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Beyond East and West: Antiquarianism, Evidential Learning, and Global Trends in Historical Study*

Q. EDWARD WANG

Rowan University

IN 1917, Hu Shi (1891–1962), a Chinese doctoral student working with John Dewey at Columbia University, began his dissertation with the following statement: “That philosophy is conditioned by its method, and that the development of philosophy is dependent upon the development of the logical method, are facts which find abundant illustrations in the history of philosophy both of the West and of the East.”¹ Having arrived in the United States in 1910 with an indemnity scholarship (established by the US government with the remuneration paid by the Qing dynasty for the Boxer Rebellion in 1900), Hu was arguably the first Chinese to ever receive a PhD from a US institution. After his return, he arranged a lecture tour for his mentor to visit China for two years and publicized Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy, which was regarded by him as a succinct introduction to modern scientific culture in the West.² Yet at the same time Hu also published several essays

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¹ Hu Shi (Shih), *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China* (repr., New York: Paragon, 1963), introduction, p. 1.

² See John Dewey, *Lectures in China, 1919–1920*, trans. Robert W. Clopton and Tsuinchou Ou (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1973). Also Barry Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

on classical Chinese learning, especially on the exacting methodology of “evidential learning” (*kaozheng xue*), a major intellectual trend of the high Qing in the eighteenth century, in exegetical study of ancient classics and texts. Hu maintained, reiterating the statement quoted above, that although cultures and histories in East and West were vastly different, there had been a few things in common, such as the way scholars approached an understanding of the past. That is, while Qing scholars were oblivious of the advent of modern science, in conducting “evidential research” (*kaozheng*) of classical texts, they developed a meticulous procedure and a host of sophisticated methods that were *scientific* in nature.³

Hu Shi’s credentials as a modern-trained scholar are unequivocal, as is his conviction in the value and efficacy of modern science.⁴ But why is he so convinced that in pursuing scientific knowledge, it will be useful and beneficial for the Chinese to revisit their past cultural tradition? Do precedents of modern scientific practice exist in Chinese culture, or is there a discernible line that demarcates tradition and modernity? If Qing evidential learning, as Hu claimed, indeed contains scientific elements, to what extent are these elements comparable to and/or compatible with modern science?⁵ Conversely, is the advent of

³ Hu Shi, “Qingdai xuezhede zhixue fangfa” [The Research Methods of Qing Scholars]. See Hu Shi, *Hu Shi zhexue sixiang ziliao xuan* [Selected Sources on Hu Shi’s Philosophical Ideas], ed. Ge Maochun and Li Xingzhi (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1981), 1:184–211.

⁴ For English works on Hu Shi as a modern scholar, see Jerome Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); and Chou Min-chih, *Hu Shih and Intellectual Choice in Modern China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984). There have been a great number of Chinese works on Hu Shi and his position in modern Chinese intellectual history, such as Yü Ying-shih, *Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi shangde Hu Shi* [Hu Shi in Modern Chinese Intellectual History] (Taipei: Lianjing, 1984); and *Chongxun Hu Shi licheng* [Reevaluation of Hu Shi’s Career] (Taipei: Lianjing, 2004).

⁵ Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954–2000). For recent attempts to go beyond Needham’s work, see Morris F. Low, ed., *Beyond Joseph Needham: Science, Technology and Medicine in East and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). For the Jesuits’ effort to introduce Western science to China, see Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, rev. ed. (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2001), pp. 116–120, and his massive *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Joanna Waley-Cohen, “China and Western Technology in the Late Eighteenth Century,” *American Historical Review* 98, no. 5 (1993): 1525–1544; Du Shi-ran and Han Qi, “The Contribution of French Jesuits to Chinese Science in the 17th and 18th centuries,” *Impact of Science on Society* 42, no. 3 (1992): 265–276; D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and West, 1500–1800* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); and for the Jesuit scientific project

modern science a unique Western contribution, or is there a need, as some scholars have recently suggested, to “provincialize” the European experience and reconsider its universality?⁶ There is no gainsaying that modern Western culture has exerted a significant influence in shaping the history of the modern world. Yet one question remains: Was the Western form of modern culture and science simply transplanted into the soils of non-Western regions, or was it grafted onto certain existing cultural traditions? If there were precedents of scientific culture in other traditions, then how did these elements influence scholars in their attempt to accommodate, appropriate, and accept the influence of Western cultures? By studying the rise, development, and characteristics of “evidential learning” in Qing China, this article hopes to offer some preliminary answers to these questions. By examining comparatively the origins of modern historical scholarship of early modern Europe in parallel with that of late imperial China, it also aspires to experiment with the study of comparative historiography, and expand the field of historiographical study that has hitherto been defined and dominated by works written by Euro-American scholars.⁷

in general, Mordechai Feingold, ed., *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003). For the Chinese hermeneutic tradition, see Ching-i Tu, ed., *Classics and Interpretations: The Hermeneutic Traditions in Chinese Culture* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2000); and Lin Qingzhang, *Mingdai kaojuxue yanjiu* [A Study of Evidential Learning in the Ming] (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1986).

⁶ Cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), and R. Bin Wong's *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁷ With almost no exception, most well-known texts in the field of historiography have hitherto centered on the Western tradition, such as Eduard Fueter, *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie*, rev. ed. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1936); G. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1959); James W. Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1962); Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the 20th Century* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1997); and Michael Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999). Those who touched upon non-Western historiography, especially Chinese historiography, such as Herbert Butterfield in his *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship* (London, 1955) and J. H. Plumb in his *The Death of the Past*, rev. ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2003), all attempted to imagine China as a contrasting “other” to the Western model of historiography. There are texts that provide surveys of the field of historiography on a worldwide scale—such as Geoffrey Barraclough's *Main Trends in History* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979); Georg G. Iggers and Harold T. Parker, eds., *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1979); Daniel Woolf, ed., *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland, 1998); and Rolf Torstendahl, ed., *Assessment of 20th Century Historiography* (Stockholm: Royal Academy, 2000)—but they are not studies of comparative historiography per se.

Insofar as the origin of modern Western historiography is concerned, there seems no need to belabor the point that antecedents of modern historical scholarship occurred long before the actual inauguration of the modern era in world history. Thanks to the studies of Arnaldo Momigliano, J. G. A. Pocock, Anthony Grafton, Donald Kelley, Joseph M. Levine, and Jerry H. Bentley, we have gained a good idea how the work of Renaissance humanists and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiquarians gave rise to the theories and praxis that we have identified as characteristics of modern historical study.⁸ In its matured form, represented by the works of Euro-American historians of the nineteenth century, this modern historical scholarship was characterized first by its belief in the meaning of human history and its interest in delineating a master narrative to present a lawlike generalization of historical development, and second by its emphasis on source criticism and verification in documenting and narrating such movement, which occasioned the development of a methodology distinctive to the discipline. More specifically, as most nineteenth-century Western historians championed the necessity of upholding a detached and objective stance, they also believed that the meaning of history could be best illustrated by historical narratives within the national matrix. For Leopold von Ranke (1793–1886), the “father of modern scientific history” in Western historiography, the rise of nation-states prefigured the direction of modern world history, which required historians to document its course with detailed, if detached, narratives grounded in reliable sources. An advocate of source criticism as the prerequisite for historical writing, Ranke devoted himself to the writing of national histories for major European countries.

These two interests (narrative and documentation) per se were not necessarily and uniquely modern. (Historians in the past and across cultures had tried to search for meaning in history and document their findings.) But prior to the nineteenth century, there had not been any

⁸ See, for example, Arnaldo Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966) and *The Classical Foundation of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Donald Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law, and History in French Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); and *Bring Out Your Dead: The Past as Revelation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987); and Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

serious attempts to integrate them in historical writing. In ancient Greece, the interest in preserving the memory of historic events helped establish historical study as a recognized form of learning in the West. But because Greek historians by and large confined their narratives to contemporary events, their claim to historical factuality, as best shown in Thucydides's investigative approaches, were also limited. Once they ventured into earlier periods, as Herodotus and some others did, their accounts revealed a naive methodology.⁹ During the Roman period as well as much of the Middle Ages, there was progress toward historical narration that adumbrated the tendency of history and speculated about its meaning. But in methodology, a similar degree of credulity remained, as legends and miracles were readily incorporated into historical accounts. In fact, even in the Renaissance, when such humanist historians as Machiavelli and Guicciardini wrote histories to revive and emulate the tradition of classical historiography, their main interest still focused on demonstrating the use of history in contemporary politics, rather than on improving the validity of their sources. The Renaissance was nonetheless significant to the development of modern historiography, for it revived the interest, not only among the historians but also in the general public, in classical Greek and Roman culture. As many studies have shown, this interest was conducive to the development of both the beliefs and the methods that were to shape the modern historical discipline.¹⁰

THE RETURN OF ANTIQUITY: EUROPE AND CHINA

In retrospect, the interest that characterized the European Renaissance is not so particular, for human beings' curiosity for a time in the past is almost universal. What is interesting was how the humanist schol-

⁹ Arnaldo Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1977), pp. 9–24, and *Studies in Historiography*, pp. 127–142. It is worth noting that in more recent years, scholars have evaluated ancient historians in a more positive light, drawing attention to the literary effect of their works. Cf. John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983); and Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

¹⁰ See Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969); Nancy Struener, *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970); Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); and Kelley, *Modern Historical Scholarship*.

ars in the Renaissance went about reviving Greek and Roman culture after the interregnum of the so-called Middle Ages. While the Middle Ages was by no means a “dark age” culpable for destroying classical culture, its length—almost a thousand years—nevertheless mounted a challenge for the humanists in their search for and restoration of classical texts (both the secular ones from ancient Greek and Roman times and sacred Old and New Testaments) in their originality. The humanists took pains to produce variorums of Latin texts and imbricate them with limpets of meticulously researched notes and comments, hoping to throw into relief the originality of a classical work against its various declensions and translations. Their interest and effort gave rise to the antiquarian movement, stretching from the late Renaissance all the way to the early nineteenth century.¹¹ Sharing the humanists’ penchant for classical culture, the antiquarians not only worked on Latin and Greek texts but also searched for material remains that ranged from coins and armor to epigraphs and medals. Aided by the availability of printing technology, the antiquarians published works and exchanged research findings with their peers. Hence, as the research of Arnaldo Momigliano and Anthony Grafton has convincingly demonstrated, they formed a Republic of Letters across Europe, which connected grand buildings in Oxford and Cambridge with noisy streets in Leiden and Paris. It was in this Republic of Letters that the scholars, whether working on texts or artifacts, honed and perfected their skills and techniques in textual and historical criticism. Both of these, needless to say, have been deemed essential to the work of the historian.¹²

There are, however, distinctions between the work of historians and antiquarians with regard to their interest in the past. Momigliano has furnished a pithy observation: “I have been fascinated,” he said, “by a type of man so near to my profession, so transparently sincere in his vocation, so understandable in his enthusiasms, and yet so deeply mysterious in his ultimate aims: the type of man who is interested in

¹¹ As late as nineteenth-century England, the antiquarian tradition remained quite alive. See Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–86* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹² In addition to Grafton and Momigliano’s works cited previously, recent studies of the Republic of Letters have included Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995); and Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc’s Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000).

historical facts without being interested in history.”¹³ Though uninterested in narrating history, the antiquarians made an important contribution to change in historical thinking. Because their work centered on restoring ancient artifacts and attesting to their value, the antiquarians eventually set out to shake the status of ancient authors and knock down their privileged position as authoritative voices about the past. In their research, the antiquarians found many inconsistencies in the works of, for example, Livy and Tacitus, when compared with the material evidence.¹⁴ This result was almost bound to happen, given the imperfection of ancient historians in methodology. What the antiquarians attempted was merely to demonstrate the superior value of their work, not necessarily to sneer at the ancient authors. But for a modern historian, their findings came to shape the very idea characterizing the practice of modern historiography: researching constantly on the past and rewriting its history in order to succeed and supplant the works that appeared in the previous ages, including those by the once-revered classical authors. Barthold Niebuhr’s success in establishing himself as an authority in Roman history, rivaling if not replacing Livy, is a telling example.¹⁵

In other words, in determining which kind of work spoke most authoritatively of the past, a meticulously glossed text or a well-preserved piece of textile, the antiquarians challenged historians to respect facts. This ideal not only motivated and characterized the work of scholars from the Renaissance on in Europe but also, as Grafton finds in Benjamin Elman, the evidential scholars in Qing China in their attempt “to seek truth in actual facts” (*shishi qiushi*). Grafton has noticed that despite the distance in culture, space, and time, there was a similar intellectual pursuit in both cultures that began as a search for moral

¹³ Momigliano, *Classical Foundation*, p. 54. A fuller development of Momigliano’s argument is found in Pocock’s *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 2; and D. R. Woolf’s *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

¹⁴ Momigliano offered a quotation by a seventeenth-century scholar, which is illuminating: “It is much safer to quote a medal than an author for in this case you do not appeal to Suetonius or to Lampridius, but to the emperor himself or to the whole body of a Roman Senate.” See his *Studies in Historiography*, pp. 14–15. Also, Grafton, *Bring Out Your Dead*; Kelley, *Modern Historical Scholarship*; and Joseph M. Levine, *The Autonomy of History: Truth and Method from Erasmus to Gibbon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and *Humanism and History*. Daniel Woolf’s *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500–1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) gives a detailed example how the antiquarians gradually dismantled the authority of classical authors.

¹⁵ A discussion of Niebuhr’s importance in modern historiography is in G. Gooch’s *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 14–23.

exemplars in the ancient, entailing the work of textual and historical criticism, and later turned out to be “a high intellectual calling in its own right”—that is, to identify facts and seek the truth in them.¹⁶ Yü Ying-shih has also pointed out that in eighteenth-century China there existed a cultural milieu that favored empiricist exercise of classical and historical study whose impact, while occurring in a different time, was comparable to that of positivism in nineteenth-century Europe.¹⁷ From different educational backgrounds and research interests, they all seem to agree with Hu Shi that in Chinese classical learning of the Qing period there emerged a cultural development parallel to that of early modern Europe. Moreover, this development appeared to have also played a crucial role in determining the way in which the modern Chinese absorbed and appropriated Western cultural influences from the nineteenth century on.

In order to show how this cultural tradition emerged in Qing China, we will begin our story *in medias res* in the eleventh century, or the Song period. This period witnessed the revival of Confucian learning because from the third century on, China’s cultural scene had gone through a notable transformation, marked by the decline of classical Confucian culture, the intrusion of Buddhism, and the emergence of Daoism or neo-Daoism. In combating the strong presence of Buddhism and Daoism, Song Confucian scholars adopted a twofold strategy. On the one hand, they encouraged “intellectualism,” hoping to fathom the meaning of the Confucian classics through exegetical study and acquisition of knowledge. By acknowledging the possibility of cultivating one’s moral mind through meditation, they, on the other hand, also promoted “anti-intellectualism,” suggesting an alternative approach to the Dao without the help of knowledge distilled in the classics.¹⁸ That is, Song Confucians were also influenced by Buddhist practices. Dur-

¹⁶ Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*, pp. 44–46. In his “Neo-Confucian Cultivation and the Seventeenth-century ‘Enlightenment,’” Wm. Theodore de Bary also compares the similar trajectories of European and East Asian history. See *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 141–216.

¹⁷ Yü Ying-shih, *Lun Dai Zhen yu Zhang Xuecheng* [On Dai Zhen and Zhang Xuecheng] (Hong Kong: Longmen shudian, 1976), pp. 197–242; and *Lishi yu sixiang* [History and Ideas] (Taipei: Lianjing, 1977), preface, pp. 1–14.

¹⁸ Yü, *Lishi yu sixiang*, pp. 87–120. For the Song revival of Confucianism and its influence in the Ming and Qing periods, see de Bary’s many works. A more recent discussion on the subject is found in Benjamin Elman, “Rethinking ‘Confucianism’ and ‘Neo-Confucianism’ in Modern Chinese History,” *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. Benjamin Elman, John Duncan, and Herman Ooms (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2002), pp. 518–554.

ing the Ming dynasty, the “anti-intellectual” approach, championed by Wang Yangming (1472–1529) and his followers in the “school of the Heart-and-Mind,” gained a broad appeal, which further amplified the Buddhist influence. By popularizing the belief in reaching sagehood through introspection, Ming scholars advocated an ahistorical attitude toward the study of the classics.¹⁹ This ahistorical bent shaped the general cultural atmosphere in the late Ming, in which the study of the classics was not deemed essential by scholars.

During the dynastic transition from the Ming to the Qing, there appeared critics of the Wang Yangming school. Thus the pendulum began to swing back in the direction of intellectualism. Gu Yanwu (1613–1682), a prominent scholar of his age, joined the Return [to Antiquity] Society (*Fushe*) and renewed the call for studying the classics. He traveled widely across China, not only to search for texts and acquire knowledge, but also to learn about the world and the means of solving social problems—both in sharp contrast to the approach of the Wang Yangming school. Moreover, unlike his Ming predecessors who had claimed that one could reach sagehood intuitively in a moment of epiphany, Gu advocated a much humbler approach. He emphasized the need to acquire a sense of humility before the ancient sages; to improve one’s moral character, one must study with care and respect the classics. In his own classical study, Gu prized the method of phonology in determining the pronunciation of the characters in ancient texts and tracing their changes over the years. Although Gu was not the first who noticed the use of phonology, it was he who initiated the revivalist project in the Qing with the aim to go around Song and Ming scholarship and directly to classical Confucianism during and prior to the Han period (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.).²⁰

In order to revive classical Confucianism, Gu’s followers in the Qing improved upon the method of phonology. In addition, they employed an array of other approaches ranging from phonology, philology, etymology, and paleography to geography, history, epigraphy, and astronomy.²¹ Their goal was to eschew metaphysical speculation and religious

¹⁹ On-cho Ng, “A Tension in Ch’ing Thought: ‘Historicism’ in Seventeenth-and-Eighteenth-Century Chinese Thought,” *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, no. 4 (1993): 561–583.

²⁰ Gu’s advocacy of phonological study was anticipated by such Ming scholars as Chen Di’s (1541–1617). For the prototypical evidential study in the Ming, see Lin Qingzhang, *Mingdai kaojuxue yanjiu*.

²¹ Qi Yongxiang, *Qianjia kaojuxue yanjiu* [A Study of Evidential Learning in the Qianlong and Jiaqing Reigns] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998); Huang

intuition and wrest the true meaning from the classics through hermeneutic and exegetical study, namely, to “search for truth in actual facts.” With its emphasis on evidence, Qing learning marked a departure from Ming learning. It was regarded as “practical learning” (*shixue*), and its practicality was not defined exclusively in scholarly terms but had broad social, political, and economic implications.²² It was also referred to as “unadorned learning” (*puxue*) because it was primarily concerned with textual and historical criticism, in contrast to the earlier ontological desire to explain the “principle” (*li*) and the Dao. Clearly pursuing these different interests notwithstanding, the Qing scholars did not name their study “Qing learning” (*Qingxue*)—it was later assigned to them by their followers in both Japan and China.²³ Instead, out of their revivalist interest, they identified their work with that of the Han period, or Han learning (*Hanxue*), and contrasted it with the Confucian scholarship in the Song, or Song learning (*Songxue*).

By distinguishing between Han and Song learning, or classical Confucianism before or during the Han period and its more recent development during the Song and Ming periods, the Qing scholars demonstrated a historical-mindedness, or historical consciousness, that had not been so well pronounced before.²⁴ It suggested an awareness of anachronism, a sense of change in historical time, which had both theoretical and methodological implications. On the theoretical level, this historical-mindedness gave arms to the Qing scholars for their challenge to Buddhist-influenced Ming Confucianism, for it revealed

Aiping, *Puxue yu Qingdai shehui* [Unadorned Learning and Qing Society] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2003); Hamaguchi Fujio, *Shindai kōkyōgaku no shisō shi teki kinkyū* [A Study of Intellectual History of Qing Evidential Learning] (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1994); Kinoshita Tetsuya, *Shinchō kōshōgaku to sono jidai* [Qing Evidential Learning and Its Times] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1996); and Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*.

²² Chen Guying et al., eds., *Mingqing shixue jianshi* [An Outline History of the Practical Learning in the Ming and Qing] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 1994) gives a general overview of the ebb and flow of this cultural trend, as does *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). Richard J. Smith has considered “practical learning” one of the main characteristics of the Qing culture in his *China's Cultural Heritage: The Ch'ing Dynasty, 1644–1911* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994), p. 139, as has Wm. Theodore de Bary in his “Some Common Tendencies in Neo-Confucianism,” *Confucianism in Action*, ed. David Nivison and Arthur Wright (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 25–49.

²³ For the use of the term “Qing learning” by Ōta Kinjō (1765–1825) and other Japanese scholars to delineate the change in Chinese scholarship from the Han, through the Song, to the Qing, see Nakayama Kyūshirō, “Kōshōgaku gaisetsu” [A Survey of Evidential Study], in *Kinsei nihon no jugaku* [Confucianism in Early Modern Japan] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1939), pp. 1–2.

²⁴ Ng, “Tension in Ch'ing Thought,” 567f.

the time difference and distance between Han and Song learning. This distance helped them realize that though revered as authoritative spokesmen for Confucian teaching, the Song and Ming Confucians lived in a much later period than the age when the Confucian classics were first compiled and studied. By taking this historicist perspective, the Qing scholars not only undermined the authority of the Song-Ming interpretation of Confucian classics, they also came to “historicize” or “desacralize” the classics by regarding them simply as historical records or documents of ancient times.²⁵ On the methodological level, this awareness of the change of time called for the use of new methods in conducting classical study. Gu Yanwu and others were drawn to the study of phonology and paleography because it helped them to see that language and pronunciation were diachronic, as they changed with the passage of time. In order to demonstrate the change, the Qing scholars eventually turned to the study of history.²⁶

This seemingly circular development of Confucian learning in China, from the Han to the Song and the Qing’s “return” to the Han, showed a tripartite periodization by the Qing scholars with respect to Chinese intellectual development. This periodization readily reminds us of the similar historical perception of the Renaissance humanists in constructing their sense of the past: from ancient Greece and Rome through the Middle Ages to their own age. Like the Qing scholars, the humanists were clearly aware of the periodical difference between the world of the ancient and the world of the Christians. But they were equally unsure about the world of their own time. The *Querelle des anciens et des modernes* and the Battle of the Books in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France and England suggested that the Renaissance humanists and the antiquaries never fully overcame the sense of cultural inferiority in facing the ancient world. Nonetheless, both the humanists in Europe and the evidential scholars in Qing China were certain that they could perform better than their immediate predecessors had. And this confidence drew from their superb and superior skills and techniques in conducting textual criticism on the validity of the classics whereby they could winnow out forgeries from the authentic.

²⁵ See Benjamin Elman, “The Historicization of Classical Learning in Ming-Ch’ing China,” *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Q. Edward Wang and Georg Iggers (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2002), pp. 101–146, and Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 69–70.

²⁶ Hamaguchi, *Shindai kōkyōgaku*, 72ff. Hamaguchi argues that Gu Yanwu’s study of phonology and etymology contributed to a historical-mindedness in the Qing. Donald Kelley has noted the similar development in the case of Lorenzo Valla for Europe in his *Modern Historical Scholarship*, pp. 19–52.

Lorenzo Valla's (1406–1457) unmasking of the *Donation of Constantine* was a well-known example. By exposing the church's fabrication of the *Donation of Constantine*, his work undermined not only the authority of the Catholic Church but that of medieval culture as a whole, hence heralding the Renaissance of classical culture. In early Qing China, Yan Ruoqu's (1636–1704) *Evidential Analysis of the Old Text Documents* (*Shangshu guwen shuzheng*) exerted a similarly seminal influence. Yan's interest in the *Classic of Documents* (*Shangshu*) was inspired by Zhu Xi (1130–1200), the doyen of Song Confucian learning. It also, to some extent, responded to the initiative by the Qing government to supplant Ming Confucianism with Zhu Xi's scholarship.²⁷ But Yan was also clearly intrigued with the new methodological interest advanced by Gu Yanwu. Like Gu, Yan showed his diligence in classical study, which meant in his case to collect and compare variorums of the *Documents* produced by New Text and Old Text schools in various ages. He also adopted and advanced Gu's phonology/philology-centered approach, which helped him to examine critically those texts, especially the difference between the New Text and Old Text *Documents*. (The Old Text classics, in pre-Han calligraphical style, were allegedly recovered from Confucius's residence in the first century B.C.E. whereas the New Text classics were written in the clerical script prevalent in the Han.) His study yielded an important finding: by examining the syntax, rhetoric, and grammar of various versions of the *Documents* with philological and historical methods, Yan concluded that the Old Text *Documents* was anachronistic; certain chapters had not been written in an age as ancient as they claimed. Because these chapters contained passages from which the Song Confucians had drawn instances in support of their metaphysical readings of Confucianism, Yan's rejection of the Old Text *Documents* amounted to a serious blow to that legitimacy.²⁸ It showed, perhaps to Yan's own surprise because of his initial sympathy for Zhu Xi, that the interpretative edifice established by Zhu

²⁷ This "return" to Song neo-Confucianism was endorsed also by the Qing court at the time. See Chen Zuwu, *Qingchu xueshu sibanlu* [Reflections on Early Qing Scholarship] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1992), pp. 295–296. Also On-cho Ng, *Cheng-Zhu Confucianism in the Early Qing: Li Guangdi (1642–1718) and Qing Learning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); and Gao Xiang, *Jindai de chushu: 18 shiji zhongguo guanlian bianqian yu shehui fazhan* [The Dawn of the Modern: Conceptual Change and Social Development in 18th-Century China] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000).

²⁸ Benjamin Elman, "The Search for Evidence from China: Qing Learning and Kōshōgaku in Tokugawa Japan," *Sagacious Monks and Bloodthirsty Warriors: Chinese Views of Japan in the Ming-Qing Period*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Norwalk: Eastbridge, 2002), pp. 166–171.

and his followers and backed up by the Qing rulers actually rested on a jerry-built foundation.

Although Yan's critical examination of the *Documents* did not go into circulation until the mid eighteenth century, it presaged the development in Qing evidential scholarship in its challenge to the Song and Ming legacy and its effort to "seek truth from facts." If Yan's success lay in his erudition and diligence, attesting to the rise of "intellectualism," this new trend had found an expressive exponent. In the early eighteenth century, Hui Dong (1697–1758), a literatus from Suzhou, gained a reputation for his erudition in classical study. In his exegetical study of the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing*), which stood at the center of his career, Hui gathered together a great number of variorums, many of them from the Han period, and examined their validity and assessed their values. His industry led him to identify different schools of interpretation in the Han on the *Changes*, trace each of their origins to an earlier age, and examine how they evolved in subsequent ages. To borrow Anthony Grafton's description of the work of the Renaissance humanists, Hui Dong showed that "one surviving manuscript was the parent of all the rest" in his exemplary study. Moreover, this "strict historical reasoning," which had energized the humanist scholars to search for the original ancient text and identify its offspring and derivatives in later times,²⁹ also enabled Hui to conclude that despite the prevalent bias against Han learning, the Han scholars actually produced exegeses of the classics in superior quality, for the Han predated the Song and hence was closer to the ancient source.

Hui Dong's advocacy of the superiority of Han learning over Song learning rested on a historicist understanding of Confucianism. Buoyed by this historicism, Hui gathered a group of students in Suzhou to embark on the project of restoring Han Confucian learning, which opened up new horizons for Qing scholarship. In their attempt to demonstrate Han superiority in Confucian learning, Hui and his followers expanded the scope of their study in both content and methodology. Methodologically, they followed Gu Yanwu's teaching and enthroned the study of phonology, paleography, etymology, and philology, all of which had been relegated to "lesser learning" (*xiaoxue*) by Song Confucians, and deemed them indispensable for understanding the classics. They discovered that owing to the crudeness of the Chinese writing system in antiquity, there had been a greater character-interchangeability in ancient texts; namely, some characters were used in place of

²⁹ Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*, p. 9.

other paleographically more complicated ones because of their similar pronunciations. Lacking sufficient knowledge in phonology, however, previous scholars had assigned meanings to those “borrowed” characters according to their paleographic designs rather than their pronunciations. In order to reveal these mistakes, Hui Dong and his students amassed a number of texts from different periods and demonstrated how certain characters had been interchangeable in antiquity because of their similar pronunciations, and how the pronunciations became dissimilar in later ages.³⁰ Their approach shows that although their point of departure was to revere the Han, their endeavor invariably involved an overhaul of the Confucian scholarly tradition *in toto*.

Thanks to their erudition and diligence, thus Hui Dong and his disciples not only rehabilitated Han Confucianism but also established the contrast between Han learning and Song learning. Through most of the Qing, scholars were to be divided by their preference and position regarding the Han and Song legacy in Confucian study. To some extent, this Han-Song debate and divide, established formally by Jiang Fan (1761–1831) in a later time, was comparable to the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns in Europe, appearing roughly the same time, in scale and significance.³¹ Yet the differences between the two were also quite obvious. If in the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns neither side seemed able to persuade the other at the time, the Moderns ultimately came out as the winner, as shown in the prevalence of scientism in the nineteenth century. By contrast, the outcome of the Han and Song divide seemed to have an opposite effect: the revival of Han learning (the Ancient) was achieved at the expense of Song learning (the Modern), though it does not mean the latter has since lost completely its appeal. As we shall mention below, the evidential learning as an intellectual movement petered out, at least in China, in the beginning of the nineteenth century. But during the eighteenth century, its phonology-based exegetical studies, exemplified by the work of Yan Ruoqu and Hui Dong, did manage to hit the Achilles’ heel of Song Confucian learning: if Song Confucians had drawn their ideas either from unauthentic documents or by misread-

³⁰ Hui Dong, for example, stated that “because the time comprises of the ancient (*gu*) and the modern (*jin*), [so that we] cannot mistake the modern pronunciation with the ancient one.” Quoted in Li Kai, *Hui Dong pingzhuan* [Critical Biography of Hui Dong] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1997), p. 67.

³¹ A series of recent studies have been done by Joseph M. Levine in his *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), *Between the Ancients and the Moderns: Baroque Culture in Restoration England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), and *Humanism and History*.

ing the classics, how could their interpretation acquire authority? In other words, classicism played a notable role in initiating the Han and Song debate and the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns. In the end, we find that a sense of presentism prevailed, as in the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns. And in a more latent form, this presentism also characterized the work of Qing evidential scholars. Though their study was more or less a reincarnation of Han learning, it demonstrated nonetheless their confidence in disputing with the accepted tradition. And this confidence came from their erudition.

Indeed, galvanized by their interest in reviving Han learning, Qing evidential scholars went on to approach a better, fuller understanding of the ancient world in its entirety. This was just as in the Renaissance and thereafter European humanists and antiquarians also went beyond the works of Polybius, Livy, and Tacitus, in hopes of obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the whole classical world.³² In 1757 Hui Dong met Dai Zhen (1724–1777), a promising young scholar thirty years his junior, who was not only to support his research on Han learning but also to expand it to a new level, fully demonstrating the erudition and comprehensiveness of Qing evidential study. After the meeting, Dai turned to support Hui, not so much for Hui's worship of the Han as for Hui's belief that philological study ought to be the key to understanding the sages' teachings. If for Hui and his followers philology-centered classical study meant a focused study on comparing the exegeses and glosses of Han and post-Han scholars and exhuming their vicissitudes, Dai had a much greater goal and developed a more sophisticated method for it. He tended to regard the philological approach, as well as the historical approach developed by himself and others of the age, more as the means with which he could discover the "meanings and principles" in the Confucian classics. That is, Dai retained a metaphysical interest, one that often characterized the work of Song Confucians.³³ According to Jiao Xun (1763–1820), Dai Zhen's admirer, Dai's approach differed from Hui Dong's revivalism, or classicism, because the latter had its inherent problem: since Hui wanted to restore the Han scholars' exegeses and glosses of the Confucian classics but not the classics themselves, his intent had a subversive effect on the revivalist cause—it championed an erroneous idea that the Han works were equivalent to the classics, without taking into account that

³² Grafton, *Bring Out Your Dead*, pp. 115–116.

³³ See Yü, *Dai Zhen yu Zhang Xuecheng* and *Lishi yu sixiang*, and Hamaguchi, *Shindai kōkyōgaku*.

the Han scholars had lived several hundred years after Confucius.³⁴ Jiao's stricture on Hui Dong underscored a significant development in Qing evidential scholarship—from the “search for the Han” (*qiuhan*) in Hui Dong to the “search for the truth” (*qiushi*) in Dai Zhen, though this development, it is important to note, did not diminish Qing evidential scholars' respect for the classics.

BETWEEN ANTIQUARIANS AND HISTORIANS

In commenting on the antiquarian endeavor in Britain, Joseph M. Levine states, “it is clear, then, that all these men had learned the first lesson of classical scholarship: that a proper understanding of the past depended upon a mastery of the language of the past, and that language was itself historical and could only be understood in its setting.”³⁵ That is, philology is the primary; from it emerges a sense of historical-mindedness. This observation also adumbrates the trajectory of the Qing evidential movement. As a supporter of Hui Dong, Dai Zhen was famously known for making the following statement: “The Classics provide the route to the Dao. What illuminate the Dao are their words. How words are formed can be grasped only through [a knowledge of] philology and paleography. From [the study of] primary and derived characters we can master the language. Through the language we can penetrate the mind and will of the ancient sages and worthies.”³⁶

Dai's own study in philological study, however, differed from and improved upon Hui's work. Eschewing Hui's obstinate bias for Han learning, Dai attempted to check the validity of the classics by reconstructing the historical contexts and analyzing their changes in developing Confucian hermeneutic culture.³⁷ His breadth enabled him to further Hui's finding that many more characters had been interchangeable in ancient times than in later times because the ancients pronounced certain vowels and consonants differently; without knowledge of such

³⁴ See Zheng Jixiong, *Qingru mingzhu shuping* [Selected Readings of Famous Works of Qing Confucians] (Taipei: Da'an chubanshe, 2001), p. 268; and Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 95.

³⁵ Levine, *Humanism and History*, p. 90. Donald Kelley has also made the same observation in his *Modern Historical Scholarship*.

³⁶ Translated and quoted in Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 31, with modifications.

³⁷ For the hermeneutic tradition in Chinese culture, see Tu, *Classics and Interpretations*; John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

differences, one would not be able to understand the character-interchangeability in ancient texts. Dai went on to develop a new phonological theory, offering a systematic reconstruction of the evolving pronunciations of the vowels and syllables through the ages. His effort, along with that of others at the time and after, turned the study of phonology into a trademark of Qing evidential learning.³⁸ If in eighteenth-century Europe, as a result of the antiquarian enterprise, “philology [was] once a handmaiden, now a queen,” the same could be said about the status change of phonology as well as philology in Qing China.³⁹

But Dai Zhen’s own research did not stop here, nor did the Qing evidential movement. Reflecting on the legacy of Hui Dong, Dai made another important statement: “Philology clarifies the meaning of the ancient classics. And the ancient classics clarify the principles and meanings of the sages and worthies. Since human minds are the same, so our minds therefore are also clarified. The meanings and principles exist nowhere other than in the classical regulations and institutions.”⁴⁰ In the last year of his life (1777), Dai Zhen stressed the point again, with a clearer expression. “One cannot,” he said, “meet Confucius and Mencius without the Six Classics. [Yet to understand the Classics], one has first to study the etymology, institutions, and referents so that one can master the language.”⁴¹ Historical study, Dai argued, not only complements but also completes the study of philology.⁴²

Two issues are worth consideration. One is that Dai emphasizes the importance of philology so that one can understand the classics. Through philological study, he hopes to plumb the “principles and

³⁸ This is the main argument made by Hamaguchi in his *Shindai kōkyogaku*, though others, such as Qi Yongxiang in his *Qianjia kaojuxue yanjiu*, have also noticed the importance of phonological study in Qing evidential learning.

³⁹ The aphorism was given by Paul Hazard and cited in Donald R. Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 210.

⁴⁰ Dai Zhen, *Dai Zhen quanji* [Complete Works of Dai Zhen] (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 1997), 6:504.

⁴¹ Hamaguchi, *Shindai kōkyogaku*, p. 194.

⁴² Dai’s and other Qing evidential scholars’ advocacy of a historicist approach to interpreting the classics, to certain extent, was comparable to the one advanced by the Antiochene school in the Christian hermeneutic tradition of the third and fourth centuries, whereas the approach of the Wang Yangming school could be compared with the allegorical, mystical reading of biblical texts advocated by the Alexandrian school, the antithesis of the Antiochene school. See *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, ed. and trans. Karfried Froelich (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Peter R. L. Brown, *The Rise of Christianity: Triumph and Diversity, 200–1000* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), and *Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*.

meanings” of the sages’ teachings. Second, he adds a new dimension to this search, as he believes that the “principles and meanings” also existed in ancient regulations and institutions. The first issue speaks to the “ultimate concern” of Qing evidential learning, which not only loomed large in the background but also was *de facto* its *raison d’être*.⁴³ The second issue points to the historical dimension of Qing learning, advancing the belief that the Dao is grounded in actual history. By stating that the ancient institutions ensconced the “principles and meanings” of the sages’ teachings, Dai extended the revivalism that had motivated the cause of evidential research from textual criticism to historical criticism. And he did it with a more definite certitude.⁴⁴ Dai’s belief that one can locate the Dao in history seems to anticipate the epistemological assumption that was to animate the research interest in Rankean historiography. This idea presupposes the sameness of the human mind in both past and present as the basis for historical understanding. In Dai Zhen’s case, he believed that this constant human mind allowed the sages of the past to enlighten their posterity of the present. Ranke, disdainful of Hegel’s arrogance in philosophizing about the course of world history, emphasized that the historian should adopt a humbler approach by simply describing it, for although the historian is unable to plumb God’s grand design for human history, he can describe and understand, through empathy and *Ahnung*, the behaviors and ideas of people who lived in the past.⁴⁵

By introducing the necessity of studying ancient institutions, Dai

⁴³ See Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshushi* [Chinese Intellectual History of the Last Three Centuries], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937); Yü, *Dai Zhen yu Zhang and Lishi yu sixiang*; Hamaguchi, *Shindai kōkyōgaku*; and more recently, On-cho Ng, “The Epochal Concept of ‘Early Modernity’ and the Intellectual History of Late Imperial China,” *Journal of World History*, 14 (2003): 37–61.

⁴⁴ For the historicization of classical study, as shown in Zhang Xuecheng’s statement “All Six Classics are only histories” (*lijing jieshiye*), see Zhang Xuecheng, “Da Shao Eryun shu” [A Reply to Shao Eryun], *Wenshi tongyi xinbian* [A New Edition of the General Meanings of Literature and History], ed. Cang Xiuliang (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), pp. 553–555. Also Li, *Dai Zhen pingzhuan*, 415f.; and perhaps most expressively, Elman, “Historicization of Classical Learning in Ming-Ch’ing China,” *Turning Points in Historiography*, pp. 101–103.

⁴⁵ Ranke believed that the historian could “grasp the event itself in its human comprehensibility, its unity, and its fullness” and that he could “behold them [historical events] and observe them” and “develop a sympathy for them.” Wilhelm von Humboldt, who belonged in the same idealist philosophic tradition, stated more clearly that this epistemological ability was *a priori* given in humans: “When two beings are completely separated by a chasm, there is no bridge of communication between them; and in order to understand each other, they must, in some other sense, have already understood each other.” Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers and Konrad von Moltke (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1973), pp. 138, 100, and 16.

Zhen thus amplified the historicism embedded in Qing evidential learning. This historicism was reflected in its motto, “to seek truth in actual facts” (*shishi qiushi*), which called for a wide array of research unprecedented in its scale. Although *shishi* is translated here as “actual facts,” it has a much broader connotation, for *shi* can also mean “matter.” Thus *shishi* can also be understood as “concrete things,” “practical matters,” and also “actual artifacts.” Indeed, the evidential project was an antiquarian movement, aiming to study anything extant and concrete in the ancient world. The breadth of their pursuit too was manifest in another term used by the scholars in referring to their work: *mingwu* and *dianzhang*. The *dianzhang* is a combination of the characters *dian* (the classics) and *zhang* (regulations). It thus refers to a host of revered texts. The term *mingwu*, combining the characters of *ming* (names) and *wu* (things), connotes a broad meaning that basically refers to anything in the world. It means literally “names and their referents,” or simply, “referents.” To study the *mingwu* suggests a comprehensive project on identifying things in the world and determining whether their references were accurate.⁴⁶ Thus the “search for truth in actual facts” meant that the Qing evidential scholars studied not only texts but also artifacts. And in order to conduct either study effectively, they must situate it in the apposite historical context. Historical study, as a result, flourished from the mid eighteenth century on, as a corollary of the maturing process of evidential research.

Though a polymath with a clear understanding of the importance of historical study, Dai Zhen was not generally considered a historian in his time, nor did he devote most of his time to historical study.⁴⁷ The honor belonged to his cohorts Wang Mingsheng (1722–1798) and Qian Daxin (1728–1804). Like Dai, Wang and Qian had acquired all the traits of an accomplished evidential scholar of their age—they had studied and published on philology, epigraphy, phonology, etymology, and paleography. In Qian’s case, he also studied Mongolian and possibly other foreign languages.⁴⁸ Moreover, they studied history and pub-

⁴⁶ For a brief discussion of the study of the *mingwu* in textual criticism, see Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 80–81. For the discussion on the definition of the *mingwu* and its broad implication for Qing scholarship, see *Qianjia xuezhede zhijing fangfa* [The Method Used by the Scholars of the Qianlong and Jiaqing Reigns in Studying the Classics], ed. Jiang Qihua (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 2000), 2:1035–1036.

⁴⁷ Dai Zhen was involved in compiling local gazetteers, in which he implemented his antiquarian interest in using both material and written sources. See Li, *Dai Zhen pingzhuān*, pp. 245–278.

⁴⁸ Qian’s knowledge of Mongol is noted by Du Weiyun in his *Qindai shixue yu shijia* [History and Historians in the Qing Dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 300.

lished historical works, including *Critical Study of the Seventeen Dynastic Histories* (*Shiqishi shangque*) by Wang and *Examination of Variances in the Twenty-two Dynastic Histories* (*Nianershi kaoyi*) by Qian. Wang and Qian shared Dai's belief that classical study entailed the study of history and that, to some extent, whether in methodology or epistemology, classical study was de facto a study of history.

Indeed, since history became indispensable in classical study, reconsiderations of their relationships began to appear in the mid eighteenth century. Lu Wenzhao (1718–1795), for example, noticed that the difference did not exist in antiquity.⁴⁹ In his preface to Zhao Yi's (1727–1814) *Notation Book to the Twenty-two Dynastic Histories* (*Nianershi zhaji*), a work resembling those of Wang Mingsheng and his own, Qian Daxin remarks that “in antiquity, there was no difference between the classics and history; when Confucius compiled the Six Classics, two historical works, *Book of Documents* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, were among them, which became exemplars of historiography.” That is, history was on a par with the classics in terms of its sociopolitical function.⁵⁰ Echoing Qian Daxin, Wang Mingsheng set out to compare the epistemological commonality between history and classics. In the study of the classics, Wang emphasized, one should not indulge in empty, metaphysical discussion, nor should that be done in the study of history. Historical study, Wang emphasized, should not seek laws and lessons through speculative discussions and regard passing moral judgment as its sole purpose. Rather, it should ensure the factuality of events and records in order to seek out the truth. Thus, to Wang, the two subjects (the study of classics and the study of history) are similar.⁵¹ When Wang remarked that establishing historical factuality ought to take priority in the work of the historian over his moral obligation, he was expressing the same principle as Ranke did a hundred years later. Because of his famous aphorism, “*wie es eigentlich gewesen*,” which he made in critiquing the moral concern of Renaissance historiography, Ranke was later hailed by modern historians as the “father of historical science.” His religious, political, and philosophical propensities were

⁴⁹ See Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 109.

⁵⁰ Qian Daxin emphasized that the difference between history and the classics was anything but a later, unfortunate development. See his preface to Zhao Yi's *Nianershi zhaji* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), pp. 1a–2a.

⁵¹ For Wang Mingsheng's opinion on how historical study complements the study of the classics, see his *Shiqishi shangque*, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* [Expanded Completed Library of Four Treasures] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), preface, 452:138.

overlooked.⁵² Wang Mingsheng was not given such an honor in his time, though his opinion was by no means an isolated voice either. In commenting on previous histories, Qian Daxin echoed Wang's point by stating, "to record history, the historian must not beautify the beauty and conceal the evil. When the records are made squarely with the facts, the right and the wrong will then reveal themselves. If the historian, in order to blame or praise, tempers his records, it destroys the *raison d'être* of his work."⁵³ Here, the intention to prioritize factuality over morality in historiography is expressed explicitly.

Does this intention to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake?⁵⁴ The answer is no, because these statements, as well as Ranke's for that matter, derived simply from an interest in improving the method of research and seeking a more autonomous status for antiquarian and historical study, though the study remained purposeful.⁵⁵ With this improved method, Lorenzo Valla could, in revealing the anachronism of the *Donation of Constantine*, support the king of Naples in a territorial dispute with the pope. Ranke's emphasis on telling what really happened as the task for the historian, as Georg Iggers notes, drew on his religious notion that there was "an objective order," or "higher reality" in history. This "objective order" or "higher reality," designed by God's hand, demands that the historian stick to what he or she can do, that is, to record accurately the unfolding of history, not indulge in speculation.⁵⁶ This seems to be the similar ground on which Wang Mingsheng and Qian Daxin's argument for the autonomy of history rests, for they are also convinced that the Dao, or the higher order

⁵² Georg G. Iggers, "The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought," *History and Theory* 2 (1962): 17–40.

⁵³ Qian Daxin, "Tangshu zhibi xinli" [New Examples for Truthful Writing in the *Tang* History], *Qian Daxin quanji* [Complete Works of Qian Daxin] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1997), 7:350. The last sentence, if translated literally, reads: "it is just like a silk weaver who burns his silk."

⁵⁴ George Huppert's *The Idea of Perfect History: Historical Erudition and Historical Philosophy in Renaissance France* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); and Lenore O'Boyle "Learning for Its Own Sake: The German University as Nineteenth-century Model," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25, no. 1 (1983): 3–25.

⁵⁵ Joseph M. Levine offers a good discussion in his *The Autonomy of History* on how methodologically the antiquarian movement paved the way for the autonomy of history as an academic discipline in the West. For a general discussion on the role of historical study in Chinese tradition, see On-cho Ng and Q. Edward Wang, *Mirroring the Past: the Writing and Use of History in Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), pp. 76–80.

in the Chinese cosmos, will reveal itself if the historian produces an accurate record.⁵⁷

As authors of the *Critical Study* and *Examination of Variances*, respectively, Wang and Qian conducted research on previous dynastic histories; the titles suggest that these were not written as historical accounts per se. But they were undoubtedly results of historical research. Qian and Wang both expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of certain dynastic histories, such as the *Yuan History* (*Yuanshi*), which had been compiled by Ming scholars whom they looked down upon. Equipped with his knowledge of Mongol, Qian Daxin culled more sources of various kinds than the Ming compilers had done and completed two works on aspects of Yuan history. One was a chronological table with detailed explanations on the succession and evolution of “aristocratic lineages” (*shizu*) in the Yuan, and the other was a bibliographic treatise on Yuan learning. He also completed the *Manuscript of Yuan History* (*Yuanshigao*), a comprehensive account aimed at supplanting the official *Yuan History*. Though the book did not survive in its entirety, its vestigial existence suggests that Qian did not confine his historical interest to correcting and commenting on previous histories.⁵⁸ He also intended to rewrite history and ground it more solidly on source criticism through evidential research.

Qian Daxin was not alone in his time; others shared his interest in rewriting the histories of previous dynasties.⁵⁹ Their intention was clearly indicated by their frequent choice of the adjective “new” (*xin*) to name their works and distinguish them from the previous ones.⁶⁰ Comparable to the belief of the European antiquarians, the Qing savants like Qian Daxin and Wang Mingsheng were all convinced that what they were doing had a value in itself, and they were fully willing

⁵⁷ Cf. Michael Quirin, “Scholarship, Value, Method, and Hermeneutics in *Kaozheng*: Some Reflections on Cui Shu (1740–1816) and the Confucian Classics,” *History and Theory* 35, no. 4 (1996): 34–53.

⁵⁸ The Japanese scholar Shimada Kan was said to have seen the remnants of Qian’s work on Yuan history. Wang Junyi and Huang Aiping, *Qingdai xueshu wenhuashi lun* [Essays on Qing Intellectual and Cultural History] (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 207–208.

⁵⁹ Qian Daxin, for instance, encouraged his friend Shao Jinhan to rewrite Song history, particularly the Southern Song history. See Zhang Shunhui, *Qingru xueji* [Studies of Qing Confucians] (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1991), pp. 272–274; and Ng and Wang, *Mirroring the Past*, pp. 243–244.

⁶⁰ Liang Qichao has given a general discussion on the historical works of Qing scholars in his *Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshushi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), pp. 270–296.

to devote time and energy to it.⁶¹ In fact, observes Elman, many Qing evidential scholars “retired from office as soon as it was practical for them to do so.”⁶² Qian Daxin did exactly that at age forty-seven. If these degree holders chose a scholarly career over a government position, those who failed to succeed in the civil service examinations had more reasons to devote themselves to academic research, for, in their times, there had emerged a Republic of Letters in China in which they could not only find a teaching position in an academy but also establish a scholarly reputation through academic excellence outside the civil service examination system. Premier evidential scholars such as Hui Dong and Dai Zhen were notable examples.⁶³

The existence of this Republic of Letters was attested to also by the fact that not only could good evidential scholars find teaching positions in many academies and exchange their ideas in both private correspondence and print,⁶⁴ but they could also join officially or semi-officially sponsored research projects to display their erudition and, more important, earn a respectable living. Dai Zhen, in spite of his initial failure in the civil service examination, was recruited by the government to help compile the massive Complete Library of Four Treasures (*Siku quanshu*) project. Ordered by the imperial fiat as a way to exercise thought control over the populace, this ambitious project aimed to catalog and abstract extant works deemed “proper” throughout the empire. Its participants, especially Dai Zhen, who quickly emerged as an undisputed leader, exercised rigorous textual and historical criticism in order to purge the Chinese literary tradition of spurious texts.⁶⁵

⁶¹ In his preface to the *Critical Study*, Wang Mingsheng gives us a vivid description of how it feels to savor this learning experience. Wang Mingsheng’s preface to *Shiqishi shangque*, p. 138.

⁶² Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 132–133.

⁶³ Elman, as well as some Japanese scholars mentioned by him, has done extensive study on the social origins of evidential scholars and how their research received official patronage from such scholar-officials as Ruan Yuan (1764–1849) who shared their interest. See *From Philosophy to Philology*, chapters 4–6.

⁶⁴ For the development of printing and book culture in late imperial China, see Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004); *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and Inoue Susumu, *Chūgoku shuppan bunkashi: Shomotsu seikai to chi no fūkei* [A Cultural History of Chinese Printing: Books and the Landscape of Knowledge] (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppansha, 2002).

⁶⁵ A general discussion of the project is in R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor’s Four Treasures: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch’ien-lung Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).

This project reminds one of the similarly designed antiquarian projects in early modern Europe, such as William Camden's *Britannia* and Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, although the European antiquarians often compiled their works privately and individually (which some Qing scholars also attempted).⁶⁶ By the time the Four Treasures project was launched, knowledge of philology, as well as its siblings etymology, phonology, and paleography, had become not only *de rigueur* in the Qing Republic of Letters but also the lingua franca for their scholarly discourses. The participants of the Four Treasures project applied source criticism to ascertain the validity of a text and regarded the method as a chief criterion by which a text was critiqued and evaluated.⁶⁷

The Qing scholars' pursuit of antiquity had extended beyond written texts and well into material remains. As a pioneer for the evidential movement, Gu Yanwu expanded on the tradition of epigraphic research, an area in which Qian Daxin and others later claimed excellence. Gu discovered that the bronze inscriptions of the pre-Qin period often corroborated, via different chronological method, the records entered in the annals such as the *Spring and Autumn*. This kind of discovery prompted him to search further for material evidence to enhance his understanding of the past. He also took an interest in numismatics, noting that the ways coins were made, or destroyed, reflected not only periods of economic change but also political upheavals in history.⁶⁸ Qian Daxin made a more conscientious effort to seek material evidence in epigraphy for historical study. He considered it the most reliable method for source criticism because, as he put it, writings on silk rolls and bamboo slips often became obliterated as both materials deteriorated over the years. Wooden-carving printing fared a little better, though it was still not so long lasting as the inscriptions etched on the bronze and stone (*jinshi*). So the "metal-stone learning" (*jinshi xue*), as epigraphy was referred to in Chinese, was essential to historical

⁶⁶ Liang Qichao mentioned a number of individually authored books by Qing scholars in epigraphy, phonology, philology, lexicography, and history in his *Xueshushi*, 176f.

⁶⁷ There were of course other criteria used to evaluate a text, including even whether it discussed principles and meanings. But whether or not the text was valid and authentic remained the main concern for the project. See Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 101. In her *Impolite Learning*, Anne Goldgar also stresses that in the Republic of Letters in Europe, there emerged a consistent pattern of behavior in how the antiquarians conducted research and communicated among themselves.

⁶⁸ Gu Yanwu, "Chunqiu shiyue bingshu" [The *Spring and Autumn Annals* Record Both Date and Month] and "Huangjin" [Gold], in *Rizhi Lu* [Records of Daily Learning] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1968), 2:35 and 4:75-78.

study. Qian, in his numerous essays on epigraphic study, expressed his genuine delight in seeing a written record was confirmed or corrected by epigraphic evidence on bronze or stone.⁶⁹ Qian's epigraphic study resulted in a large volume in his collected works. Yet a more impressive endeavor was that of Weng Fanggang (1733–1818), who published massive epigraphic collections of the Han period, a prime period of bronze inscriptions.

Given their conviction about the importance of source criticism and verification, the Qing scholars became interested in and expanded considerably the preexisting footnoting tradition in imperial China. That is, footnotes became their favorite tool in exhibiting their research, as it did for the European antiquarians.⁷⁰ Qian Daxin's *Examination of Variances* and Wang Mingsheng's *Critical Study* stand as prime examples because these were virtually works of footnotes, which they compiled in annotating the dynastic histories. Indeed, scholars ranging from Gu Yanwu to Wang Mingsheng to Zhang Xuecheng (1738–1801) all emphasized the necessity of furnishing footnotes and the importance of proper citation in scholarly writings. Gu stressed that once a citation is made, it ought to indicate the original rather than the derivative source. Wang commented more specifically that a footnote should show not merely the book's title, but also its volumes and pages. They both hammered on the key point that in entering a citation, one has to check the original source.⁷¹

CONDITIONS OF MODERNITY

If we borrow the phrase coined by a European contemporary, the cultural milieu of Qing China favored unequivocally a return to “the sources rather than streams.”⁷² It was about the same time, as Grafton's succinct account manifests, that the use of footnotes became a permanent fixture in scholarly publications in Europe.⁷³ But although foot-

⁶⁹ Qian Daxin, “Guo Yunbo jinshishi xu” [Preface to Guo Yunbo's *History of Epigraphy*], *Qian Daxin quanji*, 9:395; “Teqin dongcong shike” [The Term “Teqin” in Epigraphy], 6:256–257 and “Famensi taimiaoji” [Notes on the Epigraph at the Famen Temple], 7:178.

⁷⁰ Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁷¹ Gu Yanwu, “Jingyi lunce” [Discourses on the Meaning of the Classics], *Rizhi Lu*, 6:42–46. Wang Mingsheng, *Shiqishi shangque*, op. cit., 453:172.

⁷² Quoted in Kelley, *Faces of History*, p. 207.

⁷³ Grafton, *Footnote*, passim.

notes served the general purpose of offering citations and comments, which was practiced by both European and Chinese scholars, their currency in early modern Europe had another important reason, which seemed absent in Qing China. This reason derived not only from the desire of Europeans to maintain the flow of their historical narratives but also from the need, as it appeared from the seventeenth century on, to embed in this narrative a new understanding of the much expanded worldview.⁷⁴ That is, in addition to using footnotes to pursue and present knowledge, European historians, drawing on the Greek tradition of historical narrative and the Judeo-Christian concern with historical coherence, or a historical master narrative, had maintained the interest in making *ars historica a magistra vitae*, or a philosophy teaching by examples. During the eighteenth century, when the antiquarian enterprise reached its heyday, this interest did not wane. It was pursued with new vigor, thanks to a series of changes in the Western world. First of all, the so-called Age of Discovery had greatly broadened the worldview of the Europeans. The incessant effort by such historians as Walter Raleigh in England and Bishop Bossuet in France to write universal history attested to the effect of this change in historiography. Second, there was the protean impact of the Scientific Revolution. Methodologically speaking, it did not exert great influence in historiography, for the antiquarians had already expressed the desire for exacting and precise research based on verification of and induction from facts. Yet its vaunted success in finding general laws in the universe did spur the historians on to seek generalizations in human history, extending the traditional interest in a master narrative. Third, early modern Europe witnessed the rise of nation-states, which the historians noted as a historic phenomenon of the age. The antiquarian project was both galvanized and circumscribed by nationalist sentiment. Although there appeared some “international” texts, such as Bayle’s *Dictionary* and the *Encyclopédie* compiled by D’Alembert and Diderot, many antiquarian researches were targeted at glorifying the national tradition, be it English, or French, or Italian, through historical writing and archaeological digging. The rising tide of nationalism also occasioned a nearly inevitable outcome, as noted perceptively by Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson: as the historians searched in the past for ways to boost national pride and confidence, their seemingly

⁷⁴ According to Pocock, narrative history figured centrally in the works of eighteenth-century European scholars for both religious and political reasons. See his *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 2.

sedate endeavor also become inextricably bound up with the task of invention and imagination.⁷⁵ Indeed, while the “sources” appeared primary for eighteenth-century Europe, the “streams” were never totally neglected either, exemplified but not limited by the project of the Enlightenment *philosophes*. Moreover, if there had been a discernible tension between antiquarian research and historical narrative, stimulated by the changes highlighted above, there now emerged an effort to merge the two. Edward Gibbon’s work on the decline of the Roman Empire has been credited with the effort. In delivering his eloquent narrative, Gibbon used footnotes to indicate his indebtedness to extant scholarship. Yet despite his profound respect for the literature of erudition, Gibbon was interested mainly in offering a “stream” of thoughts, not the “sources,” on Roman history.⁷⁶ A better heir to the antiquarian legacy was found elsewhere; it was transformed by the Germans first at Göttingen University and later at Berlin University into a regime of scientific history, although the Germans, or the historicists, never shied away from speculating on historical master narratives either.⁷⁷

Let us return to Qing China. The rise of evidential learning occurred in a time where China witnessed both economic affluence and political stability under the reigns of emperors Qianlong (r. 1736–1795) and Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820). This period represented an efflorescence of dynastic rule, or its *shengshi* (thriving times). There had been, of course, challenges from the outside, such as the missionary project of the Jesuits and the English court’s intermittent requests for commercial trade. However, while indicating the existence of worlds outside China, none of this shook the traditional Sinocentric worldview held by most Chinese at the time. For the Chinese literati, as long as they could restrain their grudge against the Manchu rule (as the latter appeared more and more as defenders of Han Chinese cultural tradition), there was no pressing need for them to engage in the risky business of drawing historical lessons from the past to admonish the present. Rather, this seemed to be a

⁷⁵ For the connection between antiquarianism and nationalism, Huppert’s *Idea of Perfect History* has provided us with a case study in France. For the ways in which nationalism was forged in Europe, see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁷⁶ Levine, *Humanism and History*, pp. 101–106, 178–189; and *Autonomy of History*, 157f; Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography*, pp. 40–55; and Grafton, *Footnote*, pp. 95–98.

⁷⁷ In his massive *Historiographieggeschichte als Historik* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1991), Horst Walter Blanke offers a detailed discussion on how German scholars and historians transformed the antiquarian enterprise into modern historical study while reacting and corresponding to the Enlightenment ideas.

perfect time for the savants to embark on the task of seeking and verifying facts and artifacts of antiquity. If the footnote provided a bridge for the Europeans between antiquarian research and historical narrative, it did not play the same role in Qing scholarship because the demand for a (new) master narrative in history did not exist.⁷⁸

All this, however, was about to change. As China entered the nineteenth century, it began to feel the pain inflicted by capitalist expansion, which eventually thrust its people into a parlous position that forced them to adopt a new worldview. The evidential movement had also lost its steam, for its overemphasis on textual and historical criticism ossified otherwise lively hermeneutic discussions on the classics.⁷⁹ The resurgence of the New Text Confucian school from that time on marked a new cultural trend.⁸⁰ Toward the end of the nineteenth century, it enabled such Confucian scholars as Kang Youwei (1858–1927) to cope with the Western intrusion and fashion a Darwinist historical outlook by re-presenting the image of Confucius as a forward-looking thinker. Kang's goal was to furnish a theoretical underpinning for his reform campaign.⁸¹

Qing evidential learning, or “intellectualism” in the Confucian tradition, however, also came back to life fairly quickly. Entering the twentieth century, amid the high tide of nationalism, Chinese intellectuals revamped their traditions in order to search for useful resources for building the modern nation-state and effectively fending off West-

⁷⁸ Though different in focus, Kenneth Pomeranz and R. Bin Wong have recently highlighted the differences between China and Europe in the eighteenth century and explained how the differences contributed to the divergent developments of the two regions' history from the period forward. See Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Wong, *China Transformed*; and Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: The Silver Age in Asia and the World Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). A debate between them and their critics are found in the *Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002). From the perspective of intellectual history, On-cho Ng's “Epochal Concept of ‘Early Modernity’” also stresses the different trajectories of early modern European and Chinese history.

⁷⁹ See *Classics and Interpretations: The Hermeneutic Traditions in Chinese Culture, Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng, and John Henderson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999); and Daniel Gardner, “Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 2 (1988): 397–422.

⁸⁰ Benjamin Elman argues that the New Text Confucian School not only supplied a more engaging interpretation of the classics from an identifiable presentist perspective, but also secured political backing at court. See his *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

⁸¹ Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975).

ern expansion. Buoyed by their iconoclastic attitude toward Confucian culture, Zhang Taiyan (1869–1935), Liang Qichao (1873–1929), and Hu Shi came to search for an alternative tradition. By “rediscovering” the “scientific” Qing evidential learning, they hoped to merge it with scientism and positivism prevalent in the West in general, and critical historiography of Ranke and his disciples in particular. In so doing, they hoped to transform historical study into a modern academic discipline.⁸² Indeed, if the word “discipline” connotes not only the teaching of disciples but also the establishment of a method and pedagogy in such teaching,⁸³ what Hu and others sought in Qing evidential learning was exactly this method, which they regarded as scientific and hence compatible with the *Quellenkritik* advanced in Rankean historiography. In this scientific light, Liang Qichao turned to Dai Zhen; in order to rescue him from oblivion, he organized a conference celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of Dai’s birth in 1923. Hu Shi not only joined Liang’s “rescue” mission on Dai, but he was also intrigued by the work of Zhang Xuecheng, a more complex figure in Qing learning known for his critique of evidential study and his excellence in textual criticism and historiographical insights. By working on Zhang’s biography, Hu hoped to replicate the method of Qing scholars and demonstrate the scientific efficacy of evidential research. He Bingsong (1890–1946) turned to Zhang because Zhang not only made such technical recommendations as footnoting, but he also manifested an awareness of the difference between actual history and written history, or history and historiography, which to He was fundamental to modern historiography.⁸⁴

⁸² In a case study, Joshua Fogel has analyzed this “rediscovery” attempt: “On the ‘Rediscovery’ of the Chinese Past: Ts’ui Shu and Related Cases,” *Perspectives in a Changing China*, ed. Joshua Fogel and William Rowe (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1979), pp. 219–235; Laurence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China’s New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). For a more comprehensive study, see Q. Edward Wang, *Inventing China through History: The May Fourth Approach to Historiography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). This kind of experience also occurred elsewhere. Gyan Prakash’s *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999) reveals how Indian intellectuals, in tandem with their Chinese counterparts, made the same attempt to rediscover a “scientific” tradition in India’s past.

⁸³ See Donald Kelley, “The Problem of Knowledge and the Concept of Discipline,” in *History and the Disciplines: The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Donald Kelley (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1997), p. 16.

⁸⁴ Hu Shi, *Dai Dongyuan de zhexue* [Dai Zhen’s Philosophy] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1932) and *Zhang Shizhai nianpu* [A Chronological Biography of Zhang Xuecheng] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1922); He Bingsong, *He Bingsong lunwenji* [Essays of He Bingsong] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1990), pp. 27–50, 89–119, and 132–146. For the “revival” of Dai Zhen in modern China, see Qiu Weijun, *Dai Zhen xue de xingcheng* [The Rise of Dai Zhen Study] (Taipei: Lianjing, 2004).

The erudite and passionate Liang Qichao desired more. In his reconstruction of the Ming-Qing cultural transition, he portrayed it as an intellectual and cultural “revolution,” on more or less the same ground Hu and He’s work rested. The emphasis of Qing scholars on “practical learning,” as well as early Qing scholars’ anti-Manchu opinions, also inspired the Marxist historian Hou Wailu to characterize the Ming-Qing transition as an enlightenment.⁸⁵ Notably, this “rediscovery” of Qing learning centering on evidential study was also tinged with an international flavor. Not only did Naitō Konan (1866–1934), an eminent Sinologist in Japan, help “discover” Zhang Xuecheng, Paul Demiéville also showed an interest in him, as did David Nivison, an American philosopher.⁸⁶ E. G. Pulleyblank preferred Zhao Yi, because, compared with his peers Qian Daxin and Wang Mingsheng, Zhao showed more interest in speculating on some general motifs (master narratives?) in Chinese history.⁸⁷

Through all these ingenious and intense efforts, the Qing evidential movement indeed acquired a new life, or a new historical meaning, which the Qing antiquarians perhaps never anticipated nor attempted. But the attention and admiration heaped on them seem not at all unjustified, for in the development of modern Chinese historiography, their legacy was not only greatly appreciated, hence readily appreciable, it also paved and conditioned the way in which the latter-day Chinese have (re)constructed their past to adjust to the modern world. Almost all leading Chinese historians in the twentieth century, despite Western influence and even the Western education many of them had received, established their careers by emulating, extending, and critiquing the Qing evidential heritage and mixing it with Western styles of historiography. In the post-Mao years, the slogan “seeking the truth from

⁸⁵ Hou Wailu, *Zhongguo zaoqi qiming sixiangshi* [An Intellectual History of the Early Chinese Enlightenment] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1956). While a Marxist interpretation, Hou was inspired by Liang Qichao in making this observation. See Liang, *Qingdai xue-shugailun*, in *Liang Qichao shixue lunzhu sanzong* [Liang Qichao’s Three Historical Works] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1980), pp. 207–209. Hamaguchi in his *Shindai kōkyōgaku* has also compared Qing scholarship with the ideas and methods of the Enlightenment, pp. 240–241, as has de Bary, “Neo-Confucian Cultivation and the Seventeenth-Century ‘Enlightenment.’”

⁸⁶ David Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsiueh-ch’eng (1738–1801)* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1966).

⁸⁷ E. G. Pulleyblank, “Chinese Historical Criticism,” *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 159–160. Inspired by Pulleyblank, with whom he worked at Cambridge, Du Weiyun published *Zhao Yi zhuan* [Biography of Zhao Yi] (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1983) and a chapter on Zhao in his *Shixue yu shijia*, pp. 369–390.

facts” was deployed by Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997), the new leader, to launch his veiled criticism of the Maoist revolutionary legacy. From the 1990s forward, as the official practice of Marxist historiography gradually loosened its grip on historical writing, interest in evidential research has again captivated the attention and characterized the work of the young generation of Chinese historians.⁸⁸ The persistent appeal of evidential learning, therefore, has not only highlighted the development of modern Chinese history and historiography but also underscored the complexity and plurality of modernity in historical practices across the world.

⁸⁸ For the influence of evidential learning in modern China, exemplified by the careers of such prominent twentieth-century scholars as Liang Qichao, Hu Shi, Gu Jiegang (1893–1980), Fu Sinian (1896–1950), and Chen Yinke (Yinque, 1890–1969), see Wang Fan-sen, *Fu Ssu-nien: A Life in Chinese History and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History*; Wang, *Inventing China through History*; and Wang Rongzu, *Shijia Chen Yinke zhuan* [A Biography of Historian Chen Yinke] (Taipei: Lianjing, 1997). For the recent revival of evidential, or empirical, trend in Chinese historiography, see Hou Yunhao, “20 shiji Zhongguo de sici shizheng shixue sichao” [The Four Schools of Empiricist Historiography in 20th century China], *Shixue yuekan* [Historiography Monthly] 7 (2004): 70–80; and Wang Xuedian, “Jin wushi nian de Zhongguo shixue” [Chinese Historiography of the Past Half a Century], *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical Research] 1 (2004): 165–190.