Background

- Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58-147) was born during the era that witnessed the nadir of popularity of New Text learning. Emperor lost interest in listening to too many competing voices in council.
- From disdain and ostracism toward scholars to respect and their contributions to classical scholarship.
- Xu Shen's dictionary was not presented to the court until late in his life.

1. Historical Background and the Life of Xu Shen

About Xu Shen 許慎

- When Xu Shen was young, he became broadly learned in the classics and other records. At first Shen regarded the commentaries and explanations of the Five Classics as differing in what was excellent and bad.
- So he compiled *Divergent Meaning of the Five Classics*, furthermore, he composed *Explaining the Simple Graphs and Analyzing the Compound Characters*.
- He was known to his contemporaries as a **classicist, not a lexicographer**.

2. Classical orientation of Xu Shen

Xu Shen is most logically placed among the Old Text partisans

- **His son's** (許沖) statement preserved in their collective postface to the dictionary that his father was a disciple of Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101) and had received training in the Old Text classics,. As Jia Kui's disciple, commencing his apprenticeship most likely at Luoyang in AD 84, Xu is squarely placed within the Old Text camp.
- **Roy Andrew Miller** provides a credible evaluation. An Old Text specialist “holding remarkably independent views within this group.”

2. Classical orientation of Xu Shen

Issue: whether Xu Shen is in the Old Text group ?

- **Zheng Xuan(127-200)**: was certainly an Old Text adherent and he was the founder of “Comprehensive Confucian classicism”(*tongru* 通儒)

He found **enough fault** with Xu Shen to write a “point – for – point refutation”, is certainly suggestive of **certain weaknesses in Xu’s Old Text pedigree**, at least in the view of Zheng.

2. Classical orientation of Xu Shen

Issue: whether Xu Shen is in the Old Text group ?

Another factor to be considered on the matter of Xu Shen's scholarly loyalty is the problem of **the integrity of ancient editions**.

- **Gu Tao:** demonstrated the **eclectic, uneven** nature of the edition of the *Ceremonials and Rituals* utilized by Xu.



This particular edition is therefore ill suited to the establish the scholastic partisanship of Xu Shen as allied either with the Old Text or New Text camps.

2. Classical orientation of Xu Shen

Still, the preponderance of the evidence supports the view that Xu Shen was a loyal member of the **Old Text camp**, despite his obvious differences with Zheng Xuan's version of this school.

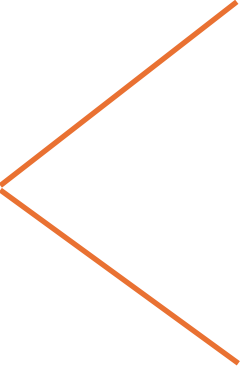
2. Classical orientation of Xu Shen

- *Divergent Meaning of the Five Classics* 五經異義

The purpose seems to be to attack the perceived failings of contemporary official learning in the academies (New Text learning)

A good summation of these defects is given in the biography of Xu Fang, he was an authoritative source for the defects in the New Text official classicism of the time, it incidentally illustrates **the internal divisions possible with the same school**, something we posited previously for Xu Shen versus Zheng Xuan.

3. The ecumenical, broad-minded scholarly approach of Xu



Huang Yongwu's study

Xu Shen's utilization of Five Classics

Ma Zonghuo's study

Some analysis about 說文解字

Huang Yongwu's study

Xu Shen's utilization of Five Classics

- **On the *Changes*** Xu Shen was a comprehensive Confucian. In his explanations of the meaning of the Changes, his remarks solely sought what was appropriate, and basically **did not rigidly hold to a single scholarly lineage.**
- **On the *Documents*** He did not emphasize any single lineage. **With regards to variant interpretations,** he broadly drew from many quarters to arrive at what was reasonable.
- **On the *Poems*** Only followed clear evidence and **did not constrain himself with factional views.**

Huang Yongwu's study

Xu Shen's utilization of Five Classics

- **On the *rites*** Xu Shen concentrated on the *Ceremonials and Rituals*, but Zheng Xuan annotated all three ritual classics.
- **On the *Spring and Autumn Annals***

Was approached in the main through *Mr. Zuo's Commentary*.

Comprehensive Open-minded

Find appropriate and reasonable classics to proof his own study which about lexicography.

Ma Zonghuo's study

Instead of presenting topical issues, he analyzes, contextualizes, defines, and discusses each entry in the *Explaining the Simple Graphs* that quotes from one of the Five Classics and other early masters' works.

<i>Changes:</i>	78 graphs
<i>Documents:</i>	159 graphs
<i>Yi-Zhoushu</i> 逸周書:	10 graphs
<i>Poems:</i>	422 graphs
<i>Sanjia Shi</i> 三家詩:	2 graphs
<i>Rites:</i>	145 graphs
<i>Spring and Autumn Annals:</i>	181 graphs
<i>Discourses of the States:</i>	20 graphs
<i>Analects:</i>	31 graphs
<i>Lost Analects</i> 逸論語:	2 graphs
<i>Classic of Filial Piety:</i>	3 graphs
A commentary on the above:	1 graph
<i>Erya:</i>	28 graphs
<i>Mengzi:</i>	8 graphs

The total number of graphs treated by Xu that can be directly applied to classical exegesis of 1,090 amounts to 12 percent of the total number of graphs (9,353) included in the dictionary.

This research reflects a rigorous academic attitude of interpreting the classics based on the study of the graphs.

*The Shuowen Jiezi
Dictionary*

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graph LR; A["The Shuowen Jiezi Dictionary"] --- B["Brief introduction about it"]; A --- C["Purpose about compiling it"]; A --- D["Xu Shen's methodology"]; B --- E["What"]; C --- F["Why"]; D --- G["How"];
```

Brief introduction about it

What

Purpose about compiling it

Why

Xu Shen's methodology

How

Brief introduction about it

- Xu Shen's *Shuowen Jiezi*, indicating his focus on **word etymology** and **structure**.
- It is the first Chinese dictionary to be arranged according to **radicals** (*bushou* 部首), or semantic classifiers, Xu devised 540 of them.
- He included 9353 graphs and 1163 so-called “reduplicated graphs” (*chongwen* 重文).

Purpose about compiling it

Despite the many technical innovations pioneered by Xu Shen and the importance of his scholarly contributions, **his purpose was not limited to pure scholarship**, as explained by William Boltz

He was motivated chiefly by his belief in the need to render the **understanding of the ancient classics free of doubt**



Thereby putting the wisdom at the service of the Han government

It was lexicological and lexicographic studies that he saw as the means to this pragmatic end, and that culminated in the compilation of the *Shuowen*

Lexicology

Classics

Government

Purpose about compiling it

- **From the numeral “one” (yi 一)**

It was in the beginning at the grand inception, that the Way was established in one, through creation heaven and earth were divided, and the myriad things were formed through transformation”

惟初太始，道立於一，造分天地，化成萬物。

Tang Kejing explains the thrust of this first entry: “The four lines commencing with ‘It was in the beginning at the grand inception,’ **were not explaining a graph, but were clarifying that the work began with the philosophical basis of ‘establishing the one’**; this explanation is entirely absurd”

惟初太始四句，不是解釋一字，而是說明本書立一為首的哲學依據。說得十分堂皇。

Purpose about compiling it

- **On the word “three” (*san* 三)**

Three is the name of its number of lines; it is the embodiment of the Way of Heaven, Earth, and Man”

三數名，天地人之道也。

Tang Kejing explains that this entry “**does not explain that it is the name of a numeral** but **explains the Way of Heaven, Earth, and Man**; Master Xu intended to adumbrate Dong Zhongshu’s 董仲舒 [179–104 BC] theory.”

Purpose about compiling it

- **On the word “king” (*wang* 王)**

King is the one to whom all-under-heaven gravitate. **Dong Zhongshu** said: “Anciently the one who created writing used three lines to connect the middle, and called it king. The three are Heaven, Earth, and Man, and the one who connects them through perforation is the King.” **Confucius** said, “One completely perforating three is king.”

王天下所歸往也。董仲舒曰：古之造文者，三畫而連其中謂之王。三者，天地人也，而參通之者王也。孔子曰：一貫三為王。

Xu Shen's methodology

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- **Presence of paranomasia (*shengxun* 聲訓)**

king (wang 王)=to go to (wang 往)

to carry out an assignment (shi 士)=to serve (shi 事)

lord(jun 君)=venerated(zun 尊)

- **A quotation from the recent master Dong Zhongshu in lieu of a classical quotation**
- **A quotation from Confucius, which is not preserved in the extant literature**

Purpose about compiling it

Xu Shen's appended "Postface" 敘

Now the written language is the foundation of classical learning, the source of kindly government. It is what the former generations relied on to transmit culture to later ages. Men of later times will rely on it to understand antiquity. Therefore it is said: "When the foundation is established, the Way grows," and "When you know the obscure, you cannot be confused." 蓋文字者，經藝之本，王政之始。前人所以垂後，後人所以識古。故曰：本立而道生。知天下之至蹟而不可亂也。

Extra-textual utility of it

This signifies that clarifying the written language through efforts such as this dictionary actually clarifies classical scholarship, kingly government, and the sources of ancient culture.

Purpose about compiling it

Extra-textual utility of it

Timothy O'Neill has reexamined the “Postface” in light of the hoary Confucian concern for “**Rectifying Names**”

- **Confucius:** Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately.
故君子名之必可言也，言之必可行也。
- **Xun Zi:** Accordingly, the way a True King institutes names [is as follows]. Because fixed names keep objects distinguished and because when his Way is practiced his goals are universally understood, he takes pains to produce uniformity [in regard to names and his Way] among the people.
故王者之制名，名定而實辨，道行而志通，則慎率民而一焉

Purpose about compiling it

The entire basis of social order, the proper implementation of the Royal Way, and even the historical legacy of a True King all hinge on names that are correct and uniform.



Extra-textual utility of it

- A nod by **Xu Shen** to the importance of “Rectifying Names”

If in writing something is not correct, these Scribes abruptly report and censure it. Now, although the codes of the Commandant of Punishment exist, there are no examinations. Elementary learning is not cultivated. No one has gone through the explanations for a very long time now.

書或不正，輒舉劾之。今雖有尉律，不課，小學不修，莫達其說久矣。

Purpose about compiling it

Timothy O'Neill sees Xu's commitment of "rectifying names" as also operating on the level of the [historical development of the script](#).

He notes the importance of the "ancient" form of the script (*guwen* 古文)



Utilized *guwen* to record the Classics, it is therefore a given that recovering these ancient forms is requisite for recovering the original intent of the Classics



The form of graph is constantly changing.

Divorcement between the original *guwen* and contemporary writing

Purpose about compiling it

Xu Shen had to face contemporary reality, so he based his definitions on the small seal script(*xiaozhuan* 小篆) but readily provided ancient forms when possible

That *guwen* can provide a link between high antiquity and the present

Without the *Shuowen* much of the writing of pre-Qin times which was not transcribed into modern graph styles would be unintelligible, and most of the bronze and oracle bone inscriptions would very likely be undecipherable.

