SCHOLARS AND THEIR MARGINALIA IN THE QING DYNASTY (1644-1911)

by

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Abstract

Marginalia are a variety of writings and symbols drawn by readers on the pages of books. In Chinese history, marginalia were rare in both records and physical books before the late Ming (1368-1644). The early-Qing (1644-1911) calligrapher, bibliophile, and textual scholar He Zhuo (1661-1722) devoted himself to reading and collating books and composed marginalia on hundreds of titles. After his death, the composition and transcription of marginalia started to become a popular scholarly practice. The transcription of marginalia helped to build up a rather efficient model of transmitting information, knowledge, and thought among scholars. It formed a particular scholarly culture—a systematic way for scholars to think and behave.

This study explores how this scholarly culture took form, gained momentum, and shaped scholarly styles and scholars’ lives, thoughts, mental states in the Qing dynasty. The main part of this study is made up of four chapters. Chapter 2 introduces the characteristics of marginalia in comparison with other Chinese interpretive texts. Chapter 3 is a case study of He Zhuo’s marginalia. Focusing on He’s marginalia on the Hou Hanshu (History of the Later Han Dynasty [25-220]), this chapter explores He’s reading habits and scholarly practices, and their influence on later scholars and readers. Chapter 4 is concerned with questions of who participated in the practice of transcribing marginalia, how different participants were involved in the process of transcription, and their motives and attitudes. Chapter 5 analyses different transcriptionists’ colophons, so as to explore their private lives and mental states.

Qing scholars spent an enormous amount of time and energy composing and transcribing marginalia. They were concerned with both content and form of marginalia. In this process, scholars not only tried to accumulate knowledge, but also pursued its aesthetic values. They inherited reading habits and scholarly approaches from Ming scholars, and developed their own way of reading, doing research, and living.
Lay Summary

Marginalia are a variety of writings and symbols drawn by readers on the margins of books. Centring on marginalia, this study explores the reading practices and the scholarly culture of Qing Dynasty China (1644-1911). Beginning in the early Qing period, more and more scholars devoted themselves to reading and collating ancient texts. They gradually developed a habit of writing marginalia while reading, transcribing other readers’ marginalia, and editing marginalia in various ways, which formed a particular scholarly culture. This study explores how this scholarly culture took form, gained momentum, and shaped scholarly styles, scholars’ lives, thoughts, and mental states in the Qing dynasty.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Yinzong Wei.
Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................. iii
Lay Summary .................................................................................................................. iv
Preface ............................................................................................................................ v
Contents ........................................................................................................................... vi
List of Tables .................................................................................................................... vii
List of Figures ................................................................................................................ viii
Conventions ..................................................................................................................... x
Chart of Historical Periods Discussed ........................................................................ xi
1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
2. Chinese Interpretive Texts: Annotation, Commentary, and Marginalia ................. 15
3. The Reading Seed He Zhuo and His Marginalia ................................................... 89
4. Transcription: Transcriptionists and Relationships Built with Marginalia ............ 124
5. Transcription: Time, Space, and Scholarship ......................................................... 176
6. Conclusion: Marginalia, Scholars, and the Intellectual History of the Qing ........... 218
   Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 230
   Appendix I Books Containing He Zhuo’s Marginalia and Their Transcriptions ......... 244
List of Tables

Table 3-1  Table of the sexagenary cycle……………………………………………………… 111
Table 4-1  Marginalia employed by Ruan Yuan’s edition of the Three Classics……………… 143
Table 5-1  Gu Guangqi’s colophons in the *Huayang guo zhi* held at the National Library of
            China ……………………………………………………………………………………………… 186
List of Figures

Figure 2-1  One half leaf of a Qing edition of the Xixiangji ........................................... 46
Figure 2-2  Genealogy of the transmission of the Yijing of New Text School in the Western
            Han ................................................................................................................. 61
Figure 2-3a A manuscript copy of the Chunqiu guliangzhuan ................................. 64
Figure 2-3b First leaf of juan 2 of a Southern Song edition of the Zhouyi zhushu ........... 65
Figure 2-4  First leaf of juan 1 of a Southern Song edition of the Shiji ....................... 67
Figure 2-5  Two half leaves of a Ming edition of the Maoshi zhenya ....................... 70
Figure 2-6  One leaf of the Xin qie Sanzang chushen quanzhuan ................................ 72
Figure 2-7  First half leaf of a multicolor edition of the Yinfujing ............................ 75
Figure 2-8  Two half leaves from a Ming edition of the Shijjing ............................... 76
Figure 2-9a One half leaf of the Hanshu containing marginalia in four colors .......... 79
Figure 2-9b One half leaf of the Li Yishan shiji containing marginalia in four colors .... 80
Figure 2-10 One half leaf of the Jixuan ji containing marginalia on the layout of the book ... 83
Figure 2-11 One half leaf of the Qian shu .................................................................. 85
Figure 4-1  Last half-leaf of the Shitong with Jiang Gao’s transcription of He Zhuo’s
            marginalia ..................................................................................................... 130
Figure 4-2  Leaf 22b of juan 20 of the Shitong with He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by
            an unknown transcriptionist ........................................................................ 131
Figure 4-3  Transcriptions of He Zhuo’s marginalia on the Zhouli zhushu ............... 141
Figure 4-4  Leaf 1a of juan 1 of the San Tangren wenji with Zhang Yu’s marginalia .... 150
Figure 4-5a Leaf 1a of the Yulan shi in the Tangren xuan Tangshi with He Zhuo’s
            marginalia ..................................................................................................... 168
Figure 4-5b  Leaf 65b of the *Yulan shi* in the *Tangren xuan Tangshi* with He Zhuo’s marginalia and impression of seals ......................................................... 169

Figure 4-5c  Last half leaf of the *Heyue yingling ji* in the *Tangren xuan Tangshi* with He Zhuo’s marginalia and impression of seals ......................................................... 170

Figure 4-6  First half leaf of the *Yulan shi* in the *Tangren xuan Tangshi* containing He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by an unknown scribe ........................................... 171

Figure 4-7  Transcriptions of He Zhuo’s marginalia in a Ming copy of the *Hou Hanshu* .... 173

Figure 5-1a  First page and Table of Contents of the *Wudai shiji* with Gu Guangqi’s colophon ................................................................. 192

Figure 5-1b  Last leaf of the *Wudai shiji* with He Zhuo’s colophons transcribed by Yao Shiyu …… 193

Figure 5-2  Leaves 5b and 6a of juan 1 of the *Li Yishan shiji* with various scholars’ marginalia respectively transcribed in different colors .............................................. 200

Figure 5-3  Jiang Fengzao’s transcription of various scholars’ marginalia on the *Dushu minqiuji* … 204

Figure 6-1  First half leaf of the “Su Xueshi wenji jiao yu” ......................................................... 225
Conventions

Chinese names and terms are Romanized according to the *pinyin* system, except for names better known in another form such as that of Confucius and those preferred by authors writing in European languages. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated; official titles follow Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*. *Zhushu* 注疏, *pingdian* 評點 and * pijiao* 批校 are respectively translated as annotation, commentary and marginalia. Chinese rare books are referred to by *juan* (lit. “scroll,” similar to “chapter”); page numbers of texts cited from rare books are given unless there is no clear page number in the book. Call numbers of rare books that were in Chinese characters will be changed to the initials of the characters. For example, *xianshan* 線善 is replaced by XS; *xianpu* 線普 by XP.
# Chart of Historical Periods Discussed

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<th>BCE</th>
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<td>Western Zhou</td>
<td>1045?-771</td>
<td>Spring and Autumn Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Zhou</td>
<td>771-256</td>
<td>771-479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warring States Period</td>
<td>479-221</td>
<td>Qin Dynasty 221-207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Dynasty</td>
<td>206 BCE-220 CE</td>
<td>Western Han 西漢 206 BCE—9 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Kingdoms</td>
<td>220-280</td>
<td>Eastern Han 東漢 23-220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin Dynasty</td>
<td>265-420</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Dynasties</td>
<td>420-589</td>
<td>Northern Dynasties 北朝 386-581</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sui Dynasty</td>
<td>589-618</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tang Dynasty</td>
<td>618-907</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms</td>
<td>907-960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Dynasty</td>
<td>960-1279</td>
<td>Northern Song 北宋 960-1127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Song 南宋 1127-1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuan Dynasty</td>
<td>1279-1368</td>
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<td>Ming Dynasty</td>
<td>1368-1644</td>
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# 1

## Introduction

In the past hundred years, studies on the history of Chinese scholarship and intellectual history\(^1\) in the Qing 清 dynasty (1644-1911) have experienced a considerable transformation in ideas, approaches and methodology. Broadly speaking, what was emphasized by academic leaders and dominant views shifted from political factors to philosophical aspects, later to social-economic and cultural dimensions. Some scholars, especially those who focused on the philosophical aspects, such as thoughts, values and beliefs, claimed that they were concerned with the “internal” dimension of scholarship, while studies concentrating on political, social, economic, religious and cultural factors were deemed to be the “external” dimension.\(^2\) In this regard, the study of Qing scholarship fell into two categories: the external approach and the internal approach. The tension between the internalists and externalists was mainly created by the former. Of course, most scholars did not conduct homogenous research focusing on only one dimension. As with all other categories, this dichotomy is not a simple one. Different scholars usually employ different approaches and pay distinct attention to each dimension. And different approaches usually resulted in different evaluations of Qing scholars’ achievements.

Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868-1936), Liu Shipei 劉師培 (1884-1919), Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), and many nationalists in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century China stressed

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\(^1\) Intellectual history in this study refers to the history of scholars (including scholars’ social network, sponsorship, and such), scholarship (including theory, knowledge, and scholarly information) and scholar’s thoughts (including such things as their beliefs, values, and ideas).

\(^2\) See, for example, Yu Yingshi 余英時 (Ying-shih Yü), “Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch’ing Confucian Intellectualism,” *Ch’ing-hua hsueh-pao* 11 (1975): 105-144.
political factors in the development of Chinese scholarship.³ For example, in Liang Qichao’s comprehensive study of the scholarship of the Qing dynasty, Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshushi 中國近三百年學術史 (A history of Chinese scholarship in the past 300 years), he made a generally fair assessment of Qing scholars mainly according to their scholarly achievements.⁴ But when talking about the characteristics of Qing scholarship, he claimed that “The point of departure of Ch’ing (Qing) learning was a violent reaction against the Neo-Confucianism of the Song [宋, 960-1279] and Ming [明, 1368-1644].”⁵ He stressed the discontinuity between Qing learning and earlier Song-Ming learning. This discontinuity, in Liang’s view, resulted from political pressure occasioned by Manchu rule. He argued, “When literary inquisitions took place all too frequently, scholars became increasingly concerned with self-preservation and dared not expound any doctrine that might arouse official suspicious. But the talents and intellect of brilliant and outstanding men could not remain unused forever; exegesis of ancient aphorisms and exhaustive searching into the semantics of technical terms could certainly be called [tasks which] ‘do not injure the world and do not conflict with men,’ and in these scholars found a refuge.”⁶ Benjamin Schwartz has


⁴ See Liang Qichao, Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshu shi 中國近三百年學術史, Zhu Weizheng 朱維鈞, ed. (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1985).

⁵ Liang, Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period, 27.

⁶ Liang, Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period, 47.
commented that Liang “stressed the peculiar repressiveness of the Manchu dynasty which forced
the literati away from ‘practical statesmanship’ into the innocuous pursuit of pure scholarship.”

There are two points needing our attention: 1) Liang focused on the Evidential Research
(kaojuxue 考據學) of the Qing dynasty (including disciplines such as philology, etymology,
paleography, geography, epigraphy, astronomy, phonetics, and phonology) and largely neglected
the Cheng-Zhu Learning of Principle (Cheng Zhu lixue 程朱理學) and Lu-Wang Learning of Mind
and Heart (Lu Wang xinxue 陸王心學); he concentrated on “pure scholarship” — scholarly
methodology, knowledge — and paid less attention to philosophical dimensions. In this regard, he
concluded that the Qing scholars contributed less in philosophical fields, and this was caused by
an oppressive climate that prevailed under Manchu rule. 2) Liang stressed the determinative impact
of political factors. This politics-oriented approach is rather influential. However, it tends to
oversimplify the situation, so that it soon drew a great deal of criticism.

Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990), Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990), as well as many other scholars
took a rather distinctive approach that they focused on the so-called “internal aspects” of Chinese
scholarship. This approach was followed by Yu Yingshi’s studies on the “internal development of
Neo-Confucianism” and the “inner logic” of intellectual trends, i.e., “focusing on the inner

7 Benjamin Schwartz, “Foreword” to Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period, xviii.
8 See Liang, Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period and Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshu shi.
9 See, for example, Sun Qinshang 孫欽善, Zhongguo guwenxianxue shi 中國古文獻學史 (Beijing:
Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 831-835.
“Qingdai sixiangshi de yige xin jieshi” 清代思想的一個新解釋, in Yu Yingshi, Zhongguo sixiang
evolution of intellectual history, ignoring political, economic and other external factors.”12 Yu came up with a new theoretical framework focused on the conflict between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism to analyze the development of Chinese thought in the late imperial period. One serious problem of this approach is that it has the tendency of detaching thought from its contexts, which might oversimplify the course that thought took and, of course, deviated from the historical facts. 13

Recent studies by Huang Jinxing (Chin-shing) 黃進興, Benjamin Elman, Hamaguchi Fojio, Lin Qingzhang, Edward Wang, and others have shown that Qing scholars, Qian-Jia Evidential Researchers and New Text scholars in particular, raised new questions and managed to supply various new answers. Evidential Research also had its philosophical dimensions and concrete ideas about how to cope with new practical affairs. These studies all showed the necessity of taking into account external factors in the study of the history of scholarship and thought. 14 Examples include,
Elman’s study of the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of Evidential Research and the Changzhou New Text School in the middle and late Qing,¹⁵ Thomas Wilson and Huang Jinxing’s studies of Confucian practice,¹⁶ Lawrence Kessler, Frederic Wakeman and Kent Guy’s studies of the relationship between scholars and the Manchu state, all of which demonstrated scholars’ attention to the external dimensions of scholarship and thought.¹⁷ The study of intellectual history

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¹⁵ See Benjamin Elman, From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China, revised edition (Los Angeles: University of California, 2001); Elman, Classicism, Politics and Kinship: The Ch’ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China;


can hardly be thoroughly comprehended without paying attention to real people’s lives, thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and practices. Factors such as political environment, social structure, economic condition, and cultural ecology could all contribute to the understanding of scholars’ living conditions and offer new explanations of the evolution of thought and scholarship in the Qing dynasty. In this sense, previous research have significantly contributed to the study of Qing intellectual history. However, most of these studies have neglected a very important dimension of intellectual history: scholarly practices, i.e., how scholars collected books and documents, how they transmitted scholarly materials to each other, how they communicated with each other, how they read and made sense of various texts, whether they used similar methods and approaches to reading, and how their reading interacted with their scholarship, thought and life. It is essential to consider scholarly practices, especially reading practices, are essential to the study of intellectual history. Yet previous approaches paid too much attention to scholars’ published works. Based on some quotations and elements of thought detected in a scholar’s works, his or her reading diet was reconstructed in a cursory way, and the relationships between him and his predecessors were hastily defined. However, works can unfold only a part of one’s thought and, normally, only a small part of what one has read. There is actually a huge gap between what one has read and what one records, between what one thinks and what one publishes. To fill in the gaps and draw a more complete picture of a person’s thought and life, one effective method is to study his or her reading practices. To do so, it is necessary to take seriously sources created in the course of reading, between what one reads and what one composes. Marginalia, a variety of writings and symbols draw by readers on the pages of books, are sources of this kind. This study will take marginalia as its object, treat scholarly practices with marginalia as a cultural phenomenon, and explore how marginalia culture took form, gained momentum, and shaped scholarly styles and scholars’ lives.
and thinking in the Qing dynasty. I attempt to answer questions of how Qing scholars treated the scholarly legacy left by Ming scholars, how marginalia culture contributed to the rise and development of evidential research, how evidential research expanded and penetrated into people’s lives, and so forth. Meanwhile, I also expect to clarify how different generations of scholars in the Qing dynasty perceived their positions and roles in the world in new circumstances.

**Methodology**

This study will focus on the cultural aspects of marginalia for the following reasons: 1) the composition, transcription, editing and publishing of marginalia involved a variety of human practices; 2) these practices, as well as the content of marginalia, reveal people’s thoughts, beliefs, ideas, emotions and other intangible factors; 3) these practices and their products influenced the thoughts and practices of later generations, permeating, in some way, into modern China. The methodology of this study is mainly derived from recent literature on the “new” history of books, an interdisciplinary hybrid of intellectual history, cultural history, new bibliographical studies, and social history. “The purpose” of the “new” history of books, Robert Darnton says, “is to understand how ideas were transmitted through print and how exposure to the printed word affected the thought and behavior of mankind.” 18 Darnton emphasizes the adjective “new” because he distinguishes this new discipline which “can be called the social and cultural history of

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18 Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books,” in The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History (New York: Norton, 1990), 107. Here Darnton focuses on printed artifacts. In this paper, I use “book” very broadly to include any written or printed text, such as manuscript written on parchment, bamboo, silk, stone, paper, and all kinds of imprints. “Text” in this study is a defining term, denoting an agglomeration of the abstract verbal signs and symbols. Books are the physical embodiments of texts.
communication by print” 19 from traditional “bibliography,” which was regarded primarily as “the servant of scholarly editing and textual criticism which, in turn, was perceived to be the servant of literary studies.” 20

Traditional bibliography concentrated on the book itself, especially on the text, the verbal information carried by the book, and tried to seek the so-called “authentic original text” that might be the closest to the “author’s intention.” 21 Put simply, it was a study of what kinds of books or texts we have; or precisely, what books human beings have. Under the influence of social and cultural history, as well as the new history of books, bibliography entered into a new stage, as demonstrated by D. F. McKenzie’s new definition of bibliography in his influential book, Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts: “Bibliography is the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the process of their transmission, including their production and reception,” that “studie[s] the composition, formal design, and transmission of texts by writers, printers, and publishers; their distribution through different communities by wholesalers, retailers, and teachers; their collection and classification by librarians; their meaning for ... and their creative regeneration

by, readers.” It is a discipline that can be defined as a “sociology of texts,” in which “texts” encompass verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data, in the form of maps, prints and music, of archives of recorded sound, of videos, and any computer-stored information.  

For social and cultural historians, the history of books as a discipline has been established on two simple premises: 1) “books make history,” i.e., “books are the primary tools that people use to transmit ideas, record memories, create narratives, exercise power, and distribute wealth;” and 2) “books are made by history: that is, they are shaped by economic, political, social, and cultural forces.” In this domain, the history of reading occupies a position of considerable importance.

If we center on reading (not books, texts or readers but reading itself), our study can be divided into three stages according to the process of reading: 1) before reading, 2) the act of reading, and 3) after reading. There is no clear division between any two of them, but this division can make the complicated situation clearer and simplify the analysis and explanation.

The study of the first stage concentrates on how books get into a reader’s hands, i.e., when, where, and in what ways a book reaches a reader. This inquiry is concerned with the production, circulation and collection of books. Focusing on the agents involved in the whole process, Darnton comes up with a model, the “communication circuit,” which includes authors, publishers, printers, shippers, booksellers, binders and readers. In “First Step Toward a History of Reading,” Darnton suggests that we study the external as well as the internal history of reading. For external aspects, there are two main types of study: microanalysis (including quantitative social history, making

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comparisons between countries, cross-statistical comparisons) and microanalysis (including study of library catalogues, notarial records, subscription lists, records of lending libraries). 25 “Having studied it as a social phenomenon, historians of reading can answer many of the ‘who,’ ‘what,’ ‘where,’ and ‘when’ questions.” 26 However, these studies can only answer how texts were transmitted, but cannot answer how ideas were transmitted and received, let alone how they affected the thoughts and behavior of readers, or, as Darnton put, “how exposure to the printed word affected the thought and behaviour of mankind.” 27

Therefore, we also need to study the second stage, the act of reading. Darnton suggests that we take into account “how people actually read” and also pay attention to reading clubs, family reading practices, and other reading practices. 28 Roger Chartier has made an in-depth study of such practices. In “Texts, Printing, Reading,” he poses a big question about reading: “How can a text that is the same for everyone who reads it become an ‘instrument of discord and battle between its readers, creating divergences between them, with each reader having an opinion depending on his own taste?’” 29 Given this diversity of readers and multiplicity of their abilities and expectations, Chartier proposes to approaches to a history of reading: “reconstructing the diversity of older readings from their sparse and multiple traces, and recognizing the strategies by which authors and publishers tried to impose an orthodoxy or a prescribed reading on the text.” 30 He suggests that two perspectives that are often pursued separately be conjoined in such a history: 1)

26 Darnton, “First Step Toward a History of Reading,” 157.
28 Darnton, The Kiss of Lamourette, 168.
Study of the text itself (“the study of the way in which texts and the printed works that convey them organize the prescribed reading,” as in the history of genres and in the bibliographical studies); and 2) Study of interpretive communities (“the collection of actual readings tracked down in individual confessions or reconstructed on the level of communities of readers — those ‘interpretive communities’ whose members share the same reading styles and the same strategies of interpretation”). Different from the “communication circuit” proposed by Darnton that centres on books, “interpretive communities” is a model for the study of reading individuals and groups, obviously centered on reading practices:

We need to develop indicators of the major divisions that can organize a history of reading practices (of the use of texts, even the uses of the same text) — for example between reading out loud, for oneself or for others, and reading in silence; between reading inwardly and privately and reading publicly; between religious reading and lay reading; and between “intensive” reading and “extensive” reading. Beyond these macroscopic cleavages, the historian must seek to determine the dominant paradigms of reading in a community of readers in a given time and place. ... The mode of reading, which is dictated by the book itself or by its interpreters, provides the archetype of all reading, whatever kind it may be.  

Similarly, Jonathon Ross also advocates:

Broadly, then, the history of reading is the history of interpretation ... of books, magazines, newspapers, advertising bills, films, radio programs, musical performances, school lessons, and adult education classes. The rationale behind this method is simply this: we can only

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31 Chartier, “Texts, Printing, Reading,” 158, 166.
understand the mentality of a given audience by reconstructing (as far as possible) its cultural diet, and then asking how that audience interpreted those cultural experiences.  

Through study of the production, circulation and collection of books, as well as the reading practices of “interpretative communities,” it is not difficult to comprehend audiences’ cultural diet, but it is difficult to know how they interpreted those cultural experiences, or to understand the emotions, thoughts, beliefs and values underlying their reading practices. Hence, it is not possible to fully understand how books and reading affected the thought and behaviour of mankind. Reading is more than getting the general main points of the text; reading will alter the mental condition of a reader; the words, illustrations, the format of the book, and even the wormholes in the paper can be triggers of new thoughts; reading can change the intellectual life of readers as well as their political and daily lives. It is not enough just to find out what the reader read and how he or she read it. We should go on to examine the effectiveness and consequences of reading, to ask not what reading could do, but what reading has done to mankind.

Therefore, we have to study the third stage of reading, a stage after the act of reading that is concerned with readers’ responses — reading reception and its effects on people’s intellectual and daily lives. “It should be possible,” Darnton says, “to develop a history as well as a theory of reader response. Possible, but not easy; for the documents rarely show readers at work, fashioning meaning from texts, and the documents are texts themselves, which also require interpretation.”  

The main problem of the study of this stage is sources. The most important sources we can use to recover the historical reader include: (1) Autobiographical documents; (2) Commonplace books;

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33 Darnton, “First Step Toward a History of Reading,” 157.
“Albums” or miscellanies of texts; and (4) Marginalia. Among these, marginalia are of the utmost importance, because they are composed during the act of reading and thus reveal the process of reading and the mind states of the reader while engaged in reading. Heather Jackson, William Sherman, and Anthony Grafton have done a great deal of pioneering work on the study of marginalia. Their contributions and the features of marginalia they have covered will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

**Structure of the Dissertation**

The main part of this study is made up of four chapters, focusing on the composition, transcription of marginalia, observing the transformation of scholarly styles, scholars’ thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and private lives within these practices, and their influence on later generations.

Chapter two introduces marginalia, along with two related forms of textual response, *zhushu* 注疏 (annotations) and *pingdian* 評點 (commentaries), of which the former usually focused on the meaning of the main text, while the latter addressed the literary features. Because all of the three are texts that provide interpretation, explanation, appreciation, and evaluation of a pre-existing “main text,” they can be defined as “interpretive texts.” I will first discuss the contents and characteristics of these interpretive texts, and then examine their physical features, such as their

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visual appearance, where and how they were contained, and how they circulated in history. Through this comparison, I expect to illustrate the essential features and various important characteristics of marginalia.

I begin, in chapter three, with a case study of the marginalia of He Zhuo 何焯 (courtesy name Qizhan 齊蟾, alternate name Yimen 義門, 1661-1722), an early Qing scholar and calligrapher. He, who worked as an imperial compiler (zuanxiu 纂修) in the imperial court, composed marginalia on hundreds of titles, which were highly influential throughout the Qing dynasty. I focus on He Zhuo’s marginalia on the Hou Hanshu 後漢書 (History of the Later Han Dynasty), closely analyzing their characteristics and their influence on later scholars and readers.

In subsequent chapters I trace the transcription of marginalia and examine how the marginalia culture took into form and gained momentum in the Qing dynasty. Also centering on He Zhuo’s marginalia, chapter four is concerned with questions of who participated in this practice, how different participants were involved in the process of transcription, and what their motives and attitudes within this practice were; chapter five analyzes colophons composed by various transcriptionists (guolu zhe 過錄者), so as to explore their scholarly lives, beliefs and emotions.
Chinese Interpretive Texts: Annotation, Commentary and Marginalia

In the late imperial period, the Chinese empire was actually a reading empire. The administration of the state was built upon a complete textual system: the state orthodoxy was derived from the Confucian Classics; the dissemination of information was facilitated via a network of memorials and other official documents; communication among scholar-officials relied on letters transmitted by their family servants even when they were living in the same street; for the illiterate, imperial announcements were publicly read by the educated in the city and by the local gentry in rural areas. Before one could, with any luck, pass the civil service examinations and become an official, he had to be well-read in the Four Books (sishu 四書), be familiar with the Five Classics (wujing 五經), and at least conversant with several histories (shi 史), philosophical works (zi 子) and works of belles-lettres (ji 集). Moreover, much of the spare time of scholar-officials and some merchants was occupied with reading of various kinds, ranging from classical texts to popular works (such as fiction, drama, short stories, and other miscellaneous works).

1 In pre-modern China, books classified into the jibu 集部 were mainly verse and pros and criticisms of them, and only verses and prose were deemed belles-letters. About civil service examination, bureaucracy, and elite culture, see Peter Bol, “The Sung Examination System and the Shih,” Asia Major, 3rd ser., 3, 2 (1990):149-71; Benjamin Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds., Education and Society in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Benjamin Elman, A Cultural History of Civil Examination in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013).

2 About the reading public and reading practices of late imperial China, see Martin W. Huang, “Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese Xiaoshuo Commentary,” Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews
documents to private letters, from memorials addressed to the throne to imperial documents directed at subjects, from classical works to popular works—could contain allusions to ancient texts. The reading, understanding and reception of ancient texts, especially the Five Classics, was a crucial task both for elite subjects and the emperor, not only in their public activities but also in their private lives and mental states. Thus, the first key question for us concerns how texts were interpreted.

The study of the interpretation of ancient Chinese texts has long centered either on a particular scholar or on a particular text. Few took into account the features of the text per se that were differently interpreted or how these texts circulated in history, which both determined the reception and historical significance of ancient texts and their various interpretations over time. For example, zhushu 注疏, pingdian 詳點 and pijiao 批校 are different in content and nature but are indiscriminately translated into “commentary” or “annotation” in English, and this has confused


our understanding of the features and functions of different kinds of interpretations of ancient Chinese texts. Therefore, I use the term “interpretive text” to denote all texts that provide interpretation, explanation, appreciation and evaluation of a pre-existing text, or the “main text.” In comparison with the main text, interpretive texts are secondary—they are generated by the main text, and for this reason, they always cling to the main text. Where there is no main text, there is no interpretive text. Interpretive text can be regarded as one kind of paratext, a concept that was proposed by Gérard Genette. In Genette’s theory, paratext consists of elements such as titles, subtitles, intertitles, prefaces, notes, epigraphs, illustrations, book covers, reviews, private letters, and many other kind of secondary signals that are related to the main text. The paratext performs the function of guiding or even controlling the reading and interpretation of the main text. It can decide how a text should be read. Genette stressed the transactional nature of paratexts between texts and readers, as he once put it: “It [paratext] not only marks the zone of transition between text and non-text, but also a transaction.” However, in comparison with other paratextual elements (such as illustrations, book covers, reviews, author’s letters), annotation, commentary and marginalia are usually physically closer to the main text, and they are mainly concerned with providing interpretation, explanation, appreciation and evaluation of a main text. Their nature is fundamentally “interpretive.” Therefore, this chapter will focus on these three interpretive texts,

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discussing their contents, features, forms, and how they circulated in imperial China. By so doing, we can gain a deeper understanding of the nature of marginalia.

**Contents and Features**

It is because of their different modes of interpretation that I draw a distinction between zhushu, pingdian, and pijiao, and translate them respectively into “annotations,” “commentaries,” and “marginalia.” Annotations primarily aimed to draw out the philosophical and political meanings of texts based on glosses of meaning and sound. Commentaries in China concentrated on the literary features of the main text and aimed to help readers appreciate the beauty of the main text and improve the reader’s skill at composing classical poetry and prose. Marginalia are readers’ hand-written reading responses, which could include anything that readers come up with while reading.

**Zhushu/Annotations: Proposing Meanings from the Classics**

The earliest interpretive texts in China can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn (770-476 BC) and Warring States (475-221 BC) periods. In his impressive monograph *Writing and Authority in Early China*, Mark Edward Lewis proposes a triangular model of “master—disciple—text” for the intellectual world during this era. This model elaborates how the various schools were organized and expanded, and how the thought of a given school was disseminated. In this book, Lewis emphasizes the crucial role that the text played for scholars in the process of the engaging with state affairs and expanding schools of thoughts in early China. He states that most of the schools in that time had a so-called “textual tradition,” that most of the schools were “text based,” and that even the “appearance of the master as an author ... was a function of, or a step toward, his
disappearance as the fundamental textual authority.” Texts, however, cannot speak for themselves. They have to be interpreted. Interpretation, even when orally transmitted from the master to the disciple, was made up of exegeses, glossing, paraphrasing, and discussion of the textual variants. These interpretations, primarily aimed at drawing out the meaning of texts, scarcely commented on the aesthetic features of the main text. So, we might think of “annotations” as their equivalent in English.

Historically, Chinese annotations actually had various names that could reveal their features. The earliest annotations on Confucian Classics were called zhuan/chuan 傳 or ji 記; later also referred to using such terms as jie 解, gu 故, xun 訓, zhangju 章句, shuo 說, or shuoyi 說義.

According to the Shuowen jiezi 說文解字 (Explaining graphs and analyzing characters), the original meaning of zhuan/chuan is “to pass on.” The influential Shuowen specialist Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815) pointed out that the extended meaning of zhuan/chuan is “to extend the meaning” and that zhuan/chuan in both zhuanzhu 傳注 (annotation) and liuchuan 流傳 (to spread)

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6 Mark Edward Lewis, Writing and Authority in Early China (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 57-69.
7 It is recorded in the “Yiwen zhi” 雅文志 of the Hanshu 漢書 that: for the Yi 易 (Book of Changes), there was the Zhoushi zhuang 周氏傳, and the zhangju 章句 of Masters Shi 施, Meng 孟 and Liangqiu’s 梁丘; for the Shu 書 (Book of documents), there was one work of zhuang , the zhangju of Masters Ouyang 歐陽, Greater Xiahou 夏侯 and Lesser Xiahou’s, the jiegu 解故 of Masters Greater Xiahou and Lesser Xiahou, and Master Ouyang’s shuoyi 說義; for the Shi 詩 (Book of songs), there were Master Mao’s gu xun zhuang 故訓傳, and Master Han’s 韓 gu 故, shuo 說, neizhuan 內傳 and waizhuan 外傳; for the Li 禮 (Book of rites), there were one work of ji 記 and one work of Mingtang yinyang shuo 明堂陰陽說; for the Chunqiu 春秋 (Spring and autumn annals), there were the zhuan of Masters Gonggyang 公羊, Guliang 段梁, Zuo 左, Zou 卓 and Jia’s 夾, and several zhangju and zaji. See Hanshu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 1701-1784.
uses this extended meaning. In other words, huan/chuan means to transmit the meaning of the Classics.

The original meaning of ji is “to record” or “to write down,” similar to zhuan/chuan. Ji annotations were actually disciples’ records of their masters’ interpretations of the Classics. The well-known Chinese historian Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (courtesy name Shizhai 實齋, 1783-1801) noted of its meaning:

The three zhuan of the Spring and Autumn Annuals recorded what meanings the annotator had heard of and drew out meanings from the Classics, so they can also be called “ji.” The two ji annotations to the Rites transmitted their explanations and circulated attached to the Classics, so they can also be called “zhuan.”

《春秋》三家之傳，各記所聞，依經起義，雖謂之記可也。經《禮》二戴之記，各傳其說，附經而行，雖謂之傳可也。10

The origin meaning of jie is “to cut an ox horn into halves;” “to analyze” is a derived meaning of this word.11 This implies that jie annotations analyzed the Classics and explained their meanings.

8 See Shuowen jiezi zhu 説文解字注, composed by Xu Shen 許慎 and annotated by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1981), juan 8A, 377.
10 Zhang Xuecheng, Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu 文史通義校注, annotated and collated by Ye Ying 葉瑛 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), juan 3, 248.
11 See the annotation of the Liji and Shiji 史記, in Liji zhushu, juan 50, 845; Shiji (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), juan 9, 399.
*Shuo* and *shuoyi* mean to declare the meaning of the Classics. The pronunciation of *xun* 訓 was similar to that of *shun* 順 (“to obey” or “to follow”), so according to Duan Yucai, *xun* means to explain the meaning of the Classics to other people and lead them to follow the right principle.\(^{12}\) *Gu* 故 is the ancient form of *gu* 話, which means “to explain the meaning of ancient words.”\(^{13}\) Its derived meaning is “to explain the main text.”\(^{14}\) *Zhangju* 章句, according to Liu Zhao’s 創昭 annotation of the *Hou Hanshu*, means “to divide the main text into sections and analyze the meanings of the sentences.”\(^{15}\)

However, no book in the “Yiwen zhi” 藝文志 (Treatise on literature) of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han Dynasty) bears a title describing it as *zhu* 注, nor is there any annotation to the Confucian Classics called *zhu* in the entirety of the *Hanshu*. *Zhu* was first used to mean “to annotate” in the biography of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (courtesy name Kangcheng 康成, 127-200) in the *Hou Hanshu*. Still, in the *Hou Hanshu*, Zhang Kai’s 張楷 biography states that Zhang Kai had composed “*zhu* to the *Shangshu*” (作尚書注), but there is no evidence that this was the title of Zhang’s book.\(^{16}\) Few annotated books recorded in the “Jingji zhi” 經籍志 (Treatise on the Confucian Classics and other books) of the *Suishu* 隋書 (History of the Sui) had *zhu* in their titles.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{12}\) *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, *juan* 3A, 91.

\(^{13}\) *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, *juan* 3A, 92.

\(^{14}\) See the annotation of the “Yiwen zhi” of *Hanshu*, *juan* 13, 1708; see also *Maoshi zhushu* 毛詩注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen, 2007), 11.


\(^{16}\) Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 35, 1212; *juan* 36, 1243.

\(^{17}\) Annotated books that were entitled with “*zhu*” include *Xiaojing mo zhu* 作尚書注 by Xu Zheng 徐整, *Hanshu zhu* 漢書注 by Lu Cheng 陸澄, and *Hanshu jizhu* 漢書集注 by Jin Zhuo 晉灼. See the “Jingji zhi” of the *Suishu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), *juan* 32, 933; *juan* 33, 953.
Most of them were only identified as having *zhu* in the author’s notes of the “Jingji zhi.”18 According to the *Shuowen jiezi*, *zhu* means “to irrigate or to fill with water.” The *Li yi shu* (Sub-annotation of the *Rites and Ceremonies*) writes: “the meaning of *zhu* is ‘tapping meaning from the Classic,’ like water dripping off an object.” (注者，注義於經下，若水之注物). Similarly, Duan Yucai said, “*Zhu* means to lead [water] to a proper position, and so explicating the Classic in order to illuminate its meaning is called ‘*zhu*’”（注之云者，引之有所適也，故釋經以明其義曰注）.19

In addition, according to the “Jingji zhi” of the *Suishu*, *yinyin* (or *yin* 音隱) annotations and *jijie* 集解 annotations gradually increased in number, and *yishu* 義疏 (or *shu* 疏) annotations flourished during the late Han to Sui period under the influence of Buddhism.20 *Yinyin* annotations focused on the phonetic aspects of ancient texts; *jijie* means “collected annotations.” *Shu* originally meant “to unblock;” its derived meaning is “to remove misunderstandings,” i.e, to explicate a text.21 After the Sui dynasty 隋 (581-617), *zhu*, *shu*, and *zhushu* became the most common appellations of annotations, although new names such as *zhengyi* 正義 (orthodox meaning), *suoyin*

18 For example, the self-annotation to the *Zhouyi* 周易 of a 7 *juan* edition in the “Jingji zhi” of the *Suishu* writes “annotations by Yao Gui 姚魁,” to that of a 13 *juan* edition writes “annotations by Cui Jian 崔觀 and Master Fu 傅,” to that of a 10 *juan* edition writes “annotations by Master Lu 廵.” The self-annotation to the *Shiji* of a 80 *juan* edition writes “annotations by Pei Yin 裴騏.” The *Shuijing* 水經 has Guo Pu’s 郭璞 annotations for a 3 *juan* edition and Li Daoyuan’s 郗道元 annotation for a 40 *juan* edition. See the “Jingji zhi” of the *Suishu*, *juan* 32, 910; *juan* 33, 953, 982, 984.


20 See the “Jingji zhi” of the *Suishu*, *juan* 32-35, 903-1104.

索隱 (searching for the hidden meaning), and xinyi 新義 (new interpretation) were created by different generations of annotators.

All these names demonstrate that the core feature of Chinese annotation was to draw out the meaning of ancient texts, and that annotations were oriented toward explicating meaning, or “yi jing qi yi” 依經起義 (to propose meanings from the Classics) in the words of Zhang Xuecheng. Daniel K. Gardner claims that, within the Confucian tradition, Classics have no fixed meaning and “there was no such thing as a timeless, normative reading of a Classic.” Through creating a complex relationship between the Classics, audiences, and the commentarial tradition, annotators shaped the understandings of the Classics and gave them new meanings and significance in particular contexts.22

Since annotation is meaning oriented, the explanation of words and sentences became its main content. In this sense, as Lu Zongda 陸宗達 and Wang Ning 王寧 put it, ancient annotations provide a great number of sources with which to probe the meanings of the words of ancient texts. Nevertheless, they also remind us that although the explanations in ancient annotations might be more accurate because they were produced close to the time when the main text was composed, they should not be treated as the only basis for our study, inasmuch as they were scarcely able to avoid biases that could generate a considerable number of incorrect explanations. Ancient annotators aimed to transmit the “correct meanings” imparted by their teachers and they claimed to be rigorously representing their teachers’ opinions.23 In other words, transmitting philosophical

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and political meanings was the annotators’ ultimate end; explaining words and sentences was just the means to that end.\(^\text{24}\)

The well-known late-Qing Chinese scholar Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (courtesy name Lumen 鹿門, 1850-1908) argued that classical study traditions were handed down from teachers to disciples in the Western Han period, and within clans in the Eastern Han period.\(^\text{25}\) Whether this distinction between the transmission methods of the Western and Eastern Han is correct or not, Pi Xirui correctly realized that different schools’ interpretations of the same Classic were, most of the time, not the same. The combination of different interpretations and various political cliques generated different schools; conflict between these schools in turn magnified the difference among different interpretations. Annotations could supply an arena for different schools, because the fundamental nature of the annotation was to transmit the sages’ Dao 道 (Way).

The Confucian Classics were transmitted orally either by different schools or by different clans before and during the Eastern Han. The great classicist Zheng Xuan was considered to have learned from various schools, adopting the strengths of both the orthodox New Text School (jinwen pai 今文派) and the Old Text School (guwen pai 古文派) in the interpretation of the Confucian Classics so as to bridge the two centuries of rivalry between them.\(^\text{26}\) His effort was actually to construct a new interpretive system, i.e., to unify and interpret all the Confucian Classics according

\(^{24}\) See also Wang Li 王力, “Zhongguo yuyanxue shi” 中國語言學史, Zhongguo yuwen 中國語文 3(1993): 233.

\(^{25}\) Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞, Jingxue lishi 經學歷史 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 136. See also Hu Pu’an 胡樸安, Zhongguo xunguxue shi 中國訓詁學史 (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 2014), 3.

\(^{26}\) Whether or not there were centuries of rivalry between the New Text and the Old Text in the Han is an area of debate. But from historical records and Han scholars’ annotations of Confucian Classics, we know that the New-Text classicists and the Old-Text classicists employed different interpretive strategy.
to the theory of *li* 禮 (ritual) as expounded in the *Classic of Rites*. As Zhang Xuecheng put it, the nature of annotations of the Confucian Classics before and during the Eastern Han was that they “basically all drew out meanings from the Classics and each composed their own books, which is different from the annotations of later times” (蓋皆依經起意，其實各自為書，與後世箋注自不同也).

As a matter of fact, various annotations after the Eastern Han also “proposed meanings from the Classics” by explaining the words and sentences. Qiao Xiuyan 喬秀巖 pointed out that *yishu* 義疏 annotations from the Wei 魏 dynasty (261-225) to the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907) were not seeking for the truth, but rather comprehending the laws of nature and human affairs. In order to express their own understanding, annotators sometimes drew farfetched analogies and made strained interpretations. Scholars of the Song dynasty 宋 (960-1279) were not satisfied with Han and Tang annotations. They composed new annotations bearing new interpretations, printed them and disseminated them all over the empire. Eventually, these new interpretations supplanted Han and Tang annotations and became the orthodox textbooks of the civil service examinations. The conflict between the new and old annotations was actually conflict between different orthodoxies, so annotations cannot be seen as mere explanations of words and sentences. Scholars of the Qing

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27 An annotation to the “Zaji” 雜記 of the *Liji* 禮記 states: “The study of the *Rites* is actually Zheng Xuan’s study” (禮是鄭學). See *Liji zhushu*, *juan* 40, 713. See also Qiao Xiuyan 喬秀巖, *Yishuxue cunwang shi lun* 義疏學存亡史論 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou, 2013), 177; Hua Zhe 華喆, *Li shi Zheng xue* 禮是鄭學 (Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2018).
30 See Kai-wing Chow, “Paratext: Commentaries, Ideology, and Politics,” 149-188; Thomas Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China*
dynasty also armed themselves with techniques of annotation to dispute with Song and Ming scholars. Their annotations and other scholarly practices cannot be considered pure evidential research on the words and sentences either, because Qing evidential scholars had their own philosophy.³¹

Take the Shijing (Book of songs, Book of poetry, or Poetry classic) as an example to illustrate how one text was interpreted in different annotations. The Shijing was a collection of just over 300 poems from the Zhou dynasty (1045 BCE - 256 BCE). From very early times, it had been one of the centerpieces of the Confucian tradition, and was referred to as Classic. There were various schools of readings of the Shijing during and before the Han dynasty, which vary not only in interpretation but also in the text of the poems. Unfortunately, most of them are lost, leaving just a small number of fragments quoted in other texts. However, the text and interpretation of the Mao school survived. Its text is called the Maoshi (Mao’s poems), and the interpretation of the text

is made up of Mao’s annotations (Mao zhuan 毛傳) and a “Preface” (Shi xu 詩序) to each poem.\textsuperscript{32}

In the order of the Maoshi, the 24\textsuperscript{th} poem is “Ye you si jun” 野有死麕 (In the wilds is a dead doe, Mao #23). This poem reads:

野有死麕，
白茅包之。
有女懷春，
吉士誘之。

林有樸楸，
野有死鹿。
白茅純束，
有女如玉。

舒而脫脫兮，
無感我帨兮，
無使尨也吠。

In the wilds is a dead doe;
With white rushes we cover her.
There was a lady longing for the spring;
A fair knight seduced her.

In the wood there is a clump of oaks,
And in the wilds a dead deer
With white rushes well bound;
There was a lady fair as jade.

“Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough;
Heigh, do not touch my handkerchief.
Take care, or the dog will bark.”\textsuperscript{33}

Literally, this poem tells a romantic story of a knight (according to Waley’s translation) who encountered a beautiful woman and his affair with her. Arthur Waley translated shui 帳 into “handkerchief” with a footnote saying: “Which was worn at the belt.” In Wen Yiduo’s 聞一多 study, “shui” was used to cover woman’s private part, i.e., it is a kind of underwear.\textsuperscript{34} In these modern readings, this poem is very erotic.


\textsuperscript{33} The Chinese text is quoted from the Maoshi zhengyi 毛詩正義 (photo-reproduction in the Shisanjing zhushu 十三經注疏, Taipei: Yiwen, 2007), juan 1, 65-66; Waley, trans., The Book of Songs, 20-21; and James Legge, trans., The She King or The Book of Poetry, 34.

\textsuperscript{34} See Wen Yiduo 聞一多, Shijing tongyi 詩經通義 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1994), 339-340.
In the *Maoshi*, each poem was introduced by a “lesser preface” (*xiaoxu* 小序) employing a didactic interpretation that stated the poem’s title, topic, ritual use, and sometimes supplied paradigmatic historical events for the poem.  

The preface of this poem reads:

“Ye you si jun” expresses disgust at the lack of ritual. Throughout the realm there had been great disorder, and oppressive men insulted women, so that lascivious manners spread. Through the transforming influence of King Wen, even in such an age of disorder, there was still a dislike of the lack of ritual.

This implies that this is a poem of satire, showing disgust at the chaotic and disorderly world, a world where *rites* has been ruined. But the meaning of the lesser preface is actually very ambiguous. Zheng Xuan composed his annotation based on the *Maoshi*, and then followed the interpretation offered in the lesser preface with his own annotation. His annotation reads:

“Lack of ritual” means [getting married] without a matchmaker and proper betrothal gifts, i.e., [the girl] was forced to marry. This refers to King Zhow’s (the last king of the Shang dynasty, c. 1600-1046 BC) time.

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36 *Maoshi zhengyi*, 65.

37 *Maoshi zhengyi*, 65.
Zheng follows the lesser preface and meanwhile guides the reading to the ritual of marriage, which neither the lesser preface nor the poem ever mention. While annotating “There was a lady longing for the spring / A fair knight seduced her,” Zheng writes:

There was a chaste virgin thinking of meeting the knight according to ritual in the mid-spring.

The fair knight asked a matchmaker to accomplish it accordingly.

有貞女思仲春以禮與男會，吉士使媒人道成之。38

For this poem, Zheng claims that the lady was a “chaste virgin,” and that the knight asked a matchmaker to help him complete the ritual of marriage and then marry her. Zheng’s annotation of “Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough” reads:

The chaste virgin wanted the fair knight to come according to ritual. She asked the knight not to be so hasty, nor to be so rough. Meanwhile, she is disgusted at the lack of ritual at that time when oppressive men insulted women [and warns the knight not to do so].

貞女欲吉士以禮來，脫脫然舒也。又疾時無禮，強暴之男相劫脅。39

In this reading, the chaste virgin told the knight to follow the rites and warned him not to violate ritual. In Zheng’s reading, the purport of this poem is to praise the chaste virgin and set a moral model for people to learn from, and the core meaning and significance of this poem is about a particular notion of rites. As mentioned above, Zheng Xuan tried to unify all the Confucian Classics according to the theory of ritual and the Classic of Rites. His efforts are demonstrated in this annotation.

38 Maoshi zhengyi, 65.
39 Maoshi zhengyi, 66.
The voluminous sub-annotations compiled in the Tang dynasty collected a large number of previous annotations and texts of other Classics, and tried to make a “Correct Meaning of the Five Classics” (五經正義). But in fact, the sub-annotations follow Zheng Xuan’s annotations; his annotations were treated as the “correct meaning” and all other quotations were used to support his arguments. If there were gaps between the Mao preface and Zheng’s annotations, the sub-annotation would attempt to close them. Sub-annotiations purported to make all the Classics perfect, as least ostensibly.40

The lesser preface, Zheng’s annotations, and the sub-annotations of this poem mention “li” (rites, ritual) fifty-three times,41 while, in the Song scholar Zhu Xi’s (朱熹, 1130-1200) Shijizhuan 詩集傳 (Collected annotations of the Shi), it does not appear once. Zhu Xi, known in the English literature as a Neo-Confucian scholar, philosopher, and politician, doesn’t interpret the poems according to ritual or the Classic of Ritual. What concerned him was to lead human nature to follow Heavenly Principle (天理), so his interpretation focused on human beings’ inner nature and moral cultivation.42 About the main meaning of this poem, Zhu states:

This stanza recounts the girl refusing the knight. She told the knight to come slowly, neither touching her handkerchief, nor alerting her dog, in order to say emphatically that he could not approach her. The idea of her chaste inviolability is clearly shown.

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40 See Van Zoeren, Poetry and Personality, 116-150; Sun Qinshan, Zhongguo guwenxianxue shi, 349-396.
41 Maoshi zhengyi, 65-66.
42 See also Van Zoeren, Poetry and Personality, 218-249.
In Zhu’s interpretation, the persona became a heroic woman who sharply defended her honor. However, his annotation is a little self-contradictory. It first states that the girl told the knight to come slowly, and then states that she wanted to make the knight not able to approach her. This might be so because, literally, it is hard to get the sense from the poem that she fiercely refuses this knight. She is half refusing and half accepting him, and perhaps enjoyed this romantic tryst. This poem, according to Zhu’s philosophy, is thus morally corrupt. One of Zhu’s students, Wang Bo 王柏 (1197-1274), despised this poem as a “lewd” (yinben zhi shi 淫奔之詩) and advocated excising it from the Shijing.44

After the Song dynasty, various annotations continued to emerge. Some of them proposed new interpretations of the Shijing, others not. But most, if not all, were meaning-oriented. Every annotator tried to explain his own understanding of this corpus of ancient poems.45

For different scholarly lineages, not only were their interpretations different, but the text of the Classics they transmitted and annotated was also not the same. Ni Qixin 倪其心 has pointed out that the text of the Confucian Classics was actually “a multi-layered complicated overlapping construction” (多層次的複雜重疊構成).46 Different schools transmitted different texts, which

43 Zhu Xi 朱熹, Shijizhuan 詩集傳, in Zhuzi quanshu 朱子全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji; Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1, 418-419.
45 About the interpretive history of the Shijing, see also Bruce Rusk, Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012).
46 Ni Qixin 倪其心, Jiaokanxue dagang 校勘學大綱 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2004), 79-85.
were altered by generations of scholars, so that the text of Classics became more and more complicated. Each annotation was actually composed based on a particular version of the text. Few collators realised this, however. Having the idea that all annotations of one Classic were made based on the same text, most collators did not make any distinction between any two different texts annotated by different schools/scholars; i.e., they did not distinguish the study of the content of the Classics—such as the thought, political and social ideas—from the editing of the text. They altered the original text of the Classics according to their own study, which often confused a Classic’s textual lineage, and as a result, the editing of the text was trapped into a vicious cycle, whereby the more a text was edited the more it needed editing. The influential eighteenth-century Chinese scholar Duan Yucai was the first to advocated telling apart the “authenticity of the original text” (底本之是非) from the “veracity of the argument” (立說之是非), then making clear which text was annotated by which annotator and which annotator actually annotated which text. But in practice, Duan Yucai was still preoccupied with the idea of determining one authentic text according to his own understanding of “authentic principle.” His overconfidence in his evidential method prevented him from realising that the text he had collated was just one new text created by himself and that his annotation of it was another new interpretation of the Classics, just as previous annotators and collators had done. The prominent classicist Gu Guangqi 顧廣圻 (1770-1839) noticed Duan Yucai’s self-contradiction and argued with him. He insisted that scholars should not alter the text and he carried out this rule when editing the Confucian Classics. Gu was very clear in theory and practice that the text was the text, annotation the annotation, and that different
annotations, even collations of the Classics, were based on different understandings of the
Classics. \(^{47}\) The well-known modern textual scholar Yu Jiaxi 余嘉锡 (1884-1955) remarks:

All scholarly works, ancient or modern, were created to meet practical needs for convenience.
When transmitted for a long time and studied deeply, the meanings and principles [of them]
become obvious. It is of course not correct that someone would consider the *Book of Changes*
as songs on the hexagrams and the *Spring and Autumn Annuals* as court reports, and yet it is
also incorrect to say they were not initially composed as such.

Yu recognizes that the meanings and principles of the Classics were added by interpreters and
annotators most of the time. Combined with different annotations, various texts of each Classic
are of historical significance; they are an important part of Chinese textual culture.

Besides Confucian Classics, annotations of the texts of the Hundred Schools during the Spring
and Autumn and Warring States Periods, although orally transmitted, were also meaning-
oriented. \(^{49}\) So were annotations of histories during the Han dynasty, which was pointed out by
Zhang Xuecheng:

\(^{47}\) About the conflict between Duan Yucai and Gu Guangqi, see Ni Qixin, *Jiaokanxue dagang*, 307-316.
\(^{49}\) See Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*. 
The grand historian [Sima] Qian composed one hundred and thirty *juan* and said [he would] “hide his book away in a famous mountain and transmit it to the right person.” Soon after, his grandson Yang Yun started to disseminate this book. After Ban Gu’s death, his *History of the Western Han* could not be thoroughly understood by scholars at that time. Thereupon, Ma Rong went to prostrate [himself] at Ban Gu’s house and learn from Ban’s little sister. Henceforth the study [of this book] started to became well known. [S]ima and Ban’s books are familiar to people today, but had to be transmitted by particular persons and learned from particular teachers. This is because for specialized scholarship, ancient scholars must hand down personal insight in addition to the study of the scriptures, which was beyond the capacity of writing and should be transmitted orally from masters to disciples. They learned and handed down their scholarship to posterity. [Sima] Qian’s book was annotated by Pei Yin, [Ban] Gu’s by Ying Shao. The later annotators, in different families’ scholarly traditions, all express their family teachings.

史遷著百三十篇，乃云“藏之名山，傳之其人。”其後外孫楊愼始布其書。班固《漢書》，自固卒後，一時學者，未能通曉。馬融乃伏閣下，從其女弟受業，然後其學始顯。夫馬、班之書，今人見之悉矣，而當日傳之必以其人，受讀必有所自者，古人專門之學，必有法外傳心，筆削之功所不及，則口授其徒，而相與傳習其業，以垂永久也。遷書自裴駰為注，固書自應劭作解，其後為之注者，猶若干家，則皆闡其家學者也。^{50}

Annotations of the Confucian Classics and texts of the Hundred Schools, and of histories *in the Han dynasty were meaning-oriented, aiming to build a systematic interpretation of the thoughts,*

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^{50} Zhang Xuecheng, *Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu, juan* 3, 237.
intentions and principles of the attributed author(s) of the text. This kind of annotation comprised the majority of pre-modern Chinese annotations. Annotations of histories and classical literary works (i.e., classical poetry and prose) after the Eastern Han dynasty were mostly concerned with explaining difficult or obscure words or expressions rather than building a systematic interpretation of the main text. However, some were still to some extent meaning-oriented. For instance, there was a tradition in Chinese literary theory that poetry was believed to express one’s intent (詩言志). Therefore, annotators were supposed to base their explanations on their comprehension of the author’s intent. In short, annotations of poems do not have many literary appreciations of the main text, which is rather different from another type of interpretive text, pingdian/commentary.

**Pingdian/Commentaries: In-depth Understanding of Literary Features**

Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 (1893-1984) claims that “if the Qing literati considered the Six Classics all histories, then the Ming literati read the Six Classics simply as literature.”\(^{51}\) This may not be correct for Ming annotations—books with “zhushu” in their titles—for, as is pointed out by Kai-wing Chow, the new annotations in the late Ming challenged the Cheng-Zhu 程朱 interpretation established in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) and thus helped to undermine the orthodoxy of the official ideology.\(^{52}\) These annotations, meaning-oriented as was pointed out above, cannot

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\(^{51}\) Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Zhongguo wenxue pipingshi* 中文文學批評史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1979), 441. What should be noted is that “wen” 文 (literature) discussed in the imperial period is different from the modern concept “wenxue” 文學 (literature). In this sense, Guo’s argument seems a little anachronistic. However, the essential feature of Chinese pingdian/commentaries were that they were mainly concerned with literary features of the text. Guo’s argument is right on this point.

\(^{52}\) Kai-wing Chow, “Paratext: Commentaries, Ideology, and Politics,” 149-188.
be understood as only concerned with the literary features of the Confucian Classics. However, for books with “pingdian” in their titles, Guo’s claim is correct.

Chineses pingdian, consisting of piping 批評 (comments, criticism) and quandian 圈點 (emphasis marks, literally it means “circles and dots,” similar to underlining and highlighting), can be translated as “commentary” in English. Different from annotations, Chinese commentaries were mainly concerned with the literary features, or “wenli” 文理, of the main text.

Wenli as a literary concept was first proposed by Liu Xie 劉勰 (courtesy name Yanhe 彥和, fl. 5th century) in his highly influential work on literary theory, Wenxin diaolong (The literary mind and the carving of dragons). Wenli literally means “the order and organization of composition, the line of thought in writing,” but was often used to denote “literary features of the text” or “literary theory.” Speaking of the Confucian Classics, Liu Xie said:

The truths (yi) [contained in the Classics] shape human nature and the affections (hsing-ch’ing) ... the language (tz’u) is the most finely wrought in the principles of literature (wen-li).

[《五經》]義既埏乎性情，辭亦匠於文理。53

Liu pointed out that the Confucian Classics were not only refined and profound in meanings, but also exquisite and elegant in language, which should be the model for later composers. Liu focused on the literary features of the Classics, so, after reading Liu’s Wenxin diaolong, Shen Yue 沈約 (courtesy name Xiwen 休文, 441-513), one of the best-known scholars of the Southern Dynasties

南朝 (420-589) praised Liu as “having an in-depth comprehension of literary theory” (深得文理).

Zhang Xuecheng regarded the *Wenxin diaolong, Shipin* 詩品 (Classifications of poets), *Wenfu* 文賦 (Rhyme prose on literature) and some other works on Chinese literature as the origin of commentary. This is because commentaries focused on the literary features of the text and at the same time drew from these works a concept and general theory of style, language, structure, and other rhetorical features. Commentaries also had an “in-depth comprehension of literary theory.”

Commentaries came into being during the Song dynasty (960-1279) under the influence of the development of civil service examinations. The earliest extant anthology with commentaries on classical prose, the *Guwen guanjian* 古文關鍵 (Key to composing classical prose) by Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137-1181), was compiled to “show the right entrance to students” (示學者以門徑). The *Chonggu wenjue* 崇古文訣 (Instructions in classical-prose composition) by Lou Fang 樓昉 (Southern Song dynasty) was compiled to “highlight the key parts and benefit later students” (抽其關鍵，以惠後學); Wang Shouren 王守仁 (style name Yangming 陽明, 1472-1529) stated that the *Wenzhang guifan* 文章軌范 (Rules and criteria of classical prose composition) by Xie Fangde 謝枋得 (1226-1289) was “compiled only for the enterprise of the civil service examinations” (是獨為舉業者設耳). These books with commentaries have been primarily concerned with the

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55 Zhang Xuecheng, *Jiaochou tongyi tongjie* 校雠通義通解, annotated by Wang Zhongmin 王重民 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1987),juan 1, 12.

56 *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965),juan 187, 1698; Yao Bao 姚瑤, “Chong gu wen jue yuan xu” 崇古文訣原序 (in Lou Fang comp., *Chong gu wen jue, Siku*...
literary features of the main text, especially rules and patterns of composing classical prose. In these commentators’ eyes, methods of prose composition turned out to be derived from prose written by the wise men of the past. Therefore, one should be a sophisticated reader before becoming a good writer. The Guwen guanjian starts with “Kan wenzi fa” 看文字法 (Methods of reading texts), which is then followed by “Lun zuowen fa” 論作文法 (Methods of prose composition). In the main body of the book, the rules and patterns of prose composition are elicited by refined comments and evaluations of the literary features of the main text. In this way, “the right entrance” to civil examination candidates was shown. 

Annotations of ancient classics were meaning oriented, aimed at transmitting the perceived intention and thought of the past sages by explaining their words and sentences; commentaries were literary style-oriented, trying to lead readers to “comprehend literary features from the characteristics of the main text” (從文本特性中領悟文學特性); i.e., they left aside the author and only appreciated the text per se. Even for the Confucian Classics, what commentaries focused on were also literary aspects of the texts; their remarks on the meaning of the classics were largely clichés. For example, there is a commentary on the Shijing titled Maoshi zhenya 毛詩振雅 (The restoration of elegance in the Maoshi) printed in the Late Ming period. Each page of this book has three registers; in the top and bottom registers are various commentaries; in the middle are the

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58 Lin Gang, Ming Qing xiaoshuo pingdian, 92.
main text of the *Shijing* and selected annotations by Mao. The commentaries on the top margin also explain the meaning of the poems. However, they are in very simple language, and more importantly, they explain the meaning through analyzing the relationship between different stanzas and the structure of the whole text. They contribute nothing to the creating of new meanings and any deeper understanding of the poems. The meanings they discussed were the literal meanings proposed in the Mao annotations. The commentaries on the bottom consist entirely of appreciations of the text. As for the “Ye you si jun,” one comment reads:

The meaning of the two characters “huai chun” [longing for spring] is sublime. Do not read them too coarsely.

“懷春” 二字甚微，莫粗看。

Another one reads:

The four characters “shu er tui tui” [Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough] are much better than beautiful diction.

“舒而脫脫” 四字妙甚于麗詞。^59_

Compared with Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi’s annotations quoted above, these commentaries are rather distinctive.

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^59_ These two commentaries are quoted from *Maoshi zhenya* 毛詩振雅 (woodblock edition carved in the late Ming period, held in the Research Institute for Oriental Cultures at the Gakushuin University), *juan* 1, 19b-20a.
Commentaries on poetry and prose showed new possibilities of interpretation in Chinese literary history. When being applied to works of fiction and drama, this new interpretive method changed the development of Chinese narrative literature.

Fiction and drama occupied a very low position in elite assessments of Chinese writings. They were despised by almost all literati before the late Ming period; accordingly, composers and compilers were apt to abandon the right to sign their real names. This, in consequence, resulted in the absence of the author in fiction and drama. Poetry was believed to express one’s intent; prose, to convey the Way of the past sages; histories and texts of the Hundred Schools, to record the past wise men’s deeds and thoughts. The reading and interpretation of these texts was centered on a powerful “author” behind the text. However, there was no sage or wise man behind the text of fiction and drama most of the time. The absence of the author invalidated the author-centered interpretation, and exacerbated the low status of fiction and drama. A breakthrough in interpretive theory was needed to change the situation. This breakthrough was made by the fiction-drama commentaries of the Ming-Qing period, which did not concentrate on the sages’ intention and or the Way; nor did they see the text as a mere container of meaning. On the contrary, the commentators emphasized that meaning came from the characteristics of the text and that literary features were no longer a dispensable auxiliary. They believed that one was able to grasp the essence of a text by pinpointing its literary features. The great seventeenth-century literary theorist and commentator Jin Shengtan ⾦聖巃 (c. 1610-1611), stated:

I have said that the *Shui-hu chuan* (*Shuihu zhuan*) is superior to the *Shih-chi* (*Shiji*), but nobody believes me. Really, I wasn’t talking nonsense. The truth is that in the *Shih-chi* words

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60 See Martin W. Huang, “Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese *Xiaoshuo* Commentary,” 51.
are used to carry events [i-wen yün-shih 以文運事], while in the Shui-hu chuan events are produced from the words [yin-wen sheng-shih 因文生事]. When you use words to carry events, you first have events that have taken place in such-and-such a way, and then you must figure out a piece of narrative for them. To use words to produce events, on the other hand, is quite different. All you have to do is follow where your pen leads. To cut down what is tall and make tall what is short is all up to you. 

In Jin Shengtan’s opinion, in good works the text comes first. Meaning and significance do not inhere in the events and philosophy recorded by the text, but in how the text is written—the genre, rhetoric, structure, and other literary features. If, as Jin Shengtan put it, the text is more important than the events and philosophy recorded in the text, then the text is more important than the author. In this sense, fiction-drama commentary had liberated the text from the overweening control of the author, and the field where meaning and significance were generated is transferred from the author to the text per se. A reader had to read the text carefully and analyze its characteristics thoroughly before being rewarded. And so “the heart of the reader suffers” (看書人心苦), wrote Jin Shengtan in his commentary on the Xixiangji 西廂記 (Romance of the Western Chamber). Interestingly, in the margin of the same page of Jin’s commentary, a piece of marginalia by a Qing scholar Wei Jirui 魏際瑞 (courtesy name Shanbo 善伯, 1620-1677) states:

I always say that reading is more difficult than composing, and yet Shengtan’s words are also saying that reading is more difficult. This was known only to Shengtan and me. Hearing this, Shengtan will certainly guffaw and yell at me: “You lousy devil!”

我謂看難於作，然聖歎此語亦是言看難於作。此惟我及聖歎自知之。聖歎聞之，必啞然罵我曰：“老賊，老賊！”

Therefore, for works of fiction and song drama, even if the author was known, he was not the only originator of meaning; readers could play a more active role in producing meanings under the guidance of commentators, who can also be seen as sophisticated readers. This, as is pointed out by Martin Huang, indicated the “ascendancy” of the reader’s status. Also in this vein, Haun Saussy claims that this theory of commentary is similar to that of New Criticism, both paying great attention to the importance of close reading of the text.

As mentioned above, some annotations, especially those of literary works in the Ming-Qing period, shared features with commentaries in that they also analyzed the literary features and discussed methods of composing poems and prose. Some fiction-drama commentaries also used zhu in their titles, because the majority of their contents were the explanation of words and expressions. Nevertheless, I am still inclined to call them “commentaries,” because the way they explained words and expressions was not the same as that of annotations.

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62 Wang Shifu 王實甫, Louwailou dingzheng tuozhu diliu caizi shu 樓外樓訂正妥註第六才子書西廂記, commented by Jin Shengtan and annotated by Zou Shenmai 鄒聖脈 (Early Qing edition cut by Zou Shengmai, held at the University of Auckland Library Special Collections), juan 2, 5ab.

The main concern of annotation was to transmit the *authentic* intent and thoughts of the past “sages.” So, finding the correct meaning of words and expressions in particular historical contexts was the core task of annotations. The method was usually twofold: (1) etymological investigation, i.e., exploring the original meaning and derived meanings of words and expressions; and (2) evidential research on historical events and contexts so as to make clear the accurate meaning of words and expressions in particular contexts. All of this was built on serious and reliable (at least in their own opinion) sources and logic. Therefore, this kind of interpretation was historical in essence. Even for the Learning of Principle (*lixue* 理學) and Learning of Mind-and-Heart (*xinxue* 心學) during the Song and Ming dynasties, which came under the influence of Buddhism and were well known for their enthusiastic discussions of moral principles, spiritual experiences, and other philosophical ideas, annotations still raised points of discussion via annotating the Confucian Classics. In order to argue with the Han-Tang scholars, they had to do some etymological investigation and clarify historical events, as well. Commentators, by contrast, concentrated on literary features of the text. Having inherited the characteristics of the poetry and prose commentaries, writers of fiction-drama commentaries focused on language, rhetoric, structure, and such.\(^64\) Thus, commentaries did not care much about the etymology of the words. In the meantime, since fiction and drama were fictional, there often was no historical context that needed explaining. Therefore, what commentaries were concerned about in the case of ambiguous and important words were the cultural implications accumulated across history and the aesthetic features generated in this process. Fiction-drama commentaries in the Ming-Qing period were filled with various popular texts that annotators did not even bother to glance at, such as miscellaneous notes, Buddhist and Daoist texts, poems and prose, other fiction and drama, and folk stories, just name a

\(^{64}\) See Lin Gang, *Ming Qing xiaoshuo pingidan*, 99-177.
few. Some commentaries cited many poems and lyrics of song dramas not only to illustrate where the main text might have come from but also to help readers appreciate the multi-layered meanings of the main text.

Let us take the Xixiangji as an example. The last two sentences of Act Three, “An Exchange of Verses,” are as follows:

Never again will I seek in dreams the blue palace gates/But only wait beneath the peach flower tree.

再不向青琐闥夢兒中尋，則去那碧桃花樹下等。65

Zou Shengmai’s commentary on the phrase qingsuota 青琐闥 states:

Door decorated with blue lattices  Meng Kang said: “The hollow part of the door was colored in blue.” [Yan] Shigu said: “The blue lattice means to carve into the shape of a chain of lattice and colour it in blue.” The inner part of the door is called ta. Fan Yanlong’s poem writes: “Being an official within the door decorated with blue lattice; Gazing from a distance at the phoenix pond.”

青琐闥  孟康曰：“門以青画戶邊鏨中。”師古曰：“青琐者，刻為連籠文，而以青塗之也。”門內曰闥。范彥龍詩：“攝官青琐闥，遙望鳳凰池。”66

This commentary first explains the meaning of qingsuo 青琐 by citing annotations of the Hanshu, and then explains the meaning of ta 閥. At this time, the meaning of this word is clear enough. But

66 Xixiangji, juan 1, 32b.
Zou Shengmai continues to quote Fan Yun’s (courtesy name Yanlong, 451-503) poem to show where this word came from, since Fan Yun was the first to use *qingsuota*. Similarly, Zou’s commentary on *beiyejing* 貝葉經 (palm leaf sutra) writes:

Palm leaf sutra  Buddhist sutras in western regions are mostly written on pattra leaves, so these sutras were called palm leaf sutras. Luobin Wang’s poem writes: “The palm leaf [sutras] transmit the words from the golden mouth [of the Buddha].” Liu Zongyuan’s poem writes: “I will hold palm leaf books in my leisure time; and read them after walking out of the Eastern Study.”

This commentary also explains the word first, and then quotes poems by two well-known Tang poets to illustrate where this word came from and how it was used historically. Interestingly, the first poem was composed by Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689/691-740) rather than Luobin Wang. This mistake, as well as lots of other mistakes and the hastily-carved appearance of the pages, shows the low quality of Ming popular editions (see Figure 2-1). — Sometimes there are only citations of poems without any explanation of the words. These poems can contribute little for explaining the meaning of words. In fact, some poems were even more elusive than the main text *per se*. Nevertheless, pointing out the relationship of the words of the drama with that of classical poems could flaunt the extraordinary taste and erudition of the author and the commentator. For the reader, it would be a very different aesthetic experience to read these two parallel texts at the same time.

67 *Xixiangji, juan* 1, 34a.
Figure 2-1  Leaf 1.34b of the Xixiangji, early Qing edition cut by Zou Shengmai. Source: General Library Special Collections Asian Languages PL2693 .H472. University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services.
Fiction-drama commentaries were not produced to trace the original meaning of a text or transmit the past sages’ intent and thoughts; they instead encouraged aesthetic appreciation. The method they employed was not primarily historical investigation or evidential research, but rather the use of a set of literary concepts to build a system of appreciation. For instance, it is written at the beginning of the fourth act of the Xixiangji that there is a ceremony on the fifteenth day of the second month. Zou Shengmai claimed that the date should be the fifteenth day of the third month rather than the second. But in his commentary, there is no evidential or historical evidence and principle adduced. Rather, he refers to another drama and analyzes the writing strategy and its effect to illustrate what it means to be good writing composed by a talented author. In Zou’s analysis, what was concerned was “marvelousness” (shenmiao 神妙), “spirit and reason” (shenli 神理), and “metaphor” (biyu 比喻). This is to evaluate the main text and even determine its authenticity according to its literary features.

Fiction-drama commentaries aimed to explore the aesthetic connotations of the main text and guide the reader in appreciating its “marvelousness” so as to be moved by the main text. They employed textual characteristics as a means to stir the reader’s sentiment, and, sometimes, to educate common readers. At the beginning of juan 42 of the Sanguozhi yanyi 三國志演義 (Romance of the three kingdoms), Mao Zonggang’s 毛宗崗 commentary has:

As for the pleasure of reading, if there is no great surprise, there is no great joy; no great uncertainty, no great delight; no great worry, no great comfort. When Zilong fought his way out and was tired with his horse, he encountered Wen Pin who was chasing him. This is a first worrying situation. When he saw [his lord] Xuande, [Xuande’s son] Ah Dou was silent. This

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68 See Xixiangji, juan 1, 34b-35b.
is an uncertainty. When Yide broke the bridge, Xuande was forced to the edge of the river and had no way out. This is a second worrying situation. When Yunchang meets [Xuande] on the overland route, their way was suddenly blocked the way by warships and they did not know that was Liu Qi. This is a surprise. When they boarded Liu Qi’s ships, they suddenly encountered another group of warships. They did not know that was Kongming, and this again is a surprising and worrying situation. [All of these] are like showing the fierce thunder coming and going and the furious billow rising and falling in the eye of the reader; it is hard to imagine that there can be such a marvellous illusion within one square foot [of paper].

讀書之樂，不大驚則不大喜，不大疑則不大快，不大急則不大慰。當子龍殺出重圍，人困馬乏之後，又遇文聘追來，是一急；而及見玄德之時，懷中阿斗不見聲息，是一疑；至翼德斷橋之後，玄德被曹操追至江邊，更無去路，又一急；及雲長旱路接應之後，忽見江上戰船攔路，不知是劉琦，又一驚；及劉琦同載之後，忽又見戰船攔路，不知是孔明，又一疑一急。令讀者眼中，如猛電之一去一來，怒濤之起一起落。不意尺幅之內，乃有如此之幻也。⁶⁹

At the beginning of that juan, the commentary points out that the text of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* can stimulate the sentiments of shock, doubt, and worry by a series of narrative strategies, which can even create the effect of “showing the fierce thunder coming and going and the furious billow rising and falling in the eye of the reader,” giving the reader a kind of extreme multi-sensory experience, and thus great pleasure from reading. All of these, the commentary reminds us, are completed “within one square foot [of paper].” One can only gain these sensory experiences and

pleasures through close reading of the main text. More interestingly, one marginal comment in the 
Xixiangji mentioned above reads: “Interesting words…I cannot stop laughing” (趣語……笑不住). This response vividly illustrates the pleasure of the reader experiences while reading the 
Xixiangji and Jin Shengtan’s commentaries.

Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646), one of the greatest vernacular writers and editors of the 
late Ming Dynasty, also held the idea that stories had much infectious power. In his “Preface” to 
the 1620 edition of Stories Old and New, Feng writes:

Just ask the storytellers to demonstrate in public their art of description: they will gladden 
you, astonish you, move you to sad tears, rouse you to song and dance; they will prompt 
you to draw a sword, bow in reverence, cut off a head, or donate money. The faint-hearted 
will be made brave, the debauched chaste, the unkind compassionate, the obtuse ashamed. 
One may well intone the Classic of Filial Piety [Xiaojing] and the Analects of Confucius 
every day, yet he will not be moved so quickly nor so profoundly as by these storytellers.

In Feng’s eyes, the stories of the storytellers can move an audience or reader more quickly and 
profoundly than the Confucian Classics. This confers recognition on the function and significance 
of fiction. Achieving this goal—to be moved by a story—depends on close reading of the text. 
Therefore, there is usually a chapter called “How to read” (dufa 讀法) at the beginning of a work 
of fiction or drama, composed by the commentator and guide the reader how to read according to 
the commentator’s suggestions. Moreover, the circles and dots used by the commentator, and

70 Xixiangji, juan 5, 16a.
71 Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, comp., Stories Old and New: A Ming Dynasty Collection, trans., Shuhui Yang 
sometimes the simplest comments “miao” 妙 (marvelous) and “hao” 好 (good) remind the reader to pay attention to the text in a particular place. Commentators were actually reading experts, whose thoughts and literary theories unfolded in their commentaries. In this sense, we can see that the commentators also controlled the meaning of the main text; some of them even controlled the text per se — for instance, Jin Shengtan often altered the main text and claimed that he did so based on an “ancient text,” which was actually non-existent.\textsuperscript{72} Therefore, it can be concluded that annotations and commentaries have one thing in common, that is, they actively express their political, philosophical, and literary thoughts through the interpretation of pre-existing texts,\textsuperscript{73} which is different from marginalia.

\textit{Pijiao/Marginalia: Hand-Written Reading Responses}

In her book, \textit{Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age}, Ann Blair discusses how a person’s reading notes helped him or her and other readers read. Because of this kind of usage, reading notes contributed much to the compilation of reference books in early modern Europe.\textsuperscript{74} The most direct function of reading notes was to help the reader read, re-read, and make sense of the main text. Some readers expected to publish their reading notes in the future even when they started to write them. This kind of note can be thought of as a draft of annotations, commentaries, or even monographs. But according to the sources I have encountered, readers rarely intended to publish his or her reading notes or make his or her voice heard by the public,\textsuperscript{75}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[73] See also Huang, “Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese Xiaoshuo Commentary,” 53.
\end{footnotes}
and reading notes were merely a by-product of reading. Since most reading notes are records of the reader’s thoughts while reading, their content ranges from exegesis to comment, from historical investigation to textual criticism, from scholia to records of the reader’s daily activities. Thus, reading notes are essentially fragmentary in character. Because they seemed trivial, even meaningless sometimes, almost all were thrown away intentionally or unintentionally in both early China and Europe. In Europe, reading notes started to be treated as long-term tools and carefully preserved in the Renaissance, while in China, one kind of reading notes, pijiao, gradually became prevalent in the mid-seventeenth century. Some of them are well preserved in a tremendous number of extant pre-modern Chinese books.

In Chinese, the word pijiao consists of two morphemes, pi 批 (comments) and jiao 校 (textual criticism or collation), and refers to all writings and marks on the margins and interlinear parts of the book. Its English equivalent is marginalia.

Marginalia, the plural form of the Latin marginale, originally meaning “notes written in the margin,” is thought to have entered English from Latin in the early nineteenth century. In Heather Jackson’s pioneering book, Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books, “marginalia” refers to “notes written anywhere in a book, and not merely in the margins.” The primary feature of marginalia is that they are hand-written notes attached to pre-existing written or printed texts. As Jackson puts it, “the essential and defining character of the marginal note throughout its history is

72 Blair, Too Much to Know, 61-74.
76 Jackson, Marginalia, 7.
77 Jackson, Marginalia, 13.
that it is a responsive kind of writing permanently anchored to pre-existing written words.” Some scholars use “manuscript annotations,” “readers’ notes,” and the like to denote marginalia. In this study, “marginalia” will be employed to avoid any confusion with annotations and commentaries. Marginalia, annotations and commentaries are three different types of interpretive texts. The core feature of annotations is to bring out the meaning of the text. Commentaries in China concentrated on the literary features of the main text and aimed to help the reader enjoy the beauty of the main text. These two were both intended to be revealed to the public, or to be “published,” like a book composed by a writer who, most of the time, not only wants his or her voice to be heard by as many people as possible, but also wants to be understood by them. Marginalia have four basic features that differentiated them from annotations and commentaries: They are 1) being hand-written; 2) being responsive to the main text, but not confined by it; 3) privacy; and 4) uniqueness.

(1) Being hand-written by the reader is an essential characteristic of marginalia, which ensures that marginalia are responsive to the pre-existing main text by the reader, and hence able to reveal the practice and mental process of reading. If marginalia are printed alongside the original text, editorial intervention should be taken into account, and the mental process of reading will undoubtedly be contaminated. These “printed marginalia” will hence become less different from traditional annotations, which are normally written or printed simultaneously with the original text.

79 Hulvey, “Not So Marginal,” 159-176.
80 Jackson, “Marginal Frivolities: Readers’ Notes as Evidence for the History of Reading,” in *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading*, eds. Robin Myers et al. (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2005), 137-151.
as a kind of interpretation of or complement to the original text, and are designed to go along with
the text they interpret. When marginalia are transcribed (guolu 過錄) by hand onto another copy
of the original text, their content and form will likely be altered significantly by many scribes. The
transcription of marginalia in China was a topic of great significance. I will discuss this practice
in chapters four and five, and use several case studies to illustrate how this practice revealed the
transcriptionist’s editorial intentions, opinions on scholarship, and attitudes towards reading.

(2) The second feature of marginalia is that they are responsive to the original text, but not
confined by it. Glosses, phonetic notations, commentaries, collating notes, paraphrases, extracts,
cross-references, and analyses, which are related to the meaning of the main text are the main
content of annotations and marginalia, but marginalia contain more information. Readers might
copy onto the margin some words, phrases or sentences — which seem elegant or full of wisdom,
or useful to the reader in some way — rather than just underline them; they might write down
reminiscences or very personal opinions, which have nothing obvious to do with the meaning of
the original text but may have been “triggered” by it; they might proudly put down their imitations
of the calligraphy of the main text; they might curse the cat that urinated on the book; they might
record their mood while reading, such as the marginalia on the Xixiangji discussed above; they
might talk about the weather of that day, or draw various symbols or doodles as they are “using,”
not just “reading” the book in their hands.

Annotations and commentaries both aimed to establish a kind of discourse with the main text
and/or the author — explaining the meanings of original texts so that they can be understood in a

81 See Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, Introduction to Manuscript Studies (Ithaca: Cornell
University Press, 2007), chapter three “Correction, Glossing, and Annotation” and chapter eleven “The
particular way; making some supplements or corrections to “vindicate” the argument of the original text; or sometimes arguing with the author. All in all, they are fixed texts that can be revealed to the public. However, sometimes, marginalia are readers’ personal opinions, which can be radical, caustic, offensive, or obscure, seemingly meaningless, and of course not ready for “publishing.” Moreover, marginalia can stand in no direct relationship to the main text. Some marginalia make plain that using a book, not just reading the text, can have other possibilities or consequences that may have no obvious relationship with the main points or literary meaning of the original text. In his research on Guillaume Budé’s (1468-1540) marginalia in Pliny, Vitruvius and Homer, a case study of scholarly reading practices in early-modern Europe, Anthony Grafton shows how a text could be used in various ways, and:

Budé’s case suggests … reading had at least two central purposes, both practical, but neither familiar to us. The first was documentary, even archival: the scholar set out not only to converse with the ancients, using the classical tradition, but to document the progress he made in doing so. He made the books he read into a monument of his scholarship as personal and splendid as the books he wrote. … reading was, among other things, a way for ambitious, powerful mean to assemble cultural capital for themselves and their friends and families. …… Budé also read … to write. What he mastered, he could quote and interpret; what he annotated, he could reprocess. Reading in early modern Europe — at least learned reading — implied copying and sorting as well as scanning.  

This is a reading practice that is not particularly familiar to modern scholars and readers, but the situation was similar in late imperial China. For example, He Zhuo, a well-known scholar and

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82 Grafton, “Is the History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise?” 155-6.
calligrapher in his time, composed an enormous amount of marginalia on the *Hou Hanshu*, some of which show how he accumulated knowledge and learned how to write rhyming couplets. For instance, in *juan* 43 of the *Hou Hanshu*, the main text states:

Previously, Emperor Guangwu and [Zhu] Hui’s father, [Zhu] Cen, both studied in Chang’an. They were old friends. After ascending the throne, [Emperor Guangwu] asked about [Zhu] Cen. At that time, Zhu Cen had already passed away. So [his son Zhu] Hui was invited [to the capital] and appointed as a Court Gentleman.

朱好興煦父岑値學長安，有舊故，及即位，求問岑，時己卒，乃召拜拜為郎。\(^83\)

He Zhuo wrote the following piece of marginalia on this passage:

Zhu Cen could be the topic of parallel couplets with Zhang Chong, [because] Cen had a son and Chong had a grandson.

朱岑可對張充，岑有子，充有孫。\(^84\)

He Zhuo meant that Zhu Cen and Zhang Chong had the same experience. According to *juan* 45 of the *Hou Hanshu*, the well-known scholar-official Zhang Pu 張酺 learned Classics from his grandfather Zhang Chong when he was young. Zhang Chong was Emperor Guangwu’s classmate and old friend. When Emperor Guangwu ascended the throne, he also asked about Zhang Chong, but Zhang Chong had also passed away at that time.\(^85\) Zhu Cen and Zhang Chong were both

\(^83\) *Hou Hanshu* (woodblock edition cut at the Jigu pavilion [Jigu ge 漁古閣] of the Mao 毛 family in the late Ming, held at the Peking University Library; abb. PKU edition hereafter), *juan* 43.

\(^84\) *Hou Hanshu*, PKU edition, *juan* 43.

Emperor Guangwu’s classmates; Zhu Cen’s son and Zhang Chong’s grandson were both celebrated scholar officials. So, He Zhuo said they can “be the basis for parallel couplets.”

Sometimes, He Zhuo himself composed couplets and wrote them down on the margin of the book. For example, Zheng Hong’s 鄭弘 biography (in juan 33 of the Hou Hanshu) recorded that Jiao Kuang 焦詀, Governor of Hedong Commandery, was implicated in a rebellion, and all his family were arrested. Jiao Kuang himself died on the road when he was being sent to the capital. The emperor was in a rage, and no one dared to argue for Jiao Kuang. Zheng Hong was one of Jiao Kuang’s students. He managed to redress the injustice done to Jiao Kuang and escorted Jiao Kuang’s family back to their home. A very similar story was recorded in juan 31 of the Hou Hanshu: Lian Fan 廉范 was also Xue Han’s 薛漢 student, and did the same thing for his teacher.86 When He Zhuo read Zheng Hong’s story, it brought to mind Lian Fan’s, and he thus composed a pair of couplets in the marginalia, as follows:

Lian Fan has Xue Han’s corpse buried properly; Zheng Hong defended Jiao Kuang regardless of his own safety.

廉范斂薛漢, 鄭弘詀焦詀。87

These examples show that He Zhuo did not just read to get the main point of the text; his reading experience is rather complex.

(3) Grafton’s study also shows that writing marginalia transformed Budé’s “printed books into unique [books],” which were “personalized possessions that documented his social position

86 Hou Hanshu, PKU edition, juan 31 and 33.
87 Hou Hanshu, PKU edition, juan 33.
as well as his prowess as a scholar.”

“...”

This refers to the third and fourth characteristics of marginalia: privacy and uniqueness.

“If ‘private’ means exclusive to oneself,” Heather Jackson claims, “then reading is not a private but a social experience and practically any reader of a given time and place is as typical as any other.”

In another paper, Jackson shows how “books were passed around, using annotation as a way of sharing knowledge and opinions, sometimes as a semi-public reviewing process.”

She defines marginalia as “semi-public,” and writes:

No marginalia of the Romantic period were written under conditions of privacy. ...

Marginalia were not then the secret utterances that they have for the most part become, but semi-public documents. ... These notes were designed for use, for show, for persuasion; they were oriented towards others, not self. They do not provide direct access to the mental processes of readers as they appropriate texts.

Her argument seems reasonable. But “private” is a scalar concept of degree most of the time. Compared with diaries and secret letters, marginalia seem more public; compared with annotations and commentaries, they are more private. Designed to be revealed to the public (or a group of people), annotations and commentaries usually have very evident intentions. They either claimed to be objective, transmitting and interpreting the real meaning of the original text, to be disinterestedly telling the truth, or can be very specific and contextual, leading the interpretation

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89 Jackson, Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books, 256.
91 Heather Jackson, “Marginal Frivolities,” in Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading, 145.
in a specific way. But most readers’ marginalia have no such scruples. — We should keep in mind that many marginalia that were too personal were cut out when they were edited for publication.

It is true that some marginalia, as Jackson points out, can be a kind of combination of public and private functions. Some marginalia, such as those written under severe political pressure, can be very public, i.e., they were composed for the public or some particular audiences, such as the emperor, head of a state, and the like. But this kind of publicness is based on the privateness of marginalia, for if they were not supposed to be a kind of “private” document, they would not capture so much attention. Therefore, the privacy of marginalia is different from case to case, but in the spectrum of privacy, marginalia lie between diaries and annotations.

(4) Marginalia can transform a book into something unique, and are also unique by themselves alone. In this aspect, they resemble holograph manuscripts. Few authors want to write a work twice; few readers will write the same marginalia on one title twice. Normally, there is just one copy of one particular reader’s marginalia on a given title. Therefore, books with marginalia usually have special meaning for the owner. For instance, a celebrated modern Chinese historian and book collector, Zhou Yiliang 周一良 (1913-2001), once wrote to a friend, “My collections are basically not worth mentioning. But among them, there are many that my hands have gone over from morning to night and to which I have added marginalia. That is why I can never forget them for a moment” (一良藏書本區區不足道，唯其中多朝夕摩挲，手加批注者，是以銜念念不能忘耳); he added: “There are no rare books in my collection. But after reading and collating them and writing marginalia in them, I feel them becoming my old friends and cannot bear to abandon them” (一良藏書無珍本，但經校讀批寫後，便覺欽欽如故人，不忍舍棄之矣). 92 Books

were thus personalized by their marginalia. They also acquired special meanings for other readers. A late Qing Chinese scholar-official, Pang Zhonglu 龐鐘璐 (courtesy name Yunshan 淮山, 1822-1876), borrowed one copy of Sanguozhi 三國志 (History of the three states) from his friend Weng Tonghe 翁同龢 (courtesy name Shuping 叔平, 1830-1904) and had it in his study for at least two years, because this copy had Weng Tongshu’s 翁同書 (courtesy name Zugeng 祖庚, 1810-1865) marginalia on it. Weng Tongshu was Weng Tonghe’s elder brother. He was also Pang Zhonglu’s friend. Besides, Pang Zhonglu admired his personality and scholarly achievements. After transcribing all the marginalia into another copy of his own, Pang rebound this book and wrote a short colophon at the back, saying, “[This book] has stayed on my desk for two years. Every time I opened it, I felt as though I was seeing an old friend” (在案頭者二年，每一展開，如見故人).

Besides these four features that are shared by marginalia in both China and Europe, Chinese marginalia in the late imperial period have one more distinctive feature: textual criticism assumed a very prominent position, both in relative quantity and importance. For some scholars, even a bad edition could become unique and valuable once it was collated by a famous scholar and bore his marginalia. For instance, there is a copy of Hou Hanshu held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XS816534-73). It is a woodblock edition carved in the late Ming by a commercial printing studio, which would never have been considered a rare book by Qing scholars. However, after transcribing various marginalia — especially that about textual criticism — from another copy into this copy, the owner, Zhang Yu 章錫 (courtesy name Shizhi 式之, 1864-1934), wrote in the colophon at the back: “Because of my hard work on this copy, have I not added one more rare book in the world?” (余之勤勤于是書也，不又為天壤間增一善本乎)

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93 This copy is now held at the National Library of China (call number: SB06086).
Moreover, uniqueness also adds more value to books with marginalia. “Books with readers’ notes,” Jackson said, “continued to be cherished.” “Readers’ notes potentially had commercial as well as sentimental value…and might even turn out to be publishable and profitable.” Because of this, forgeries of marginalia by well-known readers are not rare in the book market, and thus authentication occupies a fundamental position in the study of famous readers’ marginalia.

**Forms and Circulation**

Annotations, commentaries and marginalia are not only different in content and features, they were also supported by different materials and circulated in different ways in pre-modern China.

**Annotations: From Oral Transmission to Written on Paper, from Separation to Combination**

As mentioned earlier, the interpretation of the Classics was mainly transmitted orally from master to disciple before and during the Western Han dynasty. During that time, bamboo strips and silk were the main writing materials. However, perhaps because bamboo was heavy and silk expensive, few annotations were written down. Comparing the “Yiwen zhi” of the *Hanshu* with the biographies of scholars and classicists in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, we can find that transmitters were far more numerous than books with annotations. For instance, according to the biographies of scholars in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, there were more than thirty-five well known classicists who transmitted the teaching of the *Yijing 易經* (Book of Changes) of the New Text School. We can draw the genealogy of their transmission (Figure 2-2). However, there were just thirteen works of

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94 Jackson, “Marginal Frivolities: Readers’ Notes as Evidence for the History of Reading,” 144-145.
annotation recorded in the “Yiwen zhi,” and there is no evidence showing that most scholars wrote down their interpretations. As for the Old Text School, it was recorded in the “Rulin zhuan” 论林传(Treatise on Confucians) of the Hanshu that the famous expert on the Yijing, Fei Zhi 费直, employed the Tuan 象 annotation, Xiang 像 annotation, and Wenyan 文言 annotation, among others, to interpret the book, and that another expert, Gao Xiang 高相, interpreted the book according to divination studies. But no annotated books by either of them are recorded in the
“Yiwen zhi.” The most plausible reason is that they did not write down their interpretations.\textsuperscript{95} Hu Pu’an 胡樸安 put it this way:

[Scholars who transmitted the new text in the Western Han dynasty] all have their family traditions and/or adhered to their masters’ explanations. [The teaching] was transmitted from master to disciple within their schools from generation to generation without any distortion. Although the Erudite positions were established by the state for all the schools, scholars stuck to the teachings of their own, which were orally transmitted from master to disciple. This was the era of the Modern Text School. [At this time,] although there were exegeses, no one needed them.

各有家法，各本師說，遞相傳授，毫不雜亂。在政府之設立博士，雖兼而存之，在師弟之口耳相傳，則墨守一家之說。此今文家時代，雖有訓詁，而無需訓詁者。\textsuperscript{96}

Here “exegeses were not needed” actually means “exegeses did not need to be written down.” The explanation of the Classics was mainly orally transmitted from master to disciple or from father to sons and grandsons, which facilitated the study and transmission of a particular Confucian teaching becoming the prerogative of a family clan or the members of a school.

Annotations started to be written down in large quantities during the late Eastern Han period.\textsuperscript{97} This might be because that the technology of papermaking improved and cheaper and lighter paper, a more convenient writing material, was invented during the Eastern Han and finally replaced

\textsuperscript{95} See Zhang Xuecheng, \textit{Jiaochou tongyi tongjie}, 78-81.

\textsuperscript{96} Hu Pu’an, \textit{Zhongguo xungu xue shi}, 3.

\textsuperscript{97} For example, there were ninety-four titles on the \textit{Yijing} recorded in the “Jingji zhi” of the \textit{Suishu} (among them, sixty-nine titles existed in the Tang dynasty). See \textit{Suishu, juan} 32, 912.
bamboo strips and silk, becoming the main writing material during the Six Dynasties (220-589).  

Before the Six Dynasties, the text of the Classics and the annotations were usually not written together in one book. But during the Six Dynasties, most of the Confucian Classics and some pre-Han texts were written along with the annotations. For example, the Confucian Classics found at Dunhuang were mainly annotated editions.

Shu, which actually interpreted both the Classics and the zhu (annotation) and thus can be called sub-annotation, began to spring up in the Six Dynasties and flourished in the Sui and Tang. But they began to be written/printed together with the text of the Classics only in the Southern Song dynasty, when the civil service examinations were already the major entrance to the state bureaucracy. At this time woodblock printing was widely utilized to produce Confucian texts, and commercial publishing started to flourish. Woodblock printing facilitated the mass production of books. The popularization of Confucian Classics that resulted from the development of the civil service examinations created a large market for these Classics furnished with annotations and sub-annotations, which were highly convenient for examination candidates. These printed editions followed the basic pattern of previous manuscripts. That is, characters are arranged vertically from top to bottom.

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99 Zhang Xuecheng, Wenshi tongyi jiaozhu, collated and annotated by Ye Ying, juan 3, 248.

100 See Zhang Lijuan 張麗娟, Songdai jingshu zhushu kanke yanjiu 宋代經書註疏刊刻研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), 5.

101 See Zhang Lijuan, Songdai jingshu zhushu kanke yanjiu, 228-402; Gu Yongxin, Jingxue wenxian de yansheng he tongsuhua, 1-16, 38-122.
the top to the bottom in columns; columns go from the right to the left; the text of the Classics is in big characters, and the annotation and sub-annotation are in double-lined small characters. The biggest difference between printed Classics and previous manuscripts is that the latter were mostly bound in long continuous sections (such as long scrolls), while the former were printed in folded leaves (ye 叶. See Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-3a The Chunqiu Guliang zhuan 春秋穀梁傳, manuscript produced in the third year of the Longshuo 龙朔 reign (663), held at the National Library of China, call number BD15345. Source: Di er pi guojia guji zhengui minglu tulu 第二批国家珍贵古籍名錄图录, Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2010, picture 2539.

102 Some manuscripts were bound in sutra binding with pleat-like leaves and whirlwind binding with continuous pages pasted together. These two formats were believed to be created under the influence of Buddhist palm-leaf books, and perhaps spurred the creation of folded-leaf books. See Tsien Tsuen-Hsueh, Paper and Printing, 227-233.
Although the sub-annotations consist of multiple layers of annotation, and different layers are usually different in interpretation, the latest layer, which would have been composed by the compiler of the sub-annotation, usually selects one interpretation and tries to reconcile the gaps between the different parts of the Classics and those between the Classics and the interpretations.\(^{103}\) That is to say, although sub-annotations are multi-layered, different layers are chronologically arranged rather than randomly put together. The final explanation was based on all the layers of annotation listed, and no layer can be easily detached from the others. The sub-annotation itself

\(^{103}\) See John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators*, 79-167, 253-347.
was one completely integrated interpretive system and was able to circulate separately from the Classics.

Printing the Confucian Classics with their annotations and sub-annotations in one book was first practiced by local governments to provide more convenient versions of the Classics for examination candidates. Before long, commercial presses found that printing the main text and its annotations in one book could be a marketing strategy that attracted more consumers. They learned from the governmental press and produced more versions of Classics with annotations and sub-annotations. Moreover, they also applied this approach to the printing of other kinds of books. For example, the three annotations of the *Shiji*, the *jijie* 集解 (collected annotation, by Pei Yin 裴駰, around 430 AD), *suoyin* 索隱 (probing the meaning, by Sima Zhen 司馬貞, 697-732), and *zhengyi* 正義 (correct meaning, by Zhang Shoujie 張守節, around 1075 AD), were printed as one book in the Southern Song dynasty by Huang Shanfu 黃善夫, a publisher. This edition was not a good edition, for not only was it full of errors, but much of the *zhengyi* annotation was also cut out (see Figure 2-4). This kind of commercial printing illustrates the influence of politics and commerce on the production and circulation of annotations. And this kind of influence was much greater when it came to the printing of commentaries.104

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Figure 2-4 First leaf of *juan* 1 of the *Shiji*, carved in the Southern Song period by Huang Shanfu 黃善夫, photo-reproduction in the *Zhonghua zaizao shanben*. The three different annotations were chronologically arranged after the sentence they explained, and separated by small circles.

**Commentaries: Reshaping Chinese Books**

Commercial editions that printed various annotations together in one book seemed unsatisfactory to many, and have drawn continuous criticisms since they were invented. But the commercial printing of commentaries on poetry, classical prose, fiction and drama seemed more acceptable and exerted a significant influence on the textuality and physicality of Chinese books.

Commentaries focus on the literary features of a text, but also need to make sense of the main text first. So, the explanation of difficult words and expressions also takes up a considerable part of the commentary and resembles annotations. Similar to annotations, if commentaries have multiple layers, these different layers are typically chronologically arranged. However, unlike the
annotation, different commentators’ commentaries were usually listed in parallel rather than being formed into one completely integrated interpretive system. This is caused by the distinctive features of commentaries: Annotations focus on the meaning of the main text and can circulate separately from the main text, hence their location on the page is not that important, compared with that of commentaries. Even for an edition that had various annotations printed together in one book, different annotations were usually chronologically arranged after one sentence or one paragraph of the main text (see Figure 2-4). Commentaries, on the contrary, cannot circulate separately from the main text. This is a matter of structure, literary features, language, and the rhetoric of the main text. Detached from the text they analyze, commentaries become unintelligible. For example, without the main text, the huge number of miao (marvelous), hao (good), and emphasis marks in commentaries would make no sense at all.

The location of commentaries on the page is not insignificant. They must be as close to the text they analyzes as possible. Furthermore, since commentaries are essentially helping the reader to appreciate the text rather than seeking philosophical meanings or historical truths, they unfold more interpretive space, and the conflict between different commentaries is usually not that fierce. The same text can be appreciated from different perspectives. Most of the time, these parallel appreciations add to the aesthetic experience rather than cause contradiction. In this sense, publishers, as well as some commentators, liked to print several commentaries in one book. If book illustrations can also be seen as a kind of interpretation, we can say that book illustrations were also printed in parallel with various commentaries, and were active in the construction of the meaning field of the main text. As there were usually a variety of commentaries on one text, and they must all be printed at or near the same place, printers needed to come up with a method to contain all of them and meanwhile draw a distinction between any two of them. In the late Ming,
when popular printing was flourishing, printing enterprises were operated by many literati, writers and scholars who were not only good at reading and writing, but also skilled at printing and even bookselling. They not only did not reject commercial operations, but also actively embraced a variety of strategies that modified the textuality and physicality of Chinese books.\textsuperscript{105}

One of the most commonly used strategies to differentiate various commentaries was to print them in multiple registers. For example, the edition of \textit{Xixiangji} mentioned above has two registers. The lower register takes up about four-fifths of the page and contains the main text of the \textit{Xixiangji}, the commentary composed by Jin Shengtan, and the sub-commentary composed by Wang Zhuoshan 王斫山 and others; the main text of the \textit{Xixiangji} is in single-lined big characters; Jin’s commentary is in single-lined medium characters, and the sub-commentaries are in double-lined small characters. The upper register occupies one-fifth of the space and consists of Zou Shengmai’s commentary (see Figure 2-1). In this way, not only are the main text and various commentaries differentiated by font size, but Zou’s commentary is also distinguished by being placed in a separate registers.

In the Ming-Qing period, there were also a great many commentaries on the Confucian Classics and histories, which analyzed the literary features of the text and aimed to help examination candidates with their study of prose composition. These commentaries were different from annotations of the Classics and histories, so Zhang Xuecheng despised them for only “discussing literary features” and argued that they should not be classified in the category of

Confucian Classics or histories in book catalogues. The *Maoshi zhenya* discussed above is one of them. This copy has three registers; on the top and bottom registers are various commentaries, and on the middle are the main text of the *Shijing* and selected annotations by Mao (see Figure 2-5).

Figure 2-5 Two half leaves of the *Maoshi zhenya*, woodblock edition carved in the late Ming, held at the Lianci shuyuan in Baoding. This copy and the one held at the Research Institute for Oriental Cultures at the Gakushuin University are the same. Source: *Baoding Lianchi shuyuan shanben tulu* (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2014), 27.

Ming-Qing book illustrations, as Yuming He puts it, not only interacted with the literary text as separate representational media, but also worked together with the text and created something new: “a new kind of chapter, a new kind of book, and eventually a new vernacular language.” 107 Resonating with the literary text, illustrations can supply additional sublime meanings and generate different experiences for the reader. Moreover, even when the quality of a printed illustration was very bad, repetition of familiar stock elements in it allowed quick recognition and ease of comprehension and appreciation, which aided the reader in their own “imagining.” 108 Book illustrations actually supplied visual hermeneutics to the literary text. They were also a kind of commentary. Therefore, the pattern of “pictures above and texts below” (shangtu xiawen 上圖下文), which was very common in Ming-Qing fiction, can also be seen as a multi-register layout (see Figure 2-6).

Another distinctive strategy commonly employed by Ming-Qing publishers was multi-color printing. As early as the 1970s, the bibliographer Wang Zhongmin 王重民 pointed out that the multi-color printing that came into being in the late Ming in Huizhou 徽州 resulted from the prevalence of literary commentaries. 109 Wang also claimed that the Classics, annotations, and sub-annotations were already transcribed in different colors in the manuscript era. 110 But there is little evidence attesting to the prevalence of multi-colour transcription in the manuscript era. As mentioned above, before the Eastern Han, annotations were written separately from the Classics.

107 Yuming He, Home and the World, 142-150.
108 Robert Hegel, Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China (Stanford, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 312-326.
There was no need to differentiate different texts in one book. During the Six Dynasties to the
Tang, some Classics and important texts were copied in one book with their annotations. To differentiate the annotation from the main text, the annotation was transcribed one space lower than the main text, or in double-lined small characters, or interlineally in very small characters, or on the back of the paper, or sometimes in different colors. All these devices, resulting from the difficulty of standardization in the manuscript era, were used to tell the main text and the annotation apart; there was less need to differentiate between different annotations. During the era of print, single-lined, big-character main text with double-lined small-character annotation became the standard pattern of Chinese books; devices like multi-color printing were not common.\textsuperscript{111}

Because annotations, and sub-annotations as well, focused on the meaning of the text, their location in the book was not as important as that of commentaries. Even when different annotations and sub-annotations were printed in one book, there was still no necessity to tell them apart. However, the situation of the commentaries was rather different. Publishers were eager to print as many different of commentaries as possible in one place. To distinguish them, some publishers employed multi-color printing despite the cost. Multi-color printing was thought to make a book far more elegant and beautiful. The well-known Ming publisher Min Qiji 閔齊伋 wrote in the “Fanli” 凡例 (General Remarks) of the \textit{Chunqiu Zuozhuan} 春秋左傳 (Zuo annotation of the \textit{Spring and Autumn Annals}):

The old editions that had comments and emphasis marks were all in black ink, which was disliked in artistic and literary circles. Now I have carved another edition, with the main text and annotation in black and the commentary in red. This edition was revised three or more

\textsuperscript{111} See Huang Yongnian 黃永年, \textit{Guji banbenxue} 古籍版本學 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012), 183-184.
times and the cost of money and knife was not considered. Having one in your room, all will appreciate it in their hearts. For those who are just starting their studies and do not care about the commentaries, there is the black-ink part.

The text of the *Chunqiu* and the *Zuo Annotation* is in black; the text of commentaries is in red. This shows that the status of the Classic-annotation and the commentary was different in the publisher’s opinion. Beginners studying for the civil service examinations could ignore the red commentary. This means that commentaries did not place much emphasis on interpretation of the Classics. They were more like guides for appreciating literature and learning how to write prose. And, as a matter of fact, these dazzlingly beautiful commentaries were for the wealthy reader to “appreciate in their heart” (see Figure 2-7).

Sometimes, multi-register printing, multi-color printing, and illustrations were all applied in one edition. An edition of the *Shijing* produced in the Ming and held at the National Archives of Japan is one of these. This edition has two equal registers. For the beginning chapter of the book, the upper register is *Shijing jindan huikao* 詩經金丹匯考 (Collected studies on the golden elixir of the *Book of Songs*), and the lower register is the *Shijing nanzi* 詩經難字 (Difficult words in the *Book of Songs*). They are actually two different works on the *Shijing*. For the main body, the lower

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112 Min Qiji 閔齊伋, “Minshi jiake fenci Chunqiu Zuozhuan fanli” 閔氏家刻分次春秋左傳凡例, in *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 (Ming multi-color edition, carved by the Min family, held at the Harvard-Yenching Library), 3b.
register is the main text of *Shijing* with Zhu Xi’s annotations, while in the upper register are Gu Qiyuan’s 顧起元 (1565-1628) commentaries (see Figure 2-8). This kind of textbook was obviously more attractive to young examination candidates compared with those that crowded too many small characters in one page and were printed only in plain black.

Figure 2-7  First half leaf of *juan* 33 of the *Shiji chao* 史記鈔, woodblock edition carved by Min Zhenye 閔振業 in 1620. Courtesy of the UBC Library.
Figure 2-8 Two half leaves from a Ming edition of the *Shijing*, held at the National Archives of Japan, photo-reproduction in the *Zhonghua zaizao shanben*. This book was actually a combination of four books: *Maoshi zhengbian zhinan tu* (Guide tables of the *Shijing* with Mao’s annotations), *Shijing jindan huikao* (Collected studies on the golden elixir of the *Book of Songs*), *Shijing nanzi* (Difficult words in the *shijing*), and the *Shijing* with Zhu Xi’s annotations and Gu Qiyuan’s commentaries.
Marginalia: Anywhere, Any Color

When did people start to write marginalia? There is still no firm consensus on this question. There is some evidence that readers drew punctuation marks and special symbols to help in reading as early as early as the Spring and Autumn Period. Various kinds of punctuation marks are also found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. But it is still unknown whether these symbols were made by scribes while transcribing the main text or by later readers. They cannot be called “marginalia” according to my definition.

In the Three Kingdoms period (220-280), as recorded in the Weilüe 魏略 (Brief history of the Wei dynasty), Dong Yu 董遇 drew red and black symbols in the Zuo zhuan. Dong’s practice can be seen as the origin of drawing emphasis marks. These bi-color punctuation marks can be seen as the earliest known instance of marginalia.

In the Song dynasty, more readers made emphasis marks on what they read, and some of the emphasis marks were in multiple colors. However, it should be noted that it is still not clear whether readers in the Song wrote literary comments on book margins or not. As discussed above, pingdian/commentaries also came into being during the Song dynasty. The most reasonable

113 See Li Ling 李零, Jianbo gushu yu xueshu yuanliu 简帛古書與學術源流 (Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2004), 121-122.
process might be that commentators first drew emphasis marks and literary comments in a book, and then this book was sent to the publisher for carving and printing. These drafts of published commentaries, in hand-written forms, can be regarded as marginalia. Yet none of them survive today.

Extant books show that late-Ming and Qing scholars continued drawing emphasis marks. Meanwhile, there are some marginal writings—including literary comments, collating notes, and colophons—that were composed by several late-Ming scholars, while the composition and transcription of marginalia flourished in the Qing dynasty, becoming a very prominent cultural phenomenon. Therefore, this study will focus on the features of late-Ming and Qing marginalia.

Marginalia were notes hand written by the reader while reading. It is not difficult to imagine that their location in the book enjoyed tremendous freedom. Some famous books were held and read by quite a few sophisticated readers and have various readers’ marginalia. The first reader to write marginalia in a book usually used red ink, or sometimes black ink. To distinguish between earlier readers’ markings and their own, later readers would commonly use different colors (see Figure 2-9).

117 See Chen Xianxing 陳先行, Zhongguo guji gao chao jiao ben tulu 中國古籍稿抄校本圖錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014); Wei Li 韋力, Pijiao ben 批校本 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2003); Zhongguo guji zongmu 中國古籍總目 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009-2012).
Figure 2-9a One half leaf of the *Hanshu*, woodblock edition carved in the Wanli reign. It contains marginalia in black, red, blue and yellow ink. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS816474-513)
Figure 2-9b One half leaf of the *Li Yishan shiji*, woodblock edition carved in the Shunzhi reign (1644-1662). It contains marginalia in black, red, green and purple ink. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS6889).
Most marginalia were written at the margins of books. Books printed in the Ming and Qing dynasties usually had very wide top margins, called the “heavenly head” (tiantou 天頭), which normally were two or three times wider than the bottom margins. Top margins were well-suited to marginalia, yet bottom margins were also employed. The majority of Chinese printed books after the Yuan dynasty were printed on large leaves with the text in the centre. While binding, the leaves were folded by the center and then stacked to form a book. The side margins became the book’s spine, and the center of the text was in the book mouth. Therefore, technically, these books had no side margin. However, European books often have large side margins. Therefore, Heather Jackson notes that “the side margins are universally, in English-language books, the favoured place for the readers’ running commentary on the text.”

In both pre-modern Chinese and European books, interlinear notes, punctuations marks, and other symbols were very prevalent. Sometimes marginalia can be written on interleaved sheets of paper pasted into the book, or placed between two leaves of the book. Marginalia about personal ownership or commentary on the whole book are usually written on the flyleaf, title page, or the empty page at the end of a book.

The location of marginalia may impact contents, which Jackson discusses briefly in her book. She writes of European marginalia:

The notes that are in the closest physical proximity to the text are the interlinear glosses that traditionally move word by word, as readers’ aids, translating or defining or paraphrasing the original. ... Marks and commentary in the margin of the same page, however, express a distinct position pro or con, or offer supplementary material from an external source, such as literary

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parallels or additional evidence. The index at the back extracts from the whole text just those passages that the reader might want to refer to again, and the summary judgment at the front or back formulates an opinion that is decidedly the reader’s and not the author’s.\textsuperscript{120}

The situation in China was similar, but since textual criticism took up a considerable part of the marginalia in late imperial China, there was more space for character variants from other editions as well as scholars’ opinions on which characters were authentic. In some books, reader’s comments, which were usually not short, were put in the top margin, while variants and scholars’ short opinions were written in the bottom margin.

For pre-modern Chinese books, the layout of different editions was a great indicator for readers in distinguishing between them. Thus, information regarding the layout of various editions was usually carefully recorded in the table of contents or at the first page of the first \textit{juan}. For example, in the first page of the table of poets of the \textit{Jixuan ji} 極玄集 (The best poems, in \textit{Tangren xuan Tangshi} 唐人選唐詩 [Tang poems selected by Tang people], woodblock edition carved by the Mao family in the Ming dynasty, held at the Shanghai Library, call number: XS839789-96), He Zhuo’s marginalia says:

\begin{quote}
The manuscript copy has ten columns in each half page, and every column has sixteen characters. [For the table of poets,] there are four names in each column and the number of poems was not recorded.
抄本十行行十六字，每行四人名，不载幾首。
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{120} Jackson, \textit{Marginalia}, 49.
From the colophon at the end of the book, we learn that He Zhuo obtained a manuscript copy and collated this book against the manuscript copy. This Ming edition has eight columns in each half page and nineteen characters in each column. In the table of poets, there is just one name in each column, and it also records how many poems were selected. He recorded the layout of the manuscript, circled the poem number, made some revisions to the heading, and added the name and title of the compiler and commentator. This indicates that He not only wanted to preserve the details of an old edition, he also advocated keeping the original layout in carving a new edition (see Figure 2-10).

Figure 2-10 One half leaf of the Jixuan ji, in the Tangren xuan Tangshi, woodblock edition carved by the Mao family in the late Ming. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS839789-96).
In some cases, the layout was also discussed in the main body of the book. For instance, there is a rare book held in the Asian Library at the University of British Columbia, which contains lots of marginal commentary merely about the layout of the text. Titled *Qian shu* (Book of Qian), composed by Tian Wen (1635-1704) and carved in the 29th year of the Kangxi reign (1690), this book is a gazetteer about part of today’s Yunnan Province. On every page of the book, the characters go vertically in columns from the top of the frame to the bottom, and the columns go from right to left. This is the typical layout of most, if not all, books cut before Kangxi’s reign. However, at the top of page 1b, the marginal notes read: “Move [words from] ‘朝’ (*chao*, dynasty) to another line, do not indent” (“朝” 另行頂格寫. See Figure 2-11). The marginalia on page 2b read: “Move [words from] ‘聖天子’ (*Sheng tian zi*, the Sage Emperor) to another line and [print], do not indent” (“聖天子” 另行頂格). This kind of marginalia appears on every page which has words like “the Sage Emperor,” “the Great Empire,” and so forth. The dates of the marginalia are difficult to verify. From the style, ink and other tiny hints, however, we can estimate that it was approximately composed in the mid-Qing. The composer of the marginalia — possibly the collector of this book — is by no means to be identified, either. But the repeated marginalia about the layout show that he was uneasy about the original layout of the book and desperate to change it into a new one — to begin a new line upon mentioning the emperor’s names to show respect to the emperor, a device was “raising of lines” (*taitou* 抬頭).

In the late-Ming and Qing period, marginalia usually circulated in three ways: (1) along with the original text in the book in which it was first written down; (2) transcribed onto another copy of the same title; or (3) in printed form, either with the original text or separately.
One reader’s marginalia usually circulated along with the book he or she had read. Therefore, the circulation of marginalia is essentially the circulation of books, which is, in turn, the circulation of information and knowledge itself. Thus, previous theories and models about the dissemination and circulation of books and information, such as Robert Darnton’s
“communication circuit” and Roger Chartier’s “interpretation circuit,”\textsuperscript{121} can provide instructive methodological reference points for us to study issues of who composed what kind of marginalia, who acquired them and how, who was involved in the process of dissemination, why one should be interested in marginalia, and whether there were differences in circulation between books with marginalia and books without.

In addition, various catalogues and readers’ biographical documents supply abundant information with which to build a profile of the marginalia of a particular composer and that of a particular title. Bibliographical studies in China have a long history and occupied an important position in pre-modern Chinese scholarship. “Bibliography is the most important requirement for study. It is here that you must start and only then will you be able to find your way,” said Wang Mingsheng 王鸣盛 (1722 - 1797), a prominent Qing historian.\textsuperscript{122} The relatively complete bibliographical system in pre-modern China supplies abundant records on books. Many descriptive catalogues and some abridged catalogues have records of the physicality and textuality of a book, the history of its circulation, details of marginalia in it, if any, and the like. Based on these records, we can build up profiles of marginalia by a particular annotator or about a particular title. Moreover, books once belonging to pre-modern Chinese collectors — especially Qing scholars and collectors — are systematically held at libraries in China and all over the world. The variety of library catalogues can also help us to find real books in the library. A reader’s biographical documents can supply similar information such as when, where, and from whom a book was acquired or just read, and whether or not the book contained any hand-copied marginalia. Marginalia written at the

\textsuperscript{121} Darnton, The Kiss of Lamourette, 107-135; Roger Chartier, “Texts, Printing, Reading,” in The New Cultural History, 154-175.

front or back of the book were called “colophon” (*tiba* 題跋), and usually included such information as a summary judgment of the book, statement of ownership, history of circulation of the book. These are all very useful sources for the study of the circulation of marginalia.

(2) The transcription of marginalia is a widespread phenomenon in China. It was especially prevalent in the Qing. In this period, marginalia by famous scholars often circulated in more than one copy, transcribed by their students and other scholars who were attracted by their academic value, by calligraphers who appreciated the aesthetic value of the handwriting and imitated it in another copy of the same title, or by booksellers who saw the marginalia as marketable—they also usually imitated the handwriting of the original annotator and forged the annotator’s seals to pass their copies off as originals.

Transcribers’ intentions always become involved while transcribing. Students wanted to conceal their teachers’ mistakes; scholars concentrated on the “useful” information and left other things out; some unscrupulous booksellers’ haste was also widely known — they randomly left off quite a few marginalia, made mistakes out of carelessness, and intentionally cut information they thought was “sensitive” or did not suit contemporary sensibilities. Therefore, transcribed marginalia are distinct from the original marginalia not only in form but also in content. They are excellent sources for studying later readers’ reading responses to previous readers’ reading responses.

Compared with printed marginalia, transcribed copies are typically closer to the original. If the original marginalia are lost, transcribed copies can still be used to reconstruct the original by comparing various transcribed copies and investigating the annotators and transcribers. We need to find out how many transcribed marginalia are still in circulation, who transcribed them from which copy, and how they circulated.
(3) Transcription made marginalia more accessible, while printing enlarged the circulation circle of marginalia and made their transmission more efficient. Marginalia were normally printed in two ways: a) Marginalia on several titles were collected and then compiled into one book; b) Marginalia were printed along with the original text, creating a new edition. In both ways, marginalia were often thoroughly edited, and sometimes changed beyond recognition as a result.

In late imperial China, the transcription and editing-publishing of marginalia became a nearly universal scholarly practice. Therefore, it is one of the best points of access to late imperial Chinese scholars’ intellectual world.
3
The Reading Seed He Zhuo and His Marginalia

One of the most common fallacies in evaluating the accomplishment of scholars is to consider their philosophical or religious thoughts, political contributions, or social activities, all of which seem ostensibly practical, or put simply, useful. One result of this approach is that excessive attention is paid to scholars’ written works and their political and social activities, and thus questions about their quotidian practices of scholarship, how they perceived their scholarly activities and identity, and who in reality contributed to the development of scholarship *per se* are largely left aside. Modern intellectual history owes some attention to scholars who have been forgotten either intentionally or unintentionally, and to the practices of scholars more broadly. Taking the perspective of scholarly practice, it can be found that some little-known or unknown scholars actually made great contributions to the enterprise of scholarship, and that some well-known scholars might be different from, or at least more complicated than, what we had thought.

The following chapters will introduce some little-known or even unknown scholars, focusing on scholarly practices related to marginalia in late imperial China, examining how different scholars composed marginalia on printed books, how they transcribed and printed marginalia, how they expressed happiness, confusion, and other emotions in marginalia, as well as how they contributed to the development of scholarship and the intellectual evolution in the Qing dynasty. The story starts with an early Qing scholar He Zhuo. This chapter will examine He Zhuo’s life, his practices with marginalia, and the characteristics and influence of his marginalia.
The Reading Seed: He Zhuo

He Zhuo was a book collector, scholar and calligrapher. He was well known in his lifetime and had approximately four hundred students. Even though he did not pass the jinshi 進士 examination, he was given this title by the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (r. 1661-1722)¹ and then worked as an academic advisor in the Southern Study (Nanshufang 南書房, lit. the emperor’s southern reading room) and as an editor in the imperial printing office in the Hall of Military Glory (Wuying dian 武英殿). He was appointed the tutor of the emperor’s eighth son and established a lifelong intimacy with him, which caused him to be stigmatized after his death. He Zhuo was an avid reader and accomplished scholar specializing in textual criticism. Even when he was imprisoned because of his political enemies’ false accusations, he bore this hardship with equanimity and still devoted himself to reading and textual criticism. After his death, the Kangxi Emperor praised him as a “reading seed” (dushu zhongzi 讀書種子).²

“Reading seed” refers to a person who loves reading and is able to disseminate and hand down a set of values and thoughts of tradition and culture. In pre-modern China, it was believed that

¹ Interestingly, He Zhuo happened to be born in the first year of Kangxi’s reign and to die in the year of Kangxi’s death.
² There is no modern biography of He Zhuo. On He’s life, see the “Appendix” of He Zhuo, Yimen xiansheng ji 義門先生集, woodblock edition cut in Gusu 姑蘇 in 1833, held at the Peking University Library, photo-reproduction in Xuxiu siku quanshu 續修四庫全書; Shen Tong 沈彤, “Hanlinyuan bianxiu zenshidiuxueshi Yimen He xiansheng xingzhuang” 翰林院編修諸儒學士義門何先生行狀, in He Zhuo, Yimen dushuji 義門讀書記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 1275-1277; Quan Zuwang 全祖望, “Hanlinyuan bianxiu zeng xueshi Changzhou He gong mubeiming” 翰林院編修諸儒士長洲何公墓碑銘, in Yimen dushuji, 1278-1280; Qing shi liezhuan 清史列傳, in Qingdai zhuanshi congkan 清代傳記叢刊, compiled by Zhou Junfu 周駿富 (Taipei: Mingwen, 1986), vol. 104, juan 71.
culture (wen 文), literary culture in particular, was related to the fate of the state, and that reading seeds were those who carried on this responsibility of spreading and handing down the essence of tradition and culture. The Helin yulu 鶴林玉露 (Stories written in the forest at the Buddhist temple, lit. Jade dewdrops in the crane forest) recorded that Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126-1204) once said:

The two Kings Xian of the Han dynasty both loved books, so their states lasted the longest.

Can we let reading seeds vanish from literati families?

漢二獻皆好書，而其傳國皆最遠。士大夫家，其可使讀書種子衰息乎？

One of the well-known reading seeds before He Zhuo was the orthodox Confucian scholar-official Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (courtesy name Xizhi 希直 or Xigu 希古, 1357-1402) in the early Ming period. Fang was famous for his loyalty to the Jianwen 建文 Emperor (r. 1398-1402). When the Jianwen Emperor’s uncle, Zhu Di 朱棣, usurped the throne to become the Yongle Emperor in 1402, he summoned Fang Xiaoru and demanded that he write an inaugural address that would compare his usurpation of the throne with the regency of the Duke of Zhou during the reign of his nephew King Cheng of Zhou in the early Zhou period. Fang refused and was executed with his entire family. One of the Yongle Emperor’s tacticians once warned Yongle that, “If Fang is killed, the reading seeds under heaven will be exterminated” (殺孝孺，天下讀書種子絕矣). The implication was that if Fang were executed, the moral principles that tied to that particular reading seed would be harmed, leading to disorder. Of course, this is hyperbole, since the transmission of

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3 Luo Dajing 羅大經, Helin yulu 鶴林玉露 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 212. See also Zhou Mi 周密, Qidong yeyu 齊東野語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 380.

4 Mingshi 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 141, 4017-4021.
culture and tradition was never the business of any one person. All scholars who devoted themselves to reading and writing, collecting and printing books, collating and transcribing the texts of books, as well as those who carried on the spirits and thoughts inhering in books, can be considered reading seeds.

He Zhuo spent his whole life collecting, collating, reading, and enjoying books. It is recorded that he wrote an abundance of books, but almost all of them were burned or scattered for political reasons. The *Yimen xianshang ji* 義門先生集 (Collected works of Master Yimen, 12 *juan*), consisting of a few of He’s classical prose writings, poems, colophons and letters, was compiled and printed approximately one hundred years after his death. The *Yimen dushuji* 義門讀書記 (Reading notes of Master Yimen, 58 *juan*), compiled by He’s son, nephew, and students after his death, was a collection of He Zhuo’s marginalia on eighteen titles. However, He wrote marginalia on many more books. From the *Zhongguo guji zongmu* and catalogues of various libraries in China and abroad, we find that He Zhuo’s marginalia exists on more than one hundred titles and were transcribed by a variety of scholars throughout the Qing dynasty on more than two hundred copies of books (see Appendix I: Books Containing He Zhuo’s Marginalia and Their Transcriptions).

He Zhuo’s marginalia cover all the four branches (*sibu* 四部) of pre-modern Chinese books. The majority of his marginalia are of two kinds: 1) various comments (including literary criticism, historical and philosophical comments, and the like) on the content of the book; and 2) collation notes and collation symbols inscribed on the text. Living in a transformative period of scholarship when the Song-Ming metaphysical approach began to be seriously challenged and the relatively positivistic school of “evidential research” (*kaojuxue* 考據學) gradually came into being, He Zhuo’s comments in his marginalia inherited the characteristics of the commentarial tradition that
flourished in the Ming dynasty, and his textual criticism and evidential research—although it sometimes seemed preliminary—impacted the scholarship of the mid- and late-Qing period.

Ironically, even though He Zhuo never passed the civil service examination or got even a *juren* 舉人 degree, he was an expert in selecting classical prose and writing literary commentaries as aids to students taking civil service examinations, and he was well known by his contemporaries for this enterprise. At the same time, his learning was also despised by some scholars as the “study of the papers’ tail” (*zhiwei zhixue* 紙尾之學), that is, the study of the eight-legged essays for the civil service examinations, which was considered as occupying the most inferior place in scholarly hierarchy. A noted mid-Qing scholar Yu Zhengxie 俞正燮 (courtesy name Lichu 理初, 1775-1840) stated that “He Zhuo annotated books in the way of annotating eight-legged essays, and thus became well-known under heaven because of [his selecting and annotating] eight-legged essays” (何焯以時文名滿天下，用批時文法批書). This claim is partly true. The so-called “way of annotating eight-legged essays” refers to literary commentaries on classical prose. As discussed in chapter two, this kind of commentary focused on the literary features of the text and aimed to help examination candidates learn how to compose classical prose. According to the *Yimen dushuji* and the existing marginalia by He Zhuo, this kind of commentary only takes up a very small fraction of his marginalia, which usually covers a very wide variety of topics and subjects. Furthermore, the concerns expressed in He’s marginal comments vary with the features of the text. For the Confucian Classics, He Zhuo talked more about the Learning of Principle, self-cultivation and

other matters discussed extensively by Song-Yuan scholars. For historical works, he commented on historical figures, historical events, and the literary features of the historical text. He was a noted calligrapher, and thus his comments on books about calligraphy and rubbings from ancient inscriptions contain not only abundant information and knowledge about the work but also appreciation of the calligraphy. In addition, He was an outstanding poetry critic, and his comments on Tang poems were highly praised and widely influential.

He Zhuo was especially well-known for his expertise on the history of the Western and Eastern Han dynasties; he specialised in the textual study of the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu*. Therefore, his marginalia on these books can represent his academic style and achievements. Furthermore, I have chance to gain access to several copies of his marginalia on the *Hou Hanshu*. So, I will take He Zhuo’s marginalia on the *Hou Hanshu* as an example and examine in detail of their characteristics and influences.

**Reading He Zhuo’s Historical Comments**

In the *Hou Hanshu* held at the Peking University Library, more than half of He Zhuo’s marginalia are concerned with textual criticism. Some items discuss the literary features of the text, and several discuss the composition of rhyme couplets, as mentioned in chapter two. In addition, there are many comments on historical figures and events, historiography, previous scholar’s annotations, and such. His comments contain a great number of refined insights and fruits of his research. My examination will start with his comments on historical figures.

In traditional Chinese historical writings, *people* always occupied center stage. For instance, more than half of the contents of the Ershiwu shi (the 24 Histories plus the *Qingshi gao* 清史稿), which were deemed the “standard histories” (*zhengshi* 正史), consisted of historical figures’
biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳). Other sections were also largely biographical. Biographical writings thus were the most important component of the standard histories in Imperial China. In this sense, how to understand and evaluate historical figures was a crucial task for researchers and readers.

Of He Zhuo’s comments in the *Hou Hanshu*, chronologically the third standard history of the twenty-five, many were about historical figures. He Zhuo usually tried to understand historical figures within their historical context. He also explained the course of history based by analyzing the historical figure’s personality, status, intention, and other aspects. In He Zhuo’s brief biography composed by Shen Tong, Shen praised He, saying: “In [Master Yimen’s] marginalia, the comments on people must have traced the historical context they lived in and examined the internal and external factors [therein]” (凡題識中有論人者，必跡其世，徹其表裏). This is to make an appraisal of personages by ways of investigating events they experienced. For instance, Can Yong’s Biography in *juan* 60 of the *Hou Hanshu* reads:

In the sixth year of the Zhongping era, Emperor Ling died and Dong Zhuo became the Minister of Works [one of the Three Dukes who were the paramount dignitaries of the central government]. Hearing that Cai Yong had a good reputation, Dong summoned him to be an official, but Cai refused pleading illness. In great anger, Dong Zhuo said: “I have the power to execute one’s whole clan. If Cai Yong is so arrogant, he will soon be punished like this.” Dong also urgently ordered the local governor to nominate Cai Yong to visit him. Cai Yong had no choice but to go [visit Dong Zhuo] and was appointed Libationer.

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7 Shen Tong, *Hanlinyuan bianxiu zeng shiduxueshi Yimen He xiansheng xingzhuang*, in *Yimen dushuji*, 1277.
Cai Yong 蔡邕 (courtesy name Boji 伯喈, 132-192) was a great calligrapher, musician and scholar in the late Eastern Han dynasty. While serving Emperor Ling, he advocated that ceremonial practices be restored and criticized the influence of eunuchs in politics. When the warlord Dong Zhuo came to power and controlled the central government, he summoned Cai Yong to serve at the court. Cai Yong was compelled to comply, and was criticized because of his weakness by later scholars. He Zhuo’s comment in the margin reads:

Chen Liu was very close to Luoyang, [this is why] Bojie was inevitably contaminated. For the same reason, Ciming (Xun Shuang 荀爽) could not do what Kangcheng (Zheng Xuan 鄭玄) had done.

陳留去洛陽近，伯喈所以不免於汙染也。慈明之不得為康成也同。

This comment mentions three historical figures, Cai Yong, Xun Shuang and Zheng Xuan, all prominent scholars in the late Eastern Han. While Dong Zhuo controlled the central government, he summoned all of them to serve him. Cai Yong and Xun Shuang complied, but Zheng Xuan did not, so that Cai and Xun were thought to have lost their moral integrity while Zheng kept his. Differing from this common opinion, He Zhuo explained these three scholars’ actions using geographical factors. Actually, according to their biographies in the Hou Hanshu, Cai and Xun

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8 The main texts of the Hou Hanshu and He Zhuo’s marginalia cited in this chapter are from the Hou Hanshu held at the Peking University Library (the PKU edition).
both had a reputation for refusing to serve the government in a turbulent political era. But, as He Zhuo pointed out, Cai Yong lived in Chenliu (Kaifeng, Henan Province), and Xun Shuang in Yingyin (Xuchang, Henan Province), both of which were not far from Luoyang, Dong Zhuo’s capital. It was difficult for them to flee with their family members, and thus they could do nothing but to comply. However, Zheng Xuan lived in Gaomi (in Shandong Province), far from Luoyang and Chang’an (Xi’an, Shaanxi Province). His biography in the *Hou Hanshu* states: “[Later,] Dong Zhuo moved the capital to Chang’an. The high ministers nominated [Zheng] Xuan as the prime minister of the state of Zhao. [Zheng Xuan] did not go because the road [from Gaomi to Chang’an] was cut off.” (董卓遷都長安，公卿舉玄為趙相，道斷不至)

He Zhuo was probably inspired by this record and tried to defend Cai Yong and Xun Shuang. Using geographical factors to explain historical figures’ practices rather than arbitrarily excoriating them, He’s comments, as Shen Tong put it, “traced the historical context they lived in and examined the internal and external factors [therein].”

In Chinese historical philosophy, one of the most important functions of history was to take it as a mirror and draw lessons from it (*yi shi wei jian* 以史為鑑). To learn from history, the most difficult part is not just knowing the people or events, but also unravelling the basic roles of the course of history from the numerous and complicated historical events that comprise it. As the Grand Historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86 BCE) put it, as a historian, he expected “to examine into all that concerns Heaven and the human, to penetrate the changes of the past and present” (*究
Only then can we learn from history and solve new problems with the assistance of the wisdom derived from it. A commonly used method for historians to make sense of the past was “historical induction,” i.e., to sum up particular historical events, compare them, search for similarities and/or differences, and arrive at some general laws concerning the course of history and the vicissitudes of human society.

There is much historical induction in He Zhuo’s marginalia. Compared to the comments in the Nian’ershi zhaji 廿二史札記 (Notes on the 22 Histories), an eighteenth-century masterpiece on the standard histories composed by the great historian Zhao Yi 趙翼 (courtesy name Yunsong 雲崧, alternative name Oubei 甕北, 1727-1814), He Zhuo’s comments were less refined, neither sufficiently insightful nor well arranged. Scattered throughout the whole of the Hou Hanshu, they were long neglected by scholars. However, most of them were made based on He’s close reading of the Hanshu and Hou Hanshu, and his expertise in the history of the Han and instructive for readers. Shen Tong observed of He that “[While discussing historical events, He Zhuo] always knows the beginning and the end, and understands the whole event” (必通其首尾，盡其變). For instance, in the “Baiguanzhi san” (Treatise on Officials Part III) of the Xu Hanzhi, the main text has the following entry:


11 See Shen Tong, Hanlinyuan bianxiu zeng shiduxueshi Yimen He xiansheng xingzhuang, in Yimen dushuji, 1277.

12 The current version of Hou Hanshu is actually made up of two parts. The annuals (ji 纪) and biographies (zhuan 傳), 90 juan in total, were composed by Fan Ye and are called “Hou Hanshu” in this study. The
Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, one person, ranked at 1000 bushels (shi).

御史中丞一人，千石。

The original annotation has:

The aide to the Censor-in-chief. In old times, [the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief] was different from the Supervising Censor (who working in the local government) in that they worked in the palace and secretly reported to the emperor the illegal behavior of officials. When the Censor-in-chief became Minister of Works, [the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief] was left in the inner central court and became the leader of the Censorate. Later, [the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief] belonged to the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues.

About the change of the political duties and power of the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, He Zhuo commented on the top margin:

Bao Xun’s biography in the Weizhi states: “[Bao Xun] was appointed ‘Gongzheng’ in the fourth year of the Huangchu period.” “Gongzheng” is actually Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief. This also followed the meaning of “Xiaozai” (Deputy Prime Minister) in the Zhouguan (Rites of Zhou). But this position was not taken by high ministers, so the name does not reflect reality. In the Western Han, [the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief] was still the vice prime minister, which followed the bequeathed law and meaning of the Zhouguan, while in the

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treatises (zhi 志), 30 juan in total, were composed by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (?-c. 306) and are called “Xu Hanzhi” in this study.
Eastern Han, it belonged to the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues, so that the grand councillors could not ask about the personnel administration around the emperor. The grand councillors’ power was weakened and the old order was broken.

《魏志·鲍勋傳》：“黃初四年為宮正。” 宮正即御史中丞也。是亦沿《周官·小宰》之意，特大夫不領，名實乖耳。西京屬副相，猶得《周官》遺法，至東京轉屬少府，則三公不得問天子左右之人事，任輕而體統襲矣。

Liu Zhao’s 刘昭 (lived in the Liang 梁 dynasty [502-557]) annotation of the Hou Hanshu citing a passage from the Zhouli, which states: “The Deputy Prime Minister is in charge of the laws about the officials in the palace, and puts into practice the governmental decrees in the palace.” Gan Bao’s annotation states: “[This] resembles the duty of the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief” (《周禮》：“（小宰）掌建邦之宮刑，以主治王宮之政令。” 于賓注曰：“若御史中丞。”). 13 Fan Ye’s original annotation also states that the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief “worked in the palace and secretly reported to the emperor the illegalities of officials.” That is, the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief actually had the duty and power to supervise all the officials of the central government. They were the aides of the Censor-in-Chief. In the Western Han, the Censor-in-chief became one of the grand councillors, i.e., the prime ministers, who were the leaders of the external government. The Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief became the leader of the censors in the Censorate, still in the inner central government. Liu’s annotation also cited from the Hanshu, stating:

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Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, official of the Qin dynasty, ranked at 1000 bushels, located in the Orchid Pavilion within the palace, supervising Regional Inspectors in the external government, heading Attendant Censors in the inner central government, and overseeing the various officials.

御史中丞，秦官，秩千石，在殿中蘭台，掌圖籍秘書，外都部刺史，內領侍御史，糾察百寮。14

Liu Zhao’s annotation of the Xu Hanzhi citing from the Hanyi reads:

[The position of] Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief was previously taken by officials ranked at 2000 bushels or selected from the highest rank of Attendant Censors. They worked in the inner central government, were seated separately in the morning court meeting, headed the Orchid Pavilion, supervised Regional Inspectors, and oversaw all the hundreds of officials. When they went out [to work in the local government], they ranked at 2000 bushels.

丞，故二千石為之，或選侍御史高第，執憲中司，朝會獨坐，於掌蘭台，督諸州刺史，糾察百寮，出為二千石。15

The privilege to sit separately shows that the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief had special power and authority in the emperor’s eyes and all the officials. It was recorded in Xuan Bing’s biography in the Hou Hanshu that Emperor Guangwu 光武 specially issued a decree and permitted the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief, Metropolitan Commandant (Sili xiaowei 司隸校尉) and Director of the Imperial Secretariat (Shangshu ling 尚書令) to sit separately on special mats, which were

14 Fan Ye, Hou Hanshu, juan 27, “Xuan Bing’s Biography,” 927.
praised as the “the three who sat alone” (san duzu 三獨坐). In that time, the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief actually carried out the duty of the Censor-in-chief. They enjoyed a very crucial position and high status. Therefore, He Zhuo was right to consider them vice prime ministers.

The core task of the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief was to inspect and supervise all the officials. Once reassigned to the jurisdiction of the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues, they could directly serve the emperor, and hence the grand councillors lost this part of their power. He Zhuo said, “the grand councillors could not ask about the personnel administration around the emperor. The grand councillors’ power was weakened and the old order was broken.” He pointed out the transformation of the duties and powers of the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief and grand councillors.

He Zhuo always paid close attention to the transformation of the duties and powers of all the officials, the evolution of political institutions and political thought. His comments inspired many later scholars. For instance, in juan 46 of the Hou Hanshu, Guo Gong’s biography says:

[Guo] Gong transmitted his father’s teachings when he was young. There were always hundreds of people learning from him.

躬少傳父業，講授徒衆常數百人。

On the margin, He Zhuo writes:

Codes and laws were also taught, so that the governance by officials was very good in the Han dynasty. When the Imperial Legal Test was abolished, this custom also declined.

律亦講授，故漢之吏治精。自明法之科罷，此風衰矣。

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16 See Fan Ye, Hou Hanshu, juan 27, “Xuan Bing’s Biography,” 927.
This touches on the evolution of the legal system and intellectual history. In the Eastern Han, although Confucianism was claimed to be the official ideology, legal institutions were the foundation of the administration. The study of laws was independent from that of Confucianism and was very popular at that time. In this sense, the influence of Legalism and of Confucianism met as equals. However, the transmission and teaching of laws and Legalist thought has long been neglected in our scholarship because of the dominance of Confucianism in the later period. By stating that “codes and laws were also taught,” He Zhuo reminds us to pay attention to the transmission of laws and the Legalist thought. In the same *juan*, the main text of the *Hou Hanshu* reads: “[Guo Gong’s] father, [Guo] Hong, learned the *Xiao Du lü* (Law of the Little Du)” (父弘習小杜律). On the margin of this page, He Zhuo wrote three characters, “*Xiao Du lü*”, reminding the reader to pay attention to this book and the teachings of this school. Guo Gong’s father studied as a Legalist. He learned laws and taught laws. Guo Gong learned from his father and handed down his legal knowledge to later generations. This meant that the teaching of Legalism was transmitted from teachers to students and/or within family clans in the Han dynasty, just like the transmission of Confucianism. The main text of Chen Xian’s 陳咸 biography in the same *juan* states:

Later, [Wang] Mang summoned [Chen] Xian for appointment a second time, but he refused on the pretext of serious illness. He then collected the laws, codes and other documents in his family’s possession, and hid them all in the walls.

其後莽復徵咸，遂稱病篤。於是乃收斂其家律令書文，皆壁藏之。

He Zhuo’s marginal comment regarding this reads:

Fu Sheng hid the Classics; Chen Xian hid the laws.

伏生藏經，陳咸藏律。
Fu Sheng 伏勝, known as Fu Sheng 伏生 (Master Fu), was a prominent Confucian scholar and classicist in the Western Han period. He was well known for hiding the *Shangshu* 尚書 (Book of Documents) within the walls to prevent its being burned by the first emperor of the Qin dynasty.\(^\text{17}\) Since Chen Xiao hid some legal texts within the walls, He Zhuo made a couplet, equating Fu Sheng and Chen Xian, which exhibits his grasp of the relationship between Legalism and Confucianism.

The Eastern Han empire was said to have been governed by Confucian doctrines, but the governing of officials at that time was very harsh, a state of affairs that violated those doctrines. This contradiction, Chen Suzhen 陳蘇鎮 pointed out, was due to the fact that the central government had to use cruel officials (*kuli* 酷吏, also translated as “merciless judges”), skilled Legalists, to repress the power of wealthy families that was empire-wide, even though the empire claimed to follow the doctrines of Confucius.\(^\text{18}\) Chen’s explanation partly resolved this contradiction. Another important factor was the continuous transmission of Legalism and its education system—one could learn within his family and/or from other masters. Zhong Hao’s biography in the *Hou Hanshu* recorded that, much like Guo Gong and his family, Zhong Hao’s “was a well-known family in their commandery, specializing in criminal laws for generations” (為郡著姓，世善刑律).\(^\text{19}\) There must have been a great many families like this in the Eastern Han period. The Legalist school still possessed a significant social base; Confucianism had not yet dominated intellectual trends.

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\(^\text{17}\) See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, *juan* 121, 3124-3126.


\(^\text{19}\) Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, *juan* 62, 2064.
At that time, Confucian teachings were gradually permeating the whole of society from high to low. He Zhuo made note of this too. In Dong Xuan’s 董宣 biography in the *Hou Hanshu (juan 77)*, his marginal comment states:

Dong Xuan, He Bing, and people of their like should not be listed in the “Biographies of Cruel Officials.” Li Zhang only killed criminals to excess when he was governor of Qiansheng prefecture. It wasn’t that they killed so many people out of a capricious whim. Fan [Ye] began this *juan* with these three persons perhaps because Emperor Guangwu made the governance of officials very harsh, so that the officials went further and became too cruel. This revealed that so-called good governance in this resurgent time [the Guangwu reign, 25-57 CE] was not perfect. However, my humble opinion is that there need not be “Biographies of Cruel Officials” [in the *Hou Hanshu*].

董宣、何並之流不當列之《酷吏》，李章亦惟在千乘時誅斬盜賊過濫，非任喜怒、多誅滅也。而范首及此三人，蓋以建武吏事刻深，上好下甚，則必有入于酷者。明中興之美，坐是未盡耳。然竊謂東京《酷吏傳》可以不立。

Here, He Zhuo wrote that “my humble opinion is that there need not be ‘Biographies of Cruel Officials’ [in the *Hou Hanshu*],” arguing that Dong Xuan, He Bing and Li Zhang were not truly cruel officials who “killed too many people following their own capricious moods.” He must have made a comparison between the Western Han and the Eastern Han and found that in the Eastern Han, not only did the number of cruel officials decline dramatically, but “cruel officials” also became less cruel. “Cruel officials” were being “Confucianized” (*rusheng hua* 儒生化), to employ a term proposed by a modern scholar, Yan Buke 閻步克. Yan made this argument more clear by comparing the “Biographies of Cruel Officials” in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* with those in the *Hou
Hanshu. He found that there were fifteen cruel officials recorded in the Shiji and Hanshu, but only seven in the Hou Hanshu. Among these seven “cruel officials,” Dong Xuan was well-known for his upright and outspoken personality. When put into prison, he read and recited [Confucian books] from morning to night. He also abided by Confucian moral tenets. Another “cruel official” in the Hou Hanshu, Li Zhang, studied the Yan 颜 annotations to the Spring and Autumn Annals and was sufficiently well-versed to teach them. Huang Chang 黄昌 had also once studied the Confucian Classics. Wang Ji 王吉 loved to read [Confucian] texts and their annotations. Only Fan Ye 樊曄, Zhou Ji 周緯 and Yang Qiu 陽球 were inclined to the learning of Shen Buhai 申不害 and Han Fei 韓非, two Legalists in the Warring States period. Yet Shen Buhai and Han Fei joined hands with the Confucian scholars to fight against the eunuchs. In this sense, Yan Buke claimed, the cruel officials were Confucianized, or we can say that the Confucians were cruel-officialized (kuli hua 酷吏化). That is, the cruel officials learned the Confucian teachings and were gradually influenced by Confucian doctrines; meanwhile, the Confucian scholars started to master more administrative skills (such as law) and threw themselves into practical affairs. Therefore, Yan Buke agrees with He Zhuo’s view that “there need not be ‘Biographies of Cruel Officials’ [in the Hou Hanshu].”

This shows that He Zhuo’s view was rather novel and insightful for his time.

This is a critique of the historiography of the Hou Hanshu. Marginalia of this kind were not rare. In these historiographical comments, He Zhuo usually criticized the collection, sorting, and trimming of various historical sources, and the writer’s writing skills, views, and attitudes concerning historical events and figures.

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In addition, He also paid much attention to previous scholars’ annotations of the *Hou Hanshu*, correcting them or making compliments. For instance, He corrected errors regarding the position of the Directorate of the Palace Library (*Mishu jian* 秘書監), which was a very important position in the Han court, heading the Department of the Palace Library (*Mishu sheng* 秘書省), which was in charge of collecting court documents and compiling official histories. But there was no Directorate of the Palace Library listed in the “Treatise of Officials” (*Baiguan zhi* 百官志) of the *Xu Hanzhi*. However, it was recorded in the “Annals of Emperor Huan” (*Huandi ji* 桓帝紀) that the Directorate of the Palace Library was initially set up in the second year of the Yanxi 延熹 (158-166) era. Liu Zhao’s annotation states: “Directorate of the Palace Library, one person, ranked at 600 bushels.” In the “Treatise of Officials Part II,” under Erudite of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*Taichang boshi* 太常博士), Liu’s annotation states: “According to the ‘Annals of Emperor Huan,’ the Directorate of the Palace Library was set up in the second year of the Yanxi era.” This means that Liu’s annotator inclined to the belief that the Directorate of the Palace Library was subordinate to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*Taichang* 太常). This, according to He Zhuo, is incorrect. In the “Treatise of Officials Part III” of the *Xu Hanzhi (juan 26)*, under Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues (*Shaofu* 少府), there was the entry “Head of the Orchid Pavilion (*Lantai lingshi* 蘭台令使), ranked at 600 bushels.” He Zhuo’s marginal comment here reads:

In the “Table of noble ranks and government offices” of the *Hanshu (juan 19)*, the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief worked within the palace and the Orchid Pavilion was in charge of books and secret documents. It was recorded in the “Annals of Emperor Huan” [of the *Hou Hanshu*] that the Directorate of the Palace Library was initially set up in the second year of
the Yanxi era. The annotation cited the *Hanguan yi* states “Directorate of the Palace Library, one person, ranked at 600 bushels.” This official position should be listed under the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief and was subordinate to the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues [in the *Hou Hanshu*]. It was omitted in this treatise. Liu’s annotation added it under the Erudite of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials. This is incorrect.

《前書·百官公卿表》御史中丞在殿中，蘭臺掌圖籍秘書。《桓紀》延熹二年初置秘書監官，注引《漢官儀》“秘書監一人，秩六百石”。其官當列中丞下，屬於少府。而此志遺之，劉氏注補于太常博士之下，則非也。

By citing the *Hou Hanshu*, He Zhuo stated that the Directorate of the Palace Library should be listed under the Palace Aide to the Censor-in-chief and subordinate to the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues, and the annotation supplementing it under the Erudite of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials was incorrect. He Zhuo not only pointed out the hasty omission in the main text of the *Hou Hanshu*, but also spelled out how the annotator had made a mistake. In the Wei dynasty (221-265), the Directorate of the Palace Library was initially subordinate to the Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues. This was supposed to follow the old custom of the Eastern Han. But the *Tongdian* 通典 (Comprehensive institutions) records that the Directorate of the Palace Library was subordinate to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials, following the record of Liu’s annotation in the *Hou Hanshu*. There is still no final conclusion on the subordination of the Directorate of the Palace Library in the Eastern Han, but He Zhuo’s comments remind us that there may be a problem in the historical record of the *Hou Hanshu* and its annotation.

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In addition to the *Hou Hanshu*, He Zhuo also read and wrote a great deal of marginalia on the *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, *Sanguozhi*, *Nanshi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties), *Beishi* 北史 (History of the Northern Dynasties), *Wudaishi* 五代史 (History of the Five Dynasties), *Shitong* 史通 (Conspectus of historiography), *Huayangguo zhi* 華陽國志 (Records of the lands south of Mt. Hua), *Zhongwu jiwen* 中吳紀聞 (Collected stories from the Wu Region), and *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 (Water classic with annotations). His marginalia on these histories, historiographical works, and historical-geographical works have a great deal of insightful comments. He Zhuo was also an expert in the appreciation and authentication for the rubbings of ancient stone inscriptions and calligraphic writings on silk and paper (*beitie* 碑帖). His comments on these books, such as the *Gengzi xiaoxia ji* 庚子銷夏記 (Records written in the summer of the gengzi year), and the *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄 (Essential compendium on calligraphy) also have considerable academic and historical value. His marginalia on Tang and Song poetry were praised because his research was based not only on precise textual criticism, but also on precise comparisons between poetry and history, thus influential when it came to the reading and study of poetry, the history of Chinese literary criticism, and the history of reading. In short, although He Zhuo sometimes derived his practice from the approaches of annotating eight-legged essays, his marginalia were not the “study of the papers’ tail” kind. He contributed to the study of history, literary criticism, philology, and calligraphy, among other subjects.

**A Pioneer of Textual Criticism**

In He Zhuo’s marginalia on the *Hou Hanshu*, there are also thousands of items concerned with textual criticism. At the end of *juan* 90, He’s colophon states:
When I read this book for the first time, I disliked its numerous mistakes [within the text]. After reading Liu’s *Correction [of the Two Han Histories]*, I finally realized that good editions of this book were already rare in the Northern Song. This is because predecessors did not pay as much attention to it as to Ban [Gu’s] *Hanshu*.

初讀此書，嫌其訛謬為多，及觀劉氏《刊誤》諸條，乃知在北宋即罕善本，緣前人重之不如班書故也。

He Zhuo pointed out that people previously did not pay enough attention to the *Hou Hanshu*, resulting in editions that had numerous mistakes in the text. Therefore, he made a great effort to correct these mistakes. In the roughly 3700 pieces of marginalia he appended to *Hou Hanshu*, more than 1600 of them were concerned with textual criticism.

He Zhuo was a book collector himself. He also had good relationships with the most famous book collectors in the early Qing period, such as the Mao 毛 family of Yushan 虞山, the Ye 葉 family of Kunshan 昆山, Xu Qianxue, Qian Zeng, and so forth. He also worked as an editor in the imperial library for about twenty years. The relationships and activities supplied many opportunities for him to get access to many books, especially rare Song and Yuan editions. According to He’s colophons in the *Hou Hanshu* held at Peking University Library, he used several incomplete Song editions (*can Songben* 殘宋本) to collate the text of the *Hou Hanshu*. None of them are still extant today, so the variants collected by He Zhuo are the only evidence we have with which to recover these Song editions. He also employed the Yijing Hall (Yijing tang 一經堂) edition and the Masha 麻沙 edition carved in the Southern Song, a Yuan edition, more than three Ming editions, and several “recent editions” (*jinke* 近刻) as he read and collated the *Hou Hanshu*. Sometimes when the text seemed problematic but there was no variant character from one of these
other editions to select, he would write down his opinions based on his own understanding and research on the text.

To give one example of He’s collation: the biography of Emperor Huan in *juan 7* of the *Hou Hanshu* says:

On the *jiazi* day of the first month in the spring of the first year of the Heping reign, [the emperor] granted amnesty to the [criminals of the] whole realm. The name of the reign was changed to Heping [peace]. On the *jihai* day [of this month], the imperial decree says…The second month…

和平元年春，正月甲子，大赦天下。改元和平，己亥，詔曰……二月……

In the traditional Chinese calendrical system, a cycle of sixty terms was employed to reckon dates, which was known as the “sexagenary cycle” (*ganzhi* 干支, lit. “Stems-and-Branches”). These sixty terms in the Eastern Han are listed in Table 3-1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>01.甲子 jiazi</th>
<th>02.乙丑 yichou</th>
<th>03.丙寅 bingyi</th>
<th>04.丁卯 dingmao</th>
<th>05.戊辰 wuchen</th>
<th>06.己巳 jisi</th>
<th>07.庚午 gengwu</th>
<th>08.辛未 xinwei</th>
<th>09.壬申 renshen</th>
<th>10.癸酉 guiyou</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.甲午 jiawu</td>
<td>32.乙未 yiwei</td>
<td>33.丙申 bingshen</td>
<td>34.丁酉 dingyin</td>
<td>35.戊申 wuxu</td>
<td>36.己申 jihai</td>
<td>37.庚申 gengzi</td>
<td>38.辛申 xinchou</td>
<td>39.壬申 renshen</td>
<td>40.癸未 guiyao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.甲辰 jiachen</td>
<td>42.乙巳 yisi</td>
<td>43.丙午 bingwu</td>
<td>44.丁午 dingwei</td>
<td>45.戊午 wushen</td>
<td>46.己酉 jiyou</td>
<td>47.庚酉 gengxu</td>
<td>48.辛酉 xinhai</td>
<td>49.壬酉 renzi</td>
<td>50.癸酉 guichou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.甲寅 jiayin</td>
<td>52.乙卯 yimao</td>
<td>53.丙辰 bingchen</td>
<td>54.丁卯 dingsi</td>
<td>55.戊卯 wuwu</td>
<td>56.己卯 jiwei</td>
<td>57.庚卯 gengshen</td>
<td>58.辛卯 xinyou</td>
<td>59.壬卯 renxu</td>
<td>60.癸亥 guihai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-1 Table of the sexagenary cycle
According to the sexagenary cycle, if the \textit{jiazi} (No.01) day was in the first month, the \textit{jihai} day (No. 36) cannot be in this month. He Zhuo found this problem in the text, and wrote in the margin of this page:

If the amnesty was on the \textit{jiazi} day, the \textit{jihai} day, when political power was returned to the emperor, should have been in the second month. I suspect the date was incorrect.

若以甲子赦，則己亥歸政當在二月，疑日有誤。

The word “suspect” (yi 疑) reveals that He had not yet seen any variant character that would explain how either the \textit{jiazi} day or the \textit{jihai} day could be a correct record. He discovered this tiny mistake and made this judgment based on reasoning. After this comment, there was another sentence following a small circle:

/ In the Song edition, [“jihai” was written as] “jichou.”

〇宋本 “己丑”。

This indicated that He later found a variant in a Song edition, in which “jihai” was written as “jichou” (No. 26). This confirmed his speculation that one of the dates was written incorrectly. Based on this solid evidence, He changed the character “hai” of the main text into “chou” in red ink.

The \textit{Hou Hanshu jiaokan ji} 後漢書校勘記 (Collation notes on the \textit{Hou Hanshu}), composed by the great publisher and textual scholar Zhang Yuanji 張元濟 (1867-1959), collects variants from almost all editions of the \textit{Hou Hanshu} from the Song to the late Qing period. It was recorded in this book that the text here was “jichou” in the Shaoxing 紹興 edition carved in the Southern Song period, and was “jihai” in almost all the Yuan and Ming editions. Zhang stated, “It was
written ‘jiazi’ above, so that there shouldn’t be a ‘jihai’ [in this month]. The Song edition is right” (上言甲子，不應有己亥，宋本是). 22 Zhang and He Zhuo held the same opinion, and their opinions should be taken into account when editing the *Hou Hanshu* in modern times. But the most widely-read and influential, punctuated and collated edition of the *Hou Hanshu*, the Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 edition, has not adopted this suggestion. Instead, it employed a variant from another book, the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive mirror for aid in government). 23 This variant was discovered by a late Qing scholar Huang Shan 黃山 while he was editing the *Hou Hanshu jijie 後漢書集解* (Collected annotation to the *Hou Hanshu*), composed by his teacher Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842-1917). Huang put it:

Yuan Hong’s *Records [of the Later Han]* has “jichou,” while the *Tongjian* has “yichou.” We should regard the text of the *Tongjian* as correct.

袁《紀》作“己丑”，《通鑑》作“乙丑”，當以《通鑑》為正。24

Wang Xianqian used the text of a Ming edition, the Mao edition, to compose his collected annotations. He Zhuo wrote his marginalia on a copy of the same edition. The main text here has “jihai,” which is certainly wrong. Huang Shan found that it was “jichou” in Yuan Hong’s 袁宏 (courtesy name Yanbo 彥博, 328-376) *Houhanji 後漢紀* (Records of the Later Han) and that it was “yichou” in the *Zizhi tongjian*, and claimed the text in the *Zizhi tongjian* was right without any

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23 *Hou Hanshu, juan* 7, 295, 322.
explanation. The Houhanji and Zizhi tongjian are both other books (ta shu 他書); they hold the same status when used to collate the Hou Hanshu. Therefore, in this situation, it is difficult to tell which one is right. However, the Shaoxing edition is another edition of the Hou Hanshu itself, and its text thus enjoyed more importance in collating the Hou Hanshu. Using the Shaoxing edition as its master copy, the text in the Zhonghua edition was “jichou” in the first place. Collators should keep this text and state that there are variants in other books, rather than change the text according to other books. He Zhuo’s marginalia here show that he was a very careful reader; his way of dealing with these variants demonstrated that he was also a meticulously scholar and collator.

Unlike literary criticism and historical comments, textual criticism requires scholars to be more precise that their arguments must be based on solid and reliable textual evidence. Textual criticism was considered one of the fundamental sub-disciplines of evidential research, which characterized the scholarship of the Qing dynasty. He Zhuo was the first scholar who systematically undertook textual criticism of hundreds of titles. He led the discipline to flourish, so much so that he has been praised as the founder of textual criticism by modern scholars.25

The traditional narrative on Ming scholarship, especially classical studies and history, was that Ming scholars’ teachings were shallow and that almost all the scholars and students in that dynasty focused only on the civil service examinations, such that they spent all their energy discussing literary features of the text without first authenticating it, investigating the historical events therein, or having a deeper comprehension of the meanings of ancient Classics, histories and philosophies. Qing scholars, on the contrary, mostly concentrated on evidential research, a

25 See Liang Qichao, Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period, 69; Liang Qichao, Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshushi, 290; Wang Shaoying, “Ruan shi chongke Shisanjingzhushu kao,” 54; Elman, From Philosophy to Philology, 211-214.
positivist approach to scholarship buttressed with recourse to reliable and authentic texts. What were the causes of this transition in scholarship between the Ming and Qing? How did it come to pass? Who contributed to this transition and in what ways? These questions are still not fully answered. However, He Zhuo himself experienced this transition, which makes him a good model with which to study the evolution of thought and scholarship from the Ming to the Qing.

When he was young, He Zhuo, like most students at that time, hoped to pass the civil service examinations and become an official. He devoted himself to learning how to compose eight-legged essays. Although he never passed the examinations, he became an expert in selecting and commenting on the eight-legged essays, and, ironically, helped a great many students pass the exam. Because of this, he became well known and was eventually given the jinshi degree by the Kangxi Emperor and appointed to a position in the palace. The Qingbai leichao 清稗類鈔 (Qing anecdotes compiled by category) records:

When Yan Qianqiu, name Ruoqu, got to know He Yimen, He was twenty-four sui. They talked about the exam writings every day.

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26 Lin Qingzhang 林慶彰 and many modern scholars have already started to question conventional opinions on Ming and Qing scholarship. Lin argued that a few scholars had already started to do evidential research since the late Ming, and that Qing scholars followed these late-Ming scholars’ steps and developed the evidential research to a new stage. See Lin Qingzhang, Mingdai jingxue yanjiu lunji 明代經學研究論集 (Taipei: Wenshizhe, 1994).

27 See the “Appendix” of He Zhuo, Yimen xiansheng ji; Shen Tong, “Hanlinyuan bianxiu zen shiduxueshi Yimen He xiansheng xingzhuang”, in He Zhuo, Yimen dusuji, 1275-1277; Quan Zuwang, “Hanlinyuan bianxiu zeng xueshi Changzhou He gong mubeiming”, in Yimen dusuji, 1278-1280; Qing shi liezhuan, in Qingdai zhuanji congkan, vol. 104, juan 71.
This shows that when he was twenty-four sui, he was still devoted to the civil examinations, but by at least the thirty-first year of the Kangxi reign (1692), when He was thirty-one sui, he had started to collate books. This can be corroborated by all the colophons collected in the “Yimen tiba” 義門題跋 (Master Yimen’s colophons) in the Yimen xiansheng ji.

After reading and collating one book, He Zhuo usually wrote a short colophon stating when, where and based on which edition(s) he had read and collated that book. The colophons in the “Yimen tiba” were all composed after the thirty-first year of the Kangxi reign; more than half were written during the fortieth to fiftieth years of the Kangxi reign. In addition, in the “Preface” to the Xingyuan ji 行遠集 (Collected works of Lu Shen 陸深 [1477-1544]), He Zhuo wrote:

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28 Xu Ke 徐珂, Qing bai leichao 清稗類鈔 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 683. “Shiwen” 時文, literally meaning “modern essay,” refers to the eight-legged essay (bagu wen 八股文), which was a style of essay that examination candidates wrote in order to pass the civil service examinations during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Other alternative names include zhiyi 制藝, jingyi 經義, and Sishu wen 四書文. See Benjamin A. Elman, Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China, 46-92.

29 He Zhuo, Yimen xiansheng ji, juan 9. Only the colophon of one book, the Ouyang Xingzhou wenji 歐陽行周文集 (Collected works of Ouyang Zhan 歐陽詹 [courtesy name Xingzhou, 758-801]), records that it was written in the “yichou” 乙丑 year of the Kangxi reign, that is, the 24th year of the Kangxi reign. But in the Tieqintongjianlou cangshu mulu 鐵琴銅劍樓藏書目錄 and the Bisonglou cangshuzhi, 皕宋樓藏書志, the colophon is recorded being written in the “jichou” 己丑 year of the Kangxi reign (48th year of the Kangxi reign). In the 24th year, He was occupied by composing eight-legged essays. It is more likely that he collated this book and wrote the colophon in the 48th year of the Kangxi reign. See Qu Yong 翟鏞, Tieqintongjianlou cangshu mulu (Woodblock edition carved by the Qu 翟 family in the Xianfeng reign [1850-1861]), juan 19, 33a; Lu Xinyuan 陸心源, Bisonglou cangshuzhi (Woodblock edition carved in 1882), juan 69, 14a-15a.
Early on, I followed the current fashion and focused on classical essays for the exams. ... In the winter of the yihai year (34th year) of the Kangxi reign [1695], I studied the “Yueji” (Record of Music, one chapter of the Liji 禮記 [Record of rites]) repeatedly. I closed the book and sighed when I read about the “deceitful sounds” and the “orthodox sounds,” and their “responses with human minds.” I regretted that I used to play the lewd music of the Zheng State and the Wei State in a Confucian house. I thought I was making rapid progress every day but I actually had forgotten the Way. Realising this, I abandoned all the various explanations. Instead, I obtained the sages’ Classics to read. I concentrated on the exegesis of the words and understood thoroughly the logical arrangement of the text. By so doing, I apprehended the general meaning of the Classics, and then the essence of the Way generally came out.

This indicates that He Zhuo started to concentrate on classical studies in the thirty-fourth year of the Kangxi reign (1695). In short, his scholarly orientation shifted from study of eight-legged essays to classical studies during 1692 to 1695. Departing from the “current fashion” that focused on composing beautiful essays for the civil exams, this new approach, classical studies, aimed to comprehend the Way based on repeatedly and carefully reading the Confucian Classics. The reading and comprehension of the Classics necessitated precise explanation of the words and

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³⁰ He Zhuo, *Yimenxiansheng ji, juan* 1, 6ab.
sentences, which need to be established on reliable and accurate texts. All of this caused the development of philology, bibliography, textual criticism, and many other evidential disciplines.

He Zhuo’s scholarly transformation relied on several conditions. First, he became rather well known when he was young. He was granted the jinshi degree by the emperor and received a not particularly powerful but relatively stable position in the palace publishing office and imperial court. That is, He Zhuo was a professional scholar sponsored by the imperial family, whose main work was to read, do research, and collate and compile books. Second, He Zhuo had grown up in Suzhou, one of the economic and academic centers of Ming and Qing China. Some of the most famous book collectors and publishers gathered in that region. Therefore, it was easy for him to gain access to any kind of book, most importantly rare Song and Yuan editions. In addition, having worked in the palace for decades, He gained access to the imperial collection, which contained many rare editions. Third, according to modern scholars there was a “publishing boom” in the late Ming period. From this time on, print became the dominant mode of the circulation of texts, exceeding manuscripts. The dramatic increase in quantity of books and the proliferation of editions was one of the most important reasons for the development of textual criticism and the flourishing of marginalia. Most of He Zhuo’s marginalia were written on copies of Ming editions; the marginalia I discuss in this study are mostly written on editions printed after the late Ming. Moreover, more editions created more inconsistencies in a given text, which created new tasks for scholars: one needed to choose the “authentic” text before reading. Unfortunately, it was not always easy to determine an authentic text between different editions. Therefore, textual criticism weighed more and more in scholarship. At the same time, disciplines related to textual criticism,

such as paleography, bibliography, phonology, and phonetics, became more and more important. Finally, with the development of commerce and transportation, the circulation of books and personnel became more and more convenient. 32 Scholars could easily communicate with each other. During the Qing dynasty, scholars created an academic network swapping opinions and texts. This will be discussed in the next two chapters.

**How Was a Scholar Stigmatized?**

He Zhuo never stopped collecting, reading, and collating books, or writing marginalia. As the Kangxi Emperor remarked, He was a real reading seed. Besides, based on his contributions to textual criticism and bibliographic studies, he can be regarded as one of the founders of evidential research. However, his moral character and scholarly achievement were long disparaged by some Qing scholars for political reasons; thus he has long been underappreciated—almost neglected—in modern scholarship. In the following section, I will show how He Zhuo was stigmatized.

It is recorded in the *Qingshi liezhuan* 清史列傳 (Biographies of the Qing History) that in the 42nd year of the Kangxi reign, He Zhuo was given the *jinshi* degree by the Kangxi Emperor, and then appointed Hanlin Bachelor (*Hanlinyuan shujishi* 翰林院庶吉士), working in the Southern Study (*Nan shufang*, 南書房). Later he became the tutor of Yinsi 艹胤禛 (1681-1726), the eighth son of the emperor, and established a very intimate relationship with him, 33 which is the root cause of his wrongful disparagement.

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32 See Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*.

In the later period of Kangxi Emperor’s reign, his sons fought fiercely for the succession to their father’s throne. In the end, the fourth prince, Yinzhen 謙禛 (1678-1735), succeeded and ascended to the throne in 1723, becoming the Yongzheng Emperor. In the power struggle, Yinsi was favored by most officials in the imperial court. He had a very large support network that included many top-ranking officials. Four years after the Yongzheng Emperor ascended the throne, when he had consolidated his rule, he started to slaughter his brothers who had fought against him for the throne, and this also brought disaster to the officials who had supported them. At this time, He Zhuo had been dead for years, but he was not spared. Jiang Liangji 蔣良驤 wrote in the *Donghua lu* 東華錄 (Chronicle of the Qing Dynasty):

In the third month [of the 4th year of the Yongzheng reign], the Great Academician and the Nine Chief Ministers presented a memorial to the emperor, saying: “Qian Mingshi the expositor-in-waiting composed poems and sent them to Nian Gengyao to glorify his accomplishments. For this extreme sycophancy, he should be dismissed and punished.” The emperor’s decree read: “In the past, Qian Mingshi, He Zhuo, and Chen Menglei all had literary fame. But they were dishonorable in conduct and their comportment was despicable.”

（雍正四年）三月，大學士九卿等奏： “食侍講俸之錢名世，作詩投贈年羹堯稱功頌德，備極詬諌，應革職治罪。” 得旨： “向來如錢名世、何焯、陳夢雷等，皆頗有文名，可惜行止不端，立身卑汚。” 34

Wang Xianqian 王先謙 wrote in his *Donghua lu*:

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On the jiazi day [of the sixth month of the 4th year of the Yongzheng reign], Chong’an the Imperial Prince Kang and other princes, Beile Princes, Beizi Princes, dukes, and the Manchu and Han officials civil and military, all presented memorials to the emperor impeaching Akina’s [lit., pig, denoting Yinsi] forty crimes. …Most of the time, [Yinsi] was controlled by his wife. One day when he was talking with He Zhuo, he suffered from her to laugh out loud outside the door with no compunction. He also brought up He Zhuo’s little daughter in his house and treated her as his own daughter. …After being stripped of the title of Beile Prince, he secretly used silver and horses to draw Rufu and others into his clique, and secretly conspired with the eunuch Li Yu and managed to dismiss Emuketuo who concurrently served in the Imperial Dining Room. He also aligned with He Zhuo who worked in the Hanlin Academy. They won undeserved renown and harboured disloyal thoughts.

（雍正四年六月）甲子，康親王崇安暨諸王、貝勒、貝子、公、滿漢文武大臣等，公同議奏阿其那罪狀四十款……（胤禛）平日受制於妻，一日與何焯共談，任聽伊妻門外大笑，不知省避。又將何焯之幼女私養宅中，以為已女。……既革貝勒之後，暗以銀馬等物要結汝福等人入黨，又密同太監李玉，擅革膳房行走之厄穆克托，又與翰林院何焯固結匪黨，盗取名譽，潛蓄異心。35

This indicates that Yongzheng Emperor’s court spared no effort to damage Yinsi’s reputation, and He Zhuo was also drawn into the political brawl. One prominent modern scholar, Deng Zhicheng, pointed out that He Zhuo was lucky that he died earlier. Otherwise, as one of Yinsi’s trusted aids and a skilled counsellor, He Zhuo might not have his head after the fourth

year of the Yongzheng reign. But, unfortunately, his reputation was ruined and a shadow was cast over his scholarly contributions. These decrees of the Yongzheng Emperor spread widely and were influential. Some scholars blindly—or intentionally—followed these descriptions and despised He Zhuo without carefully reading his works. For example, Chen Kangqi 陈康祺 (1840-1890) stated:

He Zhuo knew nothing about gratitude and was dishonourable in conduct, which can be seen from the decrees of the two reigns [i.e., the Kangxi reign and the Yongzheng reign]. People within the Four Seas please do not be shocked by his empty reputation.

何焯之不識恩義，行止不端，遂明見之兩朝論旨矣，海內人士幸勿以浮名而震之。37

Chen, like many other scholars from the Qing dynasty, employed an expression similar to those used in Yongzheng’s decrees. His knowledge of He Zhuo came from Yongzheng’s decrees rather than He Zhuo’s works and marginalia. In this, he claimed that He Zhuo had an “empty reputation” (fuming 浮名). Yu Zhengxie, for his part, claimed that He Zhuo’s learning “was mostly what deceived the human heart” (生平多欺心之學).38 This claim was also influenced by Yongzheng’s decrees. None of these were impartial judgements. As a reading seed who preserved, restored and transmitted texts, and contributed much to textual studies, He Zhuo’s works and reputation should not be erased. I am not arguing that he was innocent in the princes’ battle for the succession to the

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37 Chen Kangqi 陳康祺, Lang qian jiwen erbi 郎潛紀聞二筆 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), juan 8, 475.
throne, rather, what I would like to emphasize is that we should focus on scholars’ scholarly practice and achievements while evaluating their thought and scholarly contributions.

What happened to He Zhuo also happened to other Qing scholars. In the following chapters, I will try to “rescue” some of them—many of whom may be unfamiliar to most modern readers—by investigating their scholarly practices, especially those related to reading and collating books, and composing and transcribing marginalia.
4

Transcription: Transcriptionists and Relationships Built with Marginalia

“Transcribe,” guolu 過錄 in Chinese, means to hand-copy a text, and since marginalia were mainly handwritten comments, usually in printed books (as discussed in previous chapters), the production and circulation of them were a hybrid of print culture and manuscript culture. In this particular textual culture, the transcription of marginalia as a scholarly practice occupied a very fundamental position. Records and physical evidence of the transcription of marginalia found prior to the Qing are rare. In the Qing dynasty, however, the transcription of marginalia became a prevalent scholarly practice, and transcription characterized the circulation of marginalia to a considerable extent. This chapter and the next will take the transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia as an example and examine by whom marginalia were transcribed and under what circumstances, how different texts were read and used by various transcriptionists, and what the meaning and significance this practice had for them.

This chapter will focus on various transcriptionists and the relationships formed based on marginalia. Generally speaking, the enterprise of transcribing marginalia was undertaken not only by professional scribes and scholars, but also by various other agents including book collectors, calligraphers, and book merchants earning a living by means of this scholarly practice. In the case of He Zhuo, his students, many later scholars, and some merchants were the most active transcriptionists of his marginalia. All of them, despite living in different temporal and spatial realms, were connected by He Zhuo’s marginalia and formed a kind of special relationship.
Students

He Zhuo was well known in his own time and had approximately four hundred students,¹ who were the first generation to transcribe his marginalia. Since He Zhuo was a successful scholar and calligrapher, the process of transcription for his students was not only an opportunity to accumulate research materials and academic knowledge, but also a way to practice their calligraphy.

In a copy of a Ming woodblock edition of the Zhouli zhushu 周禮注疏 (The Rites of Zhou with annotations and sub-annotations) held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XST04967-80), there are a great many of Shen Tong’s 沈彤 (courtesy name Guanyun 冠雲, alternative name Guotang 果堂, 1688-1752) marginalia and his transcriptions of his teacher He Zhuo’s marginalia. Most of He and Shen’s marginalia consist of collation notes and evidential research on the Zhouli zhushu. At the end of this book, there is a colophon composed by He Zhuo and transcribed by Shen Tong. It reads:

In the bingxu year of the Kangxi reign [1706], I had the opportunity to see a [a copy of the Zhouli zhushu in a] Song edition repaired in the Yuan dynasty. I made one rough pass at collation. Noted by He Zhuo.

康熙丙戌得見內府宋版元修本，粗校一過。焯譜。

The Zhouli zhushu was a very common book in the late Ming and early Qing period, but when He Zhuo encountered an edition printed from blocks originally carved in the Song and repaired in the Yuan, he conscientiously compared the texts of a Ming edition and this Song-Yuan edition and

¹ See He Zhuo, Yimen xiansheng ji, “Appendix;” Shen Tong, “Hanlinyuan bianxiu zeng shiduxueshì Yimen xiansheng xingzhuang,” in He Zhuo, Yimen dushuji, 1275.
recorded the variants (yiwen 異文) in the Ming edition—one of the basic collation methods of Chinese traditional textual criticism, called duijiao 對校 (to collate according to comparison). Before long, one of his students Shen Tong devoted much time and energy to transcribing the variants onto another edition.

Shen Tong was a well-known classicist in the early Qing period and was considered by Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705-1755) to be one of He Zhuo’s most famed students. After He Zhuo’s death, it was Shen Tong who composed the xingzhuang 行状 (lit. brief biography) of He Zhuo. Shen Tong specialized in the study of the Three Ritual Classics (Sanli 三禮, i.e., Rites of Zhou, Rites and Ceremonies, and Records of Rites). He Zhuo’s marginalia, the variants from that Song-Yuan edition in particular, were very important information with which to study the text of the Three Ritual Classics. Therefore, transcribing his teacher’s marginalia, especially the variants and textual criticism, was a way for him to accumulate knowledge and research resources.

As mentioned in the introduction, the most prevalent scholarly method in the Qing dynasty, evidential research, was an evidence-based approach mainly focusing on the study of ancient Chinese texts. Accordingly, reliable study was based upon reliable evidence, and reliable evidence first and foremost referred to reliable texts. Most Qing scholars had faith in the reliability of Song and Yuan editions. If Song and Yuan editions were unavailable, variants that could demonstrate the textual characteristics of Song and Yuan editions were a good substitute. This is one reason why He Zhuo’s marginalia, of which the majority were variants and other information regarding Song and Yuan editions, were treasured and transcribed in the Qing dynasty. Besides Shen Tong,

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2 Quan Zuwang 全祖望, “Shen Guotang mubanwen” 沈果堂墓版文, in Quan Zuwang ji huijiao jizhu 全祖望集彙校集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), 361.
other scholars such as Hui Dong 惠棟, Wu Xin 吳昕, Wang Xinfu 王欣夫 also transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia for this title to other copies. This will be discussed in detail below.

Another student of He Zhuo who made a great effort in the transcription of He’s marginalia is Jiang Gao 蒋杲 (courtesy name Zizun 子遵, alternative name Huangting 黃亭, 1683-1732). Jiang Gao received the jinshi degree in 1665, and was appointed Director of the Ministry of Revenue (hubu langzhong 戶部郎中), and subsequently Governor of Lianzhou 廉州, in Guangdong province. Influenced by He Zhuo, Jiang Gao was an expert in book collection and identification of book editions. He Zhuo had taught him and identified book editions in his library Zhushu Tower (Zhushu lou 篆書樓, alternate name Cishu lou 繪書樓). So far, five titles in circulation today can be found that have He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Jiang Gao:

1) *Shitong* 史通 (Conspicue of historiography), Ming woodblock edition cut by Zhang Zhixiang 張之象, held at the Shanghai Library (XS832937-38);

2) *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞 (Observations culled from arduous study), Ming woodblock edition held at the National Library of China (SB11096);

3) *Xie Xuancheng shiji* 謝宣城詩集 (Collected poems of Xie Tiao 謝眺), manuscript copied by Jiang Gao in 1710 held at the National Library of China (SB08374);

4) *Jiang Langxian Changjiang ji* 賈浪仙長江集 (Collected works of Jia Dao 賈島, abb. Changjiang ji), Qing edition cut in Xi Qiyu’s 席啟寓 Qinchuan shuwu 琴川書屋 during the Kangxi reign, held at the Fu Ssu Nien Library in Taibei;

5) *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (History of the Three Kingdoms), woodblock edition carved in the late Ming by the Mao family, held at the Shanghai Library (XS795562-69, Jiang Gao’s marginalia and
his transcription of He’s marginalia in this copy were transcribed by an unknown scholar named
Diao Daigao 刁戴高 [alternative name Yueshan 約山]).

There is a short colophon in the Xie Xuancheng shiji, stating:

In the second [lunar] month of the gengyin year of the Kangxi reign [1710], I collated the Xie
Xuancheng shiji in Master Yimen’s (He Zhuo) house, and copied this volume. Written by
Jiang Gao, the Recluse of the Fragrant Cliff.

康熙庚寅二月借義門師處校正宣城詩集，手錄一冊。香岩小隱蔣杲。

In 1710, Jiang Gao was 27 sui, and He Zhuo 49. Jiang had learned how to authenticate book
editions and collate classical texts from He. In He’s studio, Jiang copied not only a whole volume
of Xie Tiao’s poetry anthology, but also his teacher’s marginalia along with the main text. The
collating notes on the bottom margins have variants from a manuscript copy, another old
manuscript copy, and a contemporary woodblock edition among others, which evidence He’s
effort in collating the text of this poetry anthology. That copy is lost, so Jiang’s transcribed copy
is the only source of information we have for it.

Jiang Gao was also well known for imitating He Zhuo’s calligraphy. A Ming edition of the
Shitong held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XS832937-38) is filled with He Zhuo’s
marginalia, transcribed in red ink by Jiang Gao. We know that this edition was transcribed by Jiang
because, firstly, there is a short colophon at the end of the book stating, “[This colophon] was
composed by my teacher Yimen, and transcribed by [Jiang] Gao on the eleventh day of the seventh
month of 1710” (義門師記。庚寅七月十日杲錄); and, secondly because the handwriting by
Jiang in semi-cursive style small characters resembles that of He Zhuo (see Figure 4-1). Jiang was
well known for his skill in imitating He’s handwriting. Therefore, marginalia transcribed in a hand
that resembles He Zhuo’s have been attributed to Jiang. In another instance, there is a copy of the *Shitong* in a Ming woodblock edition held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XST01248-53, see Figure 4-2), whose red marginalia looks almost the same as He Zhuo’s, so much so that a late Qing book collector, Deng Zhengan 鄧邦述 (courtesy name Zhengan 正闈, 1868-1939), initially thought it was He’s holograph. But after seeing an authentic holograph version of He Zhuo’s marginalia in another copy of the *Shitong*, Deng realized that the marginalia in this copy was instead a transcription. Because the handwriting was almost the same as He Zhuo’s, Pan Boshan 潘博山 (1904-1943), a well-known book collector, claimed that the marginalia had been transcribed by Jiang Gao.4

Just like his teacher, Jiang Gao became a book collector and textual scholar. He not only transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia, but also collated many books carefully and wrote his own marginalia in exquisite handwriting. A mid-Qing scholar and poet, Peng Zhaosun 彭兆藻 (courtesy name Xianghan 湘涵, or Ganting 甘亭, 1769-1821) praised Jiang Gao:

Mr. [Jiang] Huangting collated hundreds of Classics and histories. All of them were refined and done meticulously in red and yellow ink, and were praised in artistic and literary circles. Collectors treasure copies formerly held in the Zhushu Tower.

3 This copy of *Shitong* that bears He’s handwriting is now held at the National Library of China, call number 11313.

4 See the colophon by Ye Jingkui 叶景葵 (1874-1949) at the beginning of this book, and the colophons by Wu Zhizhong 吳志忠 and Deng Bangshu 鄧邦述 at the end.
Figure 4-1  Last half-leaf of the Shitong, woodblock edition carved in the Ming dynasty. This colophon was composed by He Zhuo, and transcribed by Jiang Gao. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS832937-38).
Figure 4-2 Leaf 22b of *juan* 20 of the *Shitong*, woodblock edition carved in the Ming dynasty. The marginalia, which resemble He Zhuo’s handwriting, were transcribed by an unknown transcriptionist. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XST01248-53).
Besides Shen Tong and Jiang Gao, other students of He Zhuo, such as Chen Shaozhang (courtesy name Shangzhang, 1670-1747), Yao Shiyu (courtesy name Yucai, 玉裁, alternative name Yitian, 蕭田, 1695-1749), and Wang Youdun (courtesy name Shitiao, 師苕, 1692-1758) also transcribed their teacher’s marginalia. It seems that He Zhuo sometimes also received feedback from them. In *juan* 38 of the *Hou Hanshu* held at the Peking University Library, the main text reads: “何遽其必敗乎” (Why did we fail so quickly?), for which He Zhuo’s marginal note states:

[Chen] Shaozhang says: A character “策” (*ce*) is missing after “遽” (*ju*).

少章謂：“遽”下少一“策”字。

This sentence was the last from General Zhang Zong’s *張宗* speech to his commander when he was a general and their army was in a critical situation. Zhang asked to be the rear guard, saying:

I have heard that when one soldier exerts all his strength [to fight], he will be mightier one hundred men; once tens of thousands of soldiers face death with no regrets, this army will be invincible. I, Zhang Zong, now have an army of thousands of soldiers and have the great power. Why must we fail so quickly?

愚聞一卒畢力，百人不當；萬夫致死，可以橫行。宗今擁兵數千，以承大威。何遽其必敗乎？

Here, Zhang Zong says that they still had thousands of soldiers and therefore victory was possible even their enemy had more soldiers. Thus it is more reasonable for the last sentence to be “Why do you hastily expect our failure?” rather than “Why must we fail so quickly?” Chen Jingyun was
right that “策” (ce, to expect) should be added in this sentence. One of He’s students, Chen specialized in the *Hanshu, Hou Hanshu* and Tang poetry. He Zhuo mentions him several times in his marginalia and praises his erudition on the history of the two Han dynasties.

In marginalia to a Qing edition of the *Tangshi guchu* 唐詩鼓吹 (Tang poems for accompaniments), carved in the 16th year of the Shunzhi reign (1659) and preserved in the Chongqing Library, the communication between the master and his students is more apparent. In this copy, Chen Jingyun first transcribed his teacher’s marginalia. He Zhuo then wrote down additional comments on both the main text and his marginalia as transcribed by Chen Jingyun, and Chen later wrote many comments on these previous texts. Wang Xinfu found that the marginalia in this book were written by He Zhuo and Chen Jingyun, observing that “He Zhuo’s handwriting is smooth and ornate; while Chen Shaozhang’s handwriting is solemn and careful” (何書流麗，陳書恭謹). Concerning the content of the marginalia, he commented: “Most of He’s words consist of evaluation; most of Chen’s words are evidential research” (何語多評泊，陳語多考據). In *juan* one of this copy, there is a piece of He Zhuo’s marginalia on Liu Yuxi’s *Ku Lü Hengzhou* 哭呂衡州 (Crying for Lü Hengzhou), transcribed by Chen Shaozhang, which reads: “Seeing this piece, we can know that the talents of Liu [Yuxi] and Liu [Zongyuan] are far apart from each other” (觀此篇，可以知劉、柳才力相去之遠). But later this sentence was crossed off and two other characters, “butong” 不通 (nonsense), were written alongside by He Zhuo himself. Chen Jingyun appended his own opinion as follows:

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5 Wang Xinfu, *Yishuxuan qie cun shanben shulu* 蠩術軒簸存善本書錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 676.
6 Wang Xinfu, *Yishuxuan qie cun shanben shulu*, 676.
The comment about the talents [of Liu Yuxi and Liu Zongyuan] is one piece of my deceased teacher’s old marginalia, which I transcribed in the jisi year [1689]. It was later crossed out. The running comments on the two characters were written by my deceased teacher in the spring of the xinwei year [1691]. When talking about essays of the Tang dynasty, Master Ouyang also claimed that Liu [Yuxi] and Liu [Zongyuan] were equal, which suffices for us to know that the ancients initially did not think there was a difference between these two masters. It is appropriate that master [He] did not think his earlier comment was fair.

才力相去之評，乃余己已冬録先師舊批，後又抹去。側注二字者，則先師辛未春首批也。歐陽公論唐代文章，亦以劉、柳宗並稱，足知古人于二公初無軼輕。宜師不以前評為允也。⁷

In this last piece, Chen referred to He Zhuo as his “deceased teacher”, indicating that it was written after He’s death (1722), more than 30 years after Chen first transcribed He’s marginalia (1689). From other examples recorded in the marginalia of this copy, we learn that during those thirty years, He Zhuo changed his opinions several times because of his accumulation of research materials. The most interesting point is that He Zhuo did not revise just his own marginalia editions, but also those where his marginalia were transcribed by his students. One possible reason is that He Zhuo wanted to get some feedback from his students or other scholars.

Sometimes, he also obtained new texts from his students. In the Su Xueshi ji 蘇學士集 (Collected works of Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽, 1008-1048, courtesy name Zimei 子美, an outstanding

⁷ Wang Xinfu, Yishuxuan qie cun shanben shulu, 676.
A poet of the early Song period) held at the Shanghai Library (XS824382-83), He Zhuo’s colophon, which was transcribed by Qian Taiji 錢泰吉 (courtesy name Fuyi 輔宜, 1791-1863), reads:

I am annoyed that the newly carved Suzimei ji has many mistakes. One of my students, Lü Yili of Shimen County, whose father [Lü] Wudang ranked second in the imperial examination of the wuxu year [1718], said his family had an old manuscript copy. It now belongs to one of his uncles. He has only kept the copy collated by his deceased father. Thus, I borrowed it and collated my own copy. …Written by He Zhuo in the third month of the gengyin year of the Kangxi reign [1710].

新開雕《蘇子美集》，余病其訛謬至多。學徒石門呂懿歷，戊戌榜眼無黨先生之子，言其家有舊鈔本，今已分屬諸父，而其先公所校之本獨存，因假以是正……康熙庚寅三月晦日何焯記。

In the tenth month of this year, student Li brought his family’s old copy to me, which was a manuscript copy produced in Mr. Wu Wending’s Congshutang in my hometown and obtained by his grandfather Mr. [Lü] Wancun from the Qi family in Shanyin County. On the basis of this copy I revised the order in the table of contents and wrote this [colophon] at the end. There are tables of contents at the beginning of each juan in this manuscript copy. Younger generations have no chance to see the Song edition, yet this can serve as evidence of it. Zhuo.

是歲良月，呂生持其家舊本至，乃吾鄉呂文定公書堂鈔本，其祖晚邨先生得之山陰祁氏者也。因得改正目錄卷次而記其後。鈔本每卷之首又各有目，後生不得見宋蹤，此亦足以為據矣。焯。
This colophon tells us that He had a chance to see a manuscript copy of Su Shunqing’s poetry anthology. He collated his own copy referencing it, writing down the variants and these colophons. This manuscript copy was brought to him by one of his students, Lü Yili, who was the son of the book collector Lü Baozhong 吕葆忠 (courtesy Wudang 無黨, ?-1708) and the grandson of the well-known scholar, thinker and physician Lü Liuliang (courtesy name Yonghui 用晦, alternative name Wancun 晚村, 1629-1683). According to He’s colophon, Lü Liuliang got this manuscript copy from the Qi family in Shanyin (in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province). The Qi family was renowned for book collection in the late Ming era. The catalogues of their collection, the Danshengtang cangshumu 漳生堂藏書目 (Catalogue of the Dansheng Hall) and Danshengtang dushuji 漳生堂讀書記 (Reading notes written in the Dansheng Hall), are still very important documents for the study of book production, circulation and collection in the late Ming.  

**Mid- and Late-Qing Scholars**

In addition to his students, He Zhuo’s marginalia were also treasured by scholars after him, some of whom spent significant time and energy transcribing them. Among them was the prominent classicist Hui Dong 惠棟 (courtesy name Dingyu 定宇, alternative name Songya 松崖, 1697-1758). According to the Zhongguo guji zongmu and several other library catalogues, Hui Dong, cooperating with his father Hui Shiqi 惠士奇 (courtesy name Tianmu 天牧, alternative name Bannong 半農, 1671-1741), transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia on five titles, which are: 1) Zhouli zhushu, 2) Chunqiu gongyang zhushu 春秋公羊注疏 (The Spring and Autumn Annals of the

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8 See Qi Chenghan 祁承燦, Danshengtang cangshumu 漳生堂藏書目 and Danshengtang dushuji 漳生堂讀書記 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015).
Gongyang tradition with annotations and sub-annotations), 3) *Hanshu*, 4) *Hou Hanshu*, 5) *Sanguo zhi*.

Hui Dong was considered one of the earliest scholars who publicly and clearly advocated applying the Han scholars’ approach to the study of the Confucian Classics, as opposed to that of Song scholars. He once claimed that “The damage done by the Song scholars is even more serious than the Qin bibliocaust” (宋儒之禍，甚於秦灰). In order to rectify the misinterpretations caused by Song scholars, Hui, along with other Han Learning scholars, tried to solve some fundamental textual problems at their origins by devoting themselves to the collation of the Confucian Classics.\footnote{See Qi Yongxiang, *Qian-Jia kaojuxue yanjiu* 乾嘉考據學研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1998), 137-159.}

In this regard, He Zhuo’s marginalia, which not only included variants from rare Song and Yuan editions but also were preliminary researches on these textual problems, were of special significance. For instance, He Zhuo’s marginalia on the *Zhouli zhushu*, one of the Five Confucian Classics, were initially transcribed by his student Shen Tong and then by Hui Dong and other later scholars. Hui Dong transcribed them into a copy of a new edition that was cut in his own studio, the Hongdou Study (Hongdou zhai 紅豆齋). Based on that edition, he conducted his own research and recorded his own marginalia in it. Unfortunately, Hui Dong’s copy is not in circulation today; fortunately, his marginalia and transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia were all transcribed into another copy by one of his friends, Shen Wotian 沈沃田. Shen’s copy is also lost, but a scholar-official, Wu Xin 吳昕 (courtesy name Yunge 芸閣, *jinshi* 1774) transcribed all these accumulated marginalia into yet another copy. This copy is a woodblock edition cut by the Mao 毛 family in
the first year of the Chongzhen reign (1628) and now held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XST06322-31). At the beginning of this copy, Wu Xin’s colophon reads:

This book was originally annotated and collated by the Hui family in Yuanhe. The red characters were Mr. Bannong’s (Hui Shiqi, 1671-1741) handwriting, and the green characters were written by Songya [Hui Dong] the recluse. They probably first transcribed Mr. He Yimen’s marginalia, consisting mainly of textual criticism based on comparison with a Song edition that had been repaired in the Yuan dynasty and preserved in the Palace. They continued to transcribe [variants from] the Yu family’s Wanjuantang edition … also referring to the Xu family’s edition, … an edition with commentaries on the meanings, … an edition with annotations quoted within the Classics … [and] sometimes an edition that they call the Jian edition [presumably a Jianyang imprint]. … It is recorded at the beginning of the book that it was collated against a Song edition and the Wanjuan edition; when the other editions were cut is unknown. There are some items beginning with “[Lu] Wenchao’s comment”, which were recorded by Master Lu the Hanlin academician. In the spring of the xinsi year of the Qianlong reign [1761], I borrowed it from Mr. Shen Wotian and started to transcribe [the marginalia into one of my copies], and finished in the winter of the renwu year [1762] … Written in Chusonglou, on the day following the Shangsi Festival in the gengyin year [1770]. Noted by Wu Xin.
There is the impression of Wu Xin’s seal at the end of this paragraph. According to Wu Xin’s statements in this colophon and the marginalia in this book, Hui used multiple editions to collate the text of the *Zhouli zhushu*. For Hui, He Zhuo’s record of the information obtained from the Song-Yuan edition was quite important. Although most Qing scholars were not satisfied with or were even fiercely opposed to Song Learning, they had a fetish for Song editions. Hui Dong had composed two books on the *Rites of Zhou: Lishuo 禮說* (On Rites) and *Jiujing guyi 九經古義* (Ancient meaning of the Nine Classics), but none of his marginalia in this *Zhouli zhushu* were included in these two works. These scattered marginalia are not unimportant, though, because some items can contribute to an understanding of Hui Dong’s original attitude toward Han and Tang dynasty scholars.

Hui Dong’s marginalia also contained some important information about a Song edition of the *Zhouli zhushu*, a woodblock edition cut in Yu Renzhong’s 余仁仲 Wanjuan Hall (Wanjuan tang 萬卷堂), which is no longer in circulation today. This edition was rather famous in the Qing period, but it was already difficult to get access to it. So when Lu Wenchao got a copy, he rebound it and offered it to the emperor. Before the offering was made, Hui Dong had a chance to read it and

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10 For instance, the noted Qing bibliophile Huang Pilie 黃丕烈 (1763-1825) called himself “Ningsong zhuren” 佞宋主人 (Master of flattering Song editions). Most Qing scholars treasured Song editions and attached great importance to Song editions in book collation.

11 See also Wang Xinfu, *Yishuxuan qie cun shanben shulu*, 733.
managed to compare it with his Hongdou Study edition. Hui recorded this process in his colophon, which was transcribed at the end of Wu Xin’s copy:

Master Lu Yayu [Wenchao] obtained an annotated Song copy of the *Rites of Zhou* and will offer it to the emperor. In the spare time during the rebinding, I read it once and transcribed the variants into my copy. This copy has twelve *juan* in total, and each *juan* is bound in one volume. In the 28th day of the last month of the *yihai* year [1755]. Songya [Hui Dong].

According to the various colophons at the beginning and end of Wu Xin’s copy, this book was later acquired by the scholar-official Han Yingbi 韓應陛 (courtesy name Duiyu 對虞, alternative name Lüqing 綠卿, 1800-1860), and more marginalia were added by Shen Chengtao 沈誠敟 and Zhang Yiqing 張伊卿 in the Xianfeng reign (1850-1861). After Han Yingbi’s death, his books were all scattered. This copy ended up in the collection of the famous book collector Ye Jingkui 葉景葵 (courtesy name Kuichu 揆初, alternative name Juan’an 卷盦, 1874-1949), a friend of Wang Xinfu. Ye Jingkui also possessed a copy that has Shen Tong’s marginalia. In the 1930s, Wang Xinfu spent about two years transcribing the marginalia of these two copies into another Ming edition. The transmission of He Zhuo’s marginalia on the *Zhouli zhushu* is outlined below in Figure 4-3. From Shen Tong and Hui Dong in the High Qing to Ye Jingkui and Wang Xinfu in the Republican era, He Zhuo’s marginalia were transcribed by generations of scholars. In this process, new sources and the opinions of the transcriptionists were added to previous marginalia.
Therefore, this was not only a process of transmission, but also a process of proliferation of scholarship, which can reveal how Qing scholars did their research.

Figure 4-3 The transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia on the Zhouli zhushu.

Hui Dong’s main concern was the authentication of the text, so what he wrote and transcribed were mainly marginalia concerned with textual criticism. This is what many Qing scholars did. He Zhuo collated the Hedong xiansheng ji 河東先生集 (Collected Works of Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元). One of his friends, Wang Wenyuan 王聞遠 (1663-1741), borrowed He Zhuo’s collated copy and collated his own copy based on He’s marginalia.  He Zhuo had collated the Changjiang ji. His

12 Wang Wenyuan’s colophon states: “I have been searching for the Hedong xiansheng ji for years, but got nothing. … In the winter, I got this copy from the bookstore in front of the City God Temple. All the
textual criticism was transcribed by Jiang Gao and later by one of the most prominent textual scholars of the Qing dynasty, Lu Wenchao 魯文弨 (courtesy name Shaogong 召弓, 1717-1796). Other examples are too numerous to mention individually.

Not only did He Zhuo’s marginalia enjoy this kind of privileged status, but that of other scholars, especially textual scholars such as Lu Wenchao and Gu Guangqi 顧廣圻 (courtesy name Qianli 千里, alternative name Jianpin 潘 кред, 1770-1839), also circulated in this way. Transcribing prior scholars’ marginalia, reading them closely, and even adding new comments was one of the main forms of scholarly activity for Qing scholars. The text of ancient classics was shaped, and this scholarly practice influenced the reading and reception of traditional texts in the Qing dynasty and even today. For example, the most widely used and influential edition of the Thirteen Confucian Classics with collation notes produced under the charge of Ruan Yuan 阮元 (courtesy name Boyuan 伯元, alternative name Yuntaï 春臺, 1764-1849) was edited and carved based on some Yuan editions and many Qing scholars’ collations in their marginalia. The prefaces of these Thirteen Classics have listed the marginalia employed in these books, which are shown in the table below:\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Textual scholar & Marginalia employed & Notes \\
\hline
He Zhuo & & \\
\hline
Lu Wenchao & & \\
\hline
Gu Guangqi & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

information concerning layout and taboo characters was copied from a Song edition. There are quite a few omissions and errors. This fall, I saw in He Qizhan’s library his collated edition. So, I borrowed it, took it back and collated [this copy] for three days. … and stopped. So I procrastinated and only finally finished after more than twenty days.” (《河東先生集》，見之數年不獲，□冬得於城隍廟前之書肆。其書行款及避諱字，悉照宋本抄錄，但脫漏舛誤頗多。今秋於何庶常玘瞻□□，見其校本，因假歸，訂三日，□原書乃作輒，因循遂遲至二十餘日始校畢). See Zhongguo guji gao jiao chaoben tulu, 678-679.

\textsuperscript{13} See Fu Zengxiang, Cangyuan qunshu jingyanlu, 1083-1084.

\textsuperscript{14} See the Shisanjing zhushu 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan, chief editor, photo-reproduced edition (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 2007).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classic</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Yi 易 (Book of Changes) | Lu Wen chao  
Qian Sunbao 錢孫保 (1624-? )                                    |
| Shi 詩 (Book of Songs) | Lu Wen chao                                                            |
| Zhouli 周禮 (Rites of Zhou) | Hui Dong (incorporating his transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia)  
Lu Wen chao  
Duan Yucai                                     |
| Yili 儀禮 (Rites and Ceremonies) | Lu Wen chao  
Gu Guangqi                                             |
| Liji 禮記 (Record of Rites) | Hui Dong  
Lu Wen chao  
Sun Zhizu 孫志祖 (1737-1801)  
Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815) |
| Chunqiu Zuozhuan 春秋左傳  
(Zuo annotation on the Spring and Autumn Annals) | Hui Dong (incorporating his transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia)  
Lu Wen chao  
Duan Yucai  
Chen Shuhua 陳樹華 (1730-1801)  
Gu Zhikui 顧之遠 (1754-1797) |
| Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan 春秋公羊傳  
(Gongyang annotation on the Spring and Autumn Annals) | Hui Dong (incorporating his transcription of He Zhuo and He Huang’s marginalia)  
Duan Yucai |
| Chunqiu Guliangzhuan 春秋穀梁傳  
(Guliang annotation on the Spring and Autumn Annals) | Hui Dong (incorporating his transcription of He Zhuo and He Huang’s marginalia)  
Duan Yucai |
| Mengzi 孟子(Mencius) | He Zhuo and He Huang  
Lu Wen chao |
| Erya 爾雅 (Explaining refined language) | Hui Dong  
Lu Wen chao |
| Xiaojing 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety) | Lu Wen chao |

Table 4-1 Marginalia employed in Ruan Yuan’s edition of the Three Classics
It can be seen from this table that He Zhuo, Hui Dong and Lu Wenchao’s marginalia contributed significantly to Ruan Yuan’s edition of the Thirteen Classics. Meanwhile, the marginalia of other scholars such as Sun Zhizu, Chen Shuhua, and Gu Zhikui also did fundamental work on this influential project, but their names are nearly unknown not only in the modern Western literature, but also in that of China (even Qian Sunbao’s date of death is unknown). This is a problem that deserves further consideration. Only after carefully examining these marginalia and their composers and transcriptionists can we have a deeper understanding of the creation and significance of Ruan Yuan’s edition of the Thirteen Classics.

In the Qing dynasty, scholars were not only concerned with textual criticism; some were also interested in He Zhuo’s comments or both his comments and textual criticism. Therefore, they transcribed both, and also some non-literary marks and symbols. They were concerned not only with the meaning of the main text but also its form—the physicality of the book and the form and circulation of the marginalia per se. They paid much attention to the various scholarly practices related to the collection and reading of the book, the process of making sense of the text, and the production and transcription of marginalia. The practices themselves were of great significance to them. For instance, when Weng Tonghe 翁同龢 (courtesy name Shuping 叔平, alternative name Pingsheng 瓶生, 1830-1904) was fifteen sui, he bought a copy of the Tang Liuxiansheng ji 唐柳先生集 (Collected works of Liu Zongyuan in the Tang Dynasty) with He Zhuo’s handwritten marginalia in it.15 Weng was so excited that he composed a poem about this book, wrote it down on a separate piece of paper and put it inside. About fifty years later, Weng transcribed He’s marginalia into a new copy. He wrote a colophon at the end of this copy:

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15 This copy is now held at the National Library of China, call number SB06251.
I obtained the *Liuxiansheng ji* with marginalia from the Chen family’s Jirui Pavilion when I was fifteen *sui*. The red marginalia were rather illuminating. They were written by He Qizhan. I intended to make a copy but have not managed to. In my spare time this spring when I was lecturing in the Yuchun Palace, I collated it once roughly. My eyes were almost blind and my wrist unsteady. I am not as strong as when I was young, for which I sigh in sorrow repeatedly.

Recorded by Weng Tonghe on the seventh day of the fourth month in the *renwu* year [1882].

Weng Tonghe was a noted scholar-official and the teacher of two emperors, Tongzhi 同治 (r. 1861-1875) and Guangxu 光緒 (r. 1875-1908). He was especially well known for his calligraphy and was very confident about it. At the end of the table of contents of the *Tang Liuxiansheng ji* on which Weng transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia, Weng’s colophon reads:

The copy with Mr. Yimen’s marginalia was a Masha edition from the Yuan dynasty. This copy is a Ming edition produced in the Zhengtong reign. It is the same as the Yuan edition in its chapter order and phonetic notation, but different in the number of columns per page and characters per column. I transcribed Mr. He’s marginalia into this copy in the *renwu* year [1882]. After twenty years, in the *renyin* year [1902], I read it again and felt that the characters [I wrote] were big and beautiful, a bit better than Mr. He’s handwriting. Recorded by Weng Tonghe (Songchan) on the last day of the second month.
This comment not only revealed Weng’s confidence about his calligraphy, but also showed that while transcribing marginalia, the calligraphy was a concern. However, there was no evidence (e.g. no seals) showing that the marginalia in the copy he got when he was fifteen *sui* were actually written by He Zhuo. As a matter of fact, it is more likely that they were transcribed by some unknown scribe.

Besides calligraphy and textual criticism, Weng was also interested in the marginal comments composed by He Zhuo. He had transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia on numerous titles, such as the *Hanshu, Sanguo zhi, Shitong, Gengzi xiaoxia ji* 庚子消夏記 (Record of whiling away the summer of the gengzi year), *Han wen chao* 韓文抄 (Collected works of Han Yu 韓愈), *Tang Liuxiansheng ji*, and *Jiayou ji* 嘉祐集 (Collected works of Su Xun 蘇洵). For all of them he transcribed both the collation notes and He’s comments. There are two colophons by Weng at the end of the table of contents of the *Shitong* held at the Shanghai Library (call number: SX782275-79). The one in blue reads:

I have a copy [of *Shitong*] with marginalia by [Qian] Muweng (Qian Qianyi) transcribed by Qian Xiangling. I collated this copy with it and find that the comments that start with “Feng says” in this copy were all by Muweng. He Zhuo perhaps concealed [the truth and avoided mentioning Qian Qianyi’s name]. I supplemented the emphasis marks in blue ink and added on the top and side margins several pieces of what was left out by He. Written by Tonghe in
the sixth month of the \textit{jiashen} year [1884]. The emphasis marks seem to have been made by Xiangling rather than Muweng.

家藏錢湘靈先生臨牧翁批校本，用以對勘，乃知此本內所稱馮云者，皆牧翁評也。何蓋諱之耳。因以藍色補其圈點，並補何所漏者數條於闕上及行側。甲申六月同龢記。圈點似湘靈先生所為，非牧翁也。

The one in red states:

The copy held in my house has Royal Attendant Wang Genzhai’s comments. So I transcribed them in this copy in purple ink. The emphasis marks are a little careless, and the comments unreasonable most of the time. So, I suspect that they were not composed by Royal Attendant [Wang Jun]. However, they point out the literary ingenuity of the text, so I transcribed them in order to make the text convenient for beginners to read. Noted by Shuping.

家藏本有王艮齋侍御評語，因以色筆臨之，其圈點頗爛漫，且與評語多違戾處，疑非侍御手筆。然頗盡文章之妙，故並臨之，便於初學誦讀。叔平記。

Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (courtesy name Shouzhi 受之, alternative name Muzhai 牧齋, 1582-1664) was a prominent poet and scholar in the late Ming and early Qing periods. Wang Jun 王嵊 (courtesy name Genzhai 艮齋, 1694-1751) was a scholar-official, specializing in history and geography. Weng transcribed their comments and emphasis marks. He also transcribed those that he suspected were not composed by Qian and Wang because “they point out the literary ingenuity of the text.” For Weng Tonghe, previous scholars’ comments were useful for “beginners” to grasp the literary features of the text. Meanwhile, we can also see that Weng paid lots of attention to the emphasis marks made by previous readers. Obviously, the “comments” here mentioned by him
were mostly literary comments; the emphasis marks were also devices for helping to point out and analyze the literary features of the text. As discussed in chapter two, literary comments and emphasis marks were introduced to analyze the literary features of classical prose in order to help students prepare for the civil service examinations in the Song dynasty, and in the late Ming were widely used in works of fiction and drama to guide readers in appreciating the aesthetic values of these texts. Scholars in the Qing dynasty still used them in their marginalia, and Weng also expended much effort transcribing them. Weng asserted that they were for “beginners,” but how many “beginners” could have access to his transcriptions? The more reasonable explanation is that the comments and emphasis marks were for Weng himself to appreciate the literary beauty of the text. In a time when evidential research was the mainstream scholarly approach, when pure beauty and pleasure were excluded from scholarship and scholarly practice, scholars managed to find other ways to meet this kind of need. Weng rationalized his practice of pursuing beauty from the text by asserting that it was for unspecified “beginners.”

In the Qing dynasty, many scholars also paid significant attention to the form and physicality of both the main texts and marginalia. They tried their best to “transcribe” not only the literary writings in marginalia but also all sorts of symbols and even the way in which they were drawn.

One example is Zhang Yu 章鈺 (courtesy name Shizhi 式之, alternative name Mingyi 茗簃, 1864-1934), a late-Qing book collector and textual scholar. He transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia on several titles, such as the Sanguo zhi, Wudai shiji 五代史記 (History of the Five Dynasties), Geshibian 歌詩編 (Poetry Anthology, i.e., anthology of Li He’s poems), and San Tangren wenji 三唐人文集 (Collected works of three Tang essayists), just to name a few.

What is interesting about Zhang Yu’s transcriptions is that he transcribed not only the collation notes and comments but also the seals. In the San Tangren wenji held at the National
Library of China (call number: SB14604), He Zhuo’s marginalia as transcribed by Zhang Yu is preserved. On the first page of *juan* one of Sun Qiao’s 孫樵 anthology, Zhang’s marginalia records two of He Zhuo’s seal impressions (see Figure 4-4):

Love the ancients without belittling the moderns (intaglio characters in square shape)

不薄/今人/愛古人自文方印

“Talking about antiquity,” a dragon in the left and a tiger right (intaglio characters in rectangular shape)

“語古” 左龍右虎自文長方印

On the page listing the table of contents of Li Ao’s 李翱 anthology, Zhang recorded two more impressions of He Zhuo’s seals:

He Zhuo’s personal seal Qizhan (two square seals in relief characters)

何焯私印 齋瞻（兩朱文方印）

This demonstrates that Zhang had seen the book read by He Zhuo and that he transcribed He’s marginalia and recorded the contents of the marginalia—such as the seals—into his own copy. Zhang’s handwriting is in semi-cursive style small characters that resemble He Zhuo’s. Although He Zhuo’s copy was lost, Zhang Yu’s effort of duplicating He’s marginalia and seals can help us see how He Zhuo’s original marginalia and seals looked.
Figure 4-4 Leaf 1a of *juan* 1 of the *San Tangren wenji*, woodblock edition carved in the Ming dynasty and mended in the Qing dynasty. The marginalia in this copy were transcribed by Zhang Yu. On this half leaf, there are three seal impressions that were transcribed by Zhang. Courtesy of the National Library of China (call number: SB14604).
Scholars’ Relationships Built with Marginalia

In the process of transcription, marginalia were duplicated and disseminated to more books. Meanwhile, the scholars involved built up a kind of relationship, in which knowledge, scholarly approaches, and a particular set of values were also transmitted from one person to another and from one generation to another. The examples cited below show how Qing scholars were connected by marginalia.

At the beginning of the *Sanguo zhi* held at the Shanghai Library (XS491435-54), there is a colophon composed by Wang Qisun 王芑孫 (courtesy name Nianfeng 念豐, alternative name Lengqie shanren 棱伽山人, 1755-1818) and transcribed by Fei Yuanshan 費源深 (courtesy name Runquan 潤泉, late 19th c.). It reads:

This collated copy of the *Sanguo zhi* is held at the Shili House of my *jinshi* classmate Huang Yaopu. Yaopu obtained it from Chen Shuhua (alternative name Yequan), who previously lived in Wugang Prefecture. The marginalia that were transcribed by Yequan were from the Hui family’s Hongdou Study edition. The collation made by Feng [Ban] was well-known for its refinement, and in addition to He Yimen and Chen Shaozhang’s revisions and the Hongdou Study’s [owner’s] transcription of them, and later Yequan’s transcription—all these people were good readers of my hometown—making this copy error-free.

此《三國志》校本，余同年黃蔚圃翁士禮居所藏。蔚圃得之故武岡州之同陳冶泉樹華，冶泉所度者，惠氏紅豆齋本也。馮校世稱精善，積以何義門、陳少章先後審正而紅豆齋錄之，冶泉度之，此其人皆吾鄉之善讀書者，宜無舛錯矣。
On the *Wenxuan* (Selections of refined literature) held at the Zhejiang Library (S3563), there were He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Sun Qilu (alternative name Zhuxiang) and Wang Shijin. Wang’s colophon at the beginning reads:

Recently, I happened to visit a bookstore and saw a *Wenxuan* commented on by He Zhuo and transcribed by Mr. Sun Zhuxiang. Zhuxiang was indeed a reading seed in my hometown. This copy was carefully collated and is worthy of appreciation.

Details of Sun Qi’s life are unknown to us. Wang Shijin praised him as a “reading seed” in his hometown. Wang’s life is likewise unknown, but his marginalia and transcriptions of previous scholars’ marginalia were also very refined and precise. He was also a reading seed. Wang Qisun stated that He Zhuo, Chen Jingyun, Hui Dong, and Chen Shuhua were all good at reading. They of course are also reading seeds. For them, writing, reading, and transcribing marginalia were important practices in their lives. Their world was interwoven with different texts, among which those with marginalia were one of the most important kinds. They exchanged books with each other and transcribed marginalia from prior scholars and from the transcriptions of their contemporaries. Despite living in different times and spaces, they were connected by marginalia, and relationships were formed based on practices related to the transcription of marginalia.

In the case of He Zhuo, as discussed above, his marginalia were passed on to his students such as Shen Tong, Jiang Gao, and Chen Jingyun. They transcribed their teacher’s marginalia and learned from him how to collate books and improve their handwriting. In return, He Zhuo occasionally received feedback from his students; sometimes, he also received new texts from
them. He Zhuo also established various relationships with his teachers and friends via the exchange of marginalia. Li Guangdi 李光地 (courtesy Jinqing 晉卿, alternative name Rongcun 榮村, 1642-1718) was once He’s teacher. He Zhuo transcribed Li’s commentaries on various titles, such as the *Hanwen chao*. In addition, he and his brother He Huang 何煌 (courtesy name Xinyou 心友, 1668-1745), a book collector and textual scholar, also worked together on some texts and exchanged texts via post. He’s colophon at the end of *juan 7* of the *Hou Hanshu* held at the Peking University Library (call number: LSB/7288) reads:

> In the *jiawu* year of the Kangxi reign [1714], my younger brother Xinyou got an incomplete Song edition [of the *Hou Hanshu*] from *juan* 3 to the middle of this *juan* held by the Ye family of Baoshan. He sent me the character variants after collation, and I corrected several tens of errors [in my own copy].

康熙甲午，心友弟得包山葉氏所藏殘宋本第三卷至此卷之半，以所校字寫寄，因改正數十處。

After collating one book, He Huang always copied the character variants and his comments, sending them to his elder brother. Here, the text was transmitted, rather than the book itself. The dissemination of the text was relatively separate from the book. There are several books in circulation today collated by both He Zhuo and He Huang. For most of them, the marginalia were produced in this way.

The Ye family mentioned by He Huang was well-known for book collection and production from the Southern Song dynasty through the end of the Qing. He Zhuo established an intimate

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16 *Hanwen chao*, manuscript copy held at the National Library of China, call number 06252.
relationship with the Ye family and many other book-collection families, which gave him access to quite a few rare editions. For instance, in the *Wudai shiji* held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XS847873-78), He’s colophon (transcribed by Yao Shiyu 姚世銨) states:

In the winter of the *jiashen* year of the Kangxi reign [1704], I borrowed from Chuyin, the eldest son of Qian Zeng (courtesy name Zunwang), the *Wudai shiji* that was once read by father Dongjian the Minister of Rites. I, therefore, transcribed his marginalia. This book was read by the Minister of Rites in his youth and thus his comments are not refined. But compared with others’, his are already neat and tidy. I also added and subtracted a few parts and am very worried on account of my rash work. Noted by Zhuo.

康熙甲申冬日從虞山錢（曾）[遵]王先生長子楚殷借得宗伯東潤翁所閱《五代史記》，因而傳之。此書乃宗伯壯年閱本，未為精密，然視他人則眉目井然具矣。余亦少有增損，殊以妄作自懼云。焯記。

He Zhuo borrowed this copy from Qian Chuyin and transcribed the marginalia of the latter’s grandfather Qian Qianyi, who was a great poet and scholar and whose marginalia were filled with profound insights. Qian Qianyi was also a book collector. His library, the Jiangyun Tower (Jiangyun lou 紋雲樓) held a great number of rare books. Unfortunately, the majority of the collection was destroyed in a fire in 1650. Qian Qianyi gave the remains to his nephew Qian Zeng 錢曾 (courtesy name Zunwang 遵王, 1629-1701), also a noted book collector and the father of Qian Chuyin.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Qian Zeng 錢曾, *Dushumingqiujijiaozheng* 讀書敏求記校正, revised by Guan Tingfen 管庭芬 and Zhang Yu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007).
Qian Qianyi was a prominent poet, the leader of the Yushan School (Yushan shipai 虞山詩派). The Feng brothers, Feng Shu 馮舒 (courtesy name Jicang 己苍, alternative name Chanshoujushi 屑守居士, 1593-1645) and Feng Ban 馮班 (courtesy name Dingyuan 定遠, alternative name Dunyinlaoren 鈍吟老人, 1602-1671), were the backbone of the Yushan School, as well as being book collectors and publishers. Their books and marginalia were transmitted to He Zhuo by the Qian family. For example, Weng Tonghe transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia on Shitong into a copy of a Ming woodblock edition (now held at the Shanghai Library, call number: 782275-76). In He’s marginalia, there are many comments by Feng Shu that were transcribed from a copy held by the Qian family. He Zhuo’s colophon recorded how he got access to that copy, transcribed the marginalia and knew that the marginalia were written by Feng Shu. It reads:

On the ninth day of the ninth month of the jichou year [1709], I borrowed from Qian Chuyin the copy once read by Chanshoujushi [Feng Shu]. Then I transcribed the comments. What was interlinear was transcribed on the bottom margin. [Feng Shu’s] comments are sharp and excellent most of the time, and are greatly valued by scholars in Yushan. Only Ji Cangwei the Attendant Censor has managed to borrow it before. I would have no chance to see it if Chuyin were not fond of me. Initially I thought it was read by Qian Muweng when he just started to work in the Historiography Institute. Therefore, I wrote “Qian’s comment” on the top and bottom margins. After carefully asking Chuyin, [I knew that they were composed by Feng Shu rather than Qian Qianyi, and thus] I made some corrections. Zhuo.

己丑重陽從錢楚殷借得屑守居士閣本，因錄其評語，其在行側者，錄之闕下。議論亦多英快，虞山學者極矜重之，僕季滄莘侍御一人嘗通假爾，非楚殷好我，未由見也。始誤以為牧翁初入史館時所閱，故闕上下皆寫錢評，詳質楚殷，乃改正云。焯。
He Zhuo was a big fan of the Feng brothers. He not only transcribed their marginalia, but also collated and commented on one of Feng Ban’s works, the *Dunyin zalu* (Literary miscellany by Master Dunyin). He’s marginalia on the *Dunyin zalu* were transcribed by later scholars, and text and marginalia were edited and printed at the same time.\(^\text{18}\)

He Zhuo also established an intimate relationship with the Mao family, one of the best-known families for book collection and production. He exchanged texts with many scholars and bibliophiles such as Lu Yidian (courtesy name Chixian 救先, 1617-1686), Mao Qiling (courtesy name Dake 大可, 1629-1713), and Xu Qianxue (courtesy name Yuanyi 原一, 1631-1694).

Exchanging books and transcribing their marginalia was the most common way marginalia circulated throughout the Qing dynasty. In the late Qing and Republican era, despite the penetration of Western powers into China and initial intrusion of Western culture into every corner of Chinese society, many scholars and book collectors still lived in the tradition of this scholarly practice; they established closer relationships with each other through it, and by it they were connected as a cultural unit and endeavored to preserve and maintain traditional texts and culture. Of course, they can be called “reading seeds,” from which the traditional culture could sprout and, one day, perhaps come into being in a new form. For instance, there is a colophon by Zhang Yu in the *Sanguo zhi* held at the National Library of China (call number: SB14731), stating:

\(^{18}\) The *Dunyin zalu* held at the Shanghai Library (XS771771-72) and two copies at the National Central Library (Taipei) all have He Zhuo’s marginalia. The *Dunyin zalu* in the *Jieyue shanfang huichao* 借月山房彙鈔, *zihai* 指海, and other collectanea all has He Zhuo’s marginalia printed as commentaries.
The copy that was collated by Mr. Zhu Qiuya was obtained by Fu Yuanshu of Jiang’an. I intended to transcribe [the marginalia] and collate [my copy]. Therefore, Wu Wanbo of Renhe bought it and sent it to Tianjin. … After I finished transcribing it, Shi Zhonglu of Kuaiji borrowed the Jin[lingshu]ju edition to collate. He recorded piece by piece the differences between the Mao and [Jinlingshu]ju editions. His work was careful and refined. Hence, I transcribed his marginalia too. This all happened five or six years ago. On the thirteenth day of the fourth month of the gengshen year [1920], there was rain after a long period of drought. Noted by Mingyi.

朱秋崖先生校本為江安傅沅叔所得，鈺有意臨校，仁和吳伯宛乃購此本寄津……臨校畢本，會稽施仲魯復借校金局刻本，凡局刻與毛刻異者，逐條記出，極為精審。復分別錄入。此皆前五六年事。庚申四月十三日辰起久旱得雨。銘箸記。

Zhu Bangheng 朱邦衡 (courtesy name Qiuya 秋崖, 18th c.) transcribed He Zhuo and Hui Shiqi’s marginalia. The original copies were lost, so Zhu’s transcription is of great significance. This copy was once held by Fu Zengxiang 傅增湘 (courtesy name Shuhe 叔和, alternative name Yuanshu 沅叔, 1872-1949), and then brought by Wu Changshou 吳昌绶 (courtesy name Wanbo 宛伯, 1867-? ). Wu sent it to Zhang Yu who transcribed the marginalia into another copy. After Zhang finished the transcription, he transcribed the variants from another copy. Marginalia circulated among these scholars and bibliophiles, sometimes along with the book that carried them and sometimes via transcription.

Fu Zengxiang was one of the best-known book collectors in the late Qing and Republican era. Centered on him, a textual “communication circuit”—to employ the term proposed by Robert
Darnton\textsuperscript{19}—formed. Scholars who knew or did not know Fu Zengxiang could directly or indirectly get particular texts from him. Through exchanging books and texts, they learned from each other and authenticated book editions with the help of their collections. For the Shitong held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XST01248-53) mentioned above, Deng Bangshu’s colophon reads:

\begin{quote}
I got this book in the Wu region and thought it was collated by Yimen. After seeing the newly bought copy my jinshi classmate Yuanshu [Fu Zengxiang] brought from the capital, I knew that this was a good copy recently transcribed …The handwriting was dignified and vigorous, and could pass for He’s. Besides, the contents were also selected properly. It’s a pity that it does not provide the transcriptionist and the collector’s names, which makes it hard for us to recognize that Yan Biao was not [an offspring of] Lugong [Yan Zhenqing].\textsuperscript{20} In the winter of the renzi year [1912], written by Zheng’an.
\end{quote}

吴中得此書，誤以為義門筆校，既觀沅叔同年所藏新自都中購歸者，乃知此為同時過錄之佳本……字跡端遒，頗能亂何之真，去取亦極斟酌，惜其不肯□直□家□者姓氏，使人不辨顏標非魯公耳。壬子冬日正聞記。

Wu Zhizhong’s colophon reads:

\textsuperscript{19} See Darnton, \textit{The Kiss of Lamourette}, 107-135.

\textsuperscript{20} Here Deng Bangshu used an allusion to Yan Biao 領標 (9th c.). When Yan Biao took the civil service examinations in 854, the chief examiner made him the \textit{optimus} (zhuangyuan 狀元), because the chief examiner thought him an offspring of the great calligrapher and loyal governor Yan Zhenqing 頗真卿 (709-785). Contemporaries satirized the chief examiner for “mistaking Yan Biao for [an offspring of] Lugong [Yan Zhenqing]” (錯誤顏標作魯公). See Wang Dingbao 王定保, \textit{Tang zhiyan} 唐摭言 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), \textit{juan} 8, 88.
Mr. Zheng’an got this copy and thought it was collated by He Zhuo with He’s own handwriting. This spring, nianzhang (a man of one’s father’s generation) Fu Yuanshu bought a copy once held at the Yuhua Pavilion. This copy has one more colophon which is transcribed above. In the whole book, it is rather clear that for Feng’s comments, the character “feng” was all corrected from “qian.” There are two more colophons by He Zhuo written in the bingxu [1706] and guisi [1713] years respectively and one colophon by Gu Jianping. That copy was considered the genuine version with He’s holographic marginalia, and this a transcribed version…Not only is the imitation of He’s calligraphy in cursive style verisimilar, but also the red and yellow writings are exquisite. It is worth treasuring. I borrowed it from Mr. [Zheng’an] and collated my copies, and then collated it in return based on what I have seen. By Wu Cipei, courtesy name Ouneng, on the twenty-fourth day of the six month of the renzi year [1912].

These colophons tell us that the handwriting of the marginalia in this copy is almost the same as He Zhuo’s, so Deng and Wu initially thought it was written by him. After seeing the authentic copy held by Fu Zengxiang, they finally made it clear that the marginalia were not He Zhuo’s holographs. De Bangshu also wrote a colophon in the copy held by Fu Zengxiang. Deng’s

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21 See Fu Zengxiang, Cangyuan qunshu jingyanlu, 507.
colophon was written in the sixth month of 1912, and Wu’s in the winter of that year. At the beginning of this copy, there is a colophon written by the great industrialist and book collector Ye Jingkui 葉景葵 (courtesy name Kuichu 捆初, alternative name Juanan 卷盦, 1874-1949) in the second month of 1940, one year after Deng Bangshu’s death. It reads:

This collated edition was transcribed by He’s students and it was once seen by Yimen. Zheng’an [Deng Bangshu] and Ouneng [Wu Cipei] tried to identify [its transcriptionist] successively, but it is a pity that it is unsigned. There is a seal impression at the beginning reading “Held by Jiang Weijun’s family in the Wu region,” and at the end reading “My house is among the nine peaks and three calm ponds.” Mr. Pan Boshan doubted it was transcribed by Jiang Gao, courtesy name Zizun. But Boshan has a Houshan shizhu (Annotations of Houshan’s 後山 [Chen Shidao, 1052-1101] poems) in an early Ming edition collated by Jiang Gao. The style of Jiang’s handwriting in it is simple and plain, not similar to that in this copy. Zizun’s younger brother Bing, courtesy name Zifan, was also Yimen’s student. We are unable to see [examples of] his handwriting, so further studies are needed [to solve this problem] … Written by Jingkui in the second month of the gengchen year [1940].

There is an impression of Ye Jingkui’s seal after this colophon. This colophon and seal show that this copy belonged to Ye, probably after Deng’s death. Ye was an old friend of Deng, and once
borrowed this copy, transcribing the marginalia into another copy. Since Deng and Wu had already made it clear that the marginalia in this copy were not written by He Zhuo, Ye tried to discover the identity of the transcriptionist. He also discussed this with his friend Pan Chenghou 潘承厚 (courtesy name Boshan 博山, 1904-1943), a printer and book collector.

Throughout the Qing, marginalia were transcribed by different scholars into different copies. Texts, knowledge, thoughts, particular scholarly approaches and lifestyles were transmitted through this practice. Scholars and bibliophiles were bound together by marginalia. In the Qing dynasty, there were also other ties, such as doctrinal affiliations, clan relationships, classmate relationships, local literary societies, and other social relationships, which all played a significant part in binding scholars together, transmitting texts, knowledge, and thoughts and helping to create and consolidate scholarly identity. Marginalia and the practice of transcription strengthened these ties. It was a more efficient way to transmit texts (especially the character variants, collation notes and philological comments) and knowledge across time and space. It not only tied contemporary scholars together but also handed down texts and knowledge from generation to generation.

This can also be illustrated by a colophon written by the most famous late-Qing book historian Ye Dehui 葉德輝, in a copy of Chunqiu Gongyang zhushu now held at the National Library of China (call number: SB07937). It states:

The collated edition of Gongyang zhushu (28 juan in total) was made by He Huang (courtesy name Zhongyou, Mr. Yimen’s younger brother) in the dingyou year of the Kangxi reign [1717]. He Huang recorded the character variants from a Song governmental edition into a copy of Mao’s Jigu Pavilion edition that has both the main text, annotation and sub-annotation. In the

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22 See Ye Jingkui 葉景葵, Juan’an shuba 卷盦書跋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 64-67.
guiyou year of the Qianlong reign [1753], Hui Songya (Dong), the great recluse, produced a new collated edition based on He’s textual criticism and added the variants from a Song edition held by Cao Yin, Commissioner of the Bureau of Transmission; a Shu large-character edition; and the original annotated-and-sub-annotated edition. One of his students, Zhu Bangheng transcribed [the textual criticism and comments into another copy]. In the guichou year of the Qianlong reign [1793], Zang Yong, courtesy name Zaidong, also transcribed the marginalia into a new copy. In the seventh month of that year, Duan Yucai, courtesy name Maotang, also transcribed the marginalia into another copy. Jiang Yuan, courtesy name Tiejun thus transcribed Duan’s transcription into this copy and gave it to his student Chen Huan, courtesy name Shuofu, and Chen recorded the transmission history at the beginning of this book in the first year of the Xianfeng reign [1851]. The collation notes of one book were transcribed many times; famous scholars and classicists collated it carefully over and over again. Transmitted for more than two hundred years, the book is not only complete in volumes and chapters but also rather refined in the collation of characters and the analysis of sentences. We must keep in mind that the diligence and studiousness of former generations, and their care in reading classics, far exceed that of later young men, who usually write carelessly and do not finish what was started.
These predecessors, who were industrious in learning and circumspect in reading Confucian Classics were, of course, reading seeds. By transcribing marginalia, they formed a “communication circuit.” Furthermore, in this communication circuit, in the practice of transmitting marginalia throughout the Qing dynasty, not only were scholars and bibliophiles involved, but the role of book merchants and some unknown scribes were also of great importance.

**Merchants and Unknown Scribes**

In addition to scholars, many merchants and scribes also actively participated in the practice of transcribing marginalia. They contributed to both the transmission and proliferation of marginalia. For instance, in the *Changjiang ji* held at the Fu Ssu Nien Library in Taipei, there is a colophon by Jiang Gao that reads:

The *Changjiang ji* was collated most meticulously by Master Yimen. In the summer of the *renyin* year [1722], the Master passed away in his house in the capital, and his books were all scattered. Three month later, a person came to me to sell this book, as well as Wang [Wei] and Meng [Haoran]’s works. I was short of money at that time, [so I was not able to purchase them, which] I regretted for a long time. My exam classmate Shu Zizhan said: “If we transcribe the marginalia to other copies, we can regard the new books with marginalia as the original ones.” Therefore, I found three volumes of works by Changjiang [Jian Dao], Youcheng [Wang Wei], and Xiangyang [Meng Haoran], and gave them [to Shu Zizhan to transcribe]. It happened so quickly that I had no time to revise. Afterwards, the *Changjiang ji* was left in my
hands, and yet Wang and Meng’s works were possessed by the Pan family in Wuxing. I was pleased by Zizhan’s idea and felt lucky that the Changjiang ji was still in my possession. During a break from work at the beginning of the spring of the year jiachen [1724], I revised it once and then returned the book. People who are fond of the antiquity understand and do not blame me for my scribbles. Written by Gao of Sanjing.

This colophon can shed light on several points: Firstly, books with He Zhuo’s marginalia were rather expensive in the early Qing period. Jiang Gao was an official and his abundant book collection showed that he was not poor at all. His fiscal limit to the purchase of this volume was likely because it was too expensive. Secondly, in another book with He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Pan Zhiwan 潘志萬 (1849-1899), Pan’s colophon said that He Zhuo’s marginalia was originally written on an edition cut by Feng Ban in the late Ming or early Qing period, which cannot have been highly priced in the early Qing period. Jia Dao’s Changjiang ji was by no means a rare book at that time. So, what made the book expensive was only due to He Zhuo’s marginalia. Thirdly, within three months of He Zhuo’s death, book sellers knew to sell books with his marginalia to his students and other book collectors (such as the Pan family in Wuxing) at a very

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23 Fu Zengxiang, Cangyuan qun shu jingyan lu, 1083.
high price. Books with marginalia must have been popular to a considerable extent, from which booksellers found economic opportunity and plotted their financial gain.

In the Qing dynasty, there were quite a few complaints about the high prices of books containing marginalia. Although scholars were sometimes not able to purchase them, they had chances to read them and even transcribe the text. For example, Weng Tonghe, who was the teacher of two emperors, also failed to buy a book with He Zhuo’s marginalia. His colophon in the *Jiayouji* held at the National Library of China (call number: SB05397) reads:

On the eighth day of the forth month of the *bingchen* year [1856], a bookseller brought the *Jiayou ji* with He Zhuo’s marginalia to sell. It was too expensive, so I borrowed it and transcribed the marginalia within one day and night … By Tonghe.

丙辰四月初八日，有以何義門手批《嘉祐集》來售者，直甚昂，因假得，盡一日夜之力，臨校一過……同龢識。

Wu Cipei’s colophon on the *Yuanfeng leigao* 元豐類稿 (Collected works of Zeng Gong 曾鞏) held at the Nanjing Library (call number: 118744) also states that he spent two days and one night transcribing He Zhuo’s marginalia onto a new copy. His colophon reads:

A bookseller brought the *Yuanfeng leigao* with Mr. He Yimen’s marginalia to sell. The whole book was collated carefully based on a Song edition, and was filled with red-ink inscriptions. It deserves to be treasured, even though it was a transcribed edition. The bookseller wanted to sell it at a very high price. I was not able to purchase it, so I hurriedly found a copy into which to transcribe [the marginalia]. The bookseller asked me to return the book in a great hurry. I, therefore, finished the transcription in two days and one night. I transcribed all the collation notes. As for the comments and evidential studies, I had no
time to transcribe them … By [Wu] Cipei, on the next day of the Shangsi Festival in the third year of the Xuantong reign [1911], when I was living in the capital as a guest.

Meanwhile, I bought the edition carved by Wang Yu in the Jiajing reign. It was carved exquisitely. Initially I thought of transcribing He’s textual criticism onto this Wang edition. But I hurt my finger last winter on the road to the Huai Region. It has not recovered yet, nor can I hold a brush, so my handwriting is clumsy and obscure, which would deface a good book. Therefore, I bought this copy to transcribe … Written on the Qingming Festival.

These examples show that it seems to have been a convention for prospective purchasers to keep a book for one to two days. During this time, they could decide whether to purchase the book or not, and more importantly, examine the book closely and even transcribe the marginalia into other copies. In this process, the exchange of physical books failed, but the transmission of texts—marginalia in particular—succeeded.

Since marginalia were marketable, booksellers therefore hired scribes to transcribe, and even to forged well-known scholars’ handwriting. By so doing, the booksellers and scribes were also involved in the marginalia culture. They contributed to the duplication and dissemination of marginalia, and yet caused many troubles as well. For instance, there are many books with He
Zhuo’s marginalia in transcription, rather than He’s holograph, where the handwriting resembled He Zhuo’s, but the transcriptionist did not leave any information about himself or the transcription process. This caused lots of problems for authenticating He Zhuo’s marginalia. For the Shitong mentioned above, Deng Bangshu and Wu Cipei were able to know the marginalia in it were not written by He Zhuo only when then saw an authentic version. There are two copies of Tangren xuan Tangshi 唐人選唐詩 (Tang poems selected by Tang scholars) in the Mao edition carved in the late Ming held at the Shanghai Library. Both have He Zhuo’s marginalia, of which the calligraphy and contents are similar. But one copy (call number: XS839789-96, see Figure 4-5) has the impression of both He Zhuo and the Bao family’s seals, which means that this copy was once held by He Zhuo himself and then the Bao family, one of the most famous book-collecting and publishing families of the mid-Qing period. However, the other copy (call number: XS756297-304, see Figure 4-6) was probably a forgery by some book seller. Even decades after He’s death when Jiang Weijun collected He’s marginalia and compiled the Yimen dushuji, Jiang found that there were lots of forgeries of He’s marginalia. He writes:

Not only is it difficult to authenticate the books in circulation that purport to contain Yimen’s reading notes, but even in books contain He’s real marginalia errors abound because they have gone through several generations of recopying.

外間傳寫義門評閱之本，不特真赝紛如，即係真本，而鈔錄數過，不免舛訛。24

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24 He Zhuo, Yimen dushuji, “Fanli”凡例 (Guide to the reader), 2.
Figure 4-5a Leaf 1a of the Yulan shi in the Tangren xuan Tangshi, woodblock edition carved by the Mao family in the late Ming. The marginalia in this book were written by He Zhuo. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS839789-96).
Figure 4-5b  Leaf 65b of the *Yulan shi* in the *Tangren xuan Tangshi*. The seals here read: “He Zhuo’s seal” and “Held by the Bao Family.” Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS839789-96).
Figure 4-5c  Last half leaf of the Heyue yingling ji in the Tangren xuan Tangshi. The colophon in red was written by He Zhuo. The seal was He’s courtesy name, “Yimen.” Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS839789-96).
Figure 4-6  First half leaf of the *Yulan shi* in the *Tangren xuan Tangshi*, woodblock edition carved by the Mao family in the late Ming. The marginalia were transcribed by an unknown scribe. Courtesy of the Shanghai Library (call number: XS756297-304).
While booksellers did not forge He’s marginalia based on nothing, most of the time they transcribed He’s marginalia anonymously, in imitation of his handwriting. In this sense, they also contributed to the transmission of marginalia.

Who could these unknown scribes be becomes the last question. Scribing was a very old profession. Since antiquity, some scribes worked as low-level government officials. So scribes, both governmental and non-governmental, were elegantly called “chaoxu” 錄胥 (lit. scribing officials) in the later imperial period. They were also called “chaoshou” 錄手 (lit. scribing hands) and “shushou” 書手 (lit. writing hands). In the late imperial period, non-governmental scribes were usually impoverished examination candidates and local teachers who did this work as a part time job, or professional scribes who lived by this occupation.\(^\text{25}\) For the great bibliophile and publisher Mao Jin 毛晉 (courtesy name Zijn 子晉, 1599-1659), leader of the Mao family in the late Ming, it is recorded: “Walking through [Mao’s] gate, all the servants and house boys were transcribing books” (入門童僕盡鈔書).\(^\text{26}\) Since scribes mainly worked for money and their work was the least creative, they were looked down upon and were paid a very low salary.\(^\text{27}\)

For a scribe, there was little difference between transcribing the main text of a book and transcribing marginalia. Most of the time, one kind of marginalia were transcribed by one scribe, but sometimes the marginalia of a voluminous book were transcribed by more than one scribe. For example, He Zhuo’s marginalia on the Hou Hanshu held at the Peking University Library (call


\(^{26}\) See Ye Dehui 葉德輝, Shulin qinghua 書林清話 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 143.

\(^{27}\) See Ye Dehui, Shulin qinghua, 214.
number: LSB/7288) were transcribed in three distinct hands, probably by three different scribes (see Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-7 Last half leaf of the table of contents and leaf 11b of juan 84 of the Hou Hanshu, and leaf 2a of juan 3 of the Xu Hanzhi, woodblock edition carved by the Mao family in the late Ming. The marginalia in this book were probably transcribed by three scribes.
Transcription Culture

Before He Zhuo’s time, the transcription of marginalia was not a common practice. He Zhuo, his younger brother He Huang, and some contemporaries composed much marginalia and transcribed some prior scholars’ marginalia. Soon after He’s death, more and more scholars were involved in the practice of transcribing marginalia. This practice became a prevalent scholarly culture from the mid-Qing to the Republican period.

Marginalia served as a “communication node” that connected various agents—including scholars, bibliophiles, merchants and scribes—who together broke down barriers of time and space. The transcription of marginalia involved various people and was driven by different motives. In He Zhuo’s case, transcription, for his students, was a way to learn from their teacher; for other scholars, it supplied abundant research sources for both collating and making sense of a text; for calligraphers, it was a good opportunity to practice after a masterpiece and improve their skills; for book sellers and scribes, it was a profitable enterprise.

Through transcription, scholars and bibliophiles were connected by marginalia and formed a tight relationship. They exchanged books and, sometimes, only texts; they learned from each other about the authentication of book editions and the collation of texts. They inherited texts, research materials, and a way of life utilizing research from previous scholars; they also handed down to later generations what they had obtained from these texts and practices. Transcription was also a proliferating process. While being transmitted from person to person and from book to book, marginalia were usually not transcribed in a way that was one-hundred-percent loyal to the original copy. They were selected, modified, and distorted sometimes. Something would go missing, and more would be added. Therefore, new interpretations were able to be born therein; new meanings
could be generated; new culture and thoughts could be created. In this practice, tradition maintained continuity without being frozen.

This practice came into being against a particular political, social, and economic background. It was initiated by some scholars, and followed and disseminated by other scholars and agents. It helped to build up a relatively efficient model of the transmission of information, knowledge, thought, and even scholarly life style. This was a particular scholarly culture, a systematic way, for scholars, of thinking, analyzing, behaving and living. The next chapter will discuss Qing scholars’ thoughts, mental states, and life styles as reflected in the practice of transcription undertaken in particular times and spaces.
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Transcription: Time, Space, and Scholars

Zhao Yi 趙翼 (courtesy name Xuesong 雪崧, alternative name Oubei 鬼北, 1727-1814), a great historian, poet and critic of the mid-Qing period, wrote in one of his poems:

Busy collating in a curtain of books all day long. / Stepping outdoors, it is already the dry autumn I had not felt at all.

These two sentences describe the scholarly life of a scholar in the mid-Qing. In Zhao Yi’s description, “all day long” and “dry autumn” are the temporal elements; “curtain of books” and “out the door” are the spatial elements; “collating” and “had not feel at all [the coming of the autumn]” manifest the practices and the mental state of a scholar in a particular temporal and spatial context.

Time and space are two of the most fundamental elements in pre-modern Chinese writings. Writers intentionally or unintentionally selected particular temporal and spatial elements to encapsulate what they had done and/or what they were thinking, so as to sculpt images in their writings. Therefore, analyzing the temporal and spatial elements and deciphering the hidden meanings underlying these elements can help us to comprehend the writer’s thoughts, attitudes and mental states. This chapter will examine the temporal and spatial elements in Qing scholars’

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1 Zhao Yi 趙翼, “Wan bu cunluo” 晚步村落, in Zhao Yi, Oubei ji 鬼北集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), juan 43, 478.
marginalia, so as to picture their scholarly life, the characteristics of their scholarship, and their attitude and thoughts on scholarship and the world they lived in and perceived.

**Temporal and Spatial Records in Marginalia**

In the marginalia of Ming-Qing China, what is impressive are the detailed records of various temporal and spatial elements in colophons. Colophons in pre-modern Chinese marginalia came in various forms. There were very long colophons at the beginning and/or end of the book, introducing and evaluating its main ideas, stating the history of its circulation, and picturing its physical features. This kind was called “*ba*” (lit. postscript) in Chinese. There were also short colophons, usually called “*tizhi*” (lit. remarks and notes) or “*ji*” (lit. records), commenting on the contents of the book, or, most of the time, recording the readers’ reading practices.

Let us first read several colophons composed by He Zhuo, so as to get a better sense of what might be recorded in them. There are several colophons by him in the *Hou Hanshu* held at the Peking University Library (call number: LSB/7288). All of them recorded temporal and spatial elements in detail. At the end of the fourth *juan*, He’s colophon reads:

Written in the Babaixuan in the western chamber of the Qingyuan Auxiliary Palace in the six month of the *xinsi* year of the Kangxi reign [1701]. Zhuo.

康熙辛巳夏六月清苑行臺西序，八柏軒。竑。

The colophon at the end of *juan* 9 reads:

In the *jiawu* year of the Kangxi reign [1714], my younger brother Xinyou got an incomplete Song edition from *juan* 3 to the middle of this *juan* held by the Ye family in Baoshan. He sent me the variants after collation, and I corrected several tens of errors [in this copy].
康熙甲午，心友弟得包山葉氏所藏殘宋本第三卷至此卷之半以所校字寫寄，因改正數十處。

The colophon at the end of juan 57 reads:

From juan 45 to this point, collated by the light of an oil lamp in comparison with an incomplete Northern Song edition, in the tenth month of the guisi year of the Kangxi reign [1713]. Written by Yimen the recluse.

自四十五卷至此，以北宋殘本，镫下手校。時康熙癸巳陽月，義門潛夫記。

The colophon at the end of juan 90 reads:

When I first read this book, I was upset at the number of mistakes. Once I had read the pieces on Hou Hanshu in Liu Ban’s [Liang Hanshu] Kanwu (Corrections to the Hanshu and Hou Hanshu), I finally knew that there were few exquisite editions in the Northern Song dynasty, because people did not value this book so much as Ban Gu’s book. Some of the annotation in the Jiajing edition carved by the Directorate of Education was cut off. While this copy is still a complete version, which is one good feature. Its master copy does not have so many mistakes. I corrected the mistakes created while carving in this edition. Written in the western chamber of the Baoding Auxiliary Palace in the Middle Autumn Day of the xinsi year of the Kangxi reign [1701]. Zhuo.

初讀此書，嫌其訛謬為多，及觀劉氏《刊誤》諸條，乃知在北宋即罕善本，緣前人重之不如班書故也。嘉靖中南京國子監刊者，注經刪削，此猶完書，故是一長。其舊本不差，此復滋謬之字，略為隨文改定云。康熙辛巳中秋後題於保定行臺西序。焯。
The colophon at the end of Juan 22 of the *Xu Hanzhi* reads:

From the nineteenth to the twenty-second *juan* in the *dingyou* year of the Kangxi reign [1717], when I worked in the Wuying Publishing House, I saw by accident an incomplete copy of the big character edition carved in the Yijing Hall of Cai Qi (courtesy name Chunfu) in Jian’an in the *wuchen* year of the Jiading reign in the Song dynasty. It has Congshu Hall’s seal impression. I thought it must be good. Therefore, I borrowed it from the keeper and collated [my copy]. However, the mistakes could provoke anger … I recorded [them] to show that Song editions can also be so unreliable, without presuming to defame them.

Written by Yimen the old man, on the sixteenth day of the seventh month.

The colophon at the end of Juan 23 of the *Xu Hanzhi* reads:

In the sixth month of the *guiwei* year of the Kangxi reign [1703], I attended the eighth prince in the Nanxun Palace. There was a copy of [the *Hou Hanshu*] carved by Wang Wensheng, which I used to collate this *juan*. The Wang edition still followed the mistakes just as in the “Treaties on Geography” of the *Hanshu*. I am afraid of comparing them critically. Is it because of people’s carelessness that there are no good editions? Noted by Zhuo.
康熙癸未六月，侍八貝勒于南薰殿，架上有汪文盛刊本，因取以校此卷。汪氏亦仍詄襲舛如《前書・地理》，亦愹於互勘。書無善本，豈非茲簡之過哉？焯記。

The colophon at the end of juan 30 of the Xu Hanzhi reads:

In the early summer of the xinsi year of the Kangxi reign [1701], I finished reading the thirty juan of the Xu Hanzhi in Shaobo’s boat. The master copy of the Hou Hanshu carved by the Mao family was far from good in comparison to that of the Hanshu. The boat was sailing so that I have no chance to collate with other editions. For the time being, I must wait and reread it [the Hou Hanshu] after going back to the South. Written by Zhuo.

康熙辛巳首夏，于召伯舟中閱完《續漢志》三十卷，毛氏《後漢書》所據之本速不逮班書，舟行，又無從假他本互校，姑俟南歸再閱云。焯識。

From the twenty-third juan to this, collated with an incomplete Northern Song edition in the winter of the guisi year [1713].

自二十三卷至此，癸巳冬日得北宋殘本校。

According to these records, we can know that He Zhuo read and collated the Hou Hanshu from 1701 to 1720, about twenty years. The spatial elements he mentions include Qingyuan, Baoding, the Imperial Palace, sitting under an oil lamp in a study, and even reading on a boat. Once he had access to a new edition of the Hou Hanshu, he would borrow it and use it to collate the text of the Hou Hanshu in a copy of his own. It seems that He Zhuo never forgot to read and collate books at any time and in any place during these twenty years. He Zhuo’s biographies tell us that he was never appointed to a position of real political power or involved in any administrative practical affairs. He worked as an academic advisor in the Southern Study and as an editor in the imperial
printing office in the Hall of Military Glory for decades, devoting himself to reading and editing and occasionally supplying some opinions to the emperor and princes. He was a professional scholar who lived on a salary supplied by the imperial government. His job was to read and collate books, i.e., to produce new (reliable) texts. One of the most essential features of the scholarly culture of late Imperial China can be illustrated by He Zhuo’s case, that is, “to preserve the old while making it nevertheless new—to maintain continuity with a tradition without freezing it”—using an argument made by Daniel Boyarin about midrash.²

“To preserve the old while making it nevertheless new,” as emphasized by Boyarin, was a task of every successful culture.³ As discussed in chapter one, in Chinese history every generation of classicists proposed new ideas out of new interpretations of the Classics. Nevertheless, in the Qing dynasty, there were some new characteristics of the interpretation of ancient Classics, of which one of the most prominent is that scholars paid more attention to the text. Qing scholars were prompted to search for the Way (dao 道), or recover the Way of antiquity, through carefully studying the text of the Classics.⁴ In the scholarly culture of the Qing dynasty, new ideas were generated from new interpretations of old texts; new interpretations came into being according to newly “collated” and “edited” texts. Catalogues and other sources show that, it was very common for scholars to collate, transcribe, and analyze texts and marginalia. There were many more textual experts in the Qing than in any other periods. This scholarly culture was created by scholars in the late Ming and early Qing period in a particular political and social context, guided by a particular

³ See Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 22.
⁴ See also Ori Sela, *China’s Philological Turn: Scholars, Textualism, and the Dao in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 4-5. Sela refers to this approach as “textualism.”
zeitgeist. It generally spread all over the empire, and was, perhaps unconsciously, accepted by scholars and practiced by them. When this scholarly culture was formed, it became an invisible power, shaping all scholars’ thoughts and practices.

While devoting themselves to this textual enterprise, scholars’ ultimate goal was to search for the Way or recover the Way of antiquity, and build a better world. But they had to live in this world (cishi 此世) and deal with annoying, sometimes even dangerous, affairs. Still taking He Zhuo as an example, his colophons at the end of juan 16 of the Xu Hanzhi read:

At the shen time [3-5 pm] on the twentieth day of the forth month of the bingshen year [1716], while I was going out from the Royal Palace, a heavy wind blew. The bolt of the Duan Gate was destroyed and the Wu Gate, opened wide, was seen in the distance. I was shocked by this so recorded it here.

丙申四月二十日申時，自內直出，適大風吹，端門牡壞，午門遙望洞開，異而識之。

During the twenty-sixth to -seventh day of the sixth month of the gengzi year [1720], there were billions of turtles blocking the Lu River and going into the sea from Tianjin. Transport ships could hardly sail. [People] were seated in the barn and sacrificed a lamb and pig with music, [and] afterwards, they opened the sluice to send them out. In this way, they were gone. From the seventeenth to nineteenth days of the seventh month, it happened again.

庚子六月廿六日至七日，二日有鱉億萬，梗塞潞河，由天津入海，漕船至不可行。坐糧廡，具中牢，鼓篋致祭，開閥送之，始不復見。七月十七日至十九日又如是。

These two colophons recorded exceptional events: a damage caused by an odd wind and inconvenience brought about by billions of turtles. This can reveal some hidden feelings of He Zhuo. Damage to and disappearance of a gate bolt was long considered an omen of internal
disorder in Chinese history. The “Wuxing zhi” 五行志 (Treaties on the five elements) of the 
Hanshu states:

In the first month of the first year of Emperor Cheng’s reign, the bolt of the Zhangcheng Gate of Chang’an disappeared; so did the bolt of the second gate of the Hangu Pass. Jing Fang’s Yizhuan (Annotation on the Book of Changes) states: “If [the government] announces that peace reigns over the land without relieving the famine, there will be flooding and the bolt of the gate will be gone.” The Yaoci (Demonic words) reads “The gate moving and bolt going missing are omens of malevolent ministers carrying out misdeeds, and traitorous ministers will usurp the throne.”

As an expert on the Hanshu and the Hou Hanshu, He Zhuo would be very familiar with this omen and its meaning. During the late period of the Kangxi reign, nine of his sons fought for the throne. He Zhuo was also involved in these events. In his lifetime, he was accused falsely and put into jail; after his death, he was defamed because he was once the tutor of the Eighth Prince and helped him fight for the throne. In this sense, this piece of marginalia manifests his hidden worry about his life and reputation. Scholars who participated in political affairs could hardly escape calamities and preserve their bodies and reputations whole. Was devoting oneself to antiques and hiding in books most scholars’ best choice? For He Zhuo, a scholar who worked in the royal palace and was

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5 Hanshu, juan 27, 1401.
intimate with political figures, the answer seems to have been negative. But scholars sponsored by local government, merchants, or family resource had fewer misgivings of this kind. They concentrated on all kinds of scholarly affairs in different times and spaces. Let us first take Lu Wenchao’s case as an example.

Lu Wenchao (courtesy name Shaogong 召弓, 1717-1796) was one of the most prominent classicists, textual experts, and bibliophiles in the mid-Qing period. He collated lots of books and wrote and transcribed enormous amounts of marginalia. The *Yili zhushu* 儀禮注疏 (*Rites and Ceremonies* with annotations and sub-annotations) held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XS797827-36) is filled with Lu Wenchao’s marginalia, which manifests his painstaking work in reading and collating this book. Lu’s work, especially his brief yet diligent studies, was influential for later scholars. At the end of the preface there are colophons written by two scholars in the late Qing, Huang Sidong 黃嗣東 (courtesy name Xiaolu 小魯, 1846-1910) and Huang Pengnian 黃彭年 (courtesy name Zishou 子壽, 1824-1890). Huang Sidong’s colophon reads:

This is the original manuscript of Lu Wen’s *Yili xiangjiao* (*Complete collation notes on the Rites and Ceremonies*). Lu is a scholar of my home town. This book has ten volumes and seventeen *juan* in total. The date for reading and collating is at the end of each *juan* recorded by Master [Lu] himself. [Master Lu] devoted [himself] to this book for forty-four years, starting at the *gengwu* year [1750] and ending in the *jiayin* year [1794] of the Qianlong reign … [Master Lu’s] collation and evidential research were careful and refined, far beyond the capacity of recent classicists and scholars. I acquired this book from a bookstore in Chang’an. After reading it once, I felt like I possessed an extremely valued treasure. It will be good if my sons and grandsons can keep it for generations. Otherwise, I will send it to those who are able to read it to avoid its loss and dispersal. In so doing, I
can also be Lu’s meritorious servant. Written sincerely by Huang Sidong, a later scholar, on the fifteenth day of the second month of the dinghai year (the thirteenth year) of the Guangxu reign [1887].

Huang Pengnian’s colophon reads:

Seeing Lu Wenchao’s careful and hard work expended on this book even when he was old, I hurriedly borrowed it from Xiaolu and transcribed [the marginalia] to show my respect. Written by Huang Pengnian a scholar of later days, in the eighth month of the thirteenth year of the Guangxu reign [1887].

In this book, Lu Wenchao recorded in detail the reading and collating time at the end of every juan. Owing to these temporal records and the enormous amount of marginalia, Huang Sidong and Huang Pengnian got the whole story of Lu Wenchao’s reading and collating of this book. Moved and motivated by Lu’s sincerity and diligence, they also devoted themselves to the transcription of marginalia. From Lu Wenchao to Huang Sidong and Huang Pengnian, what was transmitted
was not only research materials but also mental fortitude and faith that meaning resided in books and the study of the classics. All of this is encapsulated in the detailed records of time spent.

Much like Lu Wenchao, another prominent textual scholar in the Qing, Guan Guangqi 顧廣圻 (courtesy name Jianpin 潘鑑, Alternative name Qianli 千里, 1770-1839) also habitually recorded the times he spent reading and collating books. The *Huayang guo zhi* 華陽國志 (Chronicles of the state of Huayang) held at the National Library of China (call number: 6226) has a great many of He Zhuo and Gu Guangqi’s marginalia copied by an unidentified transcriptionist. The following table summarizes Gu’s colophons at the end of some *juan*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Gu Guangqi’s Colophons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 1</em></td>
<td>Reread in my residence in Jiangning, in the <em>guiyou</em> year of the Jiaqing reign [1813]. By Jianpin. 嘉慶癸酉，再讀於江寧寓中。潤蘭記。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 4</em></td>
<td>Collated in the tenth month of the <em>guihai</em> year of the Jiaqing reign [1803]. By Jianpin. 嘉慶癸亥十月校。潤蘭記。 Recorded again after rereading in my residence in Jiangning in the <em>guiyou</em> year [1813]. 癸酉五月江寧寓中再讀又記。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 5</em></td>
<td>Reread in the fourth month of the <em>guiyou</em> year [1813]. 癸酉四月重讀。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 7</em></td>
<td>Reread in my residence in Jiangning in the fifth month of the <em>guiyou</em> year [1813]. 癸酉五月再讀於江寧寓中。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 8</em></td>
<td>Reread in my residence in Jiangning in the third month of the <em>guiyou</em> year [1813]. 癸酉三月再讀於江寧寓中。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 9</em></td>
<td>Collated on the twenty-seventh day. Jianpin. 廿七日校。潤蘭。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>juan 10</em></td>
<td>Reread in Jiangning in the fourth month of the <em>guiyou</em> year [1813]. 癸酉四月再讀於江寧。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collated in the tenth month of the <em>guiyou</em> year [1813]. 癸酉十月校。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a detailed record of his reading and collating history of the *Huayang guo zhi*, and of his special relationship with this book. This kind of record does not make much sense to readers of the main text. But for Gu Guangqi himself, recording the temporal sequence in detail made this book his “reading diary.” What was encapsulated within these temporal records were the events and emotional states he experienced at that time.

### Weather and Art

Some marginalia-composers and -transcriptionists also had the habit of recording the weather and other natural conditions they were experiencing during the time they read a book, such as He Zhuo’s record of the odd wind in the *Hou Hanshu* mentioned above. These records can reveal such things as their emotional state and attitude to scholarship. For instance, the *Zhongwu jiwen* 中吳紀聞 (Record of events heard in the Wu Region) held at the National Library of China (call number:
On the nineteenth day of the gengchen year of the Kangxi reign [1700], the snow ceased and the window was clear and bright. By Zhuo while blowing away the chill.

康熙庚辰十二月十九日，雪霑窗明。呵凍書，焯。

Interestingly, another copy of the Zhongwu jiwen at the National Library of China (call number: S2195) has He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Wu Zhizhong 吳志忠 (alternative name Miaodaoren 妙道人, a scholar in the later era of the Daoguang reign). For this particular colophon by He Zhuo, Wu’s transcription lacks these last sentences. Yet at the end of juan four, Wu’s colophon reads:

In the eleventh month of the renchen year of the Daoguang reign [1832] … on the nineteenth day, blowing away the chill. Miaodaoren.

道光壬辰十一月……十九日，呵凍，妙道人。

It’s difficult to know why Wu Zhizhong “forgot” to transcribe the last sentences. However, to be sure, Wu must have read the whole colophon and even been impressed by the last sentences, and then he imitated He’s expression in his own colophon.

The Sanguo zhi held at the National Library of China (call number: SB06264) is filled with He Zhuo and other scholars’ marginalia transcribed by Weng Tongshu. At the end, Weng’s colophon states:

Finished reading amidst the wind and rain on the eighteenth day of the seventh month.

七月十八日風雨中閱竟。
The *Wudai shiji* at the National Library of China (call number: SB14710) has He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Zhang Yu, as well as some marginalia composed by Zhang Yu himself. At the end of *juan* 22, Zhang’s colophon states:

Collated on the eighteenth day, when the rainy season began and it suddenly became so cold that we needed to wear cotton-padded jackets.

十八日校，梅雨驟涼，可御薄棉衣。

The *Gengzi xiaoxia ji* held at the National Library of China (call number: SB15338) has He Zhuo’s marginalia and colophons by Zhu Yun 朱筠 (1729-1781), Yu Ji 余集 (1738-1824), and Xia Huang’s 夏璜 (jinshi 1809). Xia’s colophon at the end of the book states:

Collated on the fifth day of the second month of the *bingzi* year [1816]. It was raining and a little cold. I tried the old ink Yeting sent me, writing [this] casually at the end of the book.

The sparse raindrops knocked my window, and the plum blossoms in the vase seem to smile.

丙子二月五日校對畢。是日雨，天氣微涼，試液亭所惠古墨，漫書卷尾。小雨點點，瓶梅欲笑。

These poetic writings about the weather resemble the artistic description in Zhao Yi’s poem, “Busy collating in a curtain of books all day long. / Stepping outdoors, it is already in the dry autumn that I had not felt at all.” They manifest scholars’ aesthetic mental states when viewing the physical world and engaging in self-reflection within the realm of their studies. Textual criticism and evidential research in marginalia are both rationalistic scholarship, but Qing scholars treated them in a very perceptual and poetic manner. Comparatively speaking, in modern scholarship, it is
common in prefaces for books (and sometimes acknowledgments to articles) to take a much more personal tone than in the main body of academic writing. This predisposition in Qing scholars was shown not only in their writings of time and weather but also in the way they did their writing and treated their books.

He Zhuo was a well-known calligrapher and good at regular small style and semi-cursive style script. Books that had He Zhuo’s marginalia written by himself were thus treated as artwork and treasured by bibliophiles and calligraphers (see Figure 4-5). The Ming manuscript edition of Zhuozhong zhi 酌中志 (Impartial records of Palace events) held at the National Library of China (call number: SB11564) has He Zhuo’s holographic marginalia. There is a short colophon written by an unknown collector on the cover, reading:

Fifteen juan of the manuscript are still in existence. The seven comments on the top margin and the red characters in the interlinear spaces were written by Yimen’s own hand. They are exquisite and endearing.

存原抄十五卷，頂批七處及行間紅字乃義門親筆，精緻可愛。

The Zhuozhong zhi has twenty-four juan in total. This manuscript copy has fifteen juan, i.e., more than half of the whole book. There are just seven pieces of He Zhuo’s eyebrow marginalia and several pieces of his interlinear marginalia. However, the collector emphasized these marginalia, which shows their special significance for him.

In pre-modern China, people learned calligraphy by imitating previous calligraphers’ handwriting. He Zhuo’s students, later scholars, and calligraphers all practiced their calligraphy based on marginalia written by him. Sometimes, “transcribing marginalia” was also called “imitating (lin 笔) marginalia.” In this practice, transcription of marginalia was not only a process
of transmitting research materials, but also a way to practise calligraphy. As mentioned in the last chapter, Jiang Gao, one of He Zhuo’s students, was known for transcribing and imitating his teacher’s marginalia. Similarly, Yao Shiyu 姚世钰 (courtesy name Yucai 玉裁, alternative name Yitian 意田, 1695-1749), who personally learned from He Zhuo, was also skilled in imitating He’s handwriting while transcribing his marginalia. A copy of a Ming edition of *Wudai shiji* carved in the Mao family’s Jigu Pavilion held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XS847873-78, see figure 5-1) has He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Yao Shiyu. Yao’s handwriting in regular small style script is quite handsome. Gu Guangqi’s colophon at the beginning of this book reads:

This is a collated edition with Junior Compiler He Yimen’s marginalia transcribed by Mr. Yao Yitian. The Junior Compiler collated it with a copy read by Dongjianweng (Qian Qianyi) in the Jiangyun Tower. The original copy [with He Zhuo’s own handwriting] was formerly held at the Congshu Tower of the Ma family in Weiyang, and is said to have already been scattered to the north of the Yangzi river. What is recorded in the *Dushuji* [of He Zhuo] are just some important points. Mr. Yitian once worked as a teacher for the Ma family. He transcribed He’s marginalia [into this copy] in detail without any omissions. There is no duplicate south of the Yangzi River. I expect readers treasure this book. Written by Pinzhou.

此姚意田先生手抄義門何太史校本也，太史借絳雲樓東澗翁閣本點定。原書昔在維揚馬氏叢書樓，聞已散歸江北。《讀書記》所載僅撮涯畝，意田先生館於馬氏，從原書錄出，詳審無遺，大江以南，別無副本，讀者其珍稀之。蘋洲記。
Gu Guangqi stated how Yao Shiyu did the transcription and pointed out their value. Decades later, Zhang Yu transcribed all the marginalia from this copy into another copy (the one held at the National Library of China mentioned above). Zhang Yu’s colophon at the end of that copy states:

The copy that bears Mr. Yitian’s transcription of He Yimen’s marginalia is now held at the Tianjin Library.⁶ [The marginalia] are so exquisite that they are unrivalled in the world.

⁶ This copy is now held at the Shanghai Library. Its call number is XS847873-78.
In the seventh month of the renxu year [1922], I borrowed it and transcribed the marginalia into another copy in two days, which was done carelessly and for which I would be reprimanded by the wise men of the past. By Shizhi.

蔣田先生手傳何彥門先生本今藏天津圖書館，精整無匹。壬戌七月借傳一本，竭二日之力卒事，草率當為前賢所諷，式之。
Some of Yimen’s marginalia [in this copy] are not included in the currently-circulating *Dushujì*. Yitian’s [Yao Shiyu] handwriting greatly resembles that of He Zhuo’s. Further noted by Yu.

義門識語，現行《讀書記》有未及載者。意田書跡，極似何氏。鈺又記。

It was not rare in the Qing dynasty that a scribe, like Yao Shiyu, was capable of imitating He Zhuo’s handwriting to the degree that it passed as genuine. Generally, He’s students and most scholars would be perfectly happy to record in their colophons their transcription and all other encounters with that book in detail, with specific reference to temporal and spatial elements of their experience. The benefits of this practice—a habit widely practised in paintings, calligraphic works, and books—are manifold. It was a way to actively interact with the book, especially the text borne by this book. By so doing, they were involved in the history of the circulation of that book and even the history of the transmission of the text beyond the limitations of the physical book. This practice was a way to show not only that they once possessed and read the book, but also that they contributed to the text. In short, by writing in the book, a scholar made himself present with the text of the book over temporal and special span of its history.

“Exquisite and neat” (*jingzheng* 精整), “exquisite and refined” (*jinggong* 精工), and “exquisite and good” (*jinghao* 精好) are words that Qing scholars employed to praise the beauty of the calligraphy of marginalia. These words manifest the extreme care exercised by marginalia writers and transcriptionists while writing on a book, regardless of the calligraphic style. Transcriptionists sometimes needed to transcribe more than one kind of marginalia. In order to tell them apart, multicolour inks were employed—red and yellow being the most widely used colors. Therefore, expressions such as “eyes filled with red and yellow” (*丹黄溢目*) and “exquisitely and
carefully written in red and yellow” (丹黄精谨) often appeared in colophons. In this regard, for Qing scholars, the significance of a text lay not only in its content but also in its form. Scholars, bibliophiles, and calligraphers not only copied the contents of the text, they also tried to improve their calligraphic skills and incorporate some aesthetic values during this process. Transcription supplied new possibilities for using—not only “reading”—the text.

It is worth mentioning that there were also lots of anonymous transcriptionists, who imitated He Zhuo’s handwriting but left no information about themselves, making it difficult to authenticate He Zhuo’s marginalia. As discussed in the last chapter, some of them were produced for commercial purposes. That is, merchants hired professional scribes to forge He Zhuo’s marginalia so as to raise the price of the book.

**Transformation of the Textual Space of Marginalia**

“Textual space” here refers to the location of the text in space, including its location in a book or other media, and that media’s location in a particular physical space. People’s location can change; the location of the text can also be changed. Once the owner of one book was changed or the marginalia were transcribed from one copy to another, the textual space of marginalia would undergo a transformation, which would then cause differentiation of their features and significance.

For instance, the *Changgu ji* (Collected works of Li He 李賀) carved in the Meicun Study (Meicunshuwu 梅邨書屋) in the early Qing era held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XS799517-18) has He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed in red and yellow ink by a Qing scholar, Chen Benli 陳本禮 (courtesy name Jiahui 嘉惠, alternative name Sucun 素村; 1739-1818). He Zhuo’s colophon at the end of the book reads:
In the winter of the gengwu year of the Kangxi reign [1690] when I lived in the capital, I wanted to read [Li] Changji’s poems but did not have one [copy of his anthology]. Therefore, I bought this bad edition from the market. After reading several times, I could not bear to abandon it. Those living in later times, thinking of my difficulty in getting books, should derive from this a determination to study. Noted by Zhuo after twenty years.

康熙庚午冬寓京师，欲讀長吉詩，無之，因從肆中買得此惡本，屢經目便不忍棄去。後人念余見書之難，願勵志向學也。後二十年焯記。

As a matter of fact, “this bad edition” does not refer to Chen Benli’s transcribed copy, but to a copy of “that edition” that was once read and had marginalia written on it by He Zhuo and perhaps has already been scattered and lost. So, when reading this colophon, we should keep in mind that the adjective He Zhuo used to describe the quality of the book, “bad,” may not suit this new copy. At the same time, He Zhuo’s description and comments on the textual and physical features of the old edition may not suit this new edition, either.

Actually, while transcribing marginalia, transcriptionists usually made some adjustments to adapt the marginalia to the new edition. There is another copy of Changgu ji held at the Shanghai Library (call number: 764582-83), a printed copy of a Ming edition. It is filled with He Zhuo’s marginalia and emphasis marks in red ink, and the quantity of marginalia is greater than that in Chen Benli’s transcription. Moreover, the handwriting resembles He Zhuo’s. If this is the real original copy that He Zhuo read and in which he wrote marginalia, we then can know that Chen Benli cut out some contents and changed the color while transcribing. If this is only another transcription, either the marginalia on this one or that transcribed by Chen Benli was modified in content and form. Or, more likely, both of them were changed in some way.
Generally speaking, marginalia transcribed by professional scribes hired by scholars, bibliophiles, and merchants were much closer to the original copy. For instance, the marginalia on the *Hou Hanshu* held at the Peking University Library, that we discussed in the third chapter, were transcribed by three scribes. There is much meaningless content and lots of instructions on composing rhymed couplets and poems in the voluminous marginalia. These contents are in line with the characteristics of He Zhuo’s marginalia in their original form. Except for their handwriting, scribes never left any personal information. Their self-effacement causes an absence of temporal and spatial records, and thus an absence of a particular time and space associated with the text, and therefore ambiguity in the relationship between people and people, people and the text, and text and the text.

Few scholars would copy all the marginalia into a text without making changes by their own hand. Some scholars only transcribed the collation notes and ignored all the comments; some would merely transcribe the comments. As for transcribing the collation notes, when the new copy and the old copy were of different editions, the variants, collation notes, and description of the layout would vary. Besides, the color and calligraphic style could also change while transcribing. In addition, transcriptionists would alter the location and color of the marginalia based on the physical forms of the new edition, and select the contents of the collation notes and comments according to their personal academic tastes. All of these changes were often described in the colophons. For example, the content of the *Geshi bian* 歌詩編 (Anthology of poetry), another anthology of Li He’s poetry carved by the Mao family and held at the National Library of China (call number: SB14622), is almost the same as that of the *Changgu ji*, so much so that Zhang Yu directly transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia on the *Changgu ji* into this *Geshi bian*. Zhang Yu transcribed the marginalia from a copy transcribed by Deng Bangshu, who transcribed them from
a copy transcribed by Chen Ge. After several generations of transcription, the text of the marginalia transcribed by Zhang became rather complicated, consisting of layers of information accumulated by different scholars. In the colophon at the beginning of the book, Zhang Yu described the changes he made while transcribing:

In the sixth month of the renzi year [1912], I borrowed Deng’s copy to transcribe. The previous history of transcription and transmission is stated in detail in Deng’s colophon above. Deng’s copy is an edition that has Xu Wei and Dong Maoce’s commentaries and was carved in the guichou year of the Wanli reign [1573]. This copy is considered one copy of the Kuaiji edition cut by the Mao family as claimed in Deng’s colophon. If there are any differences between these two editions, I have recorded “carved in a certain way in a certain edition” at the bottom [of this Mao edition]. If the collation by Mao and He, both according to the Song edition, are the same, I do not record it. If the characters [in this Mao edition] are different from that of the Song edition, I record He’s collation. He’s collation notes always state that “the Song and Jin editions write XYZ.” Since this Mao edition was carved based on a Song edition, I changed He’s expression into “the Jin edition write XYZ” to differentiate them. The marginalia in this book was transcribed many times. The editions were different from each other. The marginalia must not be in line with He’s original version, but it cannot be said that this is not a good copy of the Changgu ji. By Zhang Yu of Changzhou in the rented Tinghe House in Jinmen on the first day of the seventh month.
The edition He Zhuo read and in which he wrote his marginalia was unknown, but He mentioned a Jin edition and a Song edition and recorded all the variants from them into a Ming edition. Zhang Yu used a Mao edition to transcribe He Zhuo’s marginalia. This Mao edition was a reprint of the Song edition He mentioned. For this reason, Zhang Yu did not transcribe the variants of the Song edition. According to Deng Bangshu’s colophon, Deng used a Ming edition to transcribe He’s marginalia. Zhang Yu recorded the variants of this Ming edition, too. Since it combined character variants from various editions, Zhang’s copy became a very good and special edition.

As Zhang Yu had done, scholars and bibliophiles in the Qing dynasty usually transcribed the marginalia of more than one scholar into one copy. In order to distinguish them, transcriptionists employed various strategies. Sometimes, they marked the origin at the beginning of every piece of marginalia. Most of the time, they used different colors to differentiate them. For instance, the *Li Yishan shiji* 李義山詩集 (Collected poems of Li Yishan) printed in the early Qing period and held at the Shanghai Library (call number: 6889) has He Zhuo, Chen E 陳嵎, Ji Yun 紀昀, and some unknown scholars’ marginalia respectively transcribed in red, green, blue and black (see figure 5-2). The colophons in the book state:

*The marginalia in black ink were composed by Chen E, courtesy name Zuofeng. / The marginalia in green ink were composed by He Zhuo, courtesy name Qizhan, alternative name Mr. Yimen.*

*墨筆華亭陳嵎嵐嵎批/綠筆何屺瞻珂義門先生批。*

*The marginalia in black ink were composed by Ji Yun, courtesy name Xiaolan.*
Sometimes, the transcriptionist also transcribed multicolor marginalia onto a new copy in a single color, usually black. For instance, the *Suxueshi ji* 蘇學士集 (Anthology of Academician Su, Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 1008-1048) printed in the early Qing period held at the Shanghai Library (call
number: 753558) has Gu Guangqi’s marginalia transcribed by the well-known bibliophile, Huang Pilie 黃丕烈 (courtesy name Shaowu 紹武, 1763-1825). Gu’s colophon reads:

The unknown compiler’s *Lize jishi* has 35 juan in total. It is a Song edition. I collated [this *Suxueshi ji*] according to [Su’s poems] recorded in it and wrote the variants in black ink. Jianpin by the light of the lamp on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the *yimao* year [1795].

無名氏《麗澤集詩》凡三十五卷，宋槧也，就其所載校之，以墨筆為別。乙卯九月二十四日燈下潤賞記。

After this, Huang Pilie’s colophon states:

This collated edition was made by my friend Jianpin. The marginalia in the whole book are in red ink, while what was collated according to the *Lize jishi* is all in black. In my transcribing of it, I changed the red into black. What was originally in black I labeled with the two characters, “Lize.” If the characters in the *Lize* and He’s collation are the same, there were black circles at the characters in the original copy. I followed this pattern without any change. If the characters [in the *Lize*] were the same as the main text of this printed edition, there were also black circles at the characters. I followed this, too. As for characters in the *Lize* that were different from that of He’s collation and this printed edition, I recorded them as “X is written into Y in the *Lize*.” Written by Huang Pilie, who recently mourned his parents, in the Study for Reading Books not Seen Before in the sixth month in the summer of the thirtieth year (the *wuwu* year) of the Jiaqing reign [1798].

此校本為余友潤賞所傳錄，通體皆用硃筆，唯所校《麗澤集詩》皆以墨筆。余臨校改硃筆為墨筆，於原本墨筆者，皆以“麗澤”二字別之。《麗澤》與何校同者，原
From these colophons, it can be known that Gu Guangqi transcribed He Zhuo’s marginalia and then recorded in black ink the character variants of Su Shunqin’s poems taken from a Song edition of a poetry anthology. While transcribing Gu’s marginalia, Huang Pilie changed it from red to black and labeled the variants from the Lize jishi with “Lize” in order to distinguish the two kinds of marginalia. There is another copy of Suxueshi wenji in the same edition held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XST02612-15) bearing marginalia in red, blue and black. The red marginalia are a transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia. The composer and transcriptionist of the black marginalia is unknown. The blue are collation notes made by Ye Jingkui (courtesy name Kuichu 楷初, alternative name Juan’an 卷盦, 1874-1949) based on a comparison of his own copy with Huang Pilie’s transcription of Gu Guangqi’s marginalia. Ye’s colophon reads:

In the past, I got a copy [of the Sushunqin ji] in the Baihuashuwu edition, which has He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed in red ink. There were lots of erroneous characters in He’s collation. There were also three pieces of textual criticism in black. The writer did not sign his name. It was not composed by He Zhuo. In the late spring of the wuyin year [1938], I managed to borrow a collated copy from my old friend Pan Jiru. It was collated by Huang Pilie who transcribed Gu Qianli’s transcription of He Zhuo’s collation notes. He Zhuo also collated the poems according to a Song edition of the Lize ji. I collated my own copy with that, and recorded the variants in blue so as to differentiate them from the old red and black marginalia in this copy. I corrected all the errors and filled in all the dropped characters.
It was both for correcting the mistakes of the main text and then making their own copies “good editions” (shanben 善本, here referring to an edition that is well collated and has reliable texts) that Ye Jingkui transcribed He Zhuo and Gu Guangqi’s marginalia, and that Zhang Yu transcribed Deng Bangshu’s transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia after several other scholars’ transcriptions. A well-known late Qing bibliophile, Jiang Fengzao (courtesy name Xiangsheng 香生, ca. 1845-1908) once transcribed various scholars’ marginalia on the Dushu minqiu ji 讀書敏求記 (Notes on reading and diligently in investigating the past), an annotated catalogue composed by a celebrated early Qing bibliophile, Qian Zeng. While transcribing various marginalia, Jiang not only employed multiple colours but also differentiated them according to calligraphic style (see Figure 5-3). This exquisitely transcribed edition, bearing various collation notes and comments on the main text, is of course a “good edition.”

All these “good editions” produced from the transcription of marginalia were actually “established” by multi-layered texts and multiple scholar’s opinions in different temporal and spatial dimensions. As mentioned above, the marginalia culture was a hybrid of print culture and manuscript culture. When marginalia were transcribed from one printed copy to another, their textual space changed, so the relationships between marginalia and the main text, and between marginalia and the physical book that bore the main text would also change. With the

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7 See Zhongguo guji gaochaojiaoben tulu 中國古籍稿抄校本圖錄, Chen Xianxing 陳先行, et al., eds. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2014), 909-910.
transformation of the textual space, the contents of marginalia would be altered; the color, style, location on the page would also be adjusted to adapt to the new textual environment. These changes
seem minor, but they are an important part of the evolution of the text. Cumulatively, these minor changes can produce huge effects: they directly determined how the text appeared to a reader, and thus influenced how the text could be read and used. For a scholar in the Qing dynasty, the quality and quantity of the marginalia, especially collation notes, determined the depth and breadth of his study to some extent. For a common reader, “seeing” a book filled with eye-catching writings and reading the main text along with other readers’ erudite and interesting comments must have given them a very different reading experience. Texts are created in a particular context; in return, texts also create a particular context. The accumulation of marginalia changed the context whereby the main text made sense, and thus transformed the meaning and significance of the main text. Marginalia, their transcription, and other scholarly practices involved offer a key to accessing Qing scholars’ reading habits and intellectual world.

**Scholars’ Mental World**

Sometimes, the marginalia writer’s brush reached beyond the space of his study to the much broader external world, revealing the extension of his gaze from one room (yishi 一室) to all under heaven (tianxia 天下). Outside of the study, there was not only the objective natural environment but also a variety of more complicated human affairs. For instance, the *Nanshi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties) held at the National Library of China (call number: SB04309) has He Zhuo and Wang Mingsheng’s marginalia transcribed by Liu Lüfen 劉履芬 (courtesy name Yanqing 彦青, 1827-1879). There are three colophons composed by Wang Mingsheng at the end of this book. The first states that he read this *Nanshi* and wrote some marginalia in it in 1772. The second and third colophons read:
On the twenty-third day of the first month of the thirty-eighth year [of the Qianlong reign],
the guisi year [1773], I transcribed the comments from other copies again, starting from
the thirty-fourth juan. This work was finished in the afternoon of the second day of the
second month. In the morning of that day, another daughter of mine was born, when I was
fifty-two sui.

三十八年癸巳正月二十三日，重臨諸本批評，自三十四卷起，至二月初二日午後畢
工，是日清晨，又產一女，時予年五十有二。

From the eighth month of the renchen year [1772], my two concubines, whose surnames
are both Chen, went back home. Their fathers harbour malicious intentions in their hearts.
I was depressed. What was worse was that I sold houses at a loss in the eighth and ninth
months, which wasted a lot of money and energy, beyond expressing. Worse yet, my son
was stricken by a serious disease and the money I spent was incalculable. In that half year,
I was almost buried by depression, so that I neglected my enterprise. In the spring of the
guisi year [1773], when I consented to my fourth daughter’s marriage to the Yao family, I
was still upset. I snatched a moment of leisure and finished collating this book. Amidst all
this chaos, I did not stop learning from the ancients. Perhaps it is because this is what I
love.

自壬辰八月，兩陳妾又忽回家去，其父頗懷惡心，予情緒既不佳，又八九兩月連次
貼賣房屋，費財勞頓，不可勝言。又兒嗣構病危，醫藥之費不訾，半載之中，日在
愁城，遂亦廢業不理。癸巳初春，時方遣嫁第四女于姚氏，情緒亦煩擾，偷閑校畢
此書。時促之中，不輟稽古，蓋予之所好在此也。
Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛 (courtesy name Fengjie 凤喈, 1722-1797) was one of the greatest historians and classicists in the mid-Qing, who took second place at the palace examination (bangyan 榜眼) in 1754 and was the author of the masterwork, Shiqishi shangque 十七史商榷 (Discussion of problems on the Seventeen Histories). Among the enormous number of objective historical comments in his marginalia in the Nanshi, these two colophons stand out: the former recorded the event that he had a daughter at the age of 52 sui; the latter recorded various annoying family affairs. During all these pleasant or uneasy times, Wang never “stopped learning from the ancients.” At the very moment when his brush touched on external matters, it withdrew to his study where he could find peace and happiness. Here, learning and reading were not only an job or hobby; they became a mental pursuit, a habit, and an important part of his daily life. Reading books, collating them, and many other scholarly practices played a crucial role in his life.

Another relevant example of such movement between external spaces and the spaces of scholarship is the case of Weng Tonghe 翁同龢 (courtesy name Shuping 叔平, 1830-1904). The Han wen chao held at the National Library of China (call number: 06252) has Weng Tonghe’s transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia. At the end of this book, Weng’s colophons read:

On the sixteenth day of the second month of the wuwu year [1858], I saw a copy of Han Yu’s classical prose with Li Rongcun’s [Li Guangdi] marginalia. I borrowed it and transcribed the marginalia. There were just a few comments by Li. Most of them were He Yimen’s comments. At that time, my wife had been ill for several years and her breathing was feeble. I was reading by the light of a lantern at night and my mood unbearable. Remote in time and space, who could understand my sadness! Finished on the twentieth day and recorded here. By Tonghe.
戊午二月十六日，於細見李榕村先生批本韓文，假歸臨校一過，李氏說不過數條，大抵義門何氏之說居多。時余妻病療累年，至是，氣僅如繭。築燈夜讀，意境不堪，悠悠此中，孰知余悲也。二十日臨畢，因識。同龢。

In the ninth month of the wuchén year [1867] of the Tongzhi reign, I escorted home the coffins of my deceased father whose posthumous title was Wenduan, and my deceased older brother whose posthumous title was Wenqin. We started south of the Lu River and stopped in Linqing. There was no water in the river there, so we took the land route thenceforth, and returned to the boat again in Zhangqiu. I read and punctuated this book in great sorrow and depression. I took another boat carrying my wife’s coffin and watched from the distance the limitless mist covering the water. Recorded by Tonghe, on the lake at Mount Wei on the fourth day of the month.

These two colophons record domestic tragedies Weng experienced. In this depressed mood he could only take slight comfort from reading and put down his sadness in the margin of the book he was reading.

Marginalia’s reach beyond the space of the scholar’s study was not always into a space of grief. The Jinshilu 金石錄 (Catalogue of ancient bronzes and stone tablets) held at the Shanghai Library (call number: XST03117-122) has a colophon at the end by Weng Tonghe, stating that he was fortunate to acquire this book in a book market and that He Zhuo’s marginalia in it were
transcribed by a noted scholar-official and calligrapher, Dong Chun 董醇 (1810-1892). After this, another colophon by Weng reads:

In the past, my friend Pan Boyin (Pan Zuyin 潘祖隣, courtesy name Boyin 伯寅, studio name Pangxi Study [Pangxi zhai], 1830-1890) got an incomplete copy of a Song edition formerly held at the Yeshi Garden [Yeshiyuan]. Pan was extremely surprised and considered it a very rare and valuable treasure. He carved a seal, reading “the family that has ten juan of the Jinshilu,” and invited friends to drink and compose poems for it. Pan declared, “The lost treasure stopped wandering.” This certainly deserves our cheers. Noted by Pingsheng.

Pan Zuyin was a high-ranking Qing dynasty official, a noted art collector, and a prominent calligrapher. The Jinshi lu, co-written by the famous epigrapher Zhao Mingcheng 趙明誠 (1081-1129) and his wife, one of the great female poets Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1081- c. 1141), was considered one of the earliest and most important catalogues and study works on ancient Chinese bronzes and stone tablets. It enjoyed a great reputation from its publication in the Southern Song dynasty. But in the Qing dynasty, scholars believed that there were only ten juan of the Song edition (one third of the whole book) left. This incomplete Song copy (can Songben 殮宋本) thus enjoyed a very special reputation. Every collector who held it would carve a seal reading “the family that has ten juan of the Jinshi lu” (金石錄十卷人家), and so did Pan Zuyin. His seal was carved by Zhao Zhiqian 趙之謙 (1829 – 1884), a renowned calligrapher, seal carver and painter.
in the late Qing. Here, Weng recorded this anecdote, reflecting his admiration for his friend Pan Zuyin who held a Song edition, albeit incomplete, of the Jinshi lu, his regrets that most rare books were scattered and lost, his happiness that Pan stopped this incomplete Song copy from wandering, and his satisfaction from managing to get his own copy filled with previous scholars’ marginalia.

In their colophons, scholars did not talk much about theories, principles, the Way of former sages, or any kind of concrete knowledge. What they recorded was their life style, various practices with books, and their attitude toward these practices. Through transcribing previous scholars’ marginalia, the colophons in particular, they learnt from their predecessors a way to do their research, a way of life, and a way to think about their lives. They inherited from their predecessors not only concrete knowledge, but also faith in—or at least an attitude toward—books and ancient texts. That is, they were living in a particular kind of culture, shaped by it and maintaining it. I am not arguing that one particular cultural form will continue in a society without any changes. On the contrary, I’m trying to shown that the condition of a culture is influenced by political, social, economic, and other factors and undergoes a very slow, but certain, change.

In the late Qing and Republican periods (during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century), when China was going through a transformation from pre-modern to modern, the scholarly culture of the Qing dynasty was still intact. Many scholars continued the scholarly practices of their predecessors. They occupied themselves with reading and collating ancient books, transcribing marginalia, and discussing books with friends. Zhang Yu was one of them. The Wudai shiji held at the National Library mentioned above has a colophon by Zhang at the end of juan seven, reading:

See Xu Ke, Qingbai leichao, 4246; Pan Zuyin 潘祖簪, Pangxi zhai cangshuji 湧喜齋藏書記, in Xuxiu Suku quanshu, vol. 926, 429-435.
In the sixteenth day, we held a celebration for my little son Yuanyi’s first full month. I had my son’s hair cut and talked sweetly with my relatives. I snatched a moment of leisure and collated this book.

十六日，稚子元義滿月，翦鬢，與親戚情話，抽暇校此。

The colophon at the end of *juan* 62 states:

Collated for thirty-three days. I did not do anything else or contact any friends, so I read and collated a lot.

三十三日校。不治他事，朋從絕跡，故校讀較多。

While busy with family affairs, he competed against time to read and collate; in his leisure time, he read and collated more. When he was happy because of his son’s full-month celebration and the chatter with his relatives, he did not forget to read and collate; in a lonely time when he cut off the contact with his friends, he devoted himself to reading and collation. At the end of *juan* forty-two, another colophon reads:

Collated on the twenty-first day, which was my forty-ninth birthday, twenty-seven years after my father’s death, seven years after my mother’s death. Ten years ago, I became an official. On the same day, when I lived in the capital, I went to Father Wang’s and tried to write a policy essay. Another decade earlier, I was in my home (in Suzhou). [My son] Yuanshan was less than one-year-old at that time, but now he has already gone to the U.S. to study and will graduate soon. Another decade earlier, I was in Xumen (in Suzhou) and studied in an elementary school named Sixian. One more decade earlier, I learned to read the *Mencius* from master Ding. Recalling past events, I felt everything vividly [in my mind]
as if there was a painting. Qu Yuan (courtesy name Boyu) a senior official [of the Wei in the Spring and Autumn Period] said that when he was fifty sui he knew the mistakes he made at forty-nine. I will say that what I did in the last decade was perhaps right, in comparison with what I am doing now. About the reasons therein, with whom can I talk?

二十一日校，是日為余四十九歲福度，去先君之亡二十七年，先母之亡七年。前十
年為通籍之年，是日寓京，達子營汪丈處試寫箋一本。又前十年在里門，是時元善
尚未試週，今已遠道美國求學，將次畢業。又前十年，時在胥門，由斯館處蒙館。

又前十年，從丁師讀《孟子》。回望前塵，歷歷如繪。遲大夫（名瑗，字伯玉，春
秋時衛國大臣）謂知四十九年之非，余則謂，以今校之前數十年，或較是耳。此中
消息，將與誰語邪？

Here, on his forty-ninth birthday in 1913 when he lived in Tianjin,⁹ Zhang Yu looked back at his life in segments of ten years. In these forty-nine years, Zhang moved from his home to Xumen in Suzhou, then to the capital (Beijing), and then to Tianjin. In any particular time and space, reading and learning were always cornerstones of Zhang’s life. For a reading seed like Zhang Yu, external time and space transformed, but his reading life did not. Nor did his relationship with books.

Two years before 1913, the Xinhai Revolution ended the Qing dynasty, the last empire in Chinese history. The new regime was established. In this colophon, Zhang Yu also mentioned his son going to the U.S. to study. The world had changed, but he was confused. Perhaps it was time for him to transform how he saw the world, perceived the world, and responded to it. But Zhang continued to read the world according to texts that had been read and altered by past wise men. He was defending the tradition in his way. His colophons, sometimes, are inundated by confusion,

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⁹ See Su Jing 蘇精, Jindai cangshu sanshijia 近代藏書三十家 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 46.
bewilderment, and depression about the world and his destiny in it. At the end of *juan* fifteen of the *Wudai shiji*, Zhang recorded discussions with one of his friends about one of Su Shi’s 蘇軾 (1037-1101) song lyrics, the “Shui long yin (Ci yun Zhang Zhifu yanghua ci)” 水龍吟（次韻章質夫楊花詞） (Tune: “Water Dragon’s Chant,” After Zhang Zhifu’s Lyric on the Willow Catkin, Using the Same Rhyming Words). This colophon reads:

Collated on the seventeenth day. That night, Shi Zhonglu came to discuss Pogong’s [Su Shi’s] song lyric, the “Willow Catkins” (Tune: “Water Dragon’s Chant”) with me. He said: “The two sentences that start with ‘bu hen’ (do not grieve) in the second part mean that the willow catkins are not worthy of pity, yet what went with them is to be greatly pitied.” When I ask him why, [he said that] the willow catkins and what were not willow catkins both returned to dust. The six sentences from “When dawn comes” to “flowing water” have the meaning that the myriad things all perish together. This [reading] grasped the profound meanings [of this poem]. In my opinion, the first part of this poem talks about this life, the second part discusses this world. These sad words throughout all ages find someone to corroborate them. The second day when I got up in the morning, I briefly sketched this.

十七日校，夜施仲魯來與談坡公《水龍吟・楊花》一闋。渠云：“下半‘不恨’二語，謂楊花不足惜，隨以俱亡者乃大可惜。”及問其究竟，則是楊花非楊花，同歸於塵土，“流水”“曉來”六語有萬類同歸於盡之意，極得微旨。余於此詞，每謂上半為我生說，下半為世界說，千古傷心之辭，有人為之印證。翌日晨起擬書，為記其畧。

Su Shi’s entire lyric reads:
It seems to be a flower, yet not a flower, / and no on shows it any pity: let it fall! / Deserting home, it wanders by the road; / When you come to think of it, it must / have thoughts, insentient as it may be. / Its tender heart twisted by grief, / its delicate eyes heavy with sleep, / about to open, yet closed again. / In its dream it follows the wind for ten thousand miles, / to find where its lover has gone, / but then it is aroused by the orioles’ cry once more.

似花還似非花，也無人惜從教墮。拋家傍路，思量卻是，無情有思。縈損柔腸，困酣嬌眼，欲開還閉。夢隨風萬里，尋郎去處，又還被，鶯呼起。

I do not grieve that the willow catkins have flown away, / but that, in the Western Garden, / the fallen red cannot be gathered. / When dawn comes and the rain is over, / where are the traces they have left? / A pond full of broken duckweeds! / Of all the colors of springtime, / two-thirds have gone with the dust, / and one-third with the flowing water! / When you look closely, / these are not willow catkins, / but, drop after drop, parted lovers’ tears.

不恨此花飛盡，恨西園，落紅難綈。曉來雨過，遺蹤何在？一池萍碎。春色三分，二分塵土，一分流水。細看來，不是楊花點點，是離人淚。⑩

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The first paragraph of Su Shi’s song lyric writes that the willow catkins seem to be have no feelings, but they actually have deep thoughts. The second stanza states that the willow catkins, as well as all the flowers, have gone with the passing of spring, which triggers in Zhang the feeling that “the myriad things all perished together.” Zhang thought that “the first part of this poem talks about this life, the second part discusses this world,” which implies that everyone under heaven will go to an end in the political and social transformation at that time, when the order of the world was lost, even though one still has affection for the world, people and the myriad things. This kind of helpless, confused and depressed feeling is vivid portrayal of the minds of many “reading seeds” of that time.

These reading seeds, who had carefully read the Confucian Classics and other ancient works, more or less possessed a mind of romanticism. They dreamed of building up a utopian society and renewing the glorious customs recorded in ancient texts. In their opinion, all the principles of the natural world and human society were encapsulated in the classics, so that they could understand and establish a relationship between themselves and the external world according to the doctrines in those classics. They derived knowledge from various texts and tried to apply it to the practical world. However, there was always a great gap between the ideal and the reality, between what ought to be and what was so. Because of this great gap that could hardly be crossed, they withdrew from the external world to their study and tried to rebuild their ideal world in texts. This is the faith they inherited from their predecessors and would hand down to later generations. They accepted this faith, and the practices of enacting this faith, out of a kind of cultural inertia; i.e., they grew up in that culture, lived in that culture, and were shaped by that culture.

The text had rational contents and artistic features. In this regard, what was built up by the scholars was actually a rational and artistic intellectual world. In textual criticism and evidential
research, scholars rigorously complied with rational principles. Their works relied on observation and rational deduction. This “textual rationality” was never truly and successfully applied to the real world, yet it supplied a mental realm to which scholars could return, a secret getaway (taohua yuan 桃花源, lit. a Peach Garden, referencing the story of the same title) established in the scholars’ collective imagination. Therefore, in the real world, they chose an artistic life style: they had a poetic eye for all the things in the natural world; they appreciated and held on to books, and all the objects in their studies as well. They paid a lot of attention to the calligraphy of marginalia, wrote poems to eulogize rare books, and more. Generally speaking, some Qing scholars leaned toward the rational and practical aspect of their mode of reasoning; some leaned toward the artistic aspect, but neither group abandoned the other side completely. They managed to find a balanced point in between. Even when building up their ideal world in the text, their purpose was never to simply “finish” a project (compose a book or article). The scholarly practices themselves mattered. The process was more important than the result; the experience and the comprehension were a more important part of the purpose. Scholarship was not only their occupation, but also part of their life.

These “reading seeds” had a kind of rational aesthetic personality. On the one hand, they had gained the capability and inclination to pursue the truth via extensive reading and training in how to be a scholar (critical thinking within the classics); on the other hand, they pleased and/or comforted their hearts by ways of finding and appreciating the beauty of books and the practices of their scholarly life. The Zhongwu jiwen held at the National Library of China (call number: S2196) has He Zhuo’s marginalia transcribed by Wu Zhizhong 吳志忠 (alternative name Miaodaoren 妙道人, abb. Daoren). After the table of contents, there is a colophon composed by Wu, reading:
Daoren have collated this book according to four copies: an old manuscript copy collated by Mr. He Yimen and transcribed by Mr. Shen Qiutian; a copy of the Mao edition that was collated by Mao Zijin and Lu Chixian; the copy that was collated by Wuyuan according to a Song edition; and the copy compiled in the Shuofu (Persuasion of the suburbs) in a Ming manuscript edition. In addition to that collated by Shoujie according to the Tao and Jiang editions, there are six editions. Now I have come across the copy held by Ye Wenzhuang and collated by Mao Fuji, and know that it was the master copy used by He Yimen. After comparison, I corrected a lot of mistakes. How deep is Daoren’s special tie with this book!

Wu believed that he has a “special tie” with the Zhongwu jiwen. Many scholars in late imperial China believed that they had a special relationship with certain books. These “reading seeds” were devoted to scholarly practices related to books and texts all their lives. It seems less important whether there is an ultimate answer to their questions about their life and the world. What they treasured and were obsessed with, as least as expressed in marginalia, was this special tie with books.
Conclusion: Marginalia, Scholars, and the Intellectual History of the Qing

A Kind of Text and a Kind of Culture

This study of marginalia supplies an entry point into the history of texts and the history of scholars in late imperial China. Two key concepts form the foundation of this study: marginalia and scholars. Marginalia are a variety of writings and symbols drawn by readers on the margins of books, mostly printed books in the Qing dynasty. Before the late Ming, marginalia were rare in both records and physical books. In the late Ming and the early Qing period, print became the dominant mode of the circulation of texts; books became more and more accessible; and scholars had ample opportunity to compose marginalia. In this context, He Zhuo, a textual scholar and calligrapher, one of the tutors of the emperor’s sons, and friend of the most famous bibliophiles in the Jiangnan region and the capital Beijing, devoted himself to reading and collating books and composed marginalia on hundreds of titles. He inherited the Song-Ming tradition of commenting on texts, appreciating their literary features and discussing their historical and philosophical contents. At the same time, he conducted a very careful and in-depth project of textual criticism and collated a great number of texts. He was praised as “reading seed” by the Kangxi Emperor, and regarded as one of the initiators of textual criticism, a sub-discipline within the methodology of evidential research that flourished in the mid-Qing period. After his death, his marginalia quickly became popular, and books containing his marginalia sold at a rather high price. Bibliophiles sought books with his marginalia and collected them, treasuring them to the degree that they would not show them to others. Merchants forged them. More importantly, more and more scholars transcribed
them and composed marginalia of their own. In the mid-Qing period, composing and transcribing marginalia became a scholarly practice conducted by a great number of scholars.

When marginalia were transcribed from one printed book to another, their textual space was altered, as was their relationship with the main text; they were also edited in both form and content to adapt to the new textual environment. In this process, how a text was read could be rather different from how it is read today: the colorful comments, symbols and collation notes were difficult to ignore while reading. Qing scholars derived thought and knowledge, and built up their worldview by drawing on various texts. Therefore, how texts were read and interpreted could affect how they perceived both their external and inner worlds and the relationship between them. Marginalia and their long circulation history supply sources whereby we can explore these scholars’ reading practices, life styles, thought, and mental states.

Composing marginalia was by no means an absolutely new practice. Nevertheless, under the influence of a publishing boom, changes in the way scholars were sponsored, and the cumulative development of research on ancient texts during the late Ming and early Qing periods, this practice developed to a new stage, becoming a new fashion practiced by scholars empire-wide. In this process, a particular scholarly culture, “marginalia culture,” emerged. This marginalia culture was a hybrid of printed culture and manuscript culture, and was created by a series of social, political, economic, and philosophical factors. In its mature stage, it developed into a systematic way of perceiving, analyzing, and acting, and had a meaningful and powerful impact on its practitioners.

In chapters four and five, I discussed the transcription of He Zhuo’s marginalia by various agents, including He Zhuo’s disciples, later scholars, bibliophiles, calligraphers, book merchants, and so forth. This practice meant different things to different agents. For He Zhuo’s disciples, transcription was a way to learn from their teacher; for scholars, it supplied abundant research
sources for both collating and making sense of texts; for calligraphers, it furnished an opportunity to imitate a masterpiece of calligraphy and improve their skills; for book sellers and scribes, it was a profitable enterprise. In this cultural landscape, reading was never merely a way of obtaining knowledge; it was a habitual lifestyle, a practice used to cultivate oneself. This practice, for these “reading seeds,” entailed not only reading the words of a book, but also giving attention to the authentication of the text and form of the book, consulting the various marginalia surrounding the main text, transcribing previous scholars’ marginalia and composing their own, and appreciating the calligraphy of the marginalia and sometimes imitating them.

Modern scholarly literature holds the idea that Qing evidential researchers proposed to search for the Way (dao 道), or recover the Way of antiquity, through carefully studying the texts of the Classics.¹ This is correct. Searching for and/or recovering the Way of antiquity was always Confucian scholars’ ultimate goal. Nevertheless, I argue in this study that the practice of searching itself also counted. To some extent, it had more meaning and significance than the ultimate goal they were searching for yet could hardly achieve. Reading, collating, and looking for the “authentic” texts were their way of cultivating themselves, perceiving this world, and living in it.

**Marginalia Culture and the Intellectual Trend**

When composing and transcribing marginalia became a common scholarly practice in the mid-Qing period, marginalia were given more attention. Some of them were collected, edited, carved, and printed. Printing made marginalia accessible to a much larger reading public. This process can

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¹ See Sela, *China’s Philological Turn*, 4-5. Sela refers to this approach as “textualism.”
also show that when marginalia culture came into being, its influence proved pervasive, permeating people’s practices in both scholarly and daily life.

Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapters, marginalia usually drew upon a very large range of sources, including literary and historical comments, collation notes, and various colophons, to name a few. However, publishers in the Qing dynasty did not publish all of them. They chose what met their academic tastes and the supposed tastes of their readers. They also edited the text of the marginalia they published. Let us take the printing of He Zhuo’s marginalia as an example of this editorial manipulation.

Generally speaking, He Zhuo’s marginalia were printed in three ways in the Qing dynasty and the Republican period: 1) His marginalia on eighteen titles were collected and compiled as a book named *Yimen dushu ji* (Master Yimen’s reading notes); 2) some marginalia, mostly literary and historical comments, were printed alongside the main text on the margins of the book or within the main text in double-columned small characters; 3) some of his collation notes were extracted from his marginalia and edited, then attached at the end of the main text or included in scholarly collectanea.

He Zhuo’s *Yimen dushu ji* was a well-known scholarly *biji* 筆記 (lit. brush notes) in the Qing dynasty. But unlike what had been written before it, it was compiled from the marginalia and its contents were arranged according to the sequence of the main, whereas previous scholarly *biji* were usually compiled from notation books and their contents arranged according to different topics.² He Zhuo’s marginalia covered a very wide range of topics, including historical and literary criticism, collation notes, variants from other editions, comments on the visual appearance and

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physical conditions of the book, short colophons on the circulation of the book, and other amorphous thoughts while reading. Usually they were not deep research on specific topics but close reading of the main text, including anything that might have something to do with the main text. While compiling the *Yimen dushu ji*, the compilers left out most of the collation notes and omitted almost all of He Zhuo’s colophons. Most of what they included were He’s historical and literary comments, and these comments often were edited in some way.

Taking He’s marginalia in the *Hou Hanshu* as an example, the copy of *Hou Hanshu* held at the Peking University Library (Call No.: LSB/7288; abbr. PKU copy) contains 3,726 of He Zhuo’s marginalia, but the *Yimen dushuji* only has around 700 of those found in the PKU copy. Among these 3726 pieces of marginalia there are 1,625 pieces concerned with textual criticism, of which the *Yimen dushuji* included just ninety-four. More than nine tenths of the collation notes were left out. There were more than ten colophons in the PKU copy of the *Hou Hanshu*, discussing the editions of the *Hou Hanshu* and introducing the way that He Zhuo the *Hou Hanshu*, and recorded his private life, thoughts and mental states during the days he was engaged in the task. None of these were included in the *Yimen dushuji*. For the *Hou Hanshu*, most of the items in the *Yimen dushiji* are historical comments. The compiler appears to have favored the longer ones He Zhuo wrote, omitting most of the short ones. These longer comments can be seen as scholarly notes, suggesting that the compiler wanted to make the *Yimen dushuji* a traditional scholarly *biji*, regardless of He Zhuo’s efforts in textual criticism.³

In the early Qing period, just at the time when the *Yimen dushuji* was compiled, some of He Zhuo’s marginalia were printed alongside the main text, of which the best-known were He’s

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³ About He Zhuo’s marginalia on the *Hou Hanshu*, see Wei Yinzong, “He Zhuo Hou Hanshu pijuio zhi zhengli yu yanjiu” 何焯《後漢書》批校之整理與研究 (MS diss., Peking University, 2014).
marginalia on the *Kunxue jiwen* and the *Wenxuan*. For the former, other scholars’ exegeses and comments were printed within the main text in double-lined small characters, following the layout of annotations of Confucian Classics and histories. However, He Zhuo’s comments on the *Wenxuan* were printed mainly on the top margin, sometimes in red ink, similar to the printing of literary commentaries for classical proses, poetry, and fictions in the late Ming period.

The idea of printing reader’s comments was not entirely new. As discussed in chapter two, printing classical prose, poetry, and works of drama and fiction with literary commentaries and emphasis marks was a widespread practice in the late Ming. These were crafted commentaries rather than truly spontaneous reactions, but rhetorically they retained the aura of spontaneity and sprezzatura that was desirable to the late Ming readers. Most, if not all, of them were commercial imprints produced for students to master skills for the civil service examinations and for common readers to appreciate the aesthetic values of the text. Printed marginalia, to some extent, inherited this practice and shared the characteristics of commercial printing, themselves being commercial imprints for the most part. Furthermore, while printed, marginalia were edited to look like commentaries: almost all collation notes were left out and the contents were altered to make them more easy reading.

The production of *Yimen dushuji* and the printing of He’s marginalia within the main text both show the publishers’ intent to produce easy-reading texts that imparted relatively solid and reliable knowledge to a reading group that extended well beyond scholarly circles. The prevalence of these books shows that most scholars in the early- and mid- Qing period still followed the reading habits and even the scholarly methodology of Ming scholars. There was no drastic transformation from Ming to the Qing in the practice of reading. The development of new approaches, eventuating in
evidential research, was a rather long process that extended from a small group of scholars to larger groups and geographical areas.

It was in the mid-Qing era that collation notes began to be collected from marginalia, edited, and printed. This practice flourished in the late Qing and into the Republican period. For instance, the *Su Xueshi wenji* (Collected works of Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 [1008-1048]) in the well-known collectanea *Sibu congkan* (The four branches of literature collection) includes He Zhuo’s collation notes printed at the end of the book (see Figure 6-1). Many scholars in the mid- and late-Qing period also edited their own collation notes and printed them, creating a new kind of scholarly *biji*—collation *biji*. Collation notes were very important scholarly sources for authenticating the texts. The flourishing of collation *biji* and the printing of various collations notes indicate that textual criticism (*jiaokanxue* 校勘學; lit. studies of collation), as an independent scholarly discipline, had already reached maturity in both theory and practice in the Qing dynasty.

The editing and printing of marginalia is thus an important area which can supply a great deal of information concerning the evolution of scholarly culture and Qing intellectual trends. It deserves further research.

**Invisible Scholars and the Intellectual History of the Qing**

One of the principle aims of this study is to try to understand the society and scholars of Qing China. To do so, instead of focusing on the most prominent scholars or scholar-officials, I also pay attention to little-known scholars, who are unfamiliar to most modern readers but who contributed much to Qing scholarship and our understanding of ancient texts. At the same time, instead of highlighting scholars’ socio-political activities or philosophical achievements, I mainly examine their practices with marginalia, investigate various texts they read and composed, and explore
relationships among different scholars and between scholars and texts. Through investigating scholarly practices of underappreciated scholars largely ignored by our scholarship, I expect to reveal some hidden corners of intellectual history.

Figure 6-1 First half leaf of the “Su Xueshi wenji jiao yu,” attached at the end of the *Su Xueshi wenji*, in the *Sibu congkan*. 
Since most Qing scholars were involved in the marginalia culture, I seek to understand Qing scholars from their marginalia and the scholarly practices related to the marginalia they read, wrote, disseminated, and used. I argue that these Qing scholars did not passively yield to severe political pressure occasioned by the central government and socio-economic transformations; neither did they mechanically transmit philosophical concepts and doctrines. They sought to understand the world and themselves, and tried to live properly in the world under the guidance of the meaning they gained from the texts they read and collated. They expected to search for the Way, or recover the Way of antiquity—trying to build a new world on the foundation of ancient texts. To read and collate books, to research and transcribe texts, to live properly following the doctrines in the classics, and to do anything related to scholarship was their way of conducting “practical affairs,” which, in their opinion, could guide them to a new world, or a world that had long ago been conceived and formulated by sages.

Conventional research on Qing intellectual history has held a general understanding that there are some differences in scholarly method, style, and intellect between scholars of the Qing and the Ming, that is, that there was an Ming-Qing transition or Ming-Qing transformation. Ming learning is considered to have been dominated by the Neo-Confucianism that came into being in the Song dynasty and had two distinct factions: the Cheng-Zhu Learning of Principle and the Lu-Wang Learning of Mind and Heart. Qing learning, however, is believed by many researchers to have been dominated by the evidential research.

The more important question is how much do scholars of the Ming and Qing differ? How did evidential research gather momentum, and how did its popularity wax and wane in different regions and different time periods? How did different groups of Qing scholars treat the legacy of Ming learning?
As discussed in the introduction, Liang Qichao, and other scholars of his generation, stressed discontinuity between the Qing learning and the Ming learning. By declaring that “The point of departure of Ch’ing (Qing) learning was a violent reaction against the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming,”\(^4\) Liang emphasized this difference. Focusing on the prominent scholars of the Qing—mostly the evidential scholars—he argued that it the severe political pressure occasioned by Manchu rule that compelled scholars to conduct *apolitical* evidential research. Liang pointed out the determinative impact of political factors on scholars and their scholarship, and seemed to have the idea that evidential research was prevalent all over the empire. Recent research, especially that by western scholars, also examines the social-economic factors that contributed to the rise of evidential research, and finds that the evidential research was only popular only in some regions rather than the whole empire. Moreover, contrary to the prevailing view, Qian Mu and other scholars have focused on the development of the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang branches of Neo-Confucian thought in the Qing dynasty and found a continuity of Confucian teachings from Ming to Qing. More recently, Yu Yingshi has employed the concept of “inner logic” of intellectual trends “regardless of political, economic and other external factors” to develop Qian Mu’s argument.\(^5\) These scholars have explored the best-known Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang scholars and make the claim that both schools were still rather popular and underwent a great development in the Qing.

These studies are instructive, but they meanwhile raise a host of new questions: Did evidential scholars conduct research employing entirely new approaches? In which aspects and to what extent did they learn from the Ming scholars? How did evidential research influence Neo-Confucian

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\(^4\) Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period*, 27.

scholars, of whatever stripe? Or, more broadly, how did the new scholarship, evidential research, influence scholarly culture and the whole society in the Qing?

To answer these questions, in addition to political and social-economic factors and the evolution of philosophical thought itself, we should also take scholars and their scholarly practices into the account. In this study, I have taken a cultural view of history, concentrating on scholars themselves as real human beings and examining their practices with marginalia, so as to explore the characteristics and transformation of their scholarly styles, thoughts, and mental states.

The scholarly practices entailed with the composition and transcription of marginalia, as undertaken by He Zhuo, Jiang Gao, Yao Shiyu, Weng Fanggang, Zhang Yu, and other lesser-known scholars mentioned in this study, show Qing scholars practicing new ways of doing research, but these scholars also learned from the Ming scholars. In terms of reading ancient texts, Ming scholars liked making emphasis marks and writing literary, historical, and philosophical commentaries, and they published a great many book filled with these devices. These practices were condemned by some of the most prominent evidential scholars in the Qing dynasty. For example, in the Siku zongmu, few books of this kind produced in the Ming were included. Nevertheless, from the marginalia of common Qing scholars, we can see that emphasis marks and commentaries were still rather popular through the whole of the Qing dynasty. Scholars did not do evidential research every time they read a book. They also appreciated the text and commented on it just as Ming scholars had done. The practice of writing and reading commentaries had become a kind of reading habit since the Song, and the Qing inherited this practice from their predecessors. In addition, textual criticism became one of the representative sub-disciplines of evidential research in the Qing. But we should keep in mind that many Qing scholars, especially the ones who lived in the early- and mid-Qing period, were doing textual criticism on Ming editions. These
Ming editions, which the Qing scholars read and collated, were a great scholarly legacy that Qing scholars inherited from the Ming.

Liang Qichao claimed that Qing learning was a “violent reaction” against Song-Ming learning, but this “reaction” was also built on an inheritance. Qian Mu and Yu Yingshi argued that Qing learning was an internal development of Ming learning, but I want to make a complementary claim, that Qing scholars also learned scholarly approaches and reading habits from Ming scholars. The Ming-Qing transition was not only caused by political, social-economic or philosophical factors, but was also the result and manifestation of developments in scholarly culture. The study of Qing scholars’ practices with marginalia can add more details in the understanding of past scholars, and help us drew a broader pictures of Qing scholarship.

In this study, I focused on He Zhuo’s marginalia, discussed their characteristics, investigated their circulation, and explored their influence on later scholars and scholarship. It is just a starting point for marginalia culture. In order to draw a clearer and broader picture, we need to do more works such as cataloguing books that contain marginalia, examining their interactions with other types of texts, and doing more case studies of marginalia on a particular title or by a particular reader.
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——.  *Donghua lu* 東華錄. Photo-reproduction in the *Xuxiu Siku quanshu*.


——. *Jiaochou tongyi tongjie* 校雠通義通解. Annotated by Wang Zhongmin 王重民 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1987).


APPENDIX I

Books Containing He Zhuo’s Marginalia and Their Transcriptions

The table below includes books that contain He Zhuo’s marginalia and their transcriptions. In this table, books are displayed in the four-branch (sibu 四部) classification scheme, following the order in the Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao 四庫全書總目提要. For each copy, I give the title, number of juan, contributor, edition, the location it is held, and the transcriptionist(s). The contributor column lists the author, compiler (abbr. “comp.”), annotator ( abbr. “ann.”), and collator. Abbreviations of libraries are listed at the end of the table. If a copy contains—or is supposed to contain—He Zhuo’s holographic marginalia, the transcriptionist(s) column is left blank; if the transcriptionist is unknown, the transcriptionist(s) column is marked “unknown.” The copies that I have examined have an asterisk (*) following their locations.

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<td>(三國志)</td>
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<td>Chen Shou 陳壽</td>
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<td><em>Yangzi fayan</em> 楊子法言</td>
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