ÉTUDES CHINOISES

Revue de l'Association française d'études chinoises

Vol. XXXVII-2 (2018)

AFEC
ASSOCIATION
FRANÇAISE
D'ÉTUDES
CHINOISES

Guangchen Chen*

The Biography of a Ritual Vessel: On Naming, and the Dialectics of Authenticity

Résumé – Cet article entend retracer la biographie du jia 斝, un vase rituel usité durant les dynasties Shang (c. 1600-1046 av. J.-C.) et Zhou (c. 1046-249 av. J.-C.). Alors que son nom a subsisté, certes sous différentes graphies, la connaissance de sa forme physique a disparu après la dynastie Qin (221-206 av. J.-C.). L'espace laissé vacant entre le nom et la représentation est néanmoins devenu un terrain fertile pour des conjectures ou des créations portant sur son authenticité. Cet article identifie trois épisodes clés de la « vie » du jia : le catalogage d'objets antiques sous la dynastie Song (960-1279), les recherches sur les inscriptions oraculaires du début du XX^e^ *siècle et le débat sur le matérialisme et l'herméneutique de la fiction au milieu du* XX^e^ *siècle. Ils correspondent à des moments d'évolution et de progrès dans l'histoire intellectuelle, au cours desquels des lettrés ont tenté de percer le mystère de ce vase par des méthodes nouvelles, philologiques, iconographiques et littéraires. Par l'étude de ces différents moments, on démontrera que, même si l'authenticité historique se démontre principalement sur des preuves liées aux objets, leur interprétation est conditionnée par l'acte de les nommer et par le récit de leur provenance. Plus important encore, le concept même d'authenticité se construit à partir de la correspondance entre des personnes, des noms et des artefacts, et a lui-même été historicisé dans une recherche épistémologique constante et sans cesse renouvelée.*

This essay traces the elusive biography of *jia* 斝 as a name, a character, and a type of ritual vessel once popular during the Shang 商

* Guangchen Chen is a Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts, and Lecturer in the Humanities Council and Department of Comparative Literature, Princeton University.

(ca. 1600–1046 BCE) and Zhou 周 (1046–249 BCE) periods. Respectively, the name and the artifact have had a life of their own, with very different fates: although the artifact fell into obscurity, the name survived in ancient texts and continued to be used in literary language until recent times. The discrepancy between the name and the artifact has caused much confusion, but it also generates some interesting discourses, which this brief biography will explicate in detail.

Although the idea of an "object biography" seems to entail a tension between the inorganic and the living, it actually highlights the fact that objects exist within social relations, and give rise to conceptual formulations that constantly evolve and respond to specific historical contexts. In Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall's words, "At the heart of the notion of biography are questions about the links between people and things: about the ways of meanings and values are accumulated and transformed." [1] Jody Joy also argues that "Biography is relational and an object biography is comprised of the sum of the relationships that constitute it." [2]

Names are the most immediate results – or sometimes causes – of such relationships between people and things. Since relationships as such are interactive, the names that connect people and things can work both ways. They can describe what and how we want an object to be, but also affect how we perceive and understand that same object. Names are not necessarily derivative and secondary; they could become autonomous, and even acquire a prescriptive authority, which they can then exercise on the person perceiving or the object being perceived. Through time, names acquire a historicity, which runs parallel to the historicity of the objects they are supposed to denote.

Building upon the insights of previous studies on object biography, this essay addresses two questions. First, how do we grapple with an object's name that has acquired a life of its own? Second, to what extent is the life of an object shaped and even defined by the life of its name? In the Chinese context, the character as a visual construction

1. Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, "The Cultural Biography of Objects," *World Archaeology*, 1999, no. 31 (2), pp. 169-172.
2. Jody Joy, "Reinvigorating Object Biography: Reproducing the Drama of Object Lives," *World Archaeology*, 2009, no. 41 (4), p. 552.

adds a surplus to its meaning. When these various elements point in different directions, they give birth to a space of ambiguity, soliciting the creation of new historical, philological, and literary discourses.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the object and its name leads to another issue, namely authenticity. In itself, an object is neither authentic nor fake. It is only the act of naming, which produces a meaning-making structure in the form of a description or a narrative sequence, that bestows onto the object an added value, which is then translated into terms of authenticity. At the center of the issue is the correspondence (or the lack thereof) between the nominal and the substantial. Do names properly denominate objects? Is the act of naming, with its authorizing and valorizing power, accurate and legitimate? Resolving the disconnectedness between names and objects calls for narrative as a device of recovery, but how do we guarantee a narrative's reliability?

Chinese scholarship has a relatively recent branch specifically devoted to these issues, which is simply called "the study of names and objects" (*ming wu xue* 名物學), and here "objects" includes both artificial and natural things.[3] This field involves careful use of philology and rigorous interpretation of the Chinese Classics, and generally respects the prescriptive power of names. In contrast, the present paper treats names as fluid and sometimes unreliable constructions whose meanings are constantly being twisted in response to specific moments in history.

Jia, the protagonist of the present biography, maintains precisely such an intricate relationship with its own name. It was originally a pottery or bronze cup, to be used in ritual occasions during the Shang and Zhou periods, or perhaps even earlier. It appears in foundational texts such as the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經), which contains the phrase "washing *jue* and (respectfully) placing *jia* (on the table)" (*xi jue dian jia* 洗爵奠斝).[4] What makes *jia* remarkable is that for a long time

3. See Hu Pu'an 胡樸安, *Zhongguo xunguxue shi* 中國訓詁學史 (History of Chinese philology), Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1939, vol. 3, pp. 336-341.
4. *Shijing jinzhu* 詩經今注 (Modern commentaries on the *Book of Poetry*), with commentaries by Gao Heng 高亨, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980, p. 405.

afterwards it existed only as a name in the form of the special character 斝 recorded in surviving historical texts (the texts' exact dating and hence reliability are not undebatable), but active production of the artifacts in the original specifications was discontinued after the Zhou dynasty. This discrepancy created a rupture in its "life": people had always known its name through the Classics, but did not know what it exactly looked like. Although from time to time, objects that bore resemblance to the descriptions of *jia* were found, no material evidence bound the name definitively to any specific object. Today, it is only thanks to extensive efforts and advanced technologies in excavation, collecting, cataloguing, taxonomy, and image reproduction that we are able to infer that *jia* is a typological name corresponding to a common kind of drinking vessels with similar shapes.

A biography usually denotes a relatively stable entity, be it a person or an object. But the protagonist of this biography is much more fluid and elusive, hence my inquiry will not focus on a singular object, but on the interrelation between the vessel as a type and the many complex aspects of its name. First, the name has two major meaning-making components: its visual construction and the signified meanings designated by the Classics. They sometimes contradict each other. On the one hand, it is possible that the shape of the character 斝 is an imitation of the shape of the vessel; on the other hand, its prescribed meanings are supposedly related to ritual formulas, political hierarchy, and the requirement of discretion in drinking, which were all thought to be crucial for the universal harmony of the political order. These ideas strictly dictated the formats and capacities of *jia*. In other words, it is possible to reconstruct, if only approximately, a *jia* according to these requirements. These aspects give rise to a fundamental contradiction. If the character is indeed a pictograph, then it was derivative of the vessel, which existed *prior* to the name; but if the prescribed meanings are to be trusted, then the vessel was constructed *after* these prescriptions.

Thanks to the mismatch between the object and the name *jia*, its "life" was intertwined with several significant moments in intellectual and literary history. A long time after the early texts that mentioned *jia*, the Song dynasty *A Supplement to Illustrated Investigations of Antiquities* (*Xu kaogu tu* 續考古圖) makes a likely false but not groundless attempt at matching the name with an object. The roughly contemporaneous *Illustrated Catalogue of Antiquities of the Xuanhe Hall* (*Xuanhe bogu tu* 宣

和博古圖) suggests another version of the name-object correspondence, which has since been widely accepted, and is the prototype of today's idea about what *jia* should look like. In the eighteenth-century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 (1715-1763) played with a *jia*'s provenance to construct a curious narrative, with hints of allegorical reference to Miaoyu 妙玉, a character in the novel. Then the discovery of the oracle bone script at the beginning of the 20th century allowed Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940) and Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) to reexamine the character *jia*'s pictographic and philological roots. And lastly, informed by his research in material culture, the 20th-century writer Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902-1988) provided a fresh reading of Cao Xueqin's fictional depiction to reopen the debate about authenticity issues surrounding *jia*.

By examining these diverse approaches to the vessel, this paper will demonstrate that, although the establishment of historic authenticity relies heavily on object-based evidence, the interpretation of the latter is conditioned by both a regime of naming and a narrative of provenance, which render the line between history and fiction rather blurry. Even more importantly, authenticity is itself historicized as a result of an ever-developing episteme.

Cao Xueqin and Shen Congwen: The Novelists' Perspectives

My narrative of *jia*'s "life" begins with a recent moment in history, and proceeds in a reverse chronological order. I do so for two reasons. First, to borrow Walter Benjamin's visualization of the angel of history, "The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high."[5] In other words, we face the past while moving backward into the future, and the past, that distant origin which we strive to recover, is hidden behind the rubble-heap. Second, rather than establishing a

5. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, New York: Schocken Books, 1969, pp. 253-264.

hypothetical "origin" from which later developments were ostensibly derived, one had better start from what is more certain and proceed to the obscure. And it is the recent history that we know relatively well.

It was in 1961 when the one-time novelist Shen Congwen published an article entitled "'Ban pao jia' and 'dian xi qiao': some disagreements on *Dream of the Red Chamber* Annotations."[6] In it he disputes certain annotations, made by the prominent scholar Qigong 啟功 (1912-2005) in 1957,[7] and argues that these annotations err on the side of simplification, thus sacrificing the nuances and complexities that make this a great novel. In particular, Shen takes issue with the annotations' rather minimal explanation of the objects in the novel, because its author apparently had incredibly rich and intimate experiences with actual objects in the elite society's everyday life and was keen to make use of them to convey coded messages in his narrative. Many such objects have been passed down to us and are on display in museums, so Shen argues that we would be negligent not to consult these objects when trying to understand the novel.

Shen's article concerns a scene in Chapter 41, in which the protagonist Baoyu 寶玉, his relatives and female companions Daiyu 黛玉 and Baochai 寶釵, and his grandma, the respected figurehead of the family, Lady Jia 賈母,[8] receive a distant relative, Granny Liu 劉姥姥, in the luxurious and labyrinth-like family garden. Granny Liu is a humble peasant who never before witnessed anything remotely resembling the delicate dishes and the fanciful utensils. After the meal, the group proceeds to a nunnery inside the garden, and is welcomed by the resident nun Miaoyu, who is described as beautiful, smart, cultured, but eccentric and extremely fastidious. Cao Xueqin does not give explicit judgment on Miaoyu's character, but seems to give some hints through details of her actions and the objects she uses.

---

6. SHEN Congwen, "'*Ban pao jia' he 'Dian xi qiao': guanyu Honglou meng zhushi yidian shangque*" "　瓟斝"和"點犀盉"——關於《紅樓夢》注釋一點商榷 ("Ban pao jia" and "dian xi qiao": some disagreements on *Dream of the Red Chamber* annotations), *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, August 6, 1961, p. 4.
7. See CAO Xueqin and GAO E, *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959, p. 554.
8. The family name賈 is pronounced *jiǎ*, and is a homonym for *jia* 斝.

Having treated the group to some fine tea, Miaoyu leads Daiyu and Baochai away for a private gathering, and makes even more delicate tea for them. The water comes from the snow on plum blossoms she gathered five years ago in a Buddhist temple, which she has stored in a jar and buried underground. Their little gathering is discovered by Baoyu, who protests and wants to join. Then Miaoyu takes out two very special teacups for Daiyu and Baochai to use, and lets Baoyu use her own *l*ü *yu dou* 綠玉斗 (green jade dipper). This is where Shen Congwen takes issue with the 1957 annotation. One cup has an inscription "*Ban pao jia*" 瓟罦, followed by the phrase "Wang Kai's cherished plaything" (*Wang Kai zhenwan* 王愷珍玩) and another line: "seen by Su Shi of Meishan in the Imperial Secret Collection, in April of the fifth year of the Yuanfeng reign in the Song dynasty" (*Song Yuanfeng wunian siyue meishan Su Shi jianyu mifu* 宋元豐五年四月眉山蘇軾見於秘府).[9]

The 1957 notes tell the reader that, first, *jia* is a large drinking vessel in ancient times, whereas *ban* and *bo* are names of gourds. So this is a gourd-shaped cup. Second, Wang Kai (dates unknown)[10] was a ridiculously rich nobleman in the Western Jin dynasty (265-316) who took pleasure in showing off his wealth in a vastly exaggerated manner; third, Su Shi (1037-1101) was a famous poet, a once powerful politician and a connoisseur of the arts in the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). Most readers, as does the author of the 1957 notes, naturally think that all this indicates the cup "is an extremely precious ancient collectable."[11]

The brief inscriptions contain a web of complex historic references. They are fragments of the cup's mysterious history as a collectable object, and indeed arouse great curiosity. The name *Ban pao jia* is outlandish both in pronunciation and the appearance of the characters. None of them are commonly used in the modern Chinese language, thus suggesting a sense of archaic rarity. The second inscription, "Wang

9. Cao and Gao, *Honglou meng*, pp. 501-502.
10. For the life of Wang Kai, see "Wang Kai zhuan" 王愷傳 (Biography of Wang Kai), in Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, et al., *Jin shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974, p. 2412.
11. Cao and Gao, *Honglou meng*, p. 501. Also see Shen, "'Ban pao jia'," p. 4.

Kai's cherished plaything," is not only an indication of provenance, but also Wang's proud proclamation of ownership. The third inscription is even more seductive. It shows that the cup had been hidden within the Song emperor's secret collection, and an elite personage like Su Shi had managed to only have a glimpse of it. What happened before and after is shrouded in mystery. How did it end up in the emperor's hands? Where did it go after the Jurchen troops had sacked the palace and taken away its treasures, and even abducted the emperor's successors? The fact that now it resurfaces as Miaoyu's drinking utensil adds to the mystery of her background, as well as the complex historicity of this supposedly precious gem.

However, Shen's sharp eyes would not let any detail pass unscrutinized. According to him, Cao Xueqin's writing is done in such a high degree of ingenuity that no detail is insignificant, and we need to read the novel from both concrete and abstract angles. The abstract angle refers to the novel's allegorical framework. In terms of the concrete angle, he reminds us of the historic background of material culture. In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the increasingly affluent Southern middle class was fond of showing off elegance in everyday life, while their frequent picnics made it necessary to have portable utensils. So it became common to use gourds to make drinking vessels that looked like ancient bronze and jade artifacts, which at the same time were easy to transport and use. As a Shang dynasty bronze vessel, a *jia* is a perfect model for imitation. This practice continued in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and became popular among the imperial and noble circles in Beijing. Now the Palace Museum, Beijing, still holds a large collection of such vessels, which Shen himself was familiar with.[12]

12. SHEN, "'Ban pao jia'," p. 4. Shen had his own detractor: The *Honglou meng* specialist Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌 (1918-2012) published a powerful rebuke in the same newspaper, and some of his central arguments are more convincing than Shen's. For example, he points out that gourd vessels had existed long before the Ming and Qing period, a fact that I will discuss in a later section of this paper. Interestingly, what really stands behind Shen's and Zhou's reasoning, in my opinion, is their opposite views of Miaoyu. Unlike Shen, Zhou sees Miaoyu as a genuinely pure person, and the fake and pretentious cup is meant to suggest the personality not of the giver, but the receiver, namely Daiyu. See ZHOU Ruchang, "Ye tan 'Ban pao jia' he 'Dian xi qiao'" 也谈" 瓟

Shen then concludes that, quite contrary to the precious ancient "gourd-shaped cup" proposed by the original notes, *Ban pao jia* is actually a relatively recent vessel, made of a gourd, in the shape of an ancient bronze artifact. Therefore, even within the fictional context, we can date the object's creation to no earlier than the Ming dynasty, which was founded in 1368. Obviously, the other two inscriptions by earlier historic figures are therefore anachronistic, and only serve to expose the "gem" to be a laughable forgery.[13]

This conclusion seems to be further supported by the fact that the name of the vessel *jia* 斝 and the word for "fake," *jia* 假, are homonyms, both pronounced *jiǎ*. It should also be noted that the entire novel, whose theme is about dreams and illusions, is devoted to the rise and fall of the powerful family Jia 賈, which is another homonym. Therefore, it is hard to resist the reading (at least for Shen) that the novel's author is using a series of significations to imply Miaoyu being a pretentious and vain person.[14]

Although inconspicuous among the vast corpus of *Dream of the Red Chamber* studies (*Hong xue* 紅學, hereafter "*Red* studies"), Shen's intervention is a good lesson on the limits of hermeneutics, which merit a full-length article. For the present discussion, it is useful as an example showcasing how a nuanced engagement with material culture can complicate the interaction between reality, fiction, and history. It also exposes some contradictions inherent in the history of *jia*, which is inextricably bound with concepts of authenticity and involves issues in connoisseurship, art history, philology, phonology, and the study of inscriptions.

First, the surviving pre–Qin dynasty textual descriptions prescribe the *jia*'s proper shape, capacity, material, and use in rituals, which constitute the definition of an authentic *jia*. And yet while the texts have survived (here I temporarily leave aside the issue of the texts'

斝"和"點犀盉" (Additional comments on "Ban pao jia" and "Dian xi qiao"), *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, Oct. 22, 1961, p. 4, and Shen Congwen's response, "'Xing xi qiao' zhiyi" "杏犀盉"質疑 (Questioning "Xing xi qiao"), *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, Nov. 12, 1961, p. 4.

13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.

authenticity), the knowledge of the correspondence between texts and objects did not. So for a long time after the Qin dynasty, no one knew what *jia* actually looked like. This situation gave rise to confusions, conjectures, and inevitably also corrupted, fancifully imagined reproductions and forgeries. To further complicate the picture, the textual descriptions often contradict each other and are a source of endless debate. The only stable elements are the word's pronunciation and written form, which seems to be either a pictograph, an ideogram, or a mixture of both. So apart from considering the material aspects, scholars also tried to pursue philological and phonological clues, but with little avail.

With this background in mind, it is difficult to imagine that Cao Xueqin chose *jia* at random; it is more likely he consciously exploited the problematic history of *jia* for an allegoric purpose, infusing in the object certain coded and layered messages that are far more difficult to pin down than a casual reading of the episode would allow.

On the other hand, Shen's article adds yet another layer of meanings; although it deals with a small and somewhat esoteric detail of an eighteenth-century novel, it also has deep connections with Shen's own personal history as well as the political and cultural climates of the 1960s. For the first half of his life until age forty-seven, Shen Congwen had ranked among the most successful writers in China. Focusing on the everyday life of the ordinary people from his hometown area, Shen employed vivid realism to create works such as *Border Town*, *Long River*, *Xiaoxiao*, and *The Love of the Shaman God*, which describe ways of life that are steeped in rural and peripheral traditions, in stark contrast to China's burgeoning and increasingly international urban culture. He thus became known as a nativist or "Native Soil" writer, carving a path rather different from that of the cosmopolitan, urban writers in the early part of 20th century.[15]

However, when the Communist regime took over in 1949, it showed much hostility to Shen's work, and his writing career came to a halt. Both unyielding and unable to conform to the new ideology, he endured

15. For a biography of Shen Congwen that focuses on his career as a writer, see Jeffrey C. KINKLEY, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.

a tormenting and unsuccessful "re-education" process and even tried to commit suicide. Eventually, political pressure deprived us of a great writer, but in exchange, it gave us a unique art historian. Upon giving up his writing career, Shen started working as a guide at the National History Museum in August 1949 and launched his own research projects on art history, especially the then-unconventional and non-elite departments such as clothing, furniture, and everyday utensils that had been ignored by scholars. Actually, when Shen was a young soldier in West Hunan, he had already developed a strong interest in handicrafts and decorative arts. While he was against a dogmatic and simplified Marxist approach to the arts, he saw no intrinsic incompatibility between Marxism and his own literary and artistic ideals; in fact, he considered his nuanced and naturalist depiction of ordinary people as a more authentic manifestation of Marxism. Now he was able to continue cultivating this interest by studying artifacts from the past to compensate for what he could no longer achieve in literature.[16]

What is more, Shen's 1961 article was written in the wake of a consequential event, which he might or might not choose to take into consideration. A few years before, in 1954, Mao Zedong initiated a political campaign against the old school of "*Red* studies." He sided with two young and daring scholars, Li Xifan 李希凡 (1927-2018) and Lan Ling 藍翎 (1931-2005), who criticized the senior and established scholar Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1900-1990) for focusing too much on "trivial," technical details at the expense of grasping the novel's overarching political message.[17] This debate quickly turned into a brutal and far-reaching political crackdown on a large number of intellectuals. As a result, when Qigong was assigned the task of annotating the novel in 1957, he was too scared to make any extended interpretations, and

16. For the latter half of Shen's life, see Zhang Xinying 張新穎, *Shen Congwen de hou bansheng, 1948-1988* 沈從文的後半生，一九四八至一九八八 (The latter half of Shen Congwen's life, 1948-1988), Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2014.
17. For Li and Lan's critiques of Yu, see Li Xifan and Lan Ling, "Guanyu '*Honglou meng jianlun*' ji qita" 關於《紅樓夢簡論》及其他 (Concerning "Brief remarks on *Dream of the Red Chamber*" and other issues), *Wen shi zhe* 文史哲, Sept. 1954, pp. 20-25. See also Li Xifan and Lan Ling, "Ping '*Honglou meng yanjiu*'" 評《紅樓夢研究》, *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, Oct. 10, 1954, p. 5.

opted for a minimalist approach.[18] Interestingly, Shen seemed to be utterly insensitive to this situation. It is no surprise that the editors disregarded Shen's suggestions, and kept the brief annotations as they were.

This modern episode about *jia* poses many questions that have to be answered by tracing its history back to the root of the confusions, and this is what the following two episodes will do. What happened in 1961 is a gateway into the history of an artifact which, despite its ostensibly archaic outlook, retains an enduring relevance.

Revelations from the Oracle Bones

In this section, I move backward to the beginning of the 20th century which, thanks to a number of groundbreaking discoveries, turns out to be another critical moment in the "life" of *jia*.

The contour of Chinese history during this period was shaped by the collision between China and western colonial powers, resulting in China's forced modernization and the end of imperial rule. This moment of unprecedented crisis put immense pressure on traditional systems of knowledge and value, prompting them to prove themselves still valid and usable. In the face of mounting national crisis, many intellectuals turned to the West for alternatives, while others diligently searched into China's own past, and their most remarkable discovery was the 3,000-year-old oracle bones, which bore divination texts written in the oldest known form of Chinese script. Their discovery revolutionized the understanding of Chinese history, and challenged a lot of important and longstanding beliefs.

Deciphering the script was a collective effort involving some of the best scholars and the most resourceful collectors of the time, including Shen Zengzhi 沈增植 (1850-1922), Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848-1908), Wang Yirong 王懿榮 (1845-1900), Liu E 劉鶚 (1857-1909), Duan Fang 端方 (1861-1911), and the Canadian missionary James Menzies (1885-1957).

18. See Zhou Ruchang, "Shen Congwen xiangzhu 'Hong lou meng'" 沈從文詳注《紅樓夢》(Shen Congwen's detailed commentaries on *Dream of the Red Chamber*), in *Wen hui bao* 文匯報, Aug. 15, 2000, p. 11.

They were countered by famous detractors such as Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1869-1936). But it was really Luo Zhenyu and Wang Guowei who made true breakthroughs. One of the fruits of their collaboration is an interpretation of what they believed to be the oracle bone script version of the character *jia*.

In *A Study of Texts and Inscriptions from the Waste of Yin* (*Yinxu shuqi kaoshi* 殷墟書契考釋), a foundational study on the oracle bones, Luo Zhenyu provides the following observations: 1. According to Xu Shen's 許慎 (ca. 58–ca. 148 CE) *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, hereafter *Shuowen*), which is traditionally considered the authoritative source for the rationale of character structures, *jia* and *jue* 爵, the name of another bronze drinking vessel, share the same meaning; but in Luo's opinion, their shapes do not look alike; 2. Apart from the usual form of *jia* in oracle bone script (**figure 1**), a less common form instance (**figure 2**) resembles the shape of the actual vessel, but it contains an extra radical that denotes the hand, and this must have caused Xu to confuse it with *jue*; 3. a bronze script (*jinwen* 金文) character (**figure 3**) also resembles the shape of the oracle bone script character *jia*, and both of them are pictographs denoting the vessel; 4. the ancient form of the character *san* (散, **figure 4**) frequently appears in the Classics, and it resembles *jia* in the oracle bone script. According to Luo, these two characters have been confused as one. So in fact, all references to *san* in the context of rituals in the Classics actually mean *jia*.[19]

Then in a brief but dense article "On *jia*" (*Shuo jia* 說斝), Wang Guowei further explores the history of the character and the artifact, using new evidence supplied by the oracle bone script. The article starts with the same quote from *Shuowen*: "Jia […] is a pictograph, and shares the same meaning with *jue*," which Wang contrasted with aforementioned interpretation by Luo.[20] Wang sides with the latter, and gives further evidence to prove that *jia* and *san* should refer to

19. Luo Zhenyu, *Yinxu shuqi kaoshi* 殷墟書契考釋 (Investigation and explanation of the Yinxu oracle bone inscriptions), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006, pp. 182-183.

20. Wang Guowei, "Shuo jia" 說斝 (On *jia*), in *Wang Guowei xiansheng quanji chubian* 王國維先生全集初編 (Complete works of Wang Guowei, part one), Taipei:

the same thing. First, the famous collector Duan Fang collected a set of ritual vessels excavated from Baoji in Shanxi Province, which Wang had seen, and all its contents match the description in *The Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*'s chapter on the rite of single-animal offering (*Yi li: Tesheng kuishi li* 儀禮 特牲饋食禮), except that Duan's set included a *jia*, while *The Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* mentions the character *san*. Second, no ancient text mentions *san* alongside *jia*; when one is mentioned, the other is always absent. Third, *jia* is a large form of *jue*, and it is pronounced as *jiǎ* (假), one of whose meanings is "large." Because of its larger size, *The Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou li* 周禮), *The Commentary of Zuo* (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳), and *The Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) all say that *jia* can serve as both a drinking vessel and a vessel for the Rite of G*uan* (*Guan li*灌禮). And elsewhere in *The Rites of Zhou*, *san* is said to be both a drinking vessel and a Rite of G*uan* vessel. Based on this evidence, clearly all citations of *san* should actually be *jia*.[21]

Wang adds two pieces of evidence from the Classics to prove the same point before coming to an important but problematic conclusion: "[H]aving put all these pieces of evidence side by side, we know that the gains from traditional philology can actually verify ancient ritual and political systems; they do match each other."[22]

This small article makes a number of important points. In Wang's opinion, for the first time, one could use the oracle bone script – predating almost all other known sources – to verify a long, prestigious, but also dubious textual tradition. And we finally know that what was written as *san*, when referring to a drinking vessel, should actually be *jia*. Furthermore, as both objects and texts, the oracle bones strengthen the approach to ancient texts that operates beyond the narrow and self-isolating textual system, which is filled with mutual correspondences but also contradictions; instead, external and material factors now play equally important roles. Scripts carved on bones and vessels from the past maintain a relatively stable state, which form a stark contrast with texts that are more susceptible to corruption in transmission.

Datong shuju, 1976, vol.1, pp. 143-145. See also Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963, p. 300.

21. Wang, "Shuo jia," pp. 143-144.
22. Ibid., p. 145.

Lastly, the oracle bones challenge the authority of the sacred *Shuowen*, so no wonder they enraged the latter's ardent believers such as Zhang Binglin, prompting him to announce that these bones were forgeries.

In some sense, the last two aspects are one and the same issue. Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1911-1966) captures the essence of the *Shuowen* by noting that it attempts to sum up the "grammar" of the characters' structures, treating them as a static system of mutually corresponding units rather than an amalgam of historically evolving, dynamic, and individual entities. On the contrary, unearthed objects provide valuable information about the ever-developing lives of characters, so naturally these discoveries would challenge the placidity of the *Shuowen* system.[23]

But the significance of Wang's analysis does not lie in philology alone. It has strong ideological implications as well, which are a central theme of this chapter in *jia*'s biography. These implications are suggested in the concluding sentence, which is a striking departure from the objective reasoning that dominates the bulk of the article. Here a seemingly small and highly technical issue is brought to bear upon the intense political and intellectual debates at that historic moment. Wang wants us to believe that ancient Classics are indeed trustworthy; all we need is the right philological method plus sufficient material evidence. In other words, Wang thinks that the new discovery, as revolutionary as it is, reaffirms rather than challenges the Classics.

Personal reasons played a role in Wang's anxiety to prove the validity and authority of the Classics, or to find something reliable that he could cling to. To understand the context, it is worth taking a retrospective look at Wang's intellectual life. Before becoming one of the most influential modern historians working on Chinese antiquity, Wang had an illustrious career as a literary critic and aesthetician, with strong interest in Western, especially German idealist philosophy. He used to be a passionate follower of Arthur Schopenhauer, using the latter's theory to interpret *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an allegory

23. See Chen Mengjia, "Sun Yirang xiansheng bainian dan jinian" 孫詒讓先生百年誕紀念 (Commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of Sun Yirang's birth), in *Mengjiashi cunwen* 夢甲室存文 (Writings from the Mengjia Studio), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006, p. 233.

of the destructive power of desire and the will. And he applied the same interpretive strategy in his popular *Renjian's Commentaries on Ci Poetry* (*Renjian cihua* 人間詞話),[24] a collection of aphoristic commentaries on *ci* poetry. But around 1907, at the height of his literary and philosophical pursuits, he was harboring profound doubts about the whole enterprise:

> I have long been tired of philosophy. Most of its arguments are either beautiful but not truthful, or truthful but not beautiful. I know what is true, but I love the false. The grandiose metaphysics, sophisticated ethics and pure, absolute aesthetics are what I love. But if we are looking for the truthful, then we should go for positivism in epistemology, the pleasure principle in ethics, and empiricism in aesthetics. What is truthful, I cannot love. What I love, I cannot believe. This is the greatest frustration I have in the recent two to three years […] Poetry? Philosophy? To which will I devote the rest of my life? I do not know. Or maybe be something in between?[25]

The tension between the truthful and the beautiful is the key to understanding the intellectual rift that dominated Wang's entire career. And although his own narrative points to the dichotomy of positivism and metaphysics or aesthetics, or scientism and humanism, his statement can also be understood to refer to questions about the grounds of epistemology and skepticism. It bears a striking resemblance to the opening line of the last chapter of *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*, or *Laozi*): "The truthful words are not beautiful; the beautiful words are not truthful."[26] In this context, Wang's frustration is not purely personal,

---

24. Since the phrase *Renjian* literally means "the human world," the book's title is commonly translated as *Remarks on Lyrics in the Human World*. But because "Renjian" was also one of Wang's pen names, I choose to translate it as a proper name.
25. Wang Guowei, "Zixu er" 自序二 (Autobiography, no. 2), in *Wang Guowei quanji* 王國維全集 (Complete works of Wang Guowei), Guangzhou and Hangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe and Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009, vol. 14, p. 121.
26. ZHU Zhiqian 朱謙之, *Laozi jiaoshi* 老子校釋 (Commentaries on the *Laozi*), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984, p. 310. I thank Martin Kern for alerting me to this parallel.

but speaks directly to the universal sense of uncertainty about knowledge, and the resulting obsession with the truthful and the authentic.

These issues preoccupied the intellectual community at the turn of the century. Some scholars were bold enough to dismiss the Classics as outright inauthentic and unreliable, with notable precursors such as Cui Shu 崔述 (1740-1816), and later the influential Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), followed by the young and ambitious historian Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980). As representatives of the so-called "Doubting the Ancients" school (*Gushi bianpai* 古史辨派 or *Yigu pai* 疑古派), they weaponized philology to expose the problematic nature of the Classics' textual history, challenging an entire ideology based on these texts. It was certainly not the first time such doubts appeared in Chinese history, but for Wang, national crises added an extra sense of urgency to the issue. The conflict between the ancient and the modern was now mixed with that between China and the West; the native Classics did not seem able to rise to the challenge of western military and technological power. So giving up the ancients for the modern means simultaneously giving up the native for the foreign.

These conflicts reached a breaking point when, in 1911, the rule of the Qing dynasty came to an end, and the Republic of China was established. Luo and Wang were shocked and saddened by the fall of the empire, which they saw as the embodiment of the only cultural tradition they identified themselves with. This consequential event prompted them to go into a self-imposed exile in Kyoto, Japan. According to Luo, this was the moment when Wang decided to change course, and Luo played a transformative role:

> [Now that the Qing Dynasty has fallen], I urged Mr. Wang to focus on classical Chinese learning, starting with philology as the foundation. I also discussed the merits and shortcomings of scholarship with him, saying that [the essence of] Confucius's scholarship lies in believing in antiquity, whereas contemporaries believed in modernity but doubted antiquity; [...] the doubts of scholars of our Dynasty were not unjustified; but when Cui Shu wrote *Kao xin lu* 考信錄, he was doubting what should not be doubted. In recent times, it gets even worse, to the point of regarding all Classics as fake. […] The [Chinese] teaching of three thousand years hangs only by a thread, and without serious rectification, the classical tradition could not be sustained […].

> Upon hearing this, Mr. Wang was profoundly shaken, feeling regretful of himself. Realizing that his previous scholarship was immature, he picked up the more than a hundred copies of *Collected Works of Jing'an* [one of Wang's courtesy names] and burnt them all. […] Such was Mr. Wang's courage to change himself to follow the righteous! Living in Japan, Mr. Wang abandoned all his previous scholarship, and turned instead to studying the classical philosophers' works I had given him. I also shared with him all the five hundred thousand volumes from my own Dayun Library, thousands of rubbings of inscriptions on ancient artifacts, more than a thousand ancient ritual vessels, and other antiques.[27]

This was part of Luo's obituary to Wang upon the latter's suicide in 1927, so it is a one-sided account. But it is at least supported by Wang's subsequent radical and resolute shift in scholarly interests. It seems Wang finally found something in between poetry and philosophy to devote the rest of his life to. He was lucky to have the company of one of the major collectors at that time, as the invaluable objects provided ostensibly reliable materials to support Wang's quest for authenticity. Since the oracle bone inscriptions, like many other excavated objects, were not known to exist until then, they were exempted from corruptions and interventions that often happened in circulation, and this quality added to their credibility.

Kyoto served as a serene haven for Luo and Wang, far away from the political turmoil in China. There they enjoyed an extraordinary intellectual symbiosis studying the vast collection of ancient artifacts which Luo had amassed and brought with him. Among them were the invaluable oracle bones, partly coming from Wang Yirong and Liu E, and partly collected by Luo himself. Wang Guowei, who only now started to study antiquity in earnest, benefited from this incomparable resource of materials as much as the materials did from Wang's

27. Luo Zhenyu, "Haining Wang Zhongque Gong zhuan" 海寧王忠慤公傳 (A biography of Wang Zhongque from Haining), in *Luo Zhenyu xueshu lunzhu ji* 羅振玉學術論著集 (Collected scholarly works of Luo Zhenyu), Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010, vol. 10, pp. 251-252.

insights. And it is during this period that the Luo-Wang collaboration on the oracle bones produced the relevant articles on *jia*.[28]

In a biography of *jia*, these extended episodes concerning Luo and Wang might seem slightly digressive. But my purpose is to show that a ritual artifact's "life" is to a large extent defined by the intellectual repercussions it elicits. These details provide an indispensable context for understanding the brief concluding statement of "On *jia*." It would be difficult to imagine that, when reaffirming the validity and reliability of the Classics, Wang did not have these contexts in mind. Now he felt that he was finally starting to resolve many of the historical puzzles, and got hold of a firm basis, almost an *a priori* foundation, upon which the truth of the past could be reconstructed. Moreover, as a drinking vessel for ritual use, the proper production and application of *jia*, as with other vessels, was instrumental for the ritual's success, which in turn was crucial for the preservation of political order. But the story of *jia* neither started nor ended there. What was discovered in the beginning of the 20th century only retroactively illuminated and complicated the meanings of *jia*'s past life.

The Song Dynasty Naming Efforts: Narrative, Provenance, Authenticity

Wang Guowei's "On *jia*" is the first in a series of articles on ancient artifacts. The beginning of the next article, "On *guang*" (*Shuo guang* 說觥), continues with the issue of naming, stating that the names of most ancient ritual artifacts were set by the Song scholars.[29] In other words, his Song predecessors matched the names from the Classics with the ancient artifacts they found. Since some of these artifacts

28. It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail Luo's and Wang's contributions to the study of ancient artifacts. Interested readers can consult Yang Chia-ling and Roderick Whitfield (eds.), *Lost Generation: Luo Zhenyu, Qing Loyalists and the Formation of Modern Chinese Culture*, London: Saffron Books, 2012.
29. Wang Guowei, "Shuo guang" 說觥 (On *guang*), in *Wang Guowei xiansheng quanji chubian*, vol. 1, pp. 145-149. The name of the vessel is sometimes transcribed as *gong*.

bore no self-referencing inscriptions, the Song scholars made their own decisions based on ancient textual evidence on the one hand, and empirical evidence such as sizes, capacities, and shapes of the artifacts from their collections on the other. Wang stresses that although the Song scholarship has its limitations, the names it set remain unchallenged. Indeed, Luo and Wang's knowledge about the *jia*'s shape came from none other than these predecessors.

This brings my narrative of *jia*'s biography back more than seven centuries to the Northern and Southern Song dynasties. It is no accident that the two previous episodes both point to this period, when a systematic study of ancient material culture was founded. It was a time characterized by a widespread passion for antiquarianism. Thanks to the emperors' (especially Huizong 徽宗, r. 1100-1126) personal interests,[30] and also fanned by exchanges between literati friends stationed in different locations across the empire, a variety of scholarly efforts were made to recover antiquity through its material remains. As Ya-Hwei Hsu details in her study of Song antiquarianism, one of the motivations behind these activities was to reestablish proper formats of governmental rituals set by the Zhou dynasty, the ideal model for good government, and this was in turn part of a larger reform project that Huizong sought to revive.[31]

Luo and Wang emulated their Song predecessors as models, and hoped to put the Song scholarship back onto the map after what they perceived as a long slumber in the ensuing dynasties. Wang gives a very balanced evaluation of the Song contributions while rejecting recent scholars' condescending attitude:

> In our own Dynasty, since the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns, there has been a revival of ancient philology, and [scholars] often look down upon the Song writings, considering them not worth mentioning. My humble opinion is that *Kaogu tu* and *Bogu tu* made great efforts to record the artifacts' images and study their names; they

30. For Song Huizong's interest in collecting ancient artifacts, see Patricia B. EBREY, *Accumulating Culture: the Collections of Emperor Huizong*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008.

31. See Ya-Hwei HSU, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform, and the Shaping of New Taste at Huizong's Court," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 73, no. 1 (2013), pp. 137-180.

> achieved a great deal. As to locations of excavation and information about collectors, as long as they were known, they were all duly noted. Later researchers should set these practices as their models. In terms of philology, Song scholars also made groundbreaking contributions. Our own Dynasty's Ruan [Yuan] and Wu [Dacheng] could not transcend the boundaries set by them. The Song scholars' falsifications are indeed laughable, but gentlemen from our own Dynasty are not exempted from such shortcomings.[32]

From a more modern and comparative perspective, R. C. Rudolph remarks positively that although the Song scholars

> did not make spectacular discoveries of buried cities through the use of classical sources as did Heinrich Schliemann less than one hundred years ago […] they did use the early literature, together with a critical sense of judgment, some eight or nine centuries ago to discover much truth about the remote past and to dispel misinformation which had accumulated in the ensuing centuries. […] They had progressed far beyond the "cabinet of curiosities" still current in Europe at a much later date, and were engaged in intelligent research concerned with identification, etymology, dating, and interpretation.[33]

However, scholars must have come a long way to attain these achievements, a fact demonstrated by an earlier catalogue entitled *Illustrated Three Classics of Rites* (*San li tu* 三禮圖). Compiled by Nie Chongyi 聶崇義 (act. 10th cent.), it probably contains more errors than reliable information; a lot of illustrations are fantastical conjectures, but they are also informative and fascinating, because they often demonstrate very clearly the train of thought that the ancients pursued when trying to match artifacts with texts. Here we find one example of *jia* (**figure 5**), which does not look like anything we have come to associate it with. The *San li tu*'s version of the *jia* is a pictorial rendering of an apparently mistaken idea that *jia* is pronounced

32. Wang Guowei, "Songdai jinwen zhulu biao xu" 宋代金文著錄表序 (Preface to a Catalogue of Song dynasty bronze inscriptions), in *Wang Guowei quanji*, vol. 8, pp. 193-194.
33. R. C. Rudolph, "Preliminary Notes on Sung Archaeology," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1963, no. 22 (2), p. 169.

as such because it is related to the homonym *jia* 稼, which means crops.[34] This is why we see a weirdly shaped vessel decorated with crops. Assuming today's knowledge about *jia* is correct, we can all too easily dismiss the *San li tu*'s rendering as unscientific, ignorant, and laughable (although strong evidence to discredit it is lacking), but it at least shows a historic stage in pictorial thinking, in which one started with texts rather than with artifacts. A likely reason was that there was not enough material evidence to work with. But it might also suggest a text-centered mentality that subjugated materiality to a secondary position.

In comparison, later Song scholars' endeavors seem more reliable, partly because they had more objects to work with. Among their works, while the *Catalogue of Antiquities* (*Ji gu lu* 集古錄) by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072)[35] and the *Collection of Bronze and Stone Inscriptions* (*Jin shi lu* 金石錄) by Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠 (1081-1129), with contributions from Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084-1155),[36] focused on inscriptions, others were more interested in carefully recording and illustrating the anonymous artifacts' appearances. A large number of these nameless artifacts were gathered in both imperial palaces and private residences. Since confronting such silent relics from antiquity must have been an intriguing and uncanny experience, they stimulated a desire to bring them forth from the unsettling state of namelessness and match

34. NIE Chongyi 聶崇義, *San li tu* 三禮圖 (Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics), in JIA Gongyan 賈公彥, et al. (eds.), *Liji yaoyi can ben, Chongjiao Sanli tu, Yili shu canben*禮記要義殘本, 重校三禮圖, 儀禮疏殘本 (Extant fragments of the Book of Rights, Re-edited Illustrations of the Three Ritual Classics, Extant fragments of commentaries on the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial), Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981, p. 72.
35. See OUYANG Xiu, *Jigulu bawei* 集古錄跋尾 (Postscripts to the Catalogue of antiquities), in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編, Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1977. For a discussion of Ouyang's contribution to the study of antiquity, see Ronald EGAN, "Rethinking 'Traces' from the Past: Ouyang Xiu on Stone Inscriptions," in *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006, pp. 7-59.
36. ZHAO Mingcheng 趙明誠, *Jinshi lu jiaozheng* 金石錄校正 (Corrected collection of bronze and stone inscriptions), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.

them with names mentioned in the Classics. Therefore, by collecting, cataloguing, naming, and illustrating, the Song scholars created a multi-layered system of reference that cut across images, pictographs, pronunciations, inscriptions, and historic narratives. In a sense, *jia* was resurrected by the Song scholars, because it was they who conjoined the name with the artifact.

Three major examples of such illustrated catalogues have been passed down to us: the *Illustrated Investigations of Antiquities* (*Kaogu tu* 考古圖) by Lü Dalin 呂大臨 (1044-1091), the undated *A Supplement to Illustrated Investigations of Antiquities* (*Xu kaogu tu* 續考古圖),[37] and the more famous, accurate and widely referenced *Illustrated Catalogue of Antiquities at the Xuanhe Hall* (*Xuanhe bogu tu*).[38] Only the latter two had images of *jia*. Although these Song dynasty efforts have rightly been lauded as successful in general, a close examination shows that the process of naming (at least in the instance of *jia*) can be precarious and by no means easy. Indeed, the modern scholar Rong Geng 容庚 (1894-1983) notes that before the *Xuanhe bogu tu* was compiled, even the talented and extremely learned poet-scholar Su Shi did not know the name of *jue*, which was the commonest wine drinking vessel.[39]

The *Xuanhe bogu tu* was commissioned by the emperor Huizong, himself an accomplished artist, to record all the artifacts collected in the imperial palace. But it is possible that part of it was based on or made use of earlier materials, notably illustrations by the eminent painter Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106).[40] Volume 15 lists 16 items under

37. Lü Dalin and Zhao Jiucheng 趙九成, *Kaogu tu, Xu kaogu tu, Kaogu tu shiwen* 考古圖，續考古圖，考古圖釋文 (Illustrated investigations of antiquities, A supplement to illustrated investigations of antiquities, Explanation of characters in illustrated investigations of antiquities), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987.
38. *Xuanhe bogu tu* 宣和博古圖, Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1969.
39. Rong Geng, "Songdai jijin shuji shuping" 宋代吉金書籍書評 (Review of books on Song dynasty bronze inscriptions), in *Rong Geng xuanji* 容庚選集 (Selected works of Rong Geng), Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1994, p. 5.
40. For details about *Xuanhe bogu tu*'s authorship and textual history, see Chen Mengjia, "Bogu tu kaoshu" 博古圖考述 (Examination of the *Bogu tu*), in *Chen Mengjia xueshu lunwenji* 陳夢家學術論文集 (Collected scholarly works of Chen Mengjia), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016, pp. 618-631. For Li Gonglin's involvement in collecting ancient artifacts, see Robert E. Harrist, "The Artist

the *jia* category.[41] Their appearances vary, but except for the last one, the Tiger *jia* of the Han dynasty (*Han hu jia* 漢虎斝, **figure 6**),[42] which *Xuanhe bogu tu*'s compiler(s) deemed a Han imaginary recreation or falsification bearing little relation to its authentic form, all others follow the same pattern, which has since become the accepted prototype of *jia* (see, for example, **figure 7**).

No reason is provided as to why these drinking vessels are indeed what is called *jia*, but the introductions to this volume and the previous one convey to us some interesting rationales and beliefs held by their author(s). While volume 14 does not include any *jia*, its introduction does mention that "[a vessel with the capacity of] one *sheng* 升 (a measuring unit) is called *jue*, [one with] two sheng is called *gu* 觚, [one with] three *sheng* is called *zhi* 觶, [one with] four sheng is called *jiao* 角, [one with] five *sheng* is called *san* 散."[43] Although it is uncredited, we know that this quote comes from the 3rd-century dictionary *Guang ya* 廣雅. Then the introduction adds that *jia* is the Shang dynasty name for what would be called *jue* in Zhou dynasty, and *jia* and *jue* are two names for the same thing. This statement, again uncredited, comes from the *Book of Rites*, and has been challenged by Luo and Wang based on the oracle bone script.

The introduction to Volume 15 starts by asking the rhetorical question of why we need to bother with ancient artifacts' names, and answers thus: "The creation of ritual and justice is a response to later generations' corruptions; the establishment of law and temperance is a response to the decline of earnest emotions. Therefore, whenever a ritual artifact was created, it always had a name; a name is always

---

as Antiquarian: Li Gonglin and His Study of Early Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae*, 1995, 55 (3/4), pp. 237-280.

41. *Xuanhe*, pp. 1103-1131.
42. Ibid., pp. 1130-1131.
43. "一升曰爵,二升曰觚,三升曰觶,四升曰角,五升曰散." The full entry on *jia* in *Shuowen* reads as follows: "1. *jia* is a jade *jue*; 2. it is the Shang equivalent of Xia 夏 dynasty's *zhan* 琖 and Zhou dynasty's *jue*; 3. Some people say that its capacity is six *sheng*." See Xu Shen, *Shuowen*, p. 300. Xu Shen did not give any source for this last claim, and curiously, both of the Song catalogues disregard this information, which would have been considered authoritative at that time.

an admonition."[44]

It then quotes a verse, "When guests have just taken seats in the banquet" (*Bin zhi chu yan* 賓之初筵), from the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shi jing* 詩經), that admonishes against excessive drinking because it always leads to chaos.[45] The introduction argues that this is the reason why the ancestral kings created the vessel *jia*, with a precisely prescribed capacity, to prevent excessive drinking; various other vessels are also named according to their capacities so as to indicate how much one should drink.[46] In other words, the technical aspects such as size and capacity are all embodiments of political order and hierarchies; a corruption in the vessel typologies inevitably leads to political disorder, and vice versa.

At the end of this introduction, the introduction's author claims that he wants to reach all the way back to the original moment when the vessels were conceived, and thus would not be bound by any later assertions. He obviously has a firm belief in the historical authenticity of these artifacts, and these empirical evidences are the only thing he trusts:

> And yet [the proper formulas of] rites of high antiquity have long been lost, the material of drinking vessels was changed to wood; their design became crude, and they were painted red inside and black outside, with colorful decorations, so they were not at all what was originally prescribed, and could not be verified. [Later generations] did not know that the Three Epochs used the bronze models as metaphors for their laws, and we are now very distant from them. Now that these [real] vessels reappear, they can not only show previous mistaken assumptions, but always make us aware of how laughable scholars of the past were.[47]

Little is known about *Xu kaogu tu*: information about its author(s) and time of compilation is now lost, though Lu Xunyuan 陸心源 (1838-1894) considered its author to be Zhao Jiucheng 趙九成 (act.

44. *Xuanhe*, p. 1099.
45. *Shijing jinzhu*, p. 343.
46. *Xuanhe*, p. 1099
47. *Xuanhe*, p. 1100.

12th-13th cent.).[48] Internal evidence suggests that it was compiled in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), namely after the time of *Xuanhe bogu tu*. This catalogue contains a significant number of errors and inconsistencies, but it still provides important information, especially regarding how the study of ancient artifacts developed. It includes illustrations of two drinking vessels that would be called *jia* today, but the ensuing descriptions tell a different story.

In the first instance, the vessel's description is minimal, focusing on the owner at that time (Rong Xunzhi 榮詢之), its size, shape and capacity.[49] The last piece of information is crucial, because according to the aforementioned *Guang ya* quote, which *Xu kaogu tu* also regards as authoritative, capacity is the deciding factor in naming. Since this vessel can take five *sheng* of liquid in the Han standard, it should make a *san* (which, as Wang Guowei contended, actually should be *jia*). On the contrary, *Xu kaogu tu* names it a *ju* 斝 of the Shang period, contradicting the consensus established since *Xuanhe bogu tu*. This discrepancy is pointed out by Rong Geng as the *Xu kaogu tu*'s error.[50]

In the second instance, the vessel (**figure 8**) has no name; the description specifies the vessel's shape, structural components, height, width, and capacity. Then it quotes the same line from the *Guang ya*. As the capacity of the vessel is four *sheng*, the *Xu kaogu tu* this time suggests, in the form of a rhetorical question, that it is possibly a *jiao*,[51] which again is against the present consensus.

These two cases show that the empirical evidence often contradicts the textual one. If the naming was indeed done according to capacity, then the *Xu kaogu tu* at least makes one correct judgment. And yet, first, the measurement might have changed; then, these vessels might be corrupted models that departed from the original specifications; more fundamentally, there is no guarantee of the text's reliability. It is still an open question whether the idea about admonishment against excess is merely a groundless speculation or fabrication, invented in a

48. See Lü and Zhao, *Kaogu tu*, p. 1.
49. Ibid., p. 237.
50. Rong Geng, "Xu kaogu tu shuping" 續考古圖述評 (Commentaries on A Supplement to the *Xu Kaogu tu*), in Lü and Zhao, *Kaogu tu*, p. 188.
51. Ibid., p. 266.

later period. Here is no place to trod into the murky waters of textual history and textual authenticity in ancient China, but it suffices to say that this discrepancy again exposes the tension between descriptive and prescriptive naming, or between empirical and textual approaches. The Song scholars' attempts to set the names of these vessels straight, thus reconciling the floating texts and the stable but mute and nameless artifacts, were not always successful. And one of the reasons is precisely because the materials themselves were inconsistent.

Between the texts and the artifacts, yet another element complicates the picture. Some of these vessels bear inscriptions, which are intermediary between texts and materials. They give information about the artifact's ownership, occasion of use, or reason for production, often in specific terms, which are incorporated into the naming of each vessel. The Classics provide information about generic naming such as *jia* or *jue*, while the inscriptions mark the individuality and historicity of the artifacts. And yet it is still very difficult to pin down exactly what and whom these succinct and obscure inscriptions refer to. But the *Xuanhe bogu tu* takes the step of associating the artifacts with historical figures. For example, among the sixteen *jia* it records, three are named after their inscriptions: "Viscount Yi's *jia* I" and "Viscount Yi's *jia* II" (*Zhou zi Yi jia yi* 周子乙斝一, *Zhou zi Yi jia er* 周子乙斝二),[52] and "Ning [commissioned] Father Ding's *jia*" (*Ning fu Ding jia* 寧父丁斝).[53] Consulting ancient texts, the accompanying notes suggest that these *jia* were owned by these historical figures, or commissioned by their descendants to honor them. But the problem with such claims is that more than one historic figure used the same character as his name, and the same person could have more than one name.

The Song scholars' hope was to bring the material, textual, and inscriptional elements into harmony, so that the errors in the Classics could be corrected (their authenticity and reliability not being doubted), proper ritual formulas could be established, while the artifacts could be correctly named, dated, and contextualized. In other words, they could be *authenticated*. Here we see how a cer-

52. *Xuanhe*, pp. 1103-1106.
53. Ibid., pp. 1107-1108.

tain conceptualization of authenticity that correlated artifacts and events was being formed. For the Song scholars as well as modern literati such as Wang Guowei and Luo Zhenyu, any artifact that fits the specifications of the Classics and bears inscriptions suggesting historic figures was reliable evidence for records of historic events. However, what is more important for the present discussion is the inference from the other direction: an artifact acquires an identity based on its relation to historical events, and this identity defines the artifact's authenticity. A set of narratives, suggested by the inscriptions, gathers around the artifact to form its provenance and becomes part of its own historicity. This is especially important for collectors, who sometimes value an artifact exclusively for the surplus of meaning and value created by the added layer of historic narrative. This tendency can already be found among the Song scholars, as the "Viscount Yi's *jia* I" and "II", and "Ning [commissioned] Father Ding's *jia*" demonstrate. It attracts criticism from some of the contemporaries, for example the prominent scholar and essayist Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) in his *Essays from the Rong Studio* (*Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆).[54] So the boundary between using artifacts to verify history and using history to valorize artifacts is rather vague.

The 12th-century scholarship on artifacts not only founded a systematic study of ancient material culture but also conceptualized historic authenticity according to empirical evidence and positivist methods. But the study of *jia* was far from being settled; the space between the artifact, the inscription, the character, and the texts was still ambiguous enough to leave fertile ground for speculations and new interpretations. More importantly, one of the purposes of studying ancient ritual vessels was to know how to properly produce new ones, which further amplifies the confusion, because for later generations, there is now more work to be done to distinguish an "authentic" Shang or Zhou dynasty *jia* from an earnest Song reproduction. And for the same reason, the definition of authenticity becomes fluid, as a reproduction might or might not be considered a forgery.

54. See Hong Mai 洪邁, *Rongzhai Suibi* 容齋隨筆 (Essays from the Rong Studio), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005, pp. 182-183.

Another possible outcome of the Song scholarship is that *jia* might have become popularized, and the same design might be transposed to other materials. In the *History of the Song dynasty* (*Song shi* 宋史), there are references to *jia* that were of jade, gold, or silver, as well as gourd.[55] In other words, the Song scholarship planted seeds for new confusions as much as, if not more than, solving old problems.

The Song dynasty is the furthest point of my reversed chronology of *jia*'s life, because beyond that, although there are plenty of references to *jia*, they cannot be matched with visual documentation, let alone actual artifacts. But it should be noted that at least in Tang (618-907) and Song literatures, *jia* is commonly used to refer to wine vessels for everyday use.[56] This might suggest that in the Tang and the Song periods, *jia* enjoyed a higher degree of currency (at least in literary language) than in the 20th century. In fact, in the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the character already appears in Chapter 1. When Zhen Shiyin 甄士隱 and Jia Yucun's 賈雨村 conversation gradually

55. Toqto'a 脫脫, *et. al*., *Songshi* 宋史 (History of the Song), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, p. 2428.

56. For example, in the early Tang poet Luo Binwang's 駱賓王 (640-684) "Autumn Chrysanthemums" (*Qiu ju* 秋菊), one finds this line: "Meaningless that I float on this water full of golden pedals, with whom can I enjoy this jade *jia*?" (金翹徒可泛, 玉斝竟誰同); see Dong Gao 董誥, et al. (eds.), *Quan Tang wen xinbian* 全唐文新編 (New complete essays of the Tang), Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 2000, p. 851. The late Tang poet Han Wo's 韓偓 (844-923) "Another poem submitted to the King of Wuyue on the occasion of Daqing Hall banquet for Yuandang" (*You he Daqingtang ci yan Yuandang er you shi cheng Wuyue Wang* 又和大慶堂賜宴元瑭而有詩呈吳越王) reads: "Ants are floating in gold *jia*, and it's difficult to drink up the wine" (蟻浮金斝酒難乾). See Peng Dingqiu 彭定求, et al. (eds.), *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Complete poetry of the Tang), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960, p. 7824. It should be noted that the *yi* 蟻 or "ant" here is a metaphor for foam. But I translate it directly so as to retain this metaphor. Li Yu 李煜 (937-978), the Southern Tang dynasty's last ruler, opens his "Essay turning down the invitation to climb a mountain" (*Que denggao wen* 卻登高文) with the line "Jade *jia* and clear rice wine, gold plate and colorful cake" (玉斝澄醪，金盤繡餜). See *Quan Tang wen xinbian*, p. 1438. Su Shi also mentions *jia* in "A poem following [the previous poem's] rhymes in place of farewell" (*Ciyun dai liubie* 次韻代留別): "The red candles are burnt out, the jade *jia* are quickly clinking" (絳蠟燒殘玉斝飛). See Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi shixuan* 蘇軾詩選 (Selected poetry of Su Shi), Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1957, p. 77.

becomes exhilarating, and their drinking excessive, "the *guang* flies and the *jia* is being offered" (*feiguang xianjia* 飛觥獻斝). [57] Granted, the expression is a nod to an older poetic vocabulary, it still suggests that the term, at least in certain contexts, may not be so outlandish. So Shen is right to point out that antiquities, whether authentic or imitated, were common among the nobility in Cao Xueqin's time, and words such as *jia* would belong to a more colloquial linguistic register than it does in Shen's own time. [58]

Conclusion

There are two important lessons to be learned from the complicated history of *jia* both as a name and as a type of ritual vessel. First, ancient artifacts are not necessarily more reliable than ancient texts; second, the very concept of authenticity needs to be reexamined.

Regarding the first lesson, using historical artifacts to "authenticate" ancient texts is predicated upon the assumption that texts in long-term circulation are naturally susceptible to corruption and even deliberate manipulation, while excavated artifacts are much more reliable because they mostly remain unchanged through time. This is what Wang advocates as the famous "method of two-fold evidence" (*Erchong zhengju fa* 二重證據法) in his 1925 *New Evidence for Ancient History* (*Gushi xinzheng* 古史新證). [59] But Wang's method is by no means new; as Jeffrey Moser points out, the Song antiquarians were well aware of the tension between texts and artifacts. In their quest for a

57. Cao, *Honglou meng*, p. 9.
58. Shen, "'Ban pao jia', p. 4. It should be noted that Shen is mistaken when he argues that "Ban pao jia" is fake simply because, first, it is made of gourd, and second, he has seen such artifacts in the Forbidden City collection. The Song references show that the material is in no way a reliable proof of whether a *jia* is a true antique, a forgery, or an earnest imitation. A further example can be found in *Shuowen*, compiled in the Later Han dynasty, which mentions *jia* as made of jade rather than bronze, although this evidence is compromised by the fact that it considers *jia* to be the same as *jue*. See Xu, *Shuowen jiezi*, p. 300.
59. Wang Guowei, *Gushi xinzheng* 古史新證, in *Wang Guowei quanji*, vol. 11, pp. 241-242.

"timeless moral and cosmic order," they "agreed that texts imperfectly represented this timeless order […, while] the durability and physical presence of antiquities gave them the capacity to catalyze moral transformation without the mediation of textual representation." [60] In other words, the artifacts serve as a constant to correct the texts as an unreliable variant.

However, as the present biography of *jia* demonstrates, the real problem behind this method of authentication is that the artifact is no less a variable than the language that describes it. In its very inception, the shape of a *jia* might be a materialization of the character 斝, which is possibly a visualization of an idea about temperate drinking or political order (although it is equally possible that the opposite is true), and this was historically just the beginning of a long process in which the name and the numerous incarnations of the artifact shaped each other. The pre-linguistic origin of the artifact is just as unattainable as, and by no means more authentic than, the original "idea" represented by the name.

This leads to the second lesson: in the end, what really constitutes a real historic artifact? Noel Barnard gives an accurate, balanced and widely applicable definition of forgery, an opposite but closely related category:

> [A]n artifact of antique appearance which has been manufactured long after its alleged ancient date of manufacture with the intention to deceive collectors, art-historians, or scholars, is a forgery. Any particular part of a genuine ancient artifact (e.g. an inscription) which has been incorporated at a later date and also with intention to deceive, is likewise spurious. [… I]t is clear enough that "deception" is the key-note. Accordingly, an honest imitation of an archaic vessel is not to be classified as a forgery. However, under certain circumstances the object may, nevertheless, become classifiable as a fake – e.g. when a dealer incorporates an inscription in it and palms it off as a genuine article. [61]

60. Jeffrey Moser, "Why Cauldrons Come First: Taxonomic Transparency in the Earliest Chinese Antiquarian Catalogues," *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2014, no. 11, p. 3.
61. Noel Barnard, "The Incidence of Forgery Amongst Archaic Chinese Bronzes: Some Preliminary Notes," *Monumenta Serica*, 1968, vol. 27, p. 92.

Shen considers Miaoyu's *jia* to be fake because its provenance, as indicated by the catchy but dubious inscriptions, is chronologically impossible. This detail demonstrates Cao Xueqin's novelistic brilliance in choosing to set part of the *jia*'s provenance in the Song dynasty, a period when examples of "an honest imitation of an archaic," in Barnard's words, were being actively manufactured to serve practical purposes. Furthermore, in Cao's fictional setting, the artifact's "authentic" identity is determined not just by when it was made and what it is made of, but also by the ownership it has had throughout its "life," and this ownership is sometimes "proved" by the inscriptions the artifact bears. This transformation of an artifact's identity is not restricted to fiction: for instance, Zhao Mingcheng criticized Li Gonglin for randomly associating an ancient artifact with specific historical figures:

> When he [Li Gonglin] obtained a square *ting* vessel he immediately concluded that it was the one presented to Tzu Ch'an by the Marquis of Chin. And when at a later date he got this *yi*, in a like manner he took it to be that of Pi Chieh, the mother of Duke Hsiang of Chin. This is indeed ridiculous. As a matter of fact, all objects that come down to the present time from remote antiquity are precious by nature. What need is there to go to devious means to give them some false connection with a historical name so that later their value may be enhanced? This is a weakness in being too fond of antiquity.[62]

But what mattered for Li was that he could now add himself to the prestigious lineage of ownership attached to these objects, which increased his status as a collector. By the same token, Miaoyu can also claim a special prestige by placing herself alongside Wang Kai and Su Shi, as her showing off of the utensils apparently suggests. So Li and Miaoyu are defined by the objects they collect as much as the objects are defined by their ownership. This mentality turns ownership into a relationship of mutual attachment. Indeed, this is how Janet Hoskins formulates the idea of a "biographical object": "Things can be said to

62. Quoted from R. C. Rudolph, "Preliminary Notes on Sung Archaeology," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1963, no. 22 (2), p. 171.

have 'biographies' as they go through a series of transformations from gift to commodity to inalienable possession, and persons can also be said to invest aspects of their own biographies in things."[63] However, the relationship of mutual attachment becomes problematic when it is built into the identity and *authenticity* of an object; for example, Miaoyu's Jia is "authentic" if it was actually owned by Wang Kai and seen by Su Shi, and fake if it was not. An object's ownership is part of its "reception history," to borrow a term from literary criticism, and is incorporated into its own identity.

Therefore, to recapitulate the statement I make in the beginning of this essay, an artifact is in itself neither authentic nor fake. Authenticity is a regime constructed out of the relationship between persons, names, and artifacts to serve specific purposes. The study of ancient artifacts is therefore not as objective and innocent as it wishes to be. Just as Li Gonglin's mistaken definition of his acquisition's authenticity was the result of an excessive love of antiquity, Wang Guowei's conclusion about authenticity in his short article was stimulated by the anxiety over a serious cultural crisis in an age of widespread skepticism. Even the fakeness/authenticity dichotomy in the fictional context of *Dream of the Red Chamber* is exclusively constructed upon provenance and social relations. In a sense, this is also what Confucius demanded in the "rectification of names" (*zhengming* 正名)[64] – more than simply aiming for an accurate, objective, and unmediated language, a rectified name is essentially a normative requirement that carries with it deep concerns for ideological dominance. Political systems, actions, and artifacts should all reflect the "correct" morality and "proper" order, which are represented in a meticulously prescribed linguistic regime. Only when this correspondence between the name and its substance is established can "authenticity" be guaranteed.

The study of ancient artifacts remains a contentious battleground for competing ideologies, albeit often in refracted ways. The two

63. Janet Hoskins, "Agency, Biography and Objects," in Christopher Tilley, et al., *The Handbook of Material Culture*, London: Sage Publications, 2006, p. 74.

64. *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, 13.3; Edward Slingerland (trans.), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003, p. 139. See also Moser, "Why Cauldrons Come First," p. 19.

20th-century episodes detailed in this essay were caused by, and deeply imbedded in, the intellectual and political conflicts of their respective times, but they also perpetuated the longstanding tension between texts and artifacts. The same can be said about the debate surrounding the "Doubting the Ancients" school that dominated most of the 20th century and is still ongoing.[65] This tension may never be resolved, but instead of (or perhaps in addition to) perpetuating it, we can start from reflecting upon the very concept of historical authenticity.

Ultimately, one cannot help sensing a touch of irony in the apparently coincidental fact that the *jiǎ*'s 叚name and *jiǎ* 假, the Chinese word for "fake," form a pair of homonyms.

65. See, for example, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (ed.), *Gushi bian* 古史辨 (Debates on ancient history), vol. 1, Beiping: Pu she, 1926, and Li Xueqin 李學勤, *Zouchu yigu shidai* 走出疑古時代 (Going beyond the era of doubting the ancients), Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994.

Figure 1: 畢 in oracle bone script.

Figure 2: 畢 in oracle bone script. Luo Zhenyu, *Yinxu shuqi kaoshi* 殷墟書契考釋 (Investigation and explanation of the Yinxu oracle bone inscriptions), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006, pp. 182.

Figure 3: 畢 in bronze script. Ibid.

Figure 4: 敔 / in bronze script. Ibid.

Figure 5: *San li tu*'s illustration and commentary on Jia.
Nie Chongyi, *San li tu*, 1981, p. 72.

Figure 6: A Han Dynasty imaginary reconstruction of Jia, recorded in *Xuanhe bogu tu*. *Xuanhe bogu tu*, p. 1130.

Figure 7: "Father Ding's Jia" in *Xuanhe bogu tu*. Ibid., pp. 1132-1133.

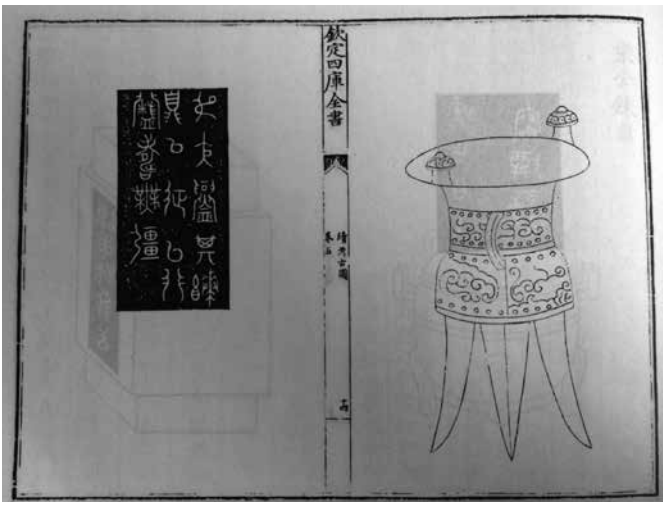

Figure 8: An unnamed bronze vessel recorded in *Xu kaogu tu*;
it is suggested as an example of the Jiao type, although it clearly belongs
to the Jia type. Rong Geng, "Xu kaogu tu shuping", p. 266.

English abstracts

Nathanel Amar: *The Lives of* Dakou *in China: From Waste to Nostalgia*

A peculiar object deeply transformed the Chinese cultural sphere in the 1990s: *dakou* (打口) CDs and tapes. Literally meaning "cut" or "gashed," the term *dakou* refers to CDs and tapes illegally sold on the Chinese black market in the 1990s, which had been shipped to China from the West in order to recycle unsold CDs and tapes. To prevent them from being sold on the black market, these CDs and tapes were cut (打) on the edges (口) in order to render them useless. This did not take into account, however, that an audio disc is read from the center to the outer edge, so only the last track was lost. A large part of this musical waste was sold for a cheap price on the black market in large cities in China, in defiance of official censorship, since a lot of Western pop music was forbidden. This paper tackles the question of *dakou* nostalgia by the members of the "*dakou* generation" through a study of various accounts, as well as stories and articles that have been published in the past few years, shedding new light on this unprecedented phenomenon.

Michel Chambon: *Producing and Consuming the Blood of Christ among Chinese Protestants Today.*

This article explores the ways in which five Chinese Christian denominations produce and consume the liquid presented as the 'blood of Christ' in Nanping City (Fujian). It presents the various means of production and concerns about proper use that inform the Chinese Christians' practices and discourses. The study shows that while the spread of Christianity in China relies on material objects, it operates not so much by promoting claims about the Christian God as by questioning the nature of things and beings.

Zhu Pinyan: *Avalokiteśvara in Gold: Art and Ideology at Contemporary Baodingshan*

On June 13, 2015, the newly renovated Thousand-Handed, Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara statue at Baodingshan was officially unveiled to the public in Chongqing, China. Sculpted in the twelfth century, the colossal statue is now covered in glittering gold and vibrant colors. While many criticized the lavish conservation work, others stressed the fact that the statue had undergone similar restorations over the course of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911), which saw the application of new pigment and gold to protect the heavily deteriorated stone. This paper aims to explore the motivations behind the decision to conserve the statue by such lavish means in 2015. I demonstrate that while the 2015 conservation project is but a continuation of the government supervision of local religious and cultural activities at Baodingshan, it has a decidedly different agenda from previous efforts. The recent conservation work is premised upon the assumption that the Avalokiteśvara statue should be recognized as a work of "art." Moreover, two narratives differentiate Baodingshan sculptures from those at other famous historical Buddhist sites: that it was Chinese rather than foreign scholars who made the discovery, and that Baodingshan sculptures represent an indigenous Chinese style. Such designation serves as the bedrock of Baodingshan's transformation into a cultural heritage site. Both the Chongqing and national government saw the conservation project as an opportunity to reaffirm the artistic merit of a local religious image, which would both generate economic interest and galvanize patriotism.

Guangchen Chen: *The Biography of a Ritual Vessel: On Naming, and the Dialectics of Authenticity*

This essay attempts to sketch a biography for *jia* 斝, a type of ritual vessel once common during the Shang 商 (c. 1600-1046 BC) and Zhou 周 (c. 1046-249 BC) periods. While its name, in various written forms, survives, the knowledge of how it looked like was lost after the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). The mismatch between the name and the artifact nonetheless became a fertile ground for conjectural and creative formulations of the idea of authenticity. The present essay identifies three key episodes in the "life" of *jia*: the Song Dynasty cataloging of ancient artifacts, early 20th-century research on oracle bone script, and the mid-20th century debate on materialism and the hermeneutics of fiction. They correspond to moments of transformation and breakthrough in intellectual history, when scholars attempted to solve the puzzle presented by this vessel through innovative philological, iconographical, and literary

methods. By investigating these episodes, this essay argues that, although the establishment of historic authenticity relies heavily on object-based evidence, the interpretation of the latter is conditioned by the act of naming and the narrative of provenance. More importantly, the very concept of authenticity is a regime constructed out of the relationship between persons, names, and artifacts, and is itself historicized through the ever-developing episteme.

Lyce Jankowski: *The Forger and Numismatist: Li Baotai and Bao Kang*

"What lengths the forgers go to! They produce items as large as *yi* and *ding* vessels; and as small as coins." These are the bitter facts that greet the reader on the first page of *Guanguge quanbian* 觀古閣泉辨 (Identifying the coins from the *Guanguge*), a pamphlet from 1873 which deals exclusively with the question of forgeries. Written by the eminent numismatist and collector Bao Kang 鮑康 (1810-1881), it gives the names of several forgers of the Xianfeng and Tongzhi reign periods, and details of their particular techniques. These forgeries, aimed at collectors, circulated through the hands of antique dealers. We learn that some dealers availed themselves of the services of forgers. For example, the brothers Su Zhaonian蘇兆年 (dates unknown) and Su Yinian 蘇億年 (dates unknown) in Chang'an worked together with a certain Zhang Erming 張二銘 (dates unknown). The manufacturing techniques varied, and some were more sophisticated than others. The simplest method was to make casts of existing coins; but sometimes an old coin might be given a new inscription, and some fantasy pieces were created too. One forger in particular attracted great attention. He was Li Baotai 李寶臺 († ca 1875), who earned the respect of the most important collectors of the time—Liu Xihai 劉喜海 (1793-1852), Ye Zhishen 葉志詵 (1776-1861), Li Zuoxian 李佐賢 (1807-1876), Chen Jieqi 陳介祺 (1813-1884), and Yang Jizhen 楊繼震 (1820-1901) —who called on his talents at making rubbings and entrusted him with their private collections of coins. They even bought old coins for him, although they were aware of his forgery business. The quality of his rubbings rendered him indispensable to them and at the same time afforded him direct access to rare pieces, which he could copy at leisure. The relationships between the collectors and forgers were thus ambiguous. Bao Kang frequently met with the forgers, whom he named, and whose skills he acknowledged. The sale of such forgeries did not worry him as much as the possibility that they might be published by collectors who did not know better.

Nathalie Monnet: *The Chinese Books in the French Royal Library: An Essential Element in the Birth of Western Sinology*

Until the end of the nineteenth century, "China" was a concept defined by texts in the mind of Europeans, as any understanding of this country could only be had through the written word. Chinese books started being imported in Europe in the seventeenth century. At first regarded as curios by collectors, then by Christian missionaries as cultural treasures where spiritual and technical knowledge was buried, they finally came to be seen as indispensable tools that enabled generations of sinologists to tackle new and exciting fields of research. Starting to collect Chinese books in 1668 under Louis XIV, the Bibliothèque du Roi—the Royal Library—in Paris best epitomizes each of these three phases. The progressive accumulation of Chinese books was the essential factor that led to the creation of the academic study of Chinese civilization in France. Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat, the curator of the Chinese collection at the Library, catalogued these books, rendered them more accessible, and provided the essential tools necessary to master the Chinese written language. The Chinese collection at the French Royal Library, through his lifelong effort, became one of the fundamental agents in the making of the modern field of sinology.

中文摘要

馬泰然 (Nathanel Amar)：“打口”在中國的多重命運：從垃圾到懷舊

二十世紀九十年代，一個嶄新的東西深深地改變了中國文化景觀，那就是打口。打口的字面義表示“缺口”，這個詞指的是中國九十年代當中黑市裡非法販賣的唱片、光盤和磁帶，這些貨品來自西方國家由輪船運到中國的全部都是唱片和帶子的貨櫃，但沒賣出而被收回的。為了不讓這些貨物被非法轉賣，它們的邊角被打破，因而無法再使用。不過，這麼做，倒是沒想到一點，就是使用時，唱盤的取讀都從中央向外進行，所以缺口的打口仍然可使用，除了最後一段。這些音樂垃圾因此流傳在大城市的黑市裡，非常便宜，挑戰著官方監控，因大部分的西方流行音樂都被官方禁止。本文首先處理可稱之為“打口一代人”的懷舊問題，經由分析最近幾年來越來越多的與之相關的見證、故事和文章，它們都對這個嶄新的現象提供了一個新照明。

陳立邦 (Michel Chambon)：製造和消費基督的血：當代中國的物質與基督教

本文主旨在探察中國南平市的五種基督教派製造和消費“基督的血”的方式。本文列出了不同的做法和顧慮，它們提供了有關中國基督徒的信仰實踐和說辭的資訊。本研究顯示，基督教在中國的發展依賴著物質實體，但它卻經常質詢物和人的性質，甚少提倡關於基督教的神的確認。

朱品岩 (Zhu Pinyan)：金色觀音：當代寶頂山的藝術與思想體系

2015年6月13日，重慶大足寶頂山新裝千手千眼觀音正式向公眾重新開放。這尊造於12世紀的巨型菩薩像此時已金光熠熠、色彩鮮明。對於這次修

復的評價不一，既有來自諸多渠道的批評聲音，也有觀點強調明清時已有重新彩妝這尊造像的先例，並且認為新彩和金箔有益於保護日漸腐朽的石質基底。關於本次高度介入的修復方案，本文志在探討其背後的動機與價值認知。我認為這一修復項目一方面反映了政府對地方宗教、文化活動的監管，這點與明清時期一脈相承，但從另一方面看，這次2015年的修復項目將這尊造像當作一件藝術品對待，這一價值認知是二十世紀初才開始形成的。在此前提之下，圍繞寶頂山造像的討論還強調其與中國其他地方佛教造像的不同：寶頂山造像被認為是由中國而非外國學者發現、且代表了中國本土的雕塑風格。以這種認知為基礎，寶頂山得以發展成一個文化遺產旅遊地。因而重慶和國家級政府都將此次修復看作一次機會，意在重申寶頂山造像的藝術價值， 從而發展地方經濟，並催生參觀者的愛國情懷。

陳廣琛 (Chen Guangchen) : 罍的前世今生：論名物互證與信史難求

本文是一篇關於“罍”的傳記。“罍”是一種商周時期流行的盛酒禮器。雖然它的名字通過古籍以各種寫法流傳下來，但它的具體形制在秦代以後就已湮沒於歷史裡。人們在嘗試解決這種名與物脫節的過程中，不斷重新理解和定義“真實性”這一概念。本文的目的，正是對歷史學語境中的“真實性”概念，作概念上的辯證。本文為“罍”的歷史，歸納出三個關鍵時刻，分別是宋代對古物的定名與歸類，二十世紀初的甲骨文研究，和二十世紀中期關於闡釋學和唯物主義的爭論。它們都與思想史上的轉折、突破相對應；在這些時刻，學者們創造性地運用語文學、圖像學和文學批評方法，試圖解決這種禮器帶來的各種謎團。通過分析這三個關鍵歷史時刻，本文提出，歷史真實性的確立，雖建基於以物為中心的證據，但是這種證據本身，又受到命名和文物流傳史這兩個因素的規限。由此可得出三個結論：第一，就其自身而言，一個物件無所謂“真”或“假”；針對古物所建立的歷史真實性，本質上是一種固化了的社會關係，此關係形成于人、名、物三者之間的張力；第二，以物為依據去證明歷史，有陷入循環論證的危險；第三，歷史真實性這個概念本身，也是隨著認知範式的發展，不斷被歷史化的。

何淑貞 (Lyce Jankowski) : 李寶臺與鮑康：貨幣學家對偽幣的意見

《甚矣作偽者之勞也。大而彝鼎，小而泉幣》。以此尖銳的評價作為全書開端，《觀古閣泉辨》（為辨認觀古閣錢幣而作）寫於1873年，是一本專注於介紹偽幣的小冊子。作者鮑康 (1810-1881)，是一位傑出的古幣研究者和收藏家。該書揭曉了自咸豐（1850-1861）至同治 (1861-1875) 年間幾位偽幣製造者的名諱及他們（製造偽幣）的特殊技法。這些偽幣以古董商為媒介最終流入收藏家之手。據此亦可解釋一些古董商和偽造者之間的合夥關係。

如長安的蘇兆年，蘇億年兄弟曾與某位名為張二銘的偽造者合作。製造偽幣的手段多樣甚至堪稱精細。最簡單的是複制模澆鑄工藝，此外，亦可見一種經由多道工序，將新字樣加在舊幣上的手法，還有些偽幣製造者不憚去創造新的、從未存在過的錢幣樣式。一位名為李寶台的偽幣製造者尤其引人注目。他受到當時幾位最大的收藏家器重。劉喜海 (1793-1852)、葉志詵 (1776-1861)、李佐賢 (1807-1876)、陳介祺 (1813-1884)、楊繼震 (1820-1901) 都把他們自己收藏的錢幣拿出來讓他作拓片。他們有時甚至去給他購買一些古幣，儘管知道他製造偽幣。高超的壓印水平讓李寶台成為不可或缺的人。他因此得到了一條可以直接獲取那些稀有錢幣的途徑，在充足的時間裡對它們自由地複制。因此，收藏家和偽幣製造者處在一種“含混不清”的關係中。鮑康會定期和他指定的這些偽幣製造者會面，了解他們的一些專長。比起這些假幣的銷路，鮑康更擔心它們可能會被一些經驗不足的收藏家們編目。

蒙曦 (Nathalie Monnet)：法國皇家圖書館裡的中文書籍：西方漢學誕生的基本要素

直到十九世紀末，對“中國”的觀念乃按照歐洲人心中的文本來定義的，就如對這個令人著迷的國家之任何理解，只能通過被寫下的文字。中文書籍十七世紀開始輸入歐洲。剛開始時，它們被收藏家們看作古玩奇品，隨後被基督教宣教士們視為文化儲藏室，收藏了靈性的和技術知識；它們最後最認為是不可或缺的工具，讓一代又一代的漢學家們得以開闢叫人興奮的新的研究領域。位於巴黎的法國皇家圖書館在路易十四世統治期間從1668年起開始收藏中文圖書，是收藏中文書的三個時期之最佳縮影。這個圖書館逐漸累積中文書，為法國設立中國文化學術研究機構奠定了基本因素。在法國皇家圖書館擔任中文藏書部主任的雷慕沙，登錄了那些中文圖書，使它們更好地被利用，提供了掌握書寫中文的基本必備工具。雷慕沙一生的努力，使法國皇家圖書館的中文藏書成了建造現代漢學領域的基要功臣之一。