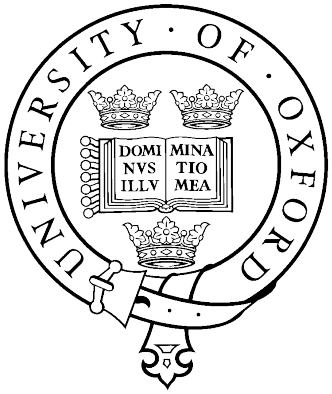
The Streams of Knowledge: Organising the *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書



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DPHIL IN ORIENTAL STUDIES

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the order of knowledge in the *Siku Quanshu*, the *Complete Writings of the Four Repositories*, the largest 'encyclopaedic' compilation of texts in pre-modern China. While contemporary scholarship has concentrated on what was included in the compilation, the question of how it was organised remains largely unexplored. Divided in five chapters, this thesis explores the understanding of knowledge and its organisation in the Qianlong era (1736–1796 CE). In the Introduction, I interrogate the methodological viability of a cross-cultural investigation and argue for a new conceptual framework to undertake such line of inquiry in the Chinese context. In Chapter 1, I show how the antecedent poetic understanding of knowledge as water determined the order of the *Complete Writings*. I provide an account of its impact on classification and briefly sketch its historical origins and development. By way of comparison to the western notion of knowledge as tree, I tease out the properties and cultural specificity of each system. In Chapter 2, I explore the intellectual, non-political purposes behind the collection. I provide a short overview of past bibliographic classifications and their impact on the editors' scholarly objectives and show how the order of the *Complete Writings* was envisioned as an advising guide to scholarship. In Chapter 3, I identify the ascribed socio-scholarly function of texts as the fundamental principle of order and investigate the different ways in which it was expressed. I also show how the Qianlong-era conception of order differs from Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian notions of classification. In the Conclusion, I summarise the main findings of this thesis and offer some reflections on the nature of bibliographic divisions, imperial scholarship, and the *Complete Writings*.

To my family, with love and gratitude.

Tradition is the living faith of the dead,

traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.

Jaroslav Pelikan

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CONVENTIONS

To undertake this thesis, I have used the electronic version of the *Siku quanshu* (*Wenyuan ge* 文淵閣 copy), which is accessible online. For every text included in the *Siku quanshu*, I do not provide the author in the footnotes as the easiest way to find a text is by name and not by the author's name, since, in several cases, this yields more than one hits. In footnotes for the *Siku quanshu* and the *Siku quanshu zongmu*, I provide in parenthesis the original *juan* number. The digital version does not provide page number (as the collection was not originally paginated) but the software allows for easy scrolling from one *juan* to another so it is highly functional. Original texts cited and included in the *Siku quanshu* are not included in the bibliography. The reason is that they can easily be accessed in the *Siku quanshu* and the argument developed in this thesis is about the compilation and not about whichever text. When included texts are referenced in footnotes, I provide their respective category in the compilation. Original texts cited but not included in the *Siku quanshu* are referenced by author's name and are included in the bibliography.

Passages from pre-modern Chinese texts have been either translated or paraphrased. In the first case, I provide the original text (with punctuation) separate from the main text. In the second, I include the original text (without punctuation) in parenthesis as part of the main text. I have used these two strategies to facilitate the reader and avoid unnecessary information.

For secondary literature in Chinese and Japanese, I provide the romanised transcription of the author's name in *pinyin* and modified Hepburn as well as the original in every occurrence. The reason I do this is to help distinguish between

texts written by the same author in different languages. If an author has published both in English and Chinese/Japanese, I provide the original graphs to their name for publications in their native languages but not in English. For in-text references to pre-modern texts and authors, I provide the original graphs and *pinyin* only in the first occurrence. I generally follow the same principle for specific terminology, except in cases where I considered it to be beneficial to the reader to have the original graph and/or *pinyin*. All Chinese characters are in traditional form, including names and titles of secondary scholarship originally published in simplified form.

I cite the original publication date in brackets when considerable amount of time (usually over thirty years) has elapsed. In cases where the work has been translated I provide the original publication date for the English version and not the one in the original language. For texts published before the nineteenth century, I have tried to include the original date of publication.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Transformed

"Cutting the feet to fit the shoes". This is how, in 1929, Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 (1899–1980 CE), bibliographer, educator, and intellectual, described adopting a western epistemological order.[1] He was referring to the introduction of a revolutionary bibliographic scheme created by an enterprising and all-American thinker,[2] Melville Dewey, which by the 1920s had left its New World shores and travelled far and wide around the globe.[3] Liu was responding to earlier attempts by Chinese intellectuals who had adopted – without adapting – western library classification schemes.[4] Instead, he argued that the Dewey Decimal Classification, the holy grail of bibliographic orders at the time and arguably to this day,[5] ought

[1] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: iv.
[2] Batty 1976: 300; and Hansson 2013: 387.
[3] For the adaptation of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) in France, see Batty 1976: 301; in India, Comaromi and Satija 1985; in Islamic libraries, Idrees 2012; and in Japan, Lee W. 2016. For more on Dewey and his classification, see Comaromi 1976; and Deng 2016.
[4] The DDC was introduced in China in 1909. Figures such as Shen Zurong 沈祖榮 (1883–1977 CE) pioneered the adoption (without adaptation) of the DDC. More notable attempts were made by Du Dingyou 杜定友 (1898–1967 CE) in *Universal Classification Scheme* (*Shijie geshu fenleifa* 世界個書分類法) and Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (1888–1979 CE) in *Unified Classification for Chinese and Foreign Texts* (*Zhongwai tushu tongyi fenleifa* 中外圖書統一分類法). For more see Matsumi Hiromitsu 松見弘道 1953; Wu Weici 吳慰慈 et al. 1999: 12; and Lee W. 2016: 490.
[5] Lee W. 2015: 302. The Dewey classification has had a "dominant" position especially in public libraries yet at times its use has declined so considerably to be known as 'the flight from Dewey',

to be modified in order to take into consideration the needs and priorities of the local academic community.[6] "It is impossible to find an absolute correspondence between the academic scopes, methods, and questions of China and the West and so", Liu held, "forcing ourselves to imitate [the West] is like cutting the feet to fit the shoes" (至於採用西方人之成法, 則因中西學術範圍方法問題不同者太多, 難於一一適合, 勉強模仿, 削足適履).[7]

Liu was part of a larger movement in the new Republican China (1912–1949 CE) that emerged after the unravelling of the imperial order in the previous half-century.[8] This transition to new social structures, epitomised in the New Culture Movement (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動), called for the modernisation and westernisation of 'Chinese culture' as a response to what was seen as a stagnant, obsolete, and deleterious 'Confucian orthodoxy.'[9] The wave of change was profound, affecting all aspects of life from the social position of women to the development of scientific research.[10] A new order was being established which left no stone unturned.[11]

Liu was part of a handful of intellectuals tasked with reforming library classifications. He was struggling to find an order which could place *all* kinds of

see Batty 1976: 303-304. However, the phrase 'flight from Dewey' reveals the dominance the system has had in the twentieth century.

[6] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: iv.

[7] Ibid. The phrase "cutting the feet to fit the shoes" is a common idiomatic expression (*chengyu* 成語) in Chinese and is derived from a phrase of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子.

[8] A considerable amount has been written on this period. For example, see Chow 1967; Hsü 1970; Spence 1981; Hao 1987; Schwarcz 1987; Spence 1990; Mitter 2005; and Cheek 2016. Also see Guy 2016; Hegel 2016; and Rawski 2016 for reflections on the trajectory of Qing historiography.

[9] For more on the rise and use of the term New Culture Movement, see Forster 2018. A sub-current of the movement, was the New Library Movement (*xin tushuguan yundong* 新圖書館運動) which aimed to implement the values and institutions of western librarianship, see Wu Weici 吳慰慈 et al. 1999: 11. For more on the anti-Confucian sentiment, see Chow 1967: 300-313.

[10] Borthwick 1983; and Reynolds 1991; and Amelung 2004.

[11] Vittinghoff 2004. For example, new knowledge from the West affected areas such as musical composition and transcription, see Gild 2004.

books – Chinese and foreign as well as ancient and contemporary – into a single, unitary bibliographic scheme.[12] It had been common practice to use modern classifications for new and foreign books while retaining traditional divisions for pre-modern, local texts.[13] The result was a fragmented bibliographic order, operating on diverse principles. Finding an appropriate order – one which could meet the new disciplinary demands of modern scholarship while respecting inherited modes of learning – lay at the centre of the self-conception of the Chinese intelligentsia, transforming the issue from mere intellectual exercise to existential necessity.[14]

Liu's answer was to subsume traditional bibliographic divisions under the order of the Dewey classification.[15] In his eyes, this was an improvement over his predecessors as it managed to create a unitary system for all kinds of books. A unified order – the underlying rationale affirmed – would facilitate the search and retrieval of texts as library users would only need to be familiar with one system. Liu had created a division that was both appropriate (*shidang* 適當) as well as convenient in its use (*bian yu yong* 便於用).[16] In Liu's eyes, unity, suitability, and utility were brought together.

Liu was anticipating that the new disciplinary, 'scientific' way of scholarly engagement would solidify, and so the scopes, questions, and methods adopted by Chinese scholars in the future would progressively converge with those of their western counterparts. His doctoral studies in the United Stated – an experience he shared with many of the main figures of the New Culture Movement – gave him a

[12] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: v.
[13] Wu Weici 吳慰慈 et al. 1999: 12.
[14] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: iv.
[15] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: v-vi.
[16] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: iv.

vision for what Chinese academia could become.[17] China was modernising and so too was its academic community.[18]

While a handful of the traditional bibliographic sections were incorporated into Liu's classification, its overall structure remained unambiguously wed to the epistemological order of the modern West.[19] The fundamental pattern of design was a binary, branching logic, dividing bibliographic units into ever smaller hierarchically ordered categories.[20] Disciplines were the defining principle of order on which traditional bibliographic divisions were recast. Traces of inherited bibliographic schemes could still be detected but positivistic logic ruled supreme. This is how the anatomy of Chinese thought was forced to fit into an alien mould.[21] And while Liu appealed to the idiomatic power of the Chinese language to lament that the feet were cut to fit the shoes, the fact that he adapted – and did not challenge – the Dewey classification made him complicit in this act of intellectual mutilation.

The Scope of Study

This thesis is about the 'foot' of Chinese thought, the order of knowledge before the introduction of western classificatory terms in the early twentieth century. It is not about the procrustean operation that Liu refers to, because it is not

[17] The most notable case is Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962 CE) who received his B.A. at Cornell and then his Ph.D. at Columbia under John Dewey. Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942 CE) and Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940 CE) studied in France and Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936 CE) and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978 CE) studied in Japan. Hsü 1970: 495-496 calculates that from 1907 to 1917 "at least 10 million" people of the new urbanised classes had "received some sort of modern education" in China and several tens of thousands had studied abroad: in the first two decades of the twentieth century, 41% of those who had studied abroad did so in Japan, 33% in the USA, and 25% in Europe.
[18] Hayhoe 1996.
[19] Lee W. 2016: 490. For more on the connection between philosophical ideas and library classifications, see Labaree 2008: 44.
[20] Lerner 2009: 120-121.
[21] Many figures contributed to this intellectual transformation, see Kurtz 2014.

possible to understand the act of 'cutting' unless we understand first what is being cut. In order to comprehend the foundational categories of knowledge in pre-modern China, we have to do so 'from the ground up' and 'on its own terms', bracketing away (at least for now) the question of modernisation.[22]

Bibliographic catalogues in China have a history as long as the creation of a unified empire, over two thousand years ago.[23] Time and again, comprehensive lists, compiled both by private scholars as well as imperial institutions, aimed to collect and order knowledge. The centuries preceding China's encounter with modernity saw a veritable explosion in such projects and no compilation stands higher than the *Complete Writings of the Four Repositories* (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書), the largest 'encyclopaedic' collection of texts undertaken in Chinese dynastic history (so large indeed, that Wikipedia outgrew it only in June of 2010).[24] Sponsored by the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor (1736–1796 CE) in the late eighteenth century, the *Complete Writings* aimed to represent the breadth of amassed knowledge while also capturing its most essential facets.[25] More crucially, it is the last major collection of texts organised according to traditional categories, before the dynastic system's eventual collapse.

By any measure, the compilation was enormous. Tens of thousands of texts from across the empire were collected in Beijing. After careful examination, selected texts were edited and copied into the collection, prefaced by introductory critical overviews providing information on their author, history, and content. Almost three and a half thousand texts were copied in full, producing a master-

[22] Kurtz 2011: 363-364; and Elman 2005: xxvi.
[23] Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 1.
[24] Blair 2010: 30.
[25] On the Qianlong emperor, see Woodside 2002; and Elliot 2009.

anthology so large – of over 36,000 volumes with approximately 800 million graphs – as to constitute a self-contained library, housed in its own, purpose-built physical structure.

The compilation expanded into derivative ventures, which expanded or narrowed the compilation scope. The *Annotated Catalogue of the Complete Writings* (*Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目) compiled bibliographical introductions for well over ten thousand titles, including texts that were considered valuable enough to be noted but not so essential as to merit reproduction in the collection. Responding to the *Annotated Catalogue's* massive scale, the *Simplified Catalogue of the Complete Writings* (*Siku quanshu jianming mulu* 四庫全書簡明目錄) included bibliographic notes – and not the original texts – exclusively for copied titles. Comprehensiveness and simplicity necessitated a complex and evolving compromise.

The *Complete Writings* was initiated in 1781 and took over a decade and a small army of literati to complete. More than three thousand scholars, scribes, editors, and copyists worked on the project with hundreds of scholars solely dedicated to sifting through vast bodies of writing, deciding what would be included and where it would be placed.[26] Among this legion of scholars, some, like Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805 CE) and Lu Xixiong 陸錫熊 (1734–1792 CE), the head compilers, exerted strong influence over the project.[27] Other scholars also left their own personal mark on the project. Introductory notes referring to the same text or

[26] Yang 1946: 10; and Huang 2013: 2.40-51. For a theoretical defense in favor of studying communal discourses over individual writings in socio-cognitive studies of knowledge, see van Dijk 2014: 173. For more on the idea of the social embeddedness of knowledge, see Fuller 2007: 177; and Labaree 2008: 54.

[27] For more on Ji Yun, see Hu Yangru 胡養儒 1993; Chan 1998; Zhang Weiping 張維屏 1998; and Ji 2014.

author, at times, exhibit significantly different views, as the scholars penning these prefaces operated in distinct learning traditions and came to significantly different conclusions.[28]

Nevertheless, the project remained a cooperative endeavour and all major decisions were taken collectively.[29] The immensity of the task meant that the project could by definition only be carried out through the mechanisms of a highly effective and sophisticated bureaucracy. Scholars at the highest levels of imperial institutions, always in conversation with the pro-active Qianlong emperor, debated the fundamental aspects of the project.[30] While figures such as Ji Yun did have a stronger say, the project cannot be identified with any one individual. Instead, it must be treated as the product of a group of literati who represented a broad cross-section – if not, entire generation – of scholars.[31] Their shared notions of knowledge and its order were the foundations which allowed for the production of such a project. This thesis is an attempt to reconstruct and analyse that substratum of assumptions, attitudes, and values – at times implicitly communicated and at others explicitly stated – held by the people behind the project which I collectively identify as the editors, collators, or simply makers of the *Complete Writings*.

The compilation was organised on the basis of the long-standing four-fold (*sibu* 四部) order of knowledge which had developed over the previous fourteen hundred years. The four main divisions were *Classics* (*jing* 經), *Records* (*shi* 史),

[28] Mote 1987b: 47; Chu 1987; Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2008; Li Xianqiang 李賢強 and Wu Hongqi 吳宏岐 2015.
[29] Huang 2013: 2.40-51 and 2.57-64. Also see Zhang Zhuanfeng 張傳峰 2007: 326 and 338-339; and Liu Fengqiang 劉風強 2015: 7, 155-158, 161-170 and 201.
[30] Guy 1987: 69-79. While the emperor did play an active role, it is a mistake to see the compilation as limited to him and his vision of scholarship, see Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2009: 38
[31] Chang 2013: 135-136.

Masters (*zi* 子), and *Collections* (*ji* 集).[32] The four-fold order was not blindly adopted and during the compilation's embryonic stages, alternative orders were considered. When the four-fold order was accepted, organisational issues were reworked and the overall order was refined by introducing an innovative three-tiered partition: the four main *divisions* (*bu* 部) were comprised of forty-four *sections* (*lei* 類) which were in turn comprised of seventy *groups* (*shu* 屬).[33] This was the first time in the history of imperial compilations that the four-fold order was broken down into three levels of increasing granularity.[34] Figure 1 illustrates the order of the *Complete Writings*.

[32] For an introduction into each of the four divisions, see Schaberg 2017; Durrant 2017; Denecke 2017; and Tian 2017a.

[33] *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目 [hence SKQSZM]: *Fanli* (*shou* 首 3). Along with providing the item title in the *Catalogue*, I also provide the number of the relevant chapter (*juan* 卷). The editors state that the *Classics* is divided into ten sections, the *Records* in fifteen, the *Masters* in fourteen, and the *Collections* in five (經部分十類史部分十五類子部分十四類集部分五類) which gives a grand total of *forty-four sections*. Further down, however, they refer to the introductory prefaces of the *forty-three sections* (四十三類之首亦各冠小序) even though all forty-four of them have a preface. It just seems possible that in the ocean of texts the editors were navigating, it was easy to lose count. Also, Huang 2013 cites sixty-four groups because she does not include the six dynastic groups of the *Separate Collections* (*bieji* 別集). However, there is no apparent reason not to include them.

[34] Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 2004 [1963]: 166-167.

The Order of the *Complete Writings of the Four Repositories*

- Classics 經
  - Book of Changes 易
  - Book of Documents 書
  - Book of Poems 詩
  - Book of Rites 禮
    - The Zhouli 周禮
    - The Yili 儀禮
    - The Liji 禮記
    - Comprehensive Meaning of the Three Rites 三禮總義
    - Comprehensive Treatises on the Rites 通禮
    - Miscellaneous Texts on the Rites 雜禮書
  - Spring and Autumn Annals 春秋
  - Book of Filial Piety 孝經
  - Comprehensive Meaning of the Five Classics 五經總議
  - Four Books 四書
  - Book of Music 樂
  - Philology 小學
    - Exegesis 訓詁
    - Lexicography 字書
    - Phonology 韻書

- Records 史
  - Official Records 正史
  - Annals 編年
  - Records of the Origins and Effects of Events 紀事本末
  - Separate Records 別史
  - Miscellaneous Records 雜史
  - Edicts and Memorials 詔令奏議
    - Edicts 詔令
    - Memorials 奏議
  - Biographies 傳記
    - Sages 聖賢
    - Eminent Figures 名人
    - Comprehensive Biographies 總錄
    - Miscellaneous Biographies 雜錄
  - Record Collations 史鈔
  - Records of Non-dynastic States 載記
  - Chronology 時令
  - Topography 地理
    - Imperial Abodes 宮殿
    - General Gazetteers 總志
    - Cities, Prefectures, and Counties 都會郡縣
    - Waterways 河渠
    - Borders 邊防
    - Natural Features 山水
    - Ancient Ruins 古跡
    - Miscellaneous Chronicles 雜記
    - Travel Chronicles 游記
    - External Chronicles 外記
  - Official Positions 職官
    - Administrative Systems 官制
    - Administrative Apothegms 官箴
  - Writings on Governance 政書
    - General Administration 通制
    - Ritual Administration 禮制
    - State Figures 邦計
    - Military Governance 軍政
    - Legal Codes 法令
    - Engineering Standards 考工
  - Bibliographies 目錄
    - Texts 經籍
    - Bronze and Stones Inscriptions 金石
  - Records Criticism 史評

- Masters 子
  - Confucians 儒家
  - Militarists 兵家
  - Legalists 法家
  - Agriculturists 農家
  - Medicinal Schools 醫家
  - Astronomical and Counting Methods 天文算法
    - Astronomical Observations 推步
    - Mathematical Texts 算書
  - Divinatory Arts 術數
    - Cosmogony 數學
    - Prognostication 占候
    - Residences and Tombs 相宅相墓
    - Divination 占卜
    - Fate and Physiognomy 命書相書
    - Yingyang and Five Phases 陰陽五行
  - Creative Arts 藝術
    - Calligraphy and Painting 書畫
    - Musical Scores 琴譜
    - Seal Carving and Engraving 篆刻
    - Miscellaneous Crafts 雜技
  - Treatises 譜錄
    - Tools and Objects 器物
    - Food and Drink 飲饌
    - Flora and Fauna 草木禽魚
  - Miscellaneous Schools and Writers 雜家
    - Miscellaneous Theories 雜學
    - Miscellaneous Authentications 雜考
    - Miscellaneous Commentaries 雜說
    - Miscellaneous Investigations 雜品
    - Miscellaneous Compilations 雜纂
    - Miscellaneous Collations 雜編
  - Encyclopedias 類書
  - Lesser Sayings 小說家
    - Miscellaneous Affairs 雜事
    - Oddities and Hearsay 異聞
    - Trivial Sayings 瑣語
  - Buddhists 釋家
  - Daoists 道家

- Collections 集
  - Elegies of Chu 楚辭
  - Separate Collections 別集
    - Han to Five Dynasties 漢至五代
    - Northern Song 北宋建隆至靖康
    - Southern Song 南宋建炎至德佑
    - Jin and Yuan 金至元
    - Ming 明洪武至崇禎
    - Qing 清
  - Comprehensive Collections 總集
  - Literary Criticism 詩文評
  - Songs and Drama 詞曲
    - Song Collections 詞集
    - Song Selections 詞選
    - Verse Novels 詞話
    - Collections of Ci Poems 詞譜詞韻
    - Southern and Northern Drama 南北曲

Figure 1: The Order of the Complete Writings of the Four Repositories

The main objective behind this thesis is to investigate the fundamental *principles* that underpinned the order of knowledge in the *Complete Writings* (Chapter 3). On what basis were distinctions drawn between divisions, sections, and groups? How did different parts of the order relate to each other? And what were the general rules that determined the order of knowledge? To answer these questions, it is necessary to establish the conceptual *purposes* motivating the project (Chapter 2). How was the compilation envisioned and who was its intended user? What scholarly goals did its makers wish to achieve? And how did past bibliographic projects inform the compilers' own intellectual aims? Answering these questions depends on the broader cultural and *poetic* understanding of knowledge that inflected the entire compilation (Chapter 1). How did antecedent notions about knowledge affect the conceptualisation of bibliographic purposes and principles? What was the imagistic understanding of the order of knowledge in late imperial China? And what were its historical foundations?

This thesis treats the *Complete Writings* as an object in its own right, not merely as a source for the study of Chinese intellectual history, but as the embodiment of its makers' ideas about the order of knowledge.[35] Primary focus is placed on the prefaces to the four main divisions and the forty-four sections (*zongxu* 總敘 and *xiaoxu* 小敘, respectively) as well as the *Guidelines for Readers* (*fanli* 凡例), the general introduction to the compilation.[36] Prefaces were not penned for the seventy groups but their organisational structure is often analysed in the introductions of their respective sections. Concentrating on this relatively small sub-section of the *Complete Writings* allows for a targeted exploration of the

[35] See Zhou Jiming 周積明 1991 and 1998 which treat the *Complete Writings* as a window into late imperial intellectual history.
[36] For more on the practice of including *fanli*, see Rolston 1990: 59.

compilers' conceptualisation of order. Unlike prefaces to specific texts, the introductions to different bibliographic units capture the *collective* understanding of the order of knowledge.[37] This body of evidence is supplemented with historical sources on the formation of the *Complete Writings*, such as imperial edicts and officials' memorials to the throne. Last, specific texts – often (but not always) included in the compilation – are discussed to explain ideas found in the introductory prefaces and the overall order of the *Complete Writings*.

Images of the 'Foot'

The nature of the 'foot' of a Chinese order of knowledge has long captured the imagination of thinkers in the West. In 1947, Jorge Luis Borges in his short story *The Analytic Language of John Wilkins* referred to a "Chinese encyclopaedia entitled the *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge* … [where] animals are divided" into fourteen categories:

> i. Belonging to the Emperor
> ii. Embalmed
> iii. Trained
> iv. Piglets
> v. Mermaids
> vi. Fabulous
> vii. Stray dogs
> viii. Those included in this classification
> ix. Those trembling as if they were mad
> x. Innumerable ones
> xi. Those drawn with a very fine camel-hair brush
> xii. Et cetera
> xiii. Those that have just broke the flower vase
> xiv. Those that from a distance look like flies.[38]

[37] I have consulted introductions to individual texts when appropriate, especially for all the texts in the *Bibliographies* (*mulu* 目錄) section, but have not made extensive use, in order to minimise the incorporation of individual scholars' biases into my argument.
[38] Borges 1973 [1947]: 103.

Borges' 'Chinese encyclopaedia' was nothing more than a figment of his imagination and nowhere do we find a classification of animals or other objects even remotely similar to this division. Borges devised this mind-boggling order not to expose the alleged irrationality of the Chinese but rather to make the point that *every* classification scheme is "arbitrary and conjectural."[39] Through this, he wanted to problematise (or perhaps simply deride) the seventeenth century philosopher John Wilkins' quixotic attempt to create a universal language premised on an 'objective' and 'universal' division of the world.

The passage has received considerable attention from scholars across fields. Foucault identified the satire as the inspiration for *The Order of Things*.[40] Following Borges, he points out that the epistemological foundations which give rise to a specific discourse are situated in time and space, following the distribution of socio-political power. There is no one order, one taxonomy, one Knowledge but rather a plurality of knowledges, a mosaic of different visions of how to order the world.[41] In *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*, George Lakoff argues Borges' taxonomy could not constitute a natural categorisation.[42] However, he also points out that indeed many non-western taxonomies have a similar feel and have been perceived as equally fantastical.[43]

The order of the *Complete Writings* has suffered a similar fate. Many aspects of the compilation have been (mis-)understood as inscrutable and irrational. Even though its order does not seem nearly as wild as Borges' *Emporium*, a

[39] Borges 1973 [1947]: 104.
[40] Foucault 2002 [1970]: xvi.
[41] Foucault 2002 [1970]: 377-378. For more on Foucault see Maniglier 2013; and Massey 2017.
[42] Lakoff 1987: 92.
[43] Ibid.

common conclusion among scholars is that it lacks an overall coherent structure.[44] This stance is by no means limited to scholars in the West. Most scholarship written in Chinese has condemned the *Complete Writings* for its "mutually conflicting and contradictory" (扞格和矛盾) categories, its "relative disorder and lack of a fixed principle" (相當紊亂, 沒有一定規格).[45] Such critiques are not new. They follow early Republican scholarship in their adoption of a modern classificatory outlook. Liu, for example, held that the four-fold order of the *Complete Writings* and its organising "principles had so many contradictions" (其原則亦多互相刺謬之處), that it was "simply unusable … making it impossible not to have a revolution" (即不能利用四庫之部類…則不能不有所改革).[46] Over the past hundred years, the four-fold order and its epistemic foundations have had a moribund trajectory disfigured by 'revolutions' of scholarly and bibliographic practice – revolutions which have brought Chinese academics closer than ever before to the modern West.[47]

Following Foucault, this thesis accepts the existence of multiple orders of knowledge which have their own internal consistency.[48] But it is not concerned with the questions of political and social power that so preoccupied the French theorist.[49] This is not to deny that power was instrumental to the formation of the *Complete Writings* – quite the opposite, since the compilation, as a product of

[44] For example, see Guy 1987: 114; Mote 1987b: 47; and Diao 2017: 201.
[45] Jiang Yuanqing 蔣元晴 1965: 115; and Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2004: 165, respectively. For more examples, see Zhang Zhuanfeng 張傳峰 2007: 304-310; and Chen Shangjun 陳尚君 and Zhang Jinyao 張金耀 2008: 19-21. For an exception to this position, see Huang Yongnian 黃永年 2014: 6.
[46] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: iv.
[47] For the four-fold order's increasing irrelevance, see Zuo Yuhe 左玉河 2004. For the state of the four-fold order today, see Makeham 2012c: 102
[48] Foucault 2002 [1970]: 379.
[49] Rouse 1994.

imperial scholarship, is steeped in the workings of power. Contemporary research has exceedingly focused on the compilation's socio-political dimensions and we know all too well how institutional and social power shaped the formation of the *Complete Writings*.[50] The question of order, however, has received far less attention. Current explanations, few and far between, predominantly appeal to power which, as Chapter 2 shows, cannot provide a compelling account. This thesis aims therefore to supplement our current understanding of the *Complete Writings* by exploring its intellectual dimensions, beyond questions of authority, legitimacy, and orthodoxy.[51] By treating the compilation as a scholarly project worthy of theoretical examination, this thesis aims to clarify the intellectual aspects of the *Complete Writings* that transcend a narrow socio-political reading.[52]

Book Catalogues and Beyond

A bibliographic catalogue is a list of books – but it is never just that. A catalogue always embodies and solidifies a specific way of understanding the world and the objects within it. The ordering of books into different divisions reflects which kinds of knowledge are considered important and unimportant, essential and secondary, and which are prized and marginalised, or even worse, ignored.[53] Changes in bibliographic catalogues reveal how priorities in the

[50] Guy 1987; and Chan 1998: 31.
[51] Man-Cheong 2004: 11 more radically challenges the utility of the term 'orthodoxy'. Chang 2013 stands at opposite ends from my position offering a comprehensive overview of the relationship between imperial power and the circulation of knowledge in the Qing.
[52] Rosenberg 1979: 441 offers a similar approach for the study of knowledge structures in the USA in the late nineteenth century.
[53] Shera 1968: 9.

production of knowledge shift over time.[54] The way in which a catalogue is organised – by author, topic, genre, publication date, language, physical size, significance or preference – reflects the compiler's understanding of the intellectual universe.

Classification is a fundamental cognitive operation, necessary to make sense of the world and operate in it.[55] We constantly classify plants, animals, objects, phenomena, words, ideas and everything in between in order to understand and use them.[56] While classification structures vary significantly across cultures, the act of grouping things together seems to be a universal trait. Studying classifications across cultures offers a gateway into their conceptual, lived realities.[57]

As Chapter 1 shows, conceptions of knowledge manifested in bibliographic catalogues are inextricably tied to ways of perceiving the world.[58] Referring to the hallmark of the French Enlightenment, the *Encyclopédie*, Robert Darnton holds that "we order the world according to categories that we take for granted simply because they are given [since] they occupy an epistemological space that is prior to thought, and so have extraordinary staying power."[59] Our categories are so deeply ingrained in how we perceive and interact with the world that they are

[54] Wilkinson 2016: 936.
[55] Estes 1994: 4; and Cohen and Lefebvre 2005: 2. Here I follow Chan and Salaba 2016: 583 in using the term 'classification' as a cognitive function. Some scholars, such as Taylor and Joudrey 2009: 376 refer to the cognitive function as 'categorisation' and refer to 'classification' as the social praxis of categorisation.
[56] Ereshefsky 2001: 3.
[57] In fact, as Burke 2016: 27 points out, without some notion of 'order' or 'categorisation' we cannot proceed to compare knowledges from different times or places.
[58] Chang 1952: 2; and Drège 1991: 90.
[59] Darnton 1985: 192. Also see Adams 2006; and Hansson 2013: 386.

invisible.[60] Their obviousness arises from their necessity to grasp the world, resulting in their total transparency.[61]

Categories appear most clearly when they break down.[62] Facing cultural and historical others illuminates the assumptions of our categories because they often defy expectations.[63] When "confronted with an alien way of categorising experience, however, we sense the frailty of our own categories, and everything threatens to come undone", Darnton notes.[64] The study of bibliographic catalogues from different cultures, like the *Complete Writings*, provides access to their knowledge orders and reveals antecedent assumptions about classification in *both* cultures.[65] If effectively undertaken, such study may shed light on features of the human experience of classification which transcend cultural bounds.[66]

The order of knowledge embodied in a bibliographic catalogue is also tied to the structure of the society which produces, preserves, transmits, consumes, destroys, or ignores such knowledge. Order both embodies and solidifies social structures. "All social action flows", Darnton points out, "through boundaries determined by classification schemes, whether or not they are elaborated as explicitly as library catalogues, organisation charts and university departments."[67] Today, for example, the institutional arrangement of modern university

[60] Olson 1999: 112; and Lee W. 2015: 305.
[61] Quinn and Holland 1987: 14.
[62] Lee W. 2015: 305.
[63] Bowker and Star 1999: 294.
[64] Darnton 1985: 192.
[65] Tennis 2015: 26.
[66] This idea is further supported by several other authors: Manheim 1999 [1929]: 406 already maintained that "today we have arrived at the point where we can see clearly that there are differences in modes of thought, not only in different historical periods but also in different cultures. Slowly it dawns upon us that not only does the content of thought change *but also its categorical structure*" (stress added). McCarthy 1996: 6 writes: "How we see, what we see, and what we make of what we see is re-shaped by the elements of our mental maps." Finally, Mote 1989: 98 holds that "one implication we can clearly derive as we review the problem of knowledge is that the cultural values of the civilisation are thoroughly intertwined with the development of its intellectual history."
[67] Darnton 1985: 193.

departments along disciplinary lines matches the organisation of the intellectual landscape into distinct disciplinary branches. The dynamic interplay between the order of knowledge and society was first proposed by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss in *Primitive Classification*.[68] They showed how social structures impact the division of knowledge and conversely how knowledge orders solidify social structures. The dynamic interplay between knowledge and society, as Chapter 3 investigates, determines how we pursue, produce, and employ scholarship.[69]

Thus, a bibliographic catalogue provides more information than the order of the structure itself, functioning as a *mirror* and *framework* for the conceptualisation of the world and society. Conceptions about the world give rise to an organisation of knowledge which structures social conduct.[70] Conversely, social conduct affects the order of knowledge calling for the affirmation or revision of conceptions about the world.[71] The relationship between world, knowledge, and society is not linear but rather cyclical, with each element affecting the other two.

[68] Durkheim and Mauss 2010 [1963]: 9 draw a causal relation between social structures and knowledge structures whereas Foucault 2002 sees the later as a reflection of the former. For more on this question, see Olson 1999: 112; and Keshet 2011: 150. The point, however, is that Durkheim and Mauss brought together social and epistemological structures and by virtue of recognising their innovation, we can talk about the relationship between the two. For more on Durkheim and Mauss, see Ellen 1979: 3.

[69] Chew 2000: 20 states that organising knowledge has both a cognitive aspect (i.e. bibliographic classification schemes) and an organisational character (i.e. places of learning and their internal structures). Kelley 1997: 22 stresses that "knowledge is a culturally constructed phenomenon, and particular disciplines represent the cultural forms in which this knowledge has been preserved, transmitted, and transformed throughout the history which is accessible to us." Finally, specifically geared towards the Chinese context, Collins 2000: 156 presents the undertaking of founding imperial libraries as an effort "to define the paramount reality" and that "any rival to official definitions of reality would also take the form of an encyclopaedia or bibliographic collection." All of the above point to the idea that knowledge is a nexus between antecedent conceptions of the world and social practice.

[70] Lenk 1993: 4; Goldstone 1994: 131; Ereshefsky 2001: 15; and Smiraglia 2012: 12.

[71] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1991: 9-10; Hansson 2005: 39; Harnad 2005: 34; Andersen and Skouvig 2006: 303; and Labaree 2008: 54. The same logic applies to other kinds of records such as commercial book-keeping, see Gardella 1982.

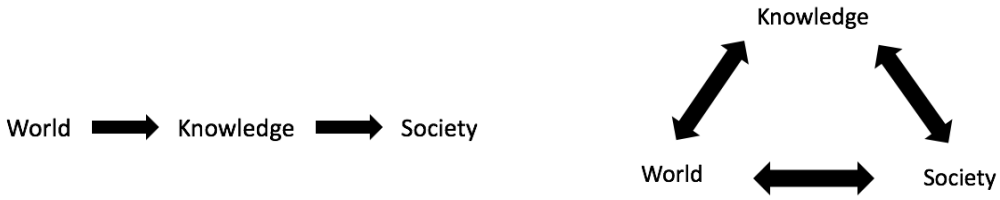


Figure 2: Linear and Cyclical Models of Knowledge Production

The study of bibliographic catalogues has suffered from inherited scholarly biases. Because a catalogue is fundamentally a list of objects, it has primarily invited scholarship focusing on documentary evidence. Scholarship in the field is defined by an agglomeration of details with little recognition of a catalogue's broader implications.[72] Of course, exceptions exist, but the overall scope of such studies remains undoubtedly wed to the antiquarian spirit of a bookish collector.[73] On the other end, post-modern cultural studies focus on broader conceptual questions about world and society. However, their analysis operates at a level of abstraction which does not invite the inclusion of bibliographic catalogues.[74] One extreme is too narrow; the other is too broad. By excessively concentrating on bibliographic orders, or ignoring them altogether, the two approaches are similar in their understanding of bibliographic catalogues as merely lists of books which cannot provide more meaningful information than the order of the books they encode.

[72] For example, see Witty 1958; Casson 2002: 38-41; and Duroselle-Melish 2015.
[73] See, for example, Wilson-Lee 2018 for a magisterial work telling the story of the rise of modern Europe through the book collecting and cataloguing experiences of Columbus' bastard son, Hernando. Also see Blair 2010 although her scope goes beyond book catalogues.
[74] For example, Lloyd 2009 explores the formation of academic practices cross-culturally but does not investigate the impact of book catalogues. Post-modern studies have focused on museums, archives and universities as institutions arranging knowledge, generally overlooking book classifications. For museums, see Bennett 1995; and Pearce 1998. For archives, see Greethem 1999; Manoff 2004; and Daston 2012. For universities, see Delanty 2001.

This conceptual study the order of *Complete Writings* offers a viable and informative midpoint between these two extremes.[75] The structure of this thesis – the poetics, purposes, and principles of the *Complete Writings* – is designed to reflect the relationship between world, knowledge, and society, aiming to strike a balance between excessively detailed and overly abstract approaches.

Knowledge Societies

Societies are becoming increasingly dependent on knowledge as a means for personal and collective advancement. For individuals, the acquisition of knowledge typically leads to enhanced social status and financial remuneration. For social groups, new knowledge – technological, medical, anthropological, historical or otherwise – creates engines for prosperity and well-being and has the potential to strengthen mutual understanding and co-existence. Never before have societies placed as many resources in the production, accumulation, and dissemination of knowledge.[76] The amplified role knowledge plays has led to the rise and popularisation of the term 'knowledge society' as well as a heightened interest, from across disciplinary fields, in the nature of knowledge.[77]

In the process of understanding what knowledge is and how it works, Peter Burke has called for the avoidance of anachronistic projections of a positivist, teleological mindset and the parochial exclusion of non-western societies.[78] Historicising knowledge is crucial in understanding its nature; pluralising the

[75] Rosenberg 1979: 441.
[76] Arnove 2019.
[77] Burke 2016: 4-5. Also see Delanty 2001.
[78] Burke 2016: 5. Also see Szostak 2013.

evidentiary pool is vital in transcending cultural limitations in our understanding of knowledge. This thesis is conceived as a response to Burke's call, offering the *Complete Writings* as one example of a non-positivist, non-western conception of knowledge.

The digital revolution has been instrumental to the rise of knowledge societies. Digital technologies have allowed for communication to take place at a previously unthinkable scale and speed. While the enabling function of digital infrastructures has been duly acknowledged, the convergence of the underlying conceptual structure – the 'software' of communication – has remained largely unrecognised. The standardisation and internationalisation of knowledge along modern disciplines has allowed for the practitioners of knowledge – librarians, bibliographers, thinkers, intellectuals, and the general public – to communicate with one another regardless of where they come from.[79] Yet digital technologies facilitate global discourse only on the basis of a shared knowledge map. Without a common conceptual scheme, communication across the world would be exponentially harder, no matter the state of digital technologies.

A single language for knowledge, however, is in tension with the diverse needs of local communities. A global categorisation fails to do justice to different conceptions of knowledge, overriding or ignoring local priorities. This has been a repeated concern of librarians and the adaptation of modern bibliographic systems – like Liu's reworking of the Dewey classification – has taken place the world over.[80] Such adaptations, however, do not challenge the fundamental assumption that modern classifications (with some adjustments) are a complete and total

[79] Chew 2005: 531.
[80] Batty 1976.

system *fit for all*. A common language and ordering scheme may be necessary for global communication but the adoption/adaptation of the modern western epistemological order is not. Modern claims to universality are a manifestation of what Robert Solomon has called the 'transcendental pretence': "that we—the white middle classes of European descent—were the representatives of all humanity, and as human nature is one, so its history", and in our case, knowledge "must be one as well."[81]

The effects of this assumption can be found even among scholars who actively call for de-parochialising modern conceptions of knowledge. Donald Kelley warns us that any history of knowledge entails looking back "from the standpoint of our own intellectual and linguistic – or disciplinary – condition. Writing the history of Anthropology, Sociology, and even of Literature, Art, or Science are anachronistic undertakings which introduce terminology and a large freight of assumptions alien to earlier historical contexts."[82] Yet, he also maintains that "the concept of 'discipline' is essential to the problem of knowledge in *human terms*, representing as it does the categories of learning and vehicles of intellectual transmission over many centuries."[83] Similarly, Burke identifies the process of pluralising the discourse on knowledge as equivalent to not assuming that any one system of disciplines is superior to others – that, say, the late imperial 'disciplinary' arrangement is inferior to the modern western one.[84] While the intention behind Kelley's and Burke's statements is commendable – to view knowledge 'in human terms' – the underlying assumption that all systems of knowledge are *disciplinary*

[81] Solomon 1979: xi.
[82] Kelley 1997: 25.
[83] Kelley 1997: 15 (stress added).
[84] Burke 2016: 18-19. Also see Gibbins 2012.

in nature remains problematic.[85] Even in institutions of learning which have traditionally employed the term, the concept of discipline and its effects on the cognitive and institutional arrangement of knowledge have morphed over time. Because disciplines are not universal constants, we cannot simply assume that they exist outside the modern academic context.

The term 'discipline' did not exist in pre-modern China and was introduced only with the advent of modernity. The contemporary term, *xueke* 學科, is an appropriation of a pre-existing word, which happens to appear in the *Complete Writings*. However, in its original usage, *xueke* hardly suggests modern conceptions of disciplines as clearly bounded fields of inquiry with exclusive sets of methods and questions, consolidated in the structure of educational institutions.[86] Rather, the term denotes a more general conception of area of study or subject. While intellectual historians like Kelley and Burke may treat disciplines as universals, sinologists have been fairly cautious. In 1964, Frederick Mote warned that disciplines "are no more than particular intellectual constructs which seem to be meaningful to us at this point in our own history."[87] William Skinner cautioned his peers that disciplines "developed not only *in* the western world but as studies *of* the western institutions…[and] remain essentially rooted in [their] particular societies."[88]

The anachronistic mistake (which is a 'mistake' only from our present perspective) has been committed not only by modern academics but also by scholars across time and space. In the Chinese setting, Former Han (202 BCE–7

[85] Bod 2015: 9.
[86] Chew 2005: 532 and 535.
[87] Mote 1964: 533.
[88] Skinner 1964: 517-518.

CE) dynasty imperial scholars ordered diverse groups of texts in neatly confined 'families' (*jia* 家) imposing a structure to earlier texts and thinkers which they themselves never employed.[89] The tendency to look back and re-conceptualise the past according to the necessities of the present is a general practice, putting into a broader perspective Solomon's transcendental pretence. By recognising this tendency in human thought, we might not be able to escape it but perhaps manage and control it.

Disciplining Tradition and The Legitimacy of Chinese Philosophy

Faced with the challenges raised by the modern West, Liu and his peers adopted its language and re-cast their inherited traditions on the basis of new categories. This is exactly when expressions such as Chinese Philosophy (*zhongguo zhexue* 中國哲學) and Chinese Literature (*zhongguo wenxue* 中國文學), started emerging as a part of a broader introduction of the Humanities as an academic subject.[90] A retrospective historical narrative aimed to show the existence of such scholarly activities from antiquity down to the present in order to legitimise them.[91] Essential to this process was mapping the new terminology onto the inherited structures and showing how old terms were identical, similar, or bore

[89] Schwartz 1985: 173-185 suggests that we comprehend the various *jia* not in the confining way of thinking them as Confucian-*ist*, or Mozi-*ist* (along the lines of Platonist or Marxists) but instead of thinking them as broader traditions in the way we think about liberalism, conservatism, or socialism with all the plurality of voices within each. He acknowledges that Han scholars were eager to cast back to the past a sense of intellectual unity that did not exist but ultimately concedes that they were justified in making these classifications given the similarities in the texts. Also see Queen 2001: 54.
[90] Cua 2000; Makeham 2012b: 3; Bai 2013: 535; and Hsiung 2015. See Blowers 2010: 7-8 for the translation and introduction of psychology in China.
[91] Makeham 2012c: 95, 100.

the seeds of heretofore unknown ideas.[92] The entire epistemological apparatus of the modern West – filtered through the Japanese experience with modernisation – was introduced into the Chinese academic mainstream and was used as a meaningful and legitimate framework of analysis.[93]

The early Republican creation of disciplinary scholarship was overwhelmingly motivated by a belief that China was 'backwards' and had to 'catch up' to western models.[94] If China wanted to be modern and join European countries – and possibly fight them off as well as partake in their economic prosperity – then it had to emulate them despite the costs. And the logic of 'catching up' has been the driving force behind institutional and intellectual changes in Chinese academia from the early twentieth century to this day.[95]

Despite warnings, a considerable cross-section of contemporary research has adopted the modern disciplinary arrangement of knowledge and its associated categorical structures to study pre-modern China. The modern perspective involves applying western categories on Chinese thought or questioning why it lacks a certain western category. The two are in principle identical since they aim to map modern concepts onto Chinese texts and when such mapping fails, the question does not turn onto itself, but rather seeks the reason behind the lack of such a 'fundamental' idea. This line of reasoning ranges from philosophical terms to literary genres: What conception of 'freedom' did ancient Chinese thinkers have

[92] The most successful and enduring of such scholarly enterprises were produced by Hu Shi 胡適 2016 [1919] and Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 1988 [1934] in *Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhongguo zhexueshi dagang* 中國哲學史大剛) and *History of Chinese Philosophy* (Zhongguo *zhexueshi* 中國哲學史). Later translations into English made these works very influential in academic circles beyond China. For more on Hu Shi, see Makeham 2012b.
[93] For Japan's role in China's academic modernisation, see Kiyohide 2004; and Chew 2005. For China's historical influence on Japan, see Pollack 1986.
[94] Makeham 2012c: 95.
[95] Chew 2005: 531.

and if they didn't, why did such a 'primary' idea elude them?[96] What are the foundational epic poems of China and if they don't exist, what are the cultural factors that precluded their formation?[97] What are the logical arguments deployed in classical texts and if there aren't any, what is it about the Chinese language that impeded them from emerging? [98] Such questions have, unfortunately, been prevalent in modern sinology, and have been posed by scholars trained in universities around the world, including greater China.[99]

The legitimacy of Chinese Philosophy (*zhongguo zhexue de hefaxing* 中國哲學的合法性) is at the heart of the predicaments of the modernisation of tradition.[100] Are there pre-modern texts and thinkers which have a philosophical – and not literary or historical – bent? And is there something above and beyond an aesthetic, cultural, or historical approach to knowledge in some parts of pre-modern Chinese thought which can be labelled as philosophy? A lot of ink has been spilled to answer these questions, evoking strong emotional responses across the board.[101] Philosophy has been perceived as so central to western forms of knowledge (or at least this is how philosophers like to think about themselves) that the question of

[96] Hansen 1972: 169-170 criticises attempts to force similarities across western notions and Chinese terms and argues that a projection of the idea of 'freedom' only hampers understanding.
[97] Owen 2007: 1390 notes how early European travelers and scholars to China were surprised not to find epic poetry as they had found in "all" other cultures around the world.
[98] Link 2013: 223 and 233 reverses the scales and asks whether Indo-European languages and philosophies make "excessive" use of entification and abstraction.
[99] Tsien 1952: 18 comments rather negatively that Chinese bibliographies do not have, like their western counterparts, an inbuilt concern and method for indefinite expansion; Bloom 1981 explores the connections between the lack of entification and counterfactual thinking with features of the Chinese language; Moser 1996: 220 acknowledges that the Chinese preoccupied themselves with "equally important but different" matters compared to the Greeks but also notes that certain features of the Chinese language (e.g. lack of morphology and context sensitivity) means that the Chinese "never *arrived* at such a threshold of awareness with regard to the classes of abstraction" (stress added); Metzger 1998 somewhat more cautiously explores the broader historical reasons behind the non-emergence of 'civil society' in China.
[100] For an overview of the debate see Defoort 2001. Some prominent contemporary interlocutors writing in Chinese are: Chen Shaoming 陳少明 2003; Wang Zhongjiang 王中江 2003; and Li Minghui 李明輝 2009. For an introduction to contemporary Chinese philosophy, see Bunnin 2003.
[101] Defoort 2006: 626.

what constitutes philosophy has been rigorously controlled. Exactly because philosophy has been presented as fundamental to western culture, the possession of philosophy among non-western societies has been equated with the possession of cultural and intellectual sophistication. Understanding the debate around the existence of 'Chinese Philosophy' is vital to appreciate the broader predicaments of contemporary sinological research and to offer some possible solutions to them.

Peter Park and Robert Bernasconi have shown how the larger debate on the existence of non-western philosophy arose only in the early to mid-eighteenth century.[102] Before, it was common not only to acknowledge that the Egyptians, Iranians, Indians, Chinese, Japanese and others had their own philosophies but also to locate the origins of ancient Greek philosophy in the East, most commonly Egypt.[103] In the eighteenth century and after, influential thinkers such as Kant and Hegel actively excluded all non-Greek and non-western societies from philosophy, arguing that it was a form of intellectual activity that was (and could have) developed only in Europe. Bryan Van Norden has harshly criticised contemporary philosophy departments in Europe and North America for the continuation of implicit racist attitudes by excluding non-western philosophies from their curricula.[104] He and others have offered several arguments for the inclusion of non-traditionally represented philosophies: first it would constitue a sign of cognitive and historical justice; diversity and pluralism will enrich current philosophical research; and changing geo-political and economic balances make it imperative to

[102] Park 2013; and Bernasconi 2001: 12,13, and 21 show how the 'scientific' notion of race (and the exclusion of non-western societies from philosophy) was most successfully developed by Kant. Bernasconi locates the motivation of developing the notion of race to the classification interests of eighteenth century Europeans such as Linnaeus'. This shows how classification dramatically impacts the ways in which we perceive, live, and behave in the world.
[103] Park 2013: 69-76.
[104] Van Norden 2017.

understand the native traditions of emerging powers. Some departments are changing, taking the necessary steps in their organisation, appointment of faculty, and allocation of resources. However, as Van Norden and others point out, when presenting their arguments they are often met with incredulity, reservation, or indifference and overall change remains small.[105]

'Philosophy justice warriors' and early modern Chinese academics are similar in that their motivations are overwhelmingly political. The possession of philosophy, now and then, has been inextricably bound with the inter-cultural politics of colonialism and imperialism. But the fact that 'Chinese philosophy' has remained so remarkably undervalued for so long might imply not only that philosophers in European and North American institutions are by and large myopic but also that the wrong questions have been posed all along.

Little reflection has taken place on the effects of naming a certain text or author philosophical and the methodological benefits and drawbacks from using the term philosophy. What does it mean to treat Confucius as a 'philosopher'? How does our understanding of the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) change if we say they are 'philosophical'? What benefits and harms are there in treating Chinese texts in philosophical terms? And in the end, does the category of 'philosophy' illuminate more than it obscures? These are vital questions to anyone studying pre-modern China and await more careful consideration.

The commitment to the use of the term 'philosophy' obviously calls for the reform of the collective understanding of 'philosophy' but also introduces a methodological dilemma. If 'philosophy' is used in a watered-down descriptive way (and we resist using its categories), then the designation loses its explanatory

[105] Chew 2000: 148; Raud 2006a: 621; Van Norden 2017: 28; and Defoort 2017: 1049.

power. If 'philosophy' is used in a robust prescriptive way (along with its categories), then there is a high probability of distorting the object of study. What value is there in recognising Chinese thought as philosophy, if we do not employ its major categorical divisions of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of language and so on. Accepting these divisions, however, furthers the incorporation of fundamental argumentative structures, evaluative norms, and categorical taxonomies. Departments of Chinese philosophy the world over have been using even more specific designations such as 'utilitarian', 'deontological', 'skeptic' and so forth as objective markers of a universal philosophical terrain, with little reflection on how these terms inflect our understanding of the object of study.[106]

Rarely acknowledged is the fact that the fundamental disagreement lies over the nature of the term 'philosophy'.[107] Is it a general description like 'art' and 'music' or a narrow designation like 'Romanticism' and 'Baroque'? To deny that China has art is as absurd as asserting it had Baroque music. Scholars who argue for the inclusion of non-western texts in philosophy curricula appeal to the use the term 'philosophy' in the first way and those who favour their exclusion refer to 'philosophy' in the second. Despite the plethora of writings dedicated to the inclusion of non-western philosophies, little has been written about the definitional problem. As long as participants continue to talk past each other, the chances of reaching consensus remain low.

[106] Cheng 2005: 178.

[107] Raud 2006b: 662 alludes to this problem but frames it in somewhat counterintuitive terms (do the Japanese have 'breakfast' or '*asagohan*' [the word for breakfast in Japanese]); Park 2013: 6 traces the exclusion of non-western cultures from philosophy to a "restrictive" and "narrow" definition; and Bernasconi 2017: 153 refers to the "non-porous" definition of philosophy as a vestige of racist ideology. While these descriptions of the problem help, I think framing the issue as I do above can help us gain better clarity on what is at stake.

The debate is not about whether a given text or author fits a certain notion of philosophy but rather whether the current notion of philosophy (as enacted by philosophy departments) is appropriate and just. The underlying rationale is that it is obvious that at least some texts are 'philosophical' (in the descriptive sense) and that the reason they are not treated as such in modern philosophy departments is because their understanding of philosophy is too narrow. Thus, somewhat ironically, the focus of the debate is not on foreign thinkers and their texts but rather on the contours of 'philosophy' (in the prescriptive sense) – a debate which can be traced all the way back to the ancient Greeks.[108] And even more ironically, the debate perpetuates philosophy's most fundamental assumption of asserting its own self-significance, as if philosophy constitutes the alpha and omega of intellectual pursuits or being philosophical is inherently good and superior to other kinds of intellectual deliberation.[109] Thus the real question we should be asking is not whether 'Chinese Philosophy' exists but rather why we wish to establish whether 'Chinese Philosophy' exists in the first place.

Within Chinese academia on China, National Studies (*guoxue* 國學), has constituted a sustained critique to disciplinarisation.[110] *Guoxue* has aimed to bypass modern disciplinary divisions and treat Chinese texts, thinkers, and ideas 'holistically'. Some *guoxue* scholars call for the reversal of academic practices and the return to modes of reasoning, arguing, and ultimately being which draw exclusively from 'traditional' Chinese texts – a return essentially to how things were, at least academically, before the encounter with the modern West.[111]

[108] Frede 2004; Lloyd 2005: 150-153; and Park 2013: 69.
[109] Cheng 2005: 176.
[110] Chew 2000: 129-130; and Chew 2005: 537.
[111] Dirlik 2011: 9-10.

Yet, given the changes of the past century, it is not clear whether such a move would be possible, let alone desirable, since there is simply something to be gained from the negotiation between different cultural systems. Could Chinese intellectuals simply ignore the past one hundred years? Is the process of coming face to face with modernity not part of China's history, just like its encounter with Buddhism centuries earlier?[112] Could the clock simply be turned back and would that do any good to Chinese academic pursuits? The illuminating effects of a simultaneous interplay between similarity and difference would all but evaporate if scholars, Chinese and otherwise, were to limit themselves to their own cultural spheres.

Guoxue is further caught up in an existential dilemma. Several *guoxue* scholars argue for its exceptionalism and non-disciplinary approach but simultaneously push for its institutionalisation which requires they conform to disciplinary divisions.[113] This uncomfortable position is not unique to *guoxue* but is reflected in area studies departments in European and North American institutions.[114] Scholars in geographically arranged departments are still expected to follow the trends of their respective disciplinary fields finding themselves in even narrower disciplinary silos (not, for example, Literature but Chinese Literature). *Guoxue* and area studies are not immune to the drive for specialisation that defines the modern academic condition.

[112] Allen 2015: 7.
[113] Guo Qiyong 國齊勇 2010; and Jiao Guocheng 焦國成 2010. For more on this, see Dirlik 2011: 11; and Makeham 2012c: 103 who discuss in greater detail this ironic position. However, notice that this problem is not inherent in *guoxue* per se but rather a result of the current discipline-based institutional context. The conundrum exists only because, right now, the only way for *guoxue* to be recognised as a 'serious' and 'legitimate' form of study is by being considered a discipline. In a different institutional setting, however, this would not be the case.
[114] Defoort 2017: 1052.

Our understanding of the contemporary predicaments of Chinese academia has significantly improved with the work by John Makeham, Brian Moloughney and Peter Zarrow, and others who have explored the transformation of traditional forms of scholarship into modern academic disciplines.[115] Such research has been instrumental in bringing into focus the methodological biases inherited from early Republican scholarship, revealing the endurance of the epistemic pathologies of modernisation. Knowledge of the social and historical conditions out of which modern disciplines were born in China can assist in the attempts to reconceptualise and re-calibrate academic practices today.

In recent years, some scholars have challenged the use of modern scholarly categories. Robert Campany and Richard King, for example, have questioned the suitability of the term 'religion' arguing that, in the pre-modern Chinese context, it leads to misguided divisions and ill-conceived questions.[116] Similarly, Pauline Yu and Stephen Owen have objected to the application of western generic conventions to pre-modern 'literary' traditions.[117] And Kōno Kimiko 河野貴美子 has contested the use of textual categories, such as 'novel', for pre-modern Japanese writing, reflecting the broader entanglement between China's modernisation question with that of its neighbours.[118]

Such scholarship, however, remains scarce and its underlying rationale has not been extended to other lines of inquiry. Bibliographic studies still suffer from the dominance of modern conceptions of knowledge.[119] The assumption that the modern epistemological apparatus is superior and therefore appropriate in

[115] Makeham 2012a; Moloughney and Zarrow 2011; Wang E. 2011; Wang F. 2011; and Steben 2012.
[116] Campany 2003; and King 2013. However, Campany 2018 take a more balanced approach, similar to the one adopted in this thesis *vis-à-vis* the concept of 'knowledge' and 'order'.
[117] Yu 1987; and Owen 2007.
[118] Kōno Kimiko 河野貴美 2017.
[119] King 2009: 40-42.

examining the order of the *Complete Writings* has not been examined and the conclusion that the four-fold order is deficient has not been challenged.[120] This thesis interrogates the use of modern categories and examines their limitations *vis-à-vis* knowledge organisation practices in late imperial China. Taking into consideration the underlying understanding of knowledge in the *Complete Writings* offers a blueprint for how we can come to a substantially different understanding of its order and re-orient our discourse about non-western conceptions of knowledge.

Introducing 知-ology

We find ourselves caught between two equally problematic positions. On the one hand, we have a modern approach which views its object of study from its own categorical structures with little effort to acknowledge ahistorical, limiting, and distorting effects. On the other, we have calls for a traditionalist revival, exemplified in *guoxue*, which is bogged down in an ironic predicament and risks repeating traditional and outdated forms of scholarship. Both positions are entrenched in either colonising and self-colonising ways of thinking, or a nationalist discourse of revival and self-strengthening.[121] These two visions of scholarship, are not a clash between modernity and tradition but rather a conflict between competing visions of modernity: one internationalist and the other

[120] Girardot 2002: 6 more emphatically calls for a "careful reevaluation of the history of western forms of knowledge concerning China." Girardot 2002 articulates this position in the context of the pioneering sinologist James Legge (1815–1897 CE) and his impact on subsequent scholarship. For more on Legge and his life, see Bowman 2016. The Jesuit mission during the late imperial era also had a tectonic impact on the West's approach towards China, see Mungello 1985; and Barrett 2005.
[121] Eoyang 2002: 219.

nationalistic. Our goal should be to avoid participating in this competition between alternative modernities and rather to offer an alternative to modernity.[122] To do this, we need to recognise that there is something of value in both. We have to look at traditional, non-western knowledge frameworks as a source of inspiration (and not imitation) while seeking to construct global 'languages' (but not on the terms of any one community). Studying Chinese thought is not only possible if conducted exclusively in traditional Chinese frames nor is it is only valuable if interpreted through modern categories; the first leads to mere repetition and the second to misrepresentation.[123]

In *The Discovery of Chinese Logic*, Joachim Kurtz argues for the need of a "de-modernised" sinology that aims to "understand the implicit and explicit criteria of validity, veracity, credibility, coherence, relevance, [and] applicability... in these fields [education, law, *canonical studies*, historiography etc.]... and record and define the terms, or metalanguages of each of these realms; trace [their] sources" and examine their use in "discrete discursive fields."[124] He equates such a method with a need "to reverse the conventional perspective and try to reconstitute concrete modes of knowledge production and their underlying rules "'from the ground up.'"[125]

The top-down approach of modern sinology applies modern concepts with robust epistemological and ontological commitments to understand Chinese terms and texts. More self-reflective approaches acknowledge the mismatch between conceptual tools and the object of study but call for the preservation of terms like

[122] Dirlik 2011: 4.
[123] It is also not clear whether it is even attainable to undertake a study in purely traditional categories, see Metzger 1998; and Ames 2005: 348.
[124] Kurtz 2011: 363-4 (stress added).
[125] See Kurtz 2011: 363-4. For an application of a de-modernised approach to sinology, See Reding 2004: 130-136

'epistemology', 'philosophy' and so forth on the basis that they can be helpful if re-qualified to fit the Chinese experience. This position is increasingly becoming the norm in sinology. But it is problematic for two reasons.

First, it remains committed to the primacy of western terminology. Even if the lexicon is qualified by limiting its connotations, the commitment to the lexicon of the modern West perpetuates a belief in the superiority and objectivity of its conceptual apparatus. The approach would be fair and methodologically sound only if the reverse process also took place, applying terms from Chinese (and other) meta-languages to understand western texts and thinkers. The question of whether Aristotle can be read as a *rujia* 儒家 ('Confucian') thinker appears vacuous.[126] Yet the reverse – do Confucian ethics constitute a kind of Aristotelian virtue ethics? – seems informative and legitimate. The unilateral use of western terminology, even if re-calibrated, prolongs the lopsided intellectual legitimacy of the modern West.

Second, the approach almost inevitably keeps the door open to misrepresentation no matter how qualified or minimal the use of western temrinology is. Terms such as 'epistemology' have a long history with an excess of assumptions and connotations which cannot be easily boxed away. Formulations such as *epistemology** by which the term is supposed to be re-conceptualised in a broadened way tend to be unsuccessful because terms cannot simply shed their ideational baggage. Terminology is never an innocent descriptive tool but rather a

[126] Nylan 2001: 3 problematises the translation of *rujia* (儒家) as Confucianism/Confucianist by explaining the historical background of the emergence of the westernised term as an attempt by Jesuit missionaries to find a counterpart to Christianity in China. I use the term 'Confucian' only as a matter of convenience.

prescriptive operation which carries its own normative commitments and frames the object of study. The terms we employ invariably inflect how we perceive.

A de-modernised methodology aims to build an understanding around the object of study 'from the ground up' by construing the methods, and questions of the people around the object of study. The fact that Chinese thought may not have some notions which are 'fundamental' in other discourses may be true but uninformative. To point out that the ancient Greeks did not have a notion of *dao* 道 or *yinyang* 陰陽 is trivial. To ask how it is possible that they did not have such ideas is misguided.

A de-modernised approach to sinology calls for a removal of terms and ideas from our methodological toolkit but does not offer a way to approach local metalanguages, criteria of validity, and rules of knowledge production. If our conceptual apparatus is stripped down to nothing more than bare bones, how can we undertake a meaningful investigation? For example, Sarah Allan remarks that "by exposing the metaphoric structures that are implicit in the language of Chinese philosophical discourse, we reveal the organisation and internal relationships of its terms and categories."[127] While Allan's methodological point is well-taken, the use of the word 'categories' invites further scrutiny from the de-modernised perspective. The word *fanchou* 範疇 was introduced into the Chinese modern lexicon in the early twentieth century to denote the idea of 'category'.[128] In the pre-modern setting, is a category understood in the Aristotelian way as an enclosed, well-defined entity with explicit criteria for inclusion? Or is it something else? Can and should pre-modern Chinese thought be understood through the prism of such

[127] Allan 1997: 5.
[128] Zhang Dainian 2002: ix.

'categories'? Does this constitute yet another misapplication of a modernised epistemological framework?[129] Yet if we cannot even make recourse to our most basic notions, how can we proceed to undertake scholarly investigation? How can we be working 'from the ground up' without using at least some concepts that are external and imposed from the top down?

Echoing Kurtz's critique, Benjamin Elman has argued for the necessity of exploring "Chinese interests…as they articulated and practiced them on their own terms rather than speculate why they did not accomplish what the Europeans did."[130] This requires that we "acknowledge that as yet we do not have appropriate categories of learning that resemble pre-modern Chinese frames" of knowledge and that we will have "to extend our own understanding and make room for…pre-modern Chinese frames."[131]

In a similar direction, Barry Allen asks his readers to consider whether ancient Chinese thinkers had "lower standards or different priorities [and] different standards" in their contemplative thinking.[132] Differences in the conceptual discourse of the ancient Chinese and our own are not the product of a similar but inferior way of thinking but rather of a different and equally valid approach to the world.[133] With this point in mind, Allen proposes a hybrid methodological toolbox that aims to combine emic (native) and etic (non-native) priorities and standards of investigation.

The possibility of picking up the methods and questions of non-modern scholarship is more radically advocated by Leigh Jenco, who calls on scholars to

[129] For a broader challenge of western epistemological frameworks, see Olson 1999.
[130] Elman 2005: xxvi (stress added).
[131] Elman 2004: 26.
[132] Allen 2015: 8.
[133] Allen 2015: 4

"aim toward a more comprehensive engagement with alternative foundations of scholarship…[so that] we should recalibrate our expectations about what it is and how we learn, *what counts as knowledge*, and with whom and for whom we might produce it."[134] Challenging the view that for scholarship to be meaningful it must assume the categorical structures of the modern West, Jenco argues that considering the conceptions of knowledge of Chinese thinkers (and beyond) might place us in the uncomfortable position of having "to replace the very grounds from which we originally launched our inquiry and the language we once used to describe and evaluate it."[135]

These concerns and aspirations echo Hans-Georg Gadamer's seminal work, *Truth and Method*. The hermeneutic challenge, according to Gadamer, is to "do justice to the historicity of understanding" while being freed from the "obstructions of the scientific concept of objectivity."[136] Gadamer sought to understand how we can reach meaningful conclusions – and not be trapped in the position of 'anything goes' – without making recourse to a putatively absolute and universal yardstick. He acknowledged that any encounter with historical and cultural others will inevitably entail a tension of perspectives. The objective of the hermeneutic approach is not to conceal this tension but rather consciously to bring it out through a 'fusion of horizons'.[137] The hermeneutic synthesis rejects the subordination of our own standards to those of others (or vice versa) as an undesirable and limiting perspective. More fundamentally, it challenges the viability of a purely emic understanding because the past is always framed for, by and through the perspective of the present. Believing that etic categories can be altogether by-

[134] Jenco 2015: 5 (stress added).
[135] Jenco 2015: 23. Also see Jenco 2011.
[136] Gadamer 2014 [1960]: 278.
[137] Gadamer 2014 [1960]: 317.

passed is misguided and naive.[138] Rather, the task "always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other. The concept of 'horizon' suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have."[139] The question then is how do we use the 'foreign past' to forge a new horizon.[140]

This thesis places itself in this broad dialogue and aims to implement a de-modernised, hybrid approach to the order of knowledge in the *Complete Writings*. Accessing the language of order from a "superior breadth of vision" which is in principle accessible to contemporary scholars as much as to high Qing literati. A hybrid methodology bringing together both horizons is not only necessary but also exciting insofar as it produces new avenues for scholarly research.[141]

New fields of study require new terms to assert their difference from pre-existing modes of scholarly inquiry. Differences in the content of questions posed, the manner in which they will be answered, and the criteria on which they will be evaluated mark differences across different lines of scholarship. A new kind of scholarly deliberation requires a new 'language' for itself in order to assert its difference and uphold its uniqueness.

In the sinological context, Min has proposed substituting the expression 'Chinese Philosophy' with a new term. His suggestion of 'sinosophy' is a substitution play on 'philosophy' by way of switching *philo-* (love) with *sino-* (Chinese) as a prefix to *sophia* (wisdom).[142] Min holds that "with this new word, we at least have a basis for their disparity from which we may have a more proper

[138] Metzger 1998.
[139] Gadamer 2014 [1960]: 316.
[140] For an interesting take on Gadamer's fusion of horizons, see Rosker 2015.
[141] See for example Hurst 2000: 3 and how she uses a 'hybrid' approach to explore the evolution of language in China.
[142] Min 2012: 215.

standpoint to examine both as different entities (either looking from one side or from the other), rather than being prone to assimilate one to the other in an artificial way."[143]

While Min's suggestion constitutes an improvement, the languages that we draw from do matter. Differences in the associations of words across languages give rise to different meanings.[144] A new lexicon drawing exclusively from western languages implicitly asserts the centrality of the West as well as curtails the breadth of a 'superior vision'.[145] A hybrid method has to produce a diction which is not only cross-cultural but also inter-linguistic, bringing to centre stage the integration of different methods and questions.

Given that this thesis investigates the order of knowledge, one way forward is by substituting the term 'epistemology'. This is a good candidate to begin with because of its centrality in western academic discourses. It is also a good point of departure because the pre-modern Chinese did not employ an analogous term and questions associated with epistemology – is knowledge justified true belief or is real knowledge ever attainable? – simply do not arise. In the spirit of a de-modernised, hybrid approach, this fact compels us to create a new inter-linguistic term. Thus, instead of 'epistemology', I suggest to speak of 知-ology/*zhiology*.

Zhi 知 is commonly translated as 'knowledge/to know', but the term has a wider semantic range, covering 'perception/to perceive' and 'realisation/to

[143] Ibid.
[144] See, for example, Allen 1997: 32.
[145] In slightly different context, Williams 1996: xiv makes a similar point that the "post-imperial liberal doctrine of 'openness'…extended to non-western societies…is argued entirely in European terms." Similarly, King 2009: 49 finds the use of the term 'gnosis' as a "catch-all term for the traditional wisdom tradition of non-western cultures…problematic because it resonates too closely…with the historically specific network of movements and traditions known as Gnosticism."

realise'.[146] In antiquity, *zhi* was interchangeably used with its near homophonous *zhi* 智, which in modern Chinese exclusively denotes wisdom. Thus while *zhi* and 'knowledge' are partially overlapping, they also retain their distinctness. Chapter 1 explores in greater detail the constellations of meaning between *zhi* and its associated terms, *sheng* 聖, sagacity and *wen* 文, the 'performance' of knowledge.

The suffix -*ology* means 'study of', 'subject of study', or 'specialty in' *zhi*. The main point behind *zhiology* is to avoid the methodological limitations inherent in using purely etic or emic sets of terms. Chinese traditions can be approached with a new set of questions drawing out a line of inquiry which nonetheless respects the theoretical contours and priorities of the object of study. *Zhiology* is a conscious reconstitution of Chinese texts but not on the basis of an exclusively alien structure. Unlike the New Culture Movement's subordination to modern standards, *zhiology* brings forth and incorporates the priorities and criteria of another horizon. It is a dynamic and generative interplay between the various ways in which *zhi* has been discussed in Chinese texts and our effort to provide a navigating compass for the plethora of issues around it. A *zhiological* study examines the etymological roots of terms associated to the idea of 'knowledge', exploring the constellations of meaning between them. It considers the aims, interests, and questions a community of thinkers posed, investigating the answers given to these questions. And it records the self-reflecting, second-order languages used to describe and evaluate such answers, probing their internal logic.

Zhiology is not epistemology with a different name and the -*ology* component of the term does not imply the creation of a new discipline. Instead, it aims to draw inspiration from both sides of its constitutive terms, examining issues

[146] Meyer 2015: 297.

from – following contemporary academic parlance – inter- cross- trans- and ultimately non-disciplinary approaches. *Zhiology* interrogates the very idea of discipline. As academic departments are becoming ever more aware of the problems of disciplinary compartmentalisation, *zhiology* functions not as the Chinese mirror image of epistemology but rather as an alternative to the idea of well-delineated disciplines. Offering an example of a *zhiological* investigation, this thesis deliberately aims to transcend disciplinary boundaries.

A recasting of traditional issues along *zhiological* lines allows us to continue discussing, debating, and reflecting on pre-modern ideas in a way which treats them as valuable. We can approach pre-modern Chinese discourses in a manner that we do not merely study them but are also partaking in them. The absence of a specific word or idea from the object of study directly analogous to ours does not mean that it ceases to be useful in our analysis. There is heuristic value in using terms which are not explicitly found in the object of study as this allows us not only to understand texts anew but also render them relevant to contemporary questions.

Motivations are the defining criterion behind the meaningful introduction of new terminology. Political motivations, premised on notions of superiority and inferiority – to protect 'our' knowledge or 'catch up' to that of others – lead to pitfalls. Methodological motivations, however, offer an alternative. The difference in motivations is what distinguishes the use of terms such as 'philosophy', 'epistemology' and 'disciplines' by early Republican and modern scholars from the terms 'knowledge', 'order' and the associated concepts ('poetics', 'purposes', 'principles' etc.) of this thesis. These terms are not used with normative judgements seeking to fit Chinese ideas into a specific mould. Rather, they are used in the

broadest way possible with the intention to highlight the difference in the similarities and the similarity in the differences *between and within* traditions.[147] Half-way between incommensurability and identity, a middle ground exists in which we can acknowledge our capacity to understand others' categories and make them our own by infusing them with new meaning.[148] The hybrid quality of *zhiology* confers dual citizenship to the new mode of scholarship. It breaks down fossilised distinctions between China and the West, as well as the modern and pre-modern.[149] The question thus is not only what can we learn *about* the Chinese experience but also what can we learn *from* it.

While the term *zhiology* might be fruitful within the confines of this thesis, we have to inspect its broader methodological utility. I therefore propose to pre-emptively respond to two possible objections to the use of the term.

One objection against *zhiology* could be that it raises the wall between scholarship on China and other parts of the world. By generating new terms, one inevitably relocates the methods and questions of inquiry in a way which may impede communication across different parts of the world. *Zhiology* may be helpful but only to study Chinese material, and, ironically, within its disciplinary boundaries.

The utility of a new hybrid diction, however, is not confined to its application to Chinese thought. Rather, it extends to western fields of knowledge and invites us to consider how conceptions about 'knowledge' in ancient Greek philosophy, for example, would look like from a *zhiological* perspective. A hybrid

[147] Van Norden 2019: 643.
[148] See Berry et al. 2011; and Lloyd 2015: 11, 13.
[149] In this sense, *zhiology* responds to Appadurai 1988: 41 that cultural studies tend to essentialise, exoticise, and totalise the 'foreign other'. Breaking down the distinction between 'West/Rest' has broader implications for other fields such as political theory, see for example, Freeden and Vincent 2013: 10.

terminology inspired from the ground-up from both traditions constitutes the only space in which a robust conversation between cultures on an equal footing can take place and methodologically sound cultural comparisons can take hold. Just as sub-fields of philosophical inquiry have developed their own sub-languages (for example, logical notation for analytic philosophy and logic), so too are hybrid languages vital for cross-cultural investigations.

In the absence of an apposite language, cross-cultural comparisons often produce dizzying effects. Incommensurability implies that there is no neutral, non-culturally determined space from which to look onto others and oneself.[150] A hybrid lexicon allows for a meaningful and equitable dialogue between partners because they bring to surface the tension between the 'view from nowhere' and the 'view from everywhere'.[151] Wishing to leave behind the specificity of any one culture is equivalent to abandoning everything one knows. While *zhiology* is a hybrid between Chinese and western lexicons, other traditions have to be included and should not be limited to a mix between western and non-western cultures. The formation of new terms between non-western cultures is, if anything, even more exciting. The integration of Buddhism into China and East Asia or the fusion of Islamic and Persian frames of knowledge are examples of how the process of hybridisation can productively take place with different interlocutors.[152] *Zhiology* welcomes the diversity of human thought as the resource on which meaningful exchange of ideas across cultures can take place. The hybrid language challenges the parochialism of any one cultural viewpoint but also highlights the salience of

[150] Boster 2005: 94.
[151] Nagel 1986.
[152] For Sino-Buhddist interactions in knowledge formation, see Storch 2014; Zacchetti 2016; and Hsu 2018. For the fusion of Persian influences into Arab encyclopaedias, see Gutas 2006; and Muhana 2017.

culture *itself* by creating new cultures. Rather than erecting walls, *zhiology* opens new horizons, creating new academic modes of inquiry across traditions.

More fundamentally, *zhiology* challenges the viability of having one and only one language in which research, cross-cultural or otherwise, can be conducted. By pointing out the specificity of each locality, it challenges the assumption that a unitary system of knowledge can take into consideration the needs and priorities of *all* local communities. By proposing a multiverse of distinct, but mutually impenetrable, languages, *zhiology* undermines the idea of universality as a genuinely universal notion, that everyone, everywhere has been trying to (or ought to be trying to) develop a universal language in which all people can communicate. Yet, visions of a universal language and ordering system are the particular expression of one locality – modern, western (and imperialistic) in its quest to relate to (or rather dominate) all other localities. The response is not to try and create another unitary language but rather accept the need for multiple idioms.[153] The absence of a single system is a sign of increased awareness of the diversity of human experience and the methodological sensitivities that arise from it.[154]

Another objection against *zhiology* could be that it cannot function as a model to generate other hybrid terms. *Zhiology* lacks a generative principle necessary to set out how to create hybrid terms and evaluate them. Without such formal rules, *zhiology* is just a word.

Zhiology is envisioned as a non-enclosed area of study, casting doubt on the need for a generative, formal, (and perhaps, formulaic) principle. *Zhiology* implies that in scholarly deliberation what matters more than principle is attitude

[153] Olson 1999: 119.
[154] Bowker and Star 1999: 322.

towards the object of study. A *zhiological* perspective calls for a charitable critical stance and a spirit of curiosity and creativity.[155] To be charitable is to strive to understand the meaning behind any text as well as the reasons behind its sustained influence across time and space. Doing so does not mean abandoning scholarly examination. Rather, the use of critical tools (provided we have reflected on their appropriateness) is carried out with the intention to explain the value of the object of study to its original community as well as to the community currently studying it.

A spirit of curiosity and creativity can transform the ambiguity and uncertainty of hybrid dictions into productive inquiry. A "restive venturesomeness" and not the demands of disciplinary principles is needed to generate new terms.[156] We have to invite the endless possibilities of lexical hybrids as a celebration of new ways of operating as scholars. An imposition of clear and precise rules harks back to the requirements imposed by the confining logic of disciplinary arrangements of knowledge. *Zhiology* does not offer a generative principle, for that would undermine its non-disciplinary spirit and its capacity to point to new lines of scholarship.

Understanding the order of the *Complete Writings* 'from the ground up' and on its 'own terms' is the aim of this thesis. *Zhiology* suggests that the integration of the terms, ideas, and priorities of the object of study into our own practices can fulfil these two methodological goals. As a *zhiological* study, this thesis is not comparative because cross-cultural investigations require a robust prior understanding of the objects of comparison which we currently do not have.

[155] Allen 2015: 6 argues that "only by creative, restive venturesomeness, not by disciplinary specialisation however global, will Chinese tradition begin to make a difference to the philosophy of the future."
[156] Allen 2015: 6.

Nonetheless, in the spirit of zhiology, this thesis recognises and welcomes the tension inherent in any inevitably cross-cultural exploration of a 'foreign past'.

Knowledge Organisation

This thesis does not seek to answer the questions raised by epistemologists and social psychologists. It does not aim to establish the formal qualities that define knowledge nor show how social processes affect the production, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge.[157] Rather, it engages with what Jesse Shera termed 'social epistemology' which is "precisely that which the epistemologists and social psychologists have neglected, namely, how knowledge is differentiated and integrated."[158] The problem of knowledge for Shera is the investigation of the intellectual forces in which the order of knowledge is created, communicated, criticised, and received.[159] More than forty years ago, he noted that "the study of the nature of knowledge, and the relationship between the structure of knowledge…and the librarian's tools for intellectual access to that knowledge, have received almost no attention."[160]

In the past two decades, a new line of inquiry has slowly but steadily been emerging which aims to answer the kinds of questions Shera proposed.[161] Known as Knowledge Organisation, this domain examines the representation of documents,

[157] For an investigation of the epistemological status of the senses in ancient Chinese philosophy, see Birdshistell 1984; and Geaney 2002. For examples of social and cognitive psychology, see Speir 1982; Wolff 1982; Chiu and Hong 2006; and Pothos and Wills 2011. For more on the sociology of knowledge, see Swindler and Arditi 1994; McCarthy 1996; Stehr and Meja 2005; Fuller 2007: 188. For a sociocognitive approach to knowledge, see van Dijk 2014.
[158] Bergen 1968: 1.
[159] Kelley 1997: 18; and Fuller 2007: 177.
[160] Shera 1968: 7-8.
[161] Andersen and Skouvig 2006: 301.

works, and concepts and their integration into orders of knowledge.[162] Knowledge Organisation fills the gap not only between epistemology and social psychology but also between bibliographic and post-modern cultural studies. Assuming an inherently inter-disciplinary approach, Knowledge Organisation is fundamentally interested in (1) questions on document description, indexing, classification, bibliographic cataloguing, and archival record-keeping; (2) objects such as encyclopaedias, catalogues, dictionaries, thesauri, and indexes; and (3) the organising activities that librarians, information and data scientists, archivists but also algorithms and laypeople undertake.[163] Library and Information Science is geared toward creating professionalised practitioners.[164] Knowledge Organisation, by contrast, is its theoretical, self-interrogating manifestation, exploring the factors determining knowledge orders.[165]

The fundamental questions of Knowledge Organisation pertain to the nature of knowledge and organisation.[166] The abstractness and fluidity of these terms means they are hard to delineate. Tennis has suggested an operational definition of knowledge organisation as "the process of ordering and representing documents."[167] While helpful, the fundamental questions persist since it is not clear what is supposedly manifested in documents, what is being ordered, and what constitutes a document.[168]

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[162] Broughton et al. 2005: 133; and Friedman and Thellefsen 2011: 645-646.
[163] Hjørland 2003: 87; Broughton 2005; Hjørland 2008; Smiraglia 2012: 1. For more on the role of 'information' in the creation of knowledge orders, see Florid 2003; and Floridi 2013.
[164] Svenonious 2000: 5.
[165] Bailey 1994; and Lambe 2007.
[166] Broughton 2005: 140.
[167] Tennis 2008: 102.
[168] Buckland 1997; Rowley and Hartley 2008: 33-35; and Lee H. 2016: 21-22. Hansson 2006: 33, 39 adds another problem namely the relationship between documents and organisation. Some scholars writing in Chinese question whether bibliographic catalogues can be seen as organising anything above and beyond texts, see for example Wang Xincai 王新才 2008: 42; and Huang Yanyu 黃晏妤 2000. Even if a bibliography is an organisation of texts and only texts, the position that it does not reflect any broader understanding of the knowledge universe and the culture out of which

On top of this concern, we have to add the problem of whether high Qing (1683–1839 CE) scholars had notions analogous to 'knowledge' and 'organisation'. The range of meanings for the two words today may well be substantially different from that of late imperial scholars' terms.[169] Because these questions are central to this thesis they are explored throughout the text and I do not attempt to resolve them in these introductory pages. It should suffice to say that conceptions of 'knowledge' and 'order' were not static or monolithic in pre-modern China and so equal emphasis is given to the differences between modern West and high Qing scholarship (Chapters 1 and 3) as well as the changes that took place in conceptions of bibliographic orders in late imperial China (Chapter 2).

Knowledge Organisation scholarship examining bibliographic catalogues remains sparse, especially for non-modern and non-western cases.[170] Hur-li Lee's recent study on the Former Han dynasty bibliographic catalogue, *Seven Epitomes* (*Qilüe* 七略) is a notable exception.[171] The overall spirit of her 'hermeneutic' approach is co-extensive with mine. Yet significant differences from Lee in both methods and conclusions point to the richness of this line of inquiry and the necessity for further research.

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it grew is shortsighted, see Zhang Quanxiao 張全曉 2006; Ke Ping 柯平 2008; and Wang Jinmin 王錦民 2012: 115.

[169] Harbsmeier 1993; and Csikszentmihalyi 2002. In this sense, my study is also a case of cognitive anthropology as defined by Boster 2005: 93 although I am not observing a living community of individuals; for more on the development of cultural anthropology, see Blount 2011.

[170] Mokhtar and Yuso 2015. Even worse, as Moulaison and Bossaller 2017: 3 point out 'indigenous systems' are often discounted as 'bounded' and 'primitive' and therefore "unfit for global consumption." For one of the earliest pieces of scholarship in the West on Chinese bibliographies (which even though groundbreaking does not approach the topic from a theoretical lens), see Kang 1938. Also see Tsien 1952; and Tsien 2004.

[171] Lee H. 2016 is an exception.

Knowledge Organisation and the High Qing

The high Qing was a period where questions about the bibliographic order of books was central to academic pursuits.[172] In the words of one celebrated scholar, Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛 (1722–1798 CE), "in learning, bibliographic studies are of outmost importance and it is necessary to apply oneself here first in order to be able to find one's way into the realms of learning" (目錄之學學中第一緊要事必從此問塗方能得其門而入).[173] Questions on the order of knowledge held unprecedented centrality and were tied to attempts to understand the totality of learning: how did the various bodies of knowledge relate to each other and how could a seemingly overwhelming tradition of scholarship be managed?[174] The high Qing saw the proliferation of compilations of all kinds of texts from Buddhist sutras to medicinal companions.[175] Amidst this explosion in compilation projects – imperial and private, generalist and specialist – the *Complete Writings* stands apart in the immensity of its scope and the boldness of its vision. Conceived as the definitive answer to the quest for order, the compilation was seen as the ultimate response to the concerns of high Qing scholarship.[176]

In 1771, the Qianlong emperor issued an edict which set in motion the *Complete Writings*, articulating his vision and the general guidelines to achieve it. A revealing excerpt of the edict, written in the emperor's voice, states that "I often ponder the imperial libraries of the past, their valuable books and the broad

[172] McDermott 2005: 166.
[173] Wang Mingsheng 王鳴盛 1987: 1.1.
[174] Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2009: 42; Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 225; and Nakamura Miki 中村未来 2016: 78.
[175] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1998: 68-69; Yan Zuozhi 嚴佐之 2008: 3; and Wang 2017. The quest for compilations was married with an enterprise for general criticism and connoisseurship, see Plaks 1990: 121.
[176] Guy 1987: 204; and Tarsala 2001: 8, 51.

erudition of the scholars who recorded their contents; the greatest of these catalogues, becoming commentaries in themselves and being passed from generation to generation, served as mirrors of thousands of years of history" (因思策府縹緗載籍極博其鉅者羽翼經訓垂範芳來固足備千秋法鑑).[177] The idea that book catalogues are mirrors of the past and commentaries of the present captures the self-reflexive character of high Qing scholarship.[178] The production of bibliographic collections was an essential exercise in the complex and evolving articulation of literati identity.[179] Given the enormous outpour of scholarship by late imperial times, how one ought to relate to the inherited traditions of learning and therefore to other scholars, both living and gone, had emerged as a question of vital significance.[180]

The *Complete Writings* is "one of the great achievements of Chinese bibliography" and the most complex and sophisticated manifestation of the four-fold order.[181] The editors were aware of the significance of their project and were in explicit conversation with bibliographic orders of the past, evaluating their merits and limitations, and incorporating elements as they saw fit. The *Complete Writings* is the last major expression of a Chinese bibliographic order before the adoption of western classification schemes and through it, one encounters over two thousand years of bibliographic practice.[182]

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[177] Staff of the China Number One History Archives, *Zuanxiu siku quanshu dang'an* 纂修四库全书档案 1997 [hence *Zuanxiu*]: 1.1. For more on the edict, see Guy 1987: 34-35 whose translation I have consulted.

[178] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1998: 59; and Smith 2015: 310. Man-Cheong 2004: 68-70 shows the significance 'meta-discursive' knowledge on the received taxonomies had become during the Qianlong era with questions on the development of bibliographic catalogues featuring in imperial examinations.

[179] For the impact of scholarly pursuits on the articulation of literati identity, see Matsumi Hiromitsu 松見弘道 1989: 221; and Roddy 1992: 4 and 212.

[180] Guy 1987: 204; and Huang 2013: 2.38.

[181] Spence 1991: 101.

[182] Tarsala 2001: 7.

Unlike past imperial compilation projects, the *Complete Writings* did not depend on a pre-existing collection. It was built from the bottom-up, calling on scholars from across the empire to submit valuable texts. This means that its order was neither predetermined by an existing collection nor predestined to follow the four-fold division. Furthermore, given its collective nature, the *Complete Writings* offers a wider awareness that private book collections or treatises on bibliography by single authors cannot capture. While they may reflect broader scholarly trends, private collections ultimately remain tied to contained, individual moments of intellectual deliberation. Given its far-reaching scope, the *Complete Writings* and its rationale extended far beyond the confines of imperial scholarship, voicing instead the concerns of an entire cohort of literati.[183]

The compilation's structure was inherited by early Republican scholars and so any investigation of their grappling with modernity will inevitably have to take into consideration how the *Complete Writings* conditioned their way of thought. While many orders existed, the four-fold division, exactly because it was used in the *Complete Writings*, had a unique standing in the minds of early twentieth century intellectuals. Figures like Liu who explicitly engaged with its perceived shortcomings, acknowledged (and reinforced) its significance.

Despite its moribund trajectory, the order of the *Complete Writings* has survived primarily through the incorporation of some of its bibliographic units in modern classifications. Liu's division, the *New Classification Scheme for Chinese Libraries* (*Zhongguo tushu fenlei fa* 中國圖書分類法), is arguably the most successful such system, used to this day in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.[184]

[183] Tarsala 2001: 90
[184] Wu Weici 吳慰慈 et al. 1999: 13

Many libraries in mainland China were using Liu's classification up until the 1960s but ideological commitments meant that it was fully abandoned by the time of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976 CE). Nonetheless, Liu's system influenced other bibliographic orders for Chinese-holding libraries in greater China and beyond.[185] Its durability vindicates his vision for the development of scholarly practice along disciplines, modified (albeit slightly) to fit the inherited traditions of learning.[186]

Another surprising way in which the four-fold order survives today is in its deployment in parallel to modern classifications, defying the vision of a unitary system that Liu sought to fulfil. University libraries from Tokyo to Oxford use modified versions of the four-fold order for their pre-modern Chinese collections, at times even including relevant modern scholarship.[187] The fact that the four-fold order is still used reflects its utility and its integral bond to the body of knowledge it was designed to organise. Despite its use, the order remains marginal, even in China-focused libraries, with the vast majority of texts (both ancient and modern) arranged according to modern classifications. The dominance of modern bibliographic structures has meant that concerns about the suitability of using foreign schemes to order knowledge in China (and elsewhere) have remained by and large muted or dormant.[188]

Yet, as the voices challenging the suitability of modern categories grow, a likely point of return for scholars in China (and East Asia) will be the high Qing and the order of the *Complete Writings*. While other schemes from antiquity and later periods do exist, they do not carry the same cultural significance nor can they

[185] Ibid.
[186] Cohen 1984: 1-4; and Kiselev et al. 2017.
[187] For a recognition of the historical significance of the four-fold order, see Taam 1977 [1935]: 17. For the order's endurance into the modern world, see Bodde 1991: 72; and Chew 2000: 146.
[188] Matsumi Hiromitsu 松見弘道 1989: 221.

purport to provide an order for knowledge as comprehensive and encompassing. If the order of knowledge is going to be re-conceptualised in the future, the *Complete Writings* – exactly because it stands at the cusp of modernity and engages with received traditions – will be the most likely point of inspiration for new ventures.

Studying the high Qing through the prism of knowledge organisation can also grant new insight into its history since it has direct bearing on the lived reality of scholars, from how they perceived their world to how they pursued knowledge. Late imperial China was a knowledge society *par excellence*. Knowledge (of certain kinds) was unambiguously prized to the extent that its acquisition and dissemination were central to the formation of personal and collective identities (of at least one section of society) as well as the operation of political and social power. For one, the imperial examination system functioned as the gateway to civil bureaucracy – and therefore wealth and power – for talented males across the empire.[189] Since the thirteenth century, however, the number of scholars had greatly outstripped the number of administrative positions, leaving the vast majority of literati outside imperial patronage and learning was increasingly valued independent of its material and social benefits.[190] Education was extended to as many individuals as possible (formally for boys but informally including many girls) and private academies burgeoned in the high Qing.[191] Bibliographic catalogues underpinned how scholars related to their books, each other, and scholarship of the past, inflecting their reading habits as well as teaching and learning strategies. The order of knowledge offers a new prism to understand literati in their embodied identities as users of texts within intellectual structures.

[189] Lai 1970; Miyazaki 1976; Man-Cheong 2004; and Elman 2013.
[190] For more on education in late imperial China, see Elman and Woodside 1994. Also see Endō Takatoshi 遠藤隆俊 1993.
[191] Bruneau 1992: 158.

Scholarly Context

Investigating the order of knowledge in the *Complete Writings* falls within Qing intellectual history and past scholarship has elucidated its socio-historical context. Elman's *From Philosophy to Philology* provides a detailed and rich description of the complex and evolving intellectual landscape in which the compilation was conceived.[192] Monographs from Japanese scholars such as Hamaguchi Fujio's 濱口富士雄 *Intellectual History of Qing Evidential Scholarship* (清代考拠学の思想史的研究) and Kinoshita Tetsuya's 木下鉄矢 *Qing Dynasty Evidential Scholars and their Times* (清朝考証学とその時代) have enhanced our understanding of the broader social, intellectual, and technological forces behind the evolution of high Qing scholarship as well as its particular, local manifestations and outcomes.[193] The value of such studies cannot be overstated as they are the foundation for any effort to understand the *Complete Writings* through a Knowledge Organisation lens. Sound intellectual history is the essential starting point for an exploration of conceptions of knowledge that transcend time and space. This thesis, however, aims to break free from the pattern of analysing Chinese thought only as the product of its immediate environment with little emphasis on abstraction and cross-contextualisation.

A study on any bibliographic catalogue falls within *muluxue* 目錄學, bibliographic studies, a mature field in Chinese academia directly traceable to pre-modern scholarship.[194] During the high Qing, *muluxue* was part of a larger body of scholarship, *jiaochou xue* 校讎學, collation studies, which primarily examined

[192] Elman 1984.
[193] Hamaguchi Fujio 濱口富士雄 1994; and Kinoshita Tetsuya 木下鉄矢 1996.
[194] Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 8-9.

issues of text formation and publication. Bibliographic catalogues were subsumed under this field of inquiry with emphasis on changes in the terminology of bibliographic sections or the placement of a given text across catalogues.[195] Despite the recognition in the Qianlong emperor's edict that book catalogues are commentaries in their own right, *muluxue*, both pre-modern and contemporary, has had a predominantly descriptive and historicist bent with little emphasis on broader conceptual issues.[196] Exceptions such as Zhou Yanwen's 周彥文 *Theory of Chinese Bibliography* (*Zhongguo muluxue lilun* 中國目錄學理論) do exist, but the literature has by and large avoided theoretical questions.[197]

Investigating the order of knowledge of the *Complete Writings* also falls within what is known in contemporary Chinese-speaking academia as *siku xue* 四庫學, *Complete Writings* studies.[198] This sub-field can be thought of as analogous to Bible studies in that a specific textual object becomes the focus of analysis from multiple disciplinary perspectives. One major contribution to the field has been the compilation of sources about the production of the *Complete Writings*. Bold first attempts in the 1930s were superseded by the comprehensive work of the Staff of the China Number One History Archives (*Zhongguo lishi diyi dang'an guan* 中國歷史第一檔案館) in Beijing who, after ten years of painstaking work, published the *Records on the Compilation of the Complete Writings* (*Zuanxiu siku quanshu dang'an* 纂修四庫全書檔案).[199] While it obviously does not include every single

[195] Lee H. 2016: 20-21.
[196] For example, see Guo Bogong 郭伯恭 2010 [1937]; Hu Chusheng 胡楚生 1995; Liu Zhaoyou 劉兆祐 2002; and Kinjō Miki 金城未來 2010. Lee H. 2016: 21 also notes the general descriptive character of *muluxue*.
[197] Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995.
[198] Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2008: 436; and Huang Aiping 黃愛平 2013.
[199] All historical sources I have used are included in *Zuanxiu*. There is little reason to believe there are any major documents not included in *Zuanxiu* especially for the early stages of compilation, see

scrap of paper found in the archives, the two-volume compilation includes over fifteen-hundred documents and all historical records referenced in this thesis are taken from this compilation. Early secondary scholarship sought to either correct errors in the *Complete Writings* or following the historiographical trends of the Republican era, challenged the idea of the Qianlong emperor as a benevolent ruler, focusing on the compilation's censorial dimensions.[200] More recently, scholars such as Huang Aiping 黃愛平 and Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 have produced exceptionally in-depth monographs providing detailed accounts of the complex operations needed to produce the *Complete Writings*.[201] Another approach, pioneered by Zhou Jiming 周積明, has viewed the *Complete Writings* as a source for Qing intellectual history.[202] While *siku xue* is dominated by monographs and articles in Chinese, scholarship in English and other languages has also been steadily, albeit on a much smaller scale, produced over the past three decades. Kent Guy's study *The Emperor's Four Treasuries* explores the socio-political aspects of the *Complete Writings*, focusing on issues of legitimacy, orthodoxy, and power.[203] Cary Liu's doctoral thesis examines the architectural symbolism of the library halls and Cheryl Tarsala's dissertation investigates the notion of authorship within the compilation.[204]

Modern scholarship in English has misunderstood and mistranslated the main divisions of the four-fold order as disciplinary. Conventionally, the four

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Tarsala 2001: 14. I have not had the opportunity to conduct archival research at the Number One Historical Archives but online searches of their databases indicates that the Archives do not hold any important documents which are not included in *Zuanxiu*. For the digitisation process in the Number One Archives, see Bartlett 2011.

[200] See, for example, Goodrich 1966; and Guo Bogong 郭伯恭 2010 [1937].

[201] Huang Aiping 黃愛平 1989; Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2004; and Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2005.

[202] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1991; and Zhou Jiming 周積明 1998.

[203] Guy 1987.

[204] Liu 1997; and Tarsala 2001.

divisions have been rendered as Classics, History, Philosophy, and Literature giving the impression of a quasi-disciplinary arrangement of knowledge.[205] The order of the *Complete Writings*, however, is hardly disciplinary and the four main divisions, as this thesis shows, have a documentary and evaluative nature. Liu acknowledged this fact by arguing that disciplines have a secondary, ancillary role (學科為副) in the four-fold order.[206] In fact, disciplines have no role but Liu's intention to modernise Chinese scholarship by merging the four-fold order with the Dewey classification functioned as an impetus to draw forced similarities between them.[207]

Recently, scholars have re-examined their understanding of key terms and the four main divisions are generally now referred to as *Classics*, *Histories*, *Masters*, and *Collections*. This constitutes an improvement from earlier translations. However, the choice to render the second division, *shi* 史, as histories remains problematic even in its plural formulation.[208] The English word 'history' is derived from the Greek *historía* which denotes systematic investigation and implies a methodical, and often narrative-based, exploration of the past.[209] This conception of 'historical' writing, however, does not match the Chinese term *shi* whose ancient and primary meaning refers to scribes and their records. The term *shi* morphed over time but even its more elaborate articulation in medieval eras substantially differed

[205] For example, Guy 1987; and Hsiung 2015 refer to main divisions as Classics, History, Philosophy and Belles-lettres; Woodside 2002 renders them as Classics, History, Miscellaneous Philosophy, and Belles-lettres; Tarsala 2001 as Classics, Histories, Masters, Collections, which seems to have become the current scholarly consensus, see Schaberg 2017; Durrant 2017; Denecke 2017; and Tian 2017a.
[206] Liu Guojun 劉國鈞 1929: iv.
[207] For a different view on the compatibility between received bibliographic structures and disciplinary divisions, see Tan Huosheng 談火生 2002.
[208] Durrant 2017: 184 acknowledges this but opts for the translation 'histories'.
[209] Bliss 1933: 6; Bounia 2004: 47; and Durrant 2017: 184. On late imperial conceptions of 'history', see Schirokauer 1993: 195; Lu 1994:134; and Ng 2005: 236-238.

from 'history' and *historía*.[210] Translating *shi* as 'histories' may lead to misguided questions: for example, it is not obvious why sections included within *shi* – such as bibliographies, administrative positions, legal statutes, and topographical gazetteers – would be part of historical writing.[211] Preserving the etymological roots and translating the term as 'records' renders the inclusion of different kinds of texts unsurprising.[212]

Another major point of translation is the name of the collection itself, *Siku quanshu*, the *Complete Writings of the Four Repositories*. Literally, the name reads: *si* 四 'four'; *ku* 庫 'repository', 'treasury', or more generally 'storage space'; *quan* 全 'complete' or 'full'; and *shu* 書 which primarily denotes what we would call today 'books', 'documents' or more broadly 'writings'. Conventionally, the compilation has been translated as the *Complete Library of the Four Repositories* (or *Treasuries*) but the translation of the last term, *shu*, as library is problematic for three reasons.

First, as Chapter 2 shows, the idea of including writings – and *only* writings – was essential to the conceptualisation of the compilation. Other physical carriers of knowledge such as stelae were explicitly cordoned off. Second, translating the last two terms, *quan shu*, as *Complete Writings* (and not *Complete Library*) coheres with the naming practices of late imperial textual collations.[213] Just in the *Complete Writings of the Four Repositories*, we find eight entries with the words *quan shu* in their titles. Of these, five are dedicated to specific thinkers and follow the form

[210] Schirokauer 1993: 195; and Lu 1994: 2-10.
[211] This way we are minimising the impositions of translation, see Yip 1993: 2.
[212] For a thought-provoking understanding of 'historical writing' in the context of late imperial scholarship, see Nappi 2018.
[213] Guy 1987 translates it as the "Complete Library of the Four Treasuries" and this is the generally accepted translation; Woodside 2002 offers "The Four Treasuries Encyclopaedia" as supplementary alternative.

the *Complete Writings of Master* X.[214] The remaining three are general collections of texts such as the *Complete Writings on Agricultural Administration* (*Nongzheng quanshu* 農政全書), the *Great Complete Writings on Nature and Principle* (*Xingli da quanshu* 性理大全書), the *Complete Writings on Astronomy and Calendrics* (*Lisuan quanshu* 歷算全書).[215] Keeping the translation closer to pre-existing uses of the term is essential in understanding the ways in which the project was conceived. Third, the translation of *shu* as library is problematic since repositories which housed books did not have the functions generally associated with libraries today.[216] Lending was uncommon and access was highly regulated, granted at an individual basis. The main function of book repositories before the twentieth century was not the location and retrieval of texts but rather their preservation.[217] Projects like the *Complete Writings*, were not based on the idea of an expanding collection but rather represented a finite and completed work of scholarship.[218]

Thus, if the *Siku quanshu* is not a library, then what is it? Following conventional terminology, it is a *collectanea* (*congshu* 叢書) different from *encyclopaedias* (*leishu* 類書) since the former reproduce texts in their entirety

[214] The texts are: *The Complete Writings of Master Zhang* (*Zhengzi quanshu* 張子全書) attributed to Zhang Zai 張載; *The Complete Writings of Master Zeng* (*Zengzi quanshu* 曾子全書) attributed to Wang Zhuo 汪晫; *The Complete Writings of Master Zisi* (*Zisizi quanshu* 子思子全書) attributed to Liu Yan 劉炎; the *Imperially Compiled Complete Writings of Mater Zhu* (*Yu zuan zhuzi quanshu* 御纂朱子全書) attributed to Zhu Xi 朱熹; and the *Complete Writings of Jingyue* (*Jingyue quanshu* 景岳全書) attributed to Zhang Jingyue 張景岳.

[215] These are attributed to Xu Guangqi 徐光啓 (1562–1633 CE), Hu Guang 胡廣 (1370–1418 CE), Mei Wending 梅文鼎 (1633–1720 CE) and Zhang Jiebin 張介賓 (c. 1563–1640 CE), respectively.

[216] Kuo 1926; Kuang 1996; Liu and Shen 2002; and Diao 2017.

[217] Taam 1977 [1935]: 28; Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995: 8-9; Kuang 1996: 9; Wang Liguan 王立貫 1991: 145; and Oguro Koushi 小黒浩司 2016. For more in-depth studies of the historical development of book repositories in China, see Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮 and Xie Zhuohua 謝灼華 2001; and Xu Linzhi 徐凌志 2004.

[218] Compare this to the 'inbuilt concern for indefinite expansion' of modern classification structures, see Tsien 1952: 18.

while the latter compile textual excerpts.[219] The translation of *leishu* as encyclopaedia is somewhat misleading as traditional *leishu* do not provide original material.[220] To view the *Complete Writings* as an encyclopaedia, however, is not entirely inappropriate since the introductory overviews of over ten thousand texts effectively render it a grand encyclopaedic compendium. Since basic information on texts, their authors, and contexts is supplemented by critical evaluations and scholarly advice, the compilation can be seen as a critical bibliography. In its effect of including and excluding entire bodies of textual production, the compilation functions as a canon. When employed for educational purposes, it assumes the role of a syllabus. In its capacity to preserve and store knowledge, the *Complete Writings* can be seen as a textual museum. And finally, in necessitating its own physical edifice, the collection can indeed be seen as a library. Keeping in mind the different identities of the *Complete Writings* reminds us of the inherent complexity that defines it.

While the field is dotted by an abundance of monographs and essays, one cannot but notice the absence of collective theoretical consolidation. We have plenty of information on ever more specific aspects of the *Complete Writings* – particularly so about its socio-historical and political dimensions – but we still lack a more robust understanding of what the compilation was about. For a project which aimed to organise the totality of all meaningful knowledge, it is remarkable that scholarship has concentrated on the question of inclusion – what gets in – and has avoided the question of order – where are things placed. In instances where the

[219] See Ren Songru 任松如 2016: 87 on what kind of *congshu* the *Complete Writings* can be labeled as.
[220] For more on encyclopaedias as well as the etymological roots of the word, see Fowler 1996. For more on *leishu*, see Loewe 1987; Wahl 1998; Kurz 2001; Drège 2007; Elman 2007; Kurz 2007; and Tian 2017b.

question is approached, it is often through the conceptual apparatus of modern classification practices and thus, even otherwise skilful analyses end up condemning it for its "disorder" and "contradictions" as seen above.

To understand why the *Complete Writings* is organised the way it is, this thesis draws from the introductory prefaces of bibliographic divisions and sections to investigate the editors' meta-language on their inherited traditions and organisation decisions. Drawing from this rich source of self-reflective scholarship is essential for producing a new understanding of the order of knowledge in the *Complete Writings* and beyond. Navigating through their words (the actual terms they employ) we can come closer to their ideas (the ascribed meanings behind those words) and understand their thought (the systematic presentation of ideas) as part of a knowledge organisation system.[221] Tools from philology, intellectual history, and philosophy are brought together in order to understand why it was sensible to organise the *Complete Writings* in the way that it was.[222] Taking into consideration the *Complete Writings*' underlying ideas and ideals about knowledge, we can come to a substantially different conclusion on the nature of its order and appreciate its significance beyond the confines of its immediate environment.[223]

[221] Hjørland 2015: 113; and Cheek 2016: 34.
[222] This coheres with Shera 1968: 9 who calls for a "truly interdisciplinary" method.
[223] In this sense, the kinds of conclusion I wish to draw follows the definition in Collins 2000: 19 that "intellectuals are people who produce decontextualised ideas. These ideas are meant to be true or significant apart from any locality and apart from anyone concretely putting them into practice." In this sense, the conclusions I wish to draw are different from those in, for example, Wang Jinqing 王晉卿 1994.

CHAPTER 1 - POETICS: KNOWLEDGE AS WATER

The Forgotten Names

Nothing could be left to chance. The *Complete Writings* was to be a magisterial display of power, and the lifeswork of an entire cohort of scholars.[1] From its inception, it was clear that the project would outdo all past bibliographic collections in scope and excellence.[2] No detail was too small to be overlooked: scholars assiduously devoted themselves to the gargantuan task of sifting through all of the amassed texts from across the empire and choosing judiciously the most valuable ones;[3] officials painstakingly selected the ink, paper, and type-font to reproduce the collection;[4] and the Qianlong emperor personally proof-read in search of mistakes.[5]

Scholarly consensus has it that great attention was given to every aspect of the compilation of the *Complete Writings* and thus numerous dimensions – from

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[1] On the general political significance of the *Complete Writings*, see Guy 1987: 2, 10, 78; and Chang 2013: 14, 17-8; on its censorial dimension, see Goodrich 1966; Ma 1980; and Brook 1988; on its scholarly dimension, see Woodside 2002: 284-287; Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2009: 38-42; Guo Bogong 郭伯恭 2010 [1937]: 2; and Liu Fangqiang 劉風強 2015: 152.

[2] For the Qianlong emperor's intentions, see *Zuanxiu* 1.1-2. Also see Woodside 2002: 282; and Elliot 2009: 118.

[3] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1998.

[4] Zhang Sheng 張升 2007; and Huang 2013: 1.77-102.

[5] Guy 1987: 99.

the most abstruse bureaucratic procedures to the way individual bibliographic entries were composed – have been thoroughly investigated.[6] We know in great detail how book-holding families from across the empire were urged to lend their collections, often put together over generations, for the production of the *Complete Writings* and how the state remunerated them for their contributions.[7] Precise and complete charts listing all the members of the *Complete Writings* bureau have been drawn enumerating their positions, functions, and pay.[8] And the history of the seven copies of the *Complete Writings* – how they survived or perished in the face of imperial collapse, foreign invasion, and civil war – has been meticulously documented.[9]

And yet, as the result of inherited scholarly biases, some aspects of the *Complete Writings* still remain unexplored. Surprisingly, the role and content of the editors' self-annotations (*anyu* 案語) have yet to be thoroughly studied.[10] Compiled historical sources leave later stages of the compilation of the complete

[6] For the bureaucratic structure of the *Complete Writings*, see Wu Zhefu 吳哲夫 1999; Huang 2013: 1.57-76; and Guy 1987: 67-120. For a detailed account of issues arising from the inclusion, description and evaluation of a single text by multiple authors, see Chu 1987. On the 'manuscript' and 'base' copies of the *Complete Writings* texts, see Zhang Sheng 張升 2008; and Yang Hongsheng 楊洪升 2008. On book binding design, see Di Ailing 翟愛玲 2008. On the annotations (*anyu* 案語) of the *Complete Writings*, see Mao 2014. A sizable part of scholarship on the *Complete Writings* has been on finding discrepancies or redressing mistakes made in the compilation's prefaces, for recent examples, see Du Zexun 杜澤遜 2007 for corrections to the *Comprehensive Collections* section (*zongji* 總集); Wang Ting 王婷 2014 for discrepancies in the *Records*; and Yang Dazhong 楊大忠 2010 for errors throughout the collection. This kind of scholarship has its roots in scholarship from the early twentieth century which treated the *Complete Writings* not as an object of scholarly interest but rather as a source for scholarly information to be taken seriously. This line of scholarship has taken a self-reflexive turn with later research revising the corrections of earlier scholarship; see, for example, Peng Mingzhe 彭明哲 1994; and Yang Liuqiao 楊劉橋 2011. Another dimension of secondary scholarship is examining (and re-examining) the role that specific individuals had in the compilation. For example, Pan Wuzhang 潘務正 2007; Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2008; and Li Xianqiang 李賢強 and Wu Hongqi 吳宏岐 2015 explore the roles of Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1732–1815 CE), Zhang Xinian 張羲年 (1737–1778 CE), and Ji Yun respectively.

[7] Fu Jiahao 付嘉豪 2011.

[8] Huang 2013: 1.58-61.

[9] Liu 1997: 1-38.

[10] Mao 2014.

Complete Writings in relative obscurity, calling for further archival research at the provincial and local levels.[11] Among these blind spots are the ideas encoded in the names of the library halls which eventually housed the four imperial copies[12] and so this chapter is dedicated to the centrality of the names to how the order of knowledge was conceived. The names of the halls were:

> *The Literary Abyss Library* (*Wenyuan ge* 文淵閣),
> *The Literary Source Library* (*Wenyuan ge* 文源閣),
> *The Literary Ford Library* (*Wenjin ge* 文津閣), and
> *The Literary Upstream Library* (*Wensu ge* 文溯閣).[13]

The names have the same structure, whereby the first graph *wen* 文– commonly translated as 'literature'/'literary' but with a semantic range covering 'erudition', 'learning', 'knowledge', 'culture', and 'ritual' – is followed by a graph denoting a

[11] Tarsala 1999: 14.

[12] Huang Aiping 黃愛平 1989: 163-164 mentions the library names but does not provide any comment or explanation as to why they were chosen. This is odd because she provides a detailed presentation of many aspects of the compilation of the *Complete Writings*. Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2004 also does not mention the library names in the context of the order of the *Complete Writings* which again, given the level of detail that characterises his research, is surprising.

[13] These four libraries housed the imperial copies of the *Complete Writings*. Another three copies were made as a sign of imperial gratitude towards intellectuals of southern provinces for their contribution to the project. The names of the three 'Southern' libraries are: *The Literary Confluence Library* (*Wenhui ge* 文匯閣), *The Literary Waves Library* (*Wenlan ge* 文瀾閣), and *The Literary Ancestor Library* (*Wenzong ge* 文宗閣). The first two names conform to the water pattern. The *Wenzong Ge* was originally built to house the encyclopaedia (*leishu*) *The Complete Collection of Texts and Images of Past and Present* (*Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成) and was later used to house a copy of the *Complete Writings*. Since it was not specially built for the *Complete Writings*, the fact that its name is not related to water is not problematic to my argument. Furthermore, the architectural model on which the library halls were built was derived from the renowned Ming dynasty library, *Hall of Heavenly Unity* (*Tianyi ge* 天一閣); for more, see Luo Zhaoping 駱兆平 2012: 40. The philosophical principle underpinning the design was 'the heavenly one gives birth to water' (*tianyi sheng shui* 天一生水) which coheres with ideas and expressions examined in the excavated manuscript *The Ultimate One Gives Birth to Water* (*Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水) examined in this chapter . For more, see Zheng Yongchang 鄭永昌 2011: 92. Therefore, even though not immediately apparent, the libraries' architecture is strictly within the water paradigm. The reason, I examine only the four imperial names is that they are conceptually most salient to the organisation of the *Complete Writings*, as discussed in the library records. Nonetheless, all names still reveal the conceptual link between water and knowledge. For more on the different library halls, see Wang Yi 王穎 2003; Wang 2007; Wang Zhiwang 王智汪 2008; Huang Aiping 黃愛平 2010; and Tong Zhenglun 童正倫 2012.

water-related feature.[14] The final graph *ge* 閣 denotes a library hall in its material instantiation as a physical edifice. Since the first and third graphs are the same across and the middle graphs are all tied to water, the names strike an elegant symmetry, hard to capture in English.

Why are the names connected to water? Contemporary scholarship has generally ignored the question or treated the names as an expression of superstition expressed in fine literary language.[15] Water, according to this account, was chosen for its apotropaic function to protect books from their perennial foe, fire. Many past imperial compilations had been ravaged by flames, accidental or deliberate, and so the possibility of total annihilation within hours was definitely present in the makers' minds.[16] Water-related names were an added auspicious measure which would ensure that books would be saved in the case of fire. Different water elements, this thinking goes, exhibited the makers' literary acuity and erudition, emboyding a fondness for literary embellishment typical of high Qing literati.[17] Guided by these assumptions, it is no surprise that contemporary scholarship has not taken a more substantial interest in the names. But could this be all that there is to the names? Are they nothing more than 'superstition' packaged in literary language? And more importantly, is this how the makers of the *Complete Writings*

[14] *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 2001: 6.2, 1512-1513.
[15] Liu 1997: 125-134 presents this view in great detail. Liu Qiang 劉薔 1998 explains that the four library names are based on a widespread belief in the apotropaic function of water as originally shown in the *Hall of Heavenly Unity*. Furthermore, this view has been personally communicated to me from several PhD candidates and members of faculty of the Philosophy department at Peking University. The fact that there is hardly any scholarship on the conceptual reasons behind the names of the *Complete Writings* library is indicative of the assumptions within modern sinology precluding the formulation of such questions not only in scholarship written in English but also in Chinese.
[16] The earliest account of the 'superstitious' explanation I have been able to find for library names in China at large is Wu 1944: 221.
[17] In a different direction, Drège 1991: 89 professes his astonishment with what he sees as a numerological fixation of the Chinese in their bibliographic schemata with the inclusion of numbers such as four or seven in the names of compilation projects.

perceived the names and were these their reasons for giving water based names to the library halls?

The library records (*ji* 記) offer a strikingly different explanation. The *Record of the Literary Ford Library* (*Wenjinge ji* 文津閣記), for example, states that "water is used to understand knowledge (*wen*)" (以水喻文) and explains the structural similarities between the four main divisions and the four water elements of the library names.[18] At the end of the exposition, the text culminates with a rhetorical question: "with the essence-and-function of water being such, could the essence-and-function of knowledge (*wen*) alone not be like this?" (水之體用如是文之體用顧獨不如是也).[19]

The metaphorical but explicit connection between water and knowledge problematises the idea that the makers' motivations were solely based on 'superstitious' beliefs and a taste for literary flourishes. It suggests a deeper, structural viewpoint, a way of thinking about knowledge and its organisation which cannot be accounted for by existing explanations.[20] The link between water and the order of knowledge, its historical origins, and its expression within the *Complete Writings*, are at the heart of this chapter.

To develop my argument, I first introduce conceptual metaphor theory – which holds that abstract thought is metaphorically grounded on concrete objects – and offer an account of the arboreal model of knowledge found in in the *Encyclopédie,* a contemporaneous western analogue to the *Complete Writings*. I

[18] *Zuanxiu* 2.2724-5.
[19] *Zuanxiu* 2.2725.
[20] In fact, to the best of my knowledge, the metaphorical link between knowledge (*wen*) and water in the *Complete Writings* library records has not been remarked at all. Liu 1997: 125, 131 sees it only as a 'symbolic analogy' and accounts only for its impact on the 'design symbology' of the library halls.

proceed to explore the ways in which the idea of 'knowledge' is different in the Chinese domain, arguing that a different poetic construction is partly responsible for the diverging conceptualisations of 'knowledge' in the two traditions. To do so, I show that thinking of knowledge as water was part of a broader understanding of *dao* 道 – the pervasive patterns of the world – as water.[21] I then return to the library names and reconstruct the rationale linking water and the order of knowledge. I show how water imagery structures the notion of order and how it developed over time and conclude with a discussion on the nature of knowledge organisation across traditions.

The Tree of Knowledge

In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson argue that abstract concepts are understood and experienced in terms of other more concrete things.[22] Our conceptual systems, they argue, are metaphorically grounded and the metaphorical structures which underpin abstract thought are reflected in language.[23] Their approach constitutes a complete inversion of the historically dominant view on metaphor.[24] For them, metaphor is not a matter of linguistic expression at best merely providing literary beauty and at worst masking the 'true' and 'literal' meaning of words.[25] Metaphor, they argue, is a matter of thought and it affects the way in which we perceive the world and operate in it. Conceptual metaphors,

[21] Allan 1997: 4.
[22] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980].
[23] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 3, 10.
[24] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 244. See also, Davidson 1978; Johnson 1981; Harris and Taylor 1997; and Johnson 2008.
[25] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 244.

structure the ways we think and act. Because these metaphors pervade our lives, they are hard to spot.[26]

Their work created nothing short of a revolution in cognitive linguistics.[27] Early scholarship was based on intuitionist arguments using everyday English sentences to reveal the mark of cognitive metaphor on language. Later scholarship tested the theory with different methodologies and showed the prevalence of metaphorical thinking across domains of experience from emotions to scientific theories.[28] Much research has been dedicated to explain the coherence across different conceptual metaphors as well as to account for the presence of multiple conceptual metaphors for the same abstract idea. The literature has expanded into other languages showing the predominance of metaphorical thinking in non-European cultures.[29] The general consensus in the field is that every linguistic group – from Japan to pre-Colombian South America – structures abstract thinking on conceptual metaphors in a way that coheres with both fundamental aspects of the embodied human experience and specific particularities of each culture.[30] Different societies use different images to conceive abstract ideas but, Lakoff and Johnson argue, they all use the same metaphorical mechanism of mapping elements of a concrete (source) domain to an abstract (target) domain.[31] The literature on

[26] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 11.

[27] The literature on conceptual metaphor theory is too large to even attempt a somewhat comprehensive review here. Developments are fast-paced and conceptual metaphor theory has evolved and become more sophisticated over the years. Below is a list of some of the most important research: Lakoff 1987; Ortony 1993; Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 114-125; Faucconnier 1997; Faucconnier and Turner 2003; Trim 2007; Glucksberg 2008; Steen 2011; Kovecses 2013; and Gibbs 2015.

[28] For metaphors on emotions, see Yu 1998; on scientific revolutions, see Kuhn 2012 [1963]; and Maasen and Weingart 2000.

[29] For the relationship between metaphors and cultures, see Yu 1998; Kovecses 2005; and Díaz-Vera 2015.

[30] Lakoff 1987; and Yu 2008.

[31] Gandolfo 2019 challenges this conclusion revealing the embedded cultural assumptions in conceptual metaphor theory. Evidence from the Chinese domain suggests a different understanding of language and therefore of 'metaphor' as well casting doubt on the claims to universality raised by conceptual metaphor theory, making it unlikely that 'metaphorical thinking' really is a universal

conceptual metaphor theory has illuminated the metaphorical foundations of many of our abstract ideas, yet, a surprising silence exists when it comes to the issue of knowledge.[32]

In western societies, knowledge has been primarily – but not exclusively – structured based on the morphology of trees.[33] In English, for example, there are many ways to talk about knowledge which reveal its tree metaphoric structure. Consider the following statements:

(1) New technologies have led to an exponential *dissemination* of knowledge.
(2) The *seeds* of knowledge have to be *planted* at an early stage.
(3) To *reap* the *fruits* of knowledge, you have to study hard.
(4) Interdisciplinary research aims to bring together different *branches* of knowledge.[34]

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mechanism of congition. However, even if conceptual metaphor theory cannot help us understand the underlying cognitive mechanism, it is a helpful tool in unpacking the semantic meaning of texts and ideas. For other critiques on conceptual metaphor theory, see Rakova 2002; Kovecses 2008; Gibbs 2009; Gibbs 2011; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Hernández 2011; and Cserep 2014. For a challenge specifically in the Chinese context, see Ekstrom 2014.

[32] Metaphors for knowledge have obviously been accounted for in many different kinds of scholarly literature. To the best of my knowledge, however, the literature on conceptual metaphor theory has not systematically tackled the question which means that they have sparsely been regarded as a substantial feature of the conceptualisation of knowledge and its order. Gontier 2011: 525 briefly describes the significance trees have had in the conception of knowledge in Christianity but does not go into detail on how they affect the conception of order. Lima 2015 approaches the question from a visual perspective but does not refer to any implications on cognition.

[33] Mazzochi 2013: 369. For more on the historical roots of the vegetative metaphors for knowledge and beyond see Ladner 1983: 727-763; and Ariew 1992. Of course, other metaphors have been employed in describing and conceptualising knowledge in the western world, see Bennett and Mandelbrote 1998. Burke 2000: 86 traces the origins of the language around the different 'fields' of knowledge and Wellmon 2015: 84 discusses how maps became a metaphor to understand knowledge. Wilson-Lee 2018: 276-277 shows how territorial metaphors for knowledge were, with the rise of modern empires from the fifteenth century onwards, tied to imperial projects of expansion and control. Other metaphors for knowledge include the edifice or structure (e.g. the *foundations* of knowledge). Historically, however, no metaphor has come close to compete with trees in structuring the order of knowledge. Their ubiquity has made them the seemingly obvious and natural way to organise knowledge. Trees have been praised and abhorred for their durability and pervasiveness, see Deleuze and Guattari 1988; and Pothos and Wills 2011: 244. Only very recently have alternative metaphorical models for knowledge organisation been deployed with the most successful ones being the web and the rhizome. For more, see Coyne 2008; Robinson and Maguire 2010; Hansson 2013; and Mazzochi 2013. While webs have challenged trees (rhizomes less so), the latter are still used to describe and think of knowledge and its order both conceptually and institutionally in university departments and school curricula. For water metaphors for knowledge in European contexts, see fn. 203. For more on the history of classification practices in the West, see Chartier 1994; Harris 1995; Borgman 2000; Connell 2000; Blom 2002; Bounia 2004; Loveland 2006; MacGregor 2007; Withers 2007; Blair 2010; Gibbins 2012; Valentine 2012; Duroselle-Melish 2015; Wellmon 2015; Ambrosio 2016; and Michel 2016. On how China was placed in knowledge structures in the West, see Lehner 2011.

[34] Williams Camus 2015: 245.

To speak and think of knowledge as a tree traces its origin in western texts to the biblical 'Tree of Knowledge.'[35] The organisation of knowledge into trees implies other aspects of a broader theory of knowledge, from how it can be communicated to how it is valued.[36] Some statements [(2) and (3)] might appear to be more metaphorical than others [(1) and (4)]. But while the extent of how metaphorical a statement *feels* may vary across different instantiations of the same metaphor, that does not negate that some aspects of knowledge are metaphorically grounded on trees.[37]

The notion that knowledge has divisible branches is used in such a matter-of-fact way that we rarely stop to think of its metaphorical construction: knowledge *can* be and indeed *is* divided into different branches.[38] The significance and self-evidence of this way of thinking is exemplified in the foldout frontispiece to the 1780 edition of the French *Encyclopédie*, a hallmark of the Enlightenment in its effort systematically to order and understand the world (see figures 3 and 4).[39]

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[35] Gontier 2011: 522 shows how trees "are highly characteristic of Judaic and Christian religion. The Book of Exodus talks about the appearance of God as a burning bush. Genesis tells the story of how Eve ate an apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thereby causing her and Adam to be expelled from paradise. Knowledge for Christians was therefore iconographically associated with trees."

[36] Mazzochi 2013: 367.

[37] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 53-54.

[38] Gontier 2011: 522 traces the origin of knowledge trees to "Porphyry's way of categorising things [which] easily allowed for a synthesis between his classification system and tree iconographies. These trees would become known as *Arbor Porphyriana*, Porphyrian trees, and they would become one of the most influential tools to depict logical relations amongst natural and supernatural things."

[39] Both figures are downloaded from the ARTFL *Encyclopédie* project, University of Chicago. Figure 3 was downloaded from: https://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/content/arbre-généalogique; and Figure 4 from: https://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/content/syst%C3%A8me-figur%C3%A9-des-connaissances-humaines (both accessed on 9 Apr. 2018). The website allows to zoom-in and see clearly the entries as well as appreciate their beauty. The original title of Figure 1 is *Explication détaillée du système des Connoissances Humaines tirée du Discours Préliminaire du Tome I. de l'Encyclopédie Publiée par M. Diderot et M. d'Alembert à Paris pour Servir à l'Usage de l'Arbre Encyclopédique* (*Detailed Explication of the System of Human Knowledge drawn from the Preliminary Discussions of the First Volume of the Encyclopédie published by Mr. Diderot and Mr. d' Alembert in Paris to serve as the Encyclopaedic Tree*). The original title of Figure 2 is *Systême figuré des connoissances humaines* (*Map of the System of Human Knowledge*). More information on the makers of both can be found in the respective links. While the *Encyclopédie* is discussed

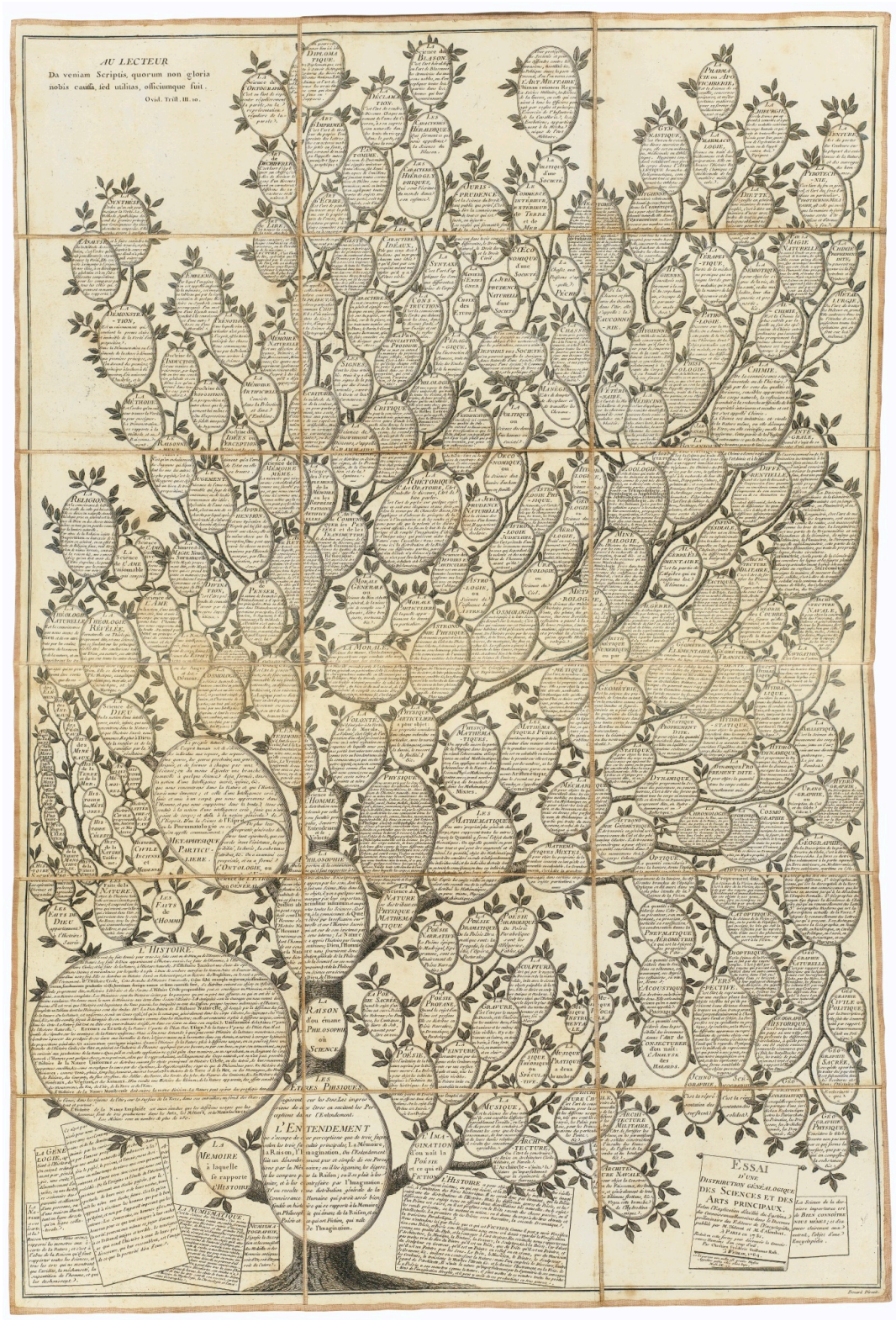


Figure 3*: Explication détaillée du système des Connoissances Humaines tirée du Discours Préliminaire du Tome I. de l'Encyclopédie Publiée par M. Diderot et Mr. d'Alembert à Paris pour Servir à l'Usage de l'Arbre Encyclopédique*

mostly in terms of intellectual history, it was a deeply political project, see Fowler 1996: 10; and Burke 2000: 115.

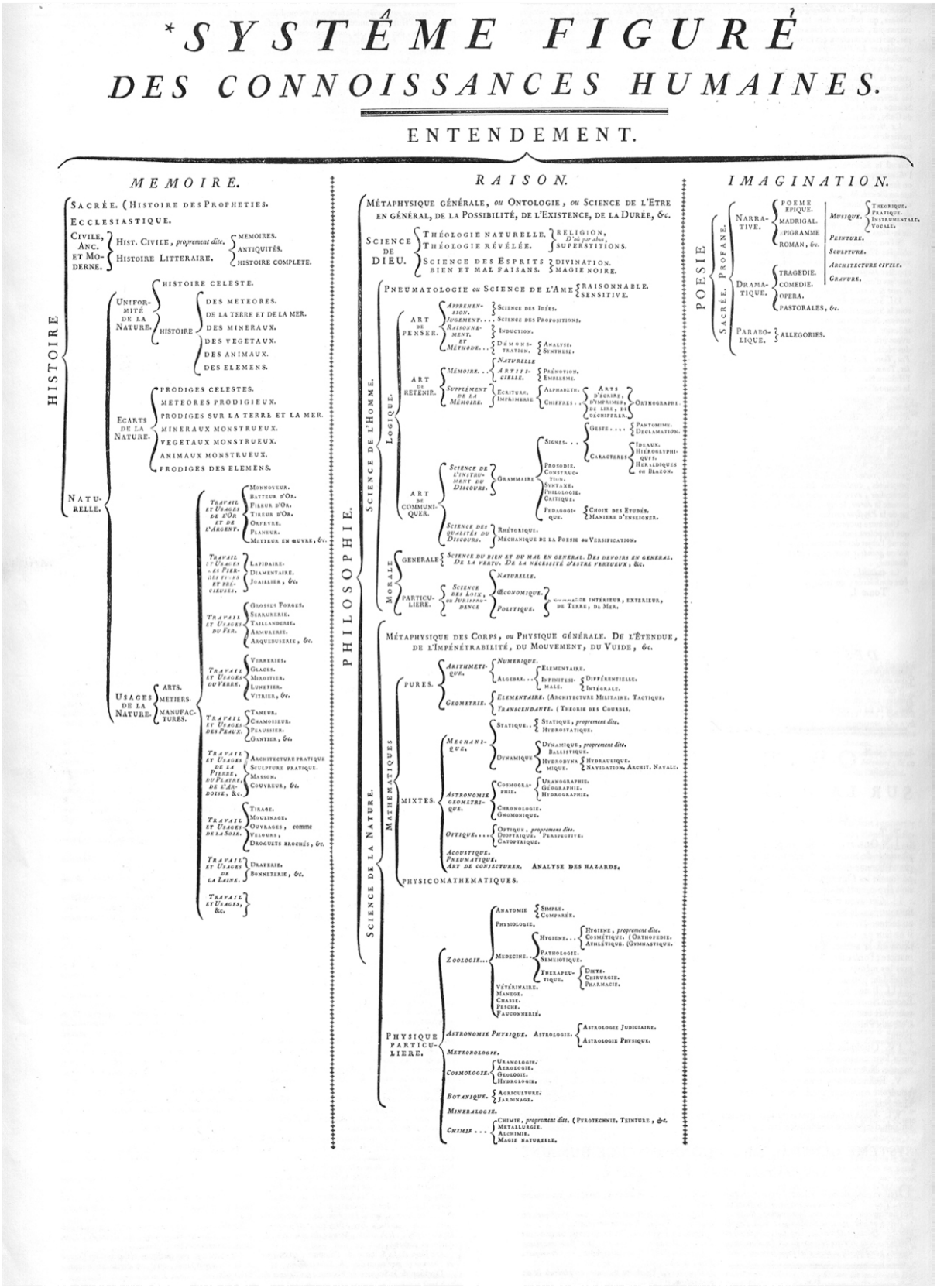


Figure 4*: Système figuré des connoissances humaines, Encyclopédie*

The Order of Branches

Trees branch out. This almost tautological statement has important implications for the structure of knowledge since branches are the most salient element of knowledge trees. The physical features of branches determine the order of knowledge: large branches are on the lower reaches of a tree and closer to its trunk, while smaller sub-branches grow out from large ones, are farther away from the trunk and each other, and are part of one and *only* one larger branch.[40] Branches' physical properties translate conceptually into hierarchical-inclusion on the vertical axis and equalising-differentiation on the horizontal.[41]

Vertically, the lowest branches represent the broadest categories from which all other sub-categories of knowledge stem. In the tree of the *Encyclopédie*, *History*, *Philosophy*, and *Poetry* are the largest branches of knowledge.[42] Moving up, categories become increasingly specific. *Philosophy*, for example, is divided into *Metaphysics*, the *Science of God*, the *Science of Man*, and the *Science of Nature*, which is sub-divided into *Mathematics* and *Particular Physics*, which is in turn sub-sub-divided into *Zoology*, *Astronomy*, *Meteorology*, and so on. The highest number of sub-divisions carried out in the *Encyclopédie* is nine but can proceed to include ever-smaller branches of knowledge, in principle tending to infinity.

The relation between branches and sub-branches on the vertical axis is from most-general to most-specific. It would be incongruent, if not flat-out wrong, if *Metaphysics* was placed ahead of *Philosophy* or if *Zoology* was placed ahead of

[40] Robinson and Maguire 2010: 606.
[41] Mazzochi 2013: 370.
[42] The makers of the *Encyclopédie* were drawing from Francis Bacon's division of knowledge and the tree main branches correspond to different faculties of the mind (Memory, Reason, and Imagination). For more on Bacon and his links to the *Encyclopédie* and tree structures, see: Ariew 1992; Gaukroger 2004; Loveland 2006: 62-65; Hansson 2013: 386-387; and Wellmon 2015: 104.

Science of Nature. Knowledge is organised based on a hierarchical structure of "broader-narrower, inclusive-included, superclass-subclass, or dominant-dominated relations between concepts" just as smaller branches grow out from larger ones and not the other way around. [43]

Hierarchical structures require the inclusion of subclasses within their appropriate superclass. Since branches can be part of one and *only* one larger branch the exact position of the domains of knowledge entails their hierarchical inclusion. Branches cannot have sub-sets that are conceptually related to other branches: it would be wrong, for example, to place *Sculpture* under *Metaphysics*.

The *Encyclopédie* frontispiece depicts knowledge as perfectly contained, distinct entities. Lakoff has shown how the metaphorical construction of inclusion is structured on the notion of categories as containers. [44] In this metaphorical construction, an object can only be inside or outside a container. Establishing definitions for a category entails delineating its contours in order to specify to the clearest degree possible which objects are its members (are *within*) and which are not (are left *out*). Branches in knowledge trees function as container-categories illustrating the point that different conceptual metaphors cohere within a given paradigm.[45] The only feature that distinguishes branches of knowledge trees from other categories is that their members are not simple objects but other, conceptually narrower categories. Knowledge branches are containers of containers just as smaller tree branches exist on and grow out of larger ones.[46]

[43] Keshet 2011: 144.
[44] Ortony 1993: 11.
[45] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 97-105.
[46] On how different conceptual metaphors co-exist and complement each other, see Kovecses 2005: 231.

On the horizontal axis, branches are equal but different. Branches that are on the same horizontal plane exhibit the *same* level of conceptual generality. It would be incoherent to have a division whose first tier of branches were *History*, *Philosophy*, and *Engraving*. We would have different levels of generality on the same plane, which structurally goes against the idea that branches of the same size are on the same height. Larger branches and broader categories are toward the bottom, smaller branches and narrower categories are toward the top.

The farther out a branch is on a knowledge tree the more distant it is from categories of other branches. For example, *Pedagogy*, the sixth-iteration sub-branch of *Philosophy*, is far-removed from the sixth-iteration sub-branch of *History*, *Cloth-Making*. Categories of a knowledge tree diverge as they are progressively divided.

Tree structures are immensely powerful because they can be used to order knowledge on a variety of organising principles. History, for example, can be structured by theme, geography, or chronology (or a combination of the three). Different ways of reasoning yield substantially different classifications. Yet, they all exhibit the same structural features – vertical inclusion and horizontal differentiation – because specific principles do not challenge the fundamental assumptions of tree structures but rather abide by them.[47] The tree is foundational in the conceptualisation of the order of knowledge and exists independently and *a priori* of specific organising principles.

Knowledge as a tree is not merely a linguistic adornment or a convenient visualisation. Our very understanding of what knowledge is and how it can be organised is premised on the structure of trees. Be it in words or images, the

[47] Lima 2011: 25.

expression 'the branches of knowledge' is not considered merely metaphorical but rather literal, capturing an aspect of knowledge thought of as fundamentally true. The schematised version of the *Encyclopédie*'s illustration (figure 4) is indicative of the fact that most knowledge-organising schemata in the West – including modern university departments – follow the tree structure.[48]

But tree structures are not constrained by specific organising principles nor are they limited to knowledge. They are powerful structures because they can be employed for the organisation of many concepts. Historically they have been used to organise such diverse ideas as mythological lore, family genealogies, syntactic relations, and philosophical concepts.[49] They even determine the cladistic structure of Darwin's theory of evolution,[50] stemmatic philology,[51] and more recently the binary languages of computer programming.[52]

Drip, Drop, Dao: The Nature of Knowledge

Returning to the Chinese context, we first have to explore whether there is an analogous notion of knowledge and if so tease out its particular features. As noted in the Introduction, the term *zhi* 知 is the standard Chinese translation for 'knowledge'. Yet, while *zhi* overlaps with the semantic field of 'knowledge', the

[48] See Weingart 2013: 59-63 for a historical presentation of doubting the tree structure from the mid-nineteenth century.
[49] Deleuze and Gauttari 1988: 5; and Lima 2011: 25.
[50] Lima 2011: 64-68. Gontier 2011: 531 also makes this point writing that "[a]s groundbreaking the idea of evolution by means of natural selection might have been, Darwin did not formulate this theory in a scientific vacuum. On the contrary, his ideas were formulated and visualised with a language and imagery [of trees] that had been developing for centuries."
[51] Robins 1997: 264; and Bod 2015: 79.
[52] Deleuze and Gauttari 1988: 5.

two are not identical.[53] In classical Chinese texts, *zhi* also means 'to realise'/'realisation', 'to perceive'/'perception' and 'wisdom.'[54] In contemporary Chinese, the graph *zhi* 智 is reserved for 'wisdom' but in antiquity and up until the modern transformation of Chinese in the twentieth century, the two were used interchangeably.

The questions raised about knowledge in Chinese texts cannot squarely fit into the epistemological frameworks of western philosophy.[55] Chinese thinkers did not devise a formal definition of *zhi* or explain the mechanisms through which it is acquired. They did not seek to understand the relationship between *zhi* and, say, perception, truth, or the mind.[56] These questions never arose.[57] Instead, they asked different questions revealing a different set of concerns. There is no monolithic view on *zhi* in Chinese intellectual history in the same way that there is no one view on knowledge in western philosophy. This point, however, does not mean that there was no broad framework that delineated the range of positions that were assumed over time by different thinkers.

In *Vanishing into Things: Knowledge in the Chinese Tradition*, Allen suggests that knowledge in the Chinese setting "poses questions about point and value. What makes knowledge wise and worth pursuing? What is the relationship to other values – good government, say, or ritual, or war?"[58] Allen treats the

[53] Rosker 2008: 2-10.
[54] Meyer 2015: 297.
[55] Harbsmeier 1993.
[56] Fraser 2011.
[57] Zhang 2002: 421 presents Chinese ideas on 'theory of knowledge' as linked to 'philosophy of language' and 'theory of truth,' aiming to use a structure and mode of analysis principally rooted in the intellectual experience of western philosophy. Birdwhistell 1984: 79 presents the 'implicit' role that experiential knowledge has played in the development of other types of knowledge in Chinese thought. Zhang 2002 remarks that epistemology was treated in a 'sporadic manner' and Birdwhistell 1984 concludes that experiential knowledge was an 'ill-defined concept' that did not attract 'rigorous investigation and clarification'. By using an entirely non-native framework to analyse Chinese thought, both studies end-up in the position of evaluating Chinese thought as sub-standard.
[58] Allen 2015: 3.

relationship between *zhi* and *sheng* 聖, sagacity, as foundational in classical China. He argues that "*penetrating the subtle* – seeing a lot in little things [and] *discerning the concordant and contrary* – knowing the resonance among things, and how to amplify or dampen emerging tendencies … is the ecumenical understanding of sage knowledge in the Chinese tradition; it is not strictly universal – there are exceptions – but it is the leading idea."[59] We do not have to agree with all of Allen's conclusions on what 'knowledge' is in the Chinese setting to appreciate its qualitative differences with *zhi*. Becoming aware of the partial (dis-)similarity between the two is rather the point to reflect on.

The relationship between *zhi* and *sheng* introduces the crucial issue of how one becomes a sage. Texts from classical antiquity give different answers depending on their own particular ideal of sagacity and the actions required to attain it. Nonetheless, there is a shared minimal understanding that *wen*, erudition and ritual, is part of the process. Different texts place different degrees of emphasis on *wen*, yet they all embrace it.

As previously noted, the term *wen* has a broad semantic field with wide range of translations.[60] *Wen* may be regarded as the manifestation of *zhi* – that which has been apprehended. *Wen* is seen as capturing *zhi* and transmiting it through demeanour and language. In the form of text, *wen* is the manifestation of *zhi*; in the form of demeanour and behaviour, *wen* is the embodiment of *zhi*. By definition, a text which grapples with issues of *zhi* will be part of its material manifestation. And with virtually no exception, the most important texts from

[59] Ibid.
[60] DeWoskin 1982: 53; Yu and Huters 1994: 21-24; and Zhang 1996 explore the broadness of the term *wen*.

antiquity discuss how demeanour and ritual inform *wen* and the 'performance' of obtained knowledge.[61]

The conceptual links between *zhi*, *sheng*, and *wen* are not accidental. Rather, part of the reason they are related is that they are conceptually based on the same metaphor. In *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue*, Allan applies the insights of conceptual metaphor theory to Chinese thought, and shows that *dao* is metaphorically grounded on water.[62] Her work has created a small but sustained interest in unearthing the metaphorical structures that underpin abstract ideas in China, and I follow this line of scholarship to provide a reconstruction of the evidence in support of the metaphorical grounding of *dao* on water and its extension to knowledge.[63] My primary focus rests on classical texts from various traditions covering not only received texts but also excavated manuscripts. By investigating texts from the Warring States 戰國 (453–222 BCE), the period that was decisive in the development of Chinese thought, we can trace the earliest instantiations of thinking in terms of water, thus showing how they predate Former

[61] Liu 1975: 7.
[62] Allan 1997.
[63] For applications of conceptual metaphor theory to ancient Chinese texts at large, see Allan 1997; Min 2001; Slingerland 2003; Jin Gu 金戈 2003; He Liye 何麗野 2003; Slingerland 2004b; Reding 2004; Pan Jia 潘杰 2005; Slingerland 2005; Nakajima Takahiro 中島隆博 2007: 77-78 and 102-106; Slingerland 2011; and Slingerland 2017. For applications to 'Daoist' texts, see Chen and Holt 2002; Slingerland 2004a; Kim 2006; Cline 2008; Giblett 2009; Lu 2012; and Harrison 2015. For applications to the 'Confucian' tradition, see Jones 2016 which highlights the mechanics of water-based arguments in the *Mencius*; and Slingerland 2011 which provides a theoretical buttress to the use of conceptual metaphor in approaching ancient Chinese texts. For application of conceptual metaphor theory to late imperial texts, see Bao 2015. Furthermore, Yao Xinzhong 姚新中 2004 – inspired by Allan's work – focuses on knowledge and wisdom and presents their connotations as structrued by water. Wen Yanling 溫延玲 2008 and Wu Zhongsheng 吳中勝 2016 explore the influence of water on Chinese aesthetic values. Also see Meyer 2015 which even though does not use the notion of conceptual metaphor, presents an innovative analysis which brings to centre stage the role of water in *Zhuangzi* in its performative formation of meaning. Munro 1985b explores water imagery and the construction of images of the self. For more on images and metaphors of the self, see Lai 1979; and Satyendra 1993.

Han imperial scholarship, the bottleneck through which all received texts went through.

The ancient texts examined here are *representative* of a broader way of thinking because they were influential and therefore *constitutive* of contemporaneous as well as later thinking. Despite fluctuations, the received texts retained strong currency through the ages and were read and re-read over millennia. While obviously lost, ideas contained in excavated texts were partially preserved through ancient texts which were succesfully transmitted. During the Qianlong era, and for many centuries prior, received texts from antiquity were without a doubt part and parcel of the education of literati.[64] By surveying a selection of texts from the classical as well as the medieval and late imperial eras, I show that the extension of water imagery from *dao* to knowledge and its organisation in the *Complete Writings* is not a one-off phenomenon but rather emblematic of a broader way of thinking.

The Dao of the World

In October of 1993, something extraordinary happened in the fields of central China. A team of archeologists discovered in Guodian 郭店 county, in present-day Hunan province, a tomb which dated from around 300 BCE in what was at the time the ancient state of Chu 楚.[65] The tomb's layout, the coffin, divination bones and other mortuary objects gave significant new insights into burial and religious practices of antiquity. Such a find was already a source of

[64] Sela 2018: 180.
[65] Holloway 2009: 1.

excitement but what was further found in the tomb lay beyond all expectations.[66] A bundle of bamboo slips – more than 800 of them – contained a wealth of texts, many of them unknown and others partially (and debatably) identifiable with transmitted texts. This textual treasure has given unprecedented access to the intellectual world of antiquity *as it was*, free from the alterations of early imperial scholarship.

One of these texts – unknown prior to the discovery of Guodian – is *The Ultimate One Gives Birth to Water* (*Taiyi shengshui* 太一生水).[67] The text has an argumentative structure which links cosmological principles with the sages (*shengren* 聖人) and the first phrase of the text states that the Ultimate One, the 'real name' for *dao*, "gives birth to water and water returns and joins with the Ultimate One, completing heaven" (太一生水水反薄太一是以成天).[68] It is for this reason, the text continues, that "the Ultimate One is stored in water" (是故太一藏於水).[69] The text expands on the link between cosmology and ethics by arguing that the person who grasps (*zhi*) the Ultimate One and carries out his own service according to *dao* (以道從事者) is a sage.[70] It concludes by arguing in favour of "cutting back on strength" (伐於強) and promoting the idea that "the *dao* of heaven values weakness and reduces what is completed so as to add to what is living" (天道貴弱削成者以益生者).[71]

[66] The significance of the texts from Guodian has been compared to that of the Dead Sea scrolls, see Chan 2019 which, as a companion edited volume, illustrates their significance in contemporary scholarship.
[67] Here I am using the text and slightly modified translation as provided in Meyer 2012: 209-226.
[68] Meyer 2012: 214.
[69] Meyer 2012: 215.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Meyer 2012: 216.

The connection between *dao* and water was not unique to the *Ultimate One*. Many texts found in the Guodian tomb – some of which have inappropriately been labelled 'proto-versions' of the paradigmatic Daoist classic *Laozi* 老子[72] – are replete with water imagery used to conceptualise *dao*:

> 譬道之在天下也，猶小谷之與江海。[73]
> Comparing the presence of *dao* in the world is like the relationship of little streams to rivers and seas.
>
> 大曰潰，潰曰遠，遠曰反。天大，地大，道大，王亦大，域中有四大安王處一安 。[74]
> 'Great' speaks of 'overflow', 'overflow' speaks of 'go far', 'go far' speaks of 'return'. The sky is great, the earth is great, *dao* is great, and the king is also great. In the land, there are four greats and the king is one of them.
>
> 反也者道之動也，弱也者道之用也。[75]
> Going back is the movement of *dao*, being weak is the function of *dao*.
>
> 上德如谷。[76]
> The highest virtue is like a low valley.

[72] Allan 2003: 240 following most scholars writing in Chinese adopts this position. However, the questions surrounding the writings found in Guodian are considerable, complex, and many of them unfortunately unanswerable. What we can say, however, is that the excavated texts do not claim to be *Laozi*. They have no tittle and no link to a contemporaneous text named as such. Instead, they are a collection of different writings, each representing an independent unit of thought. Nonetheless, the excavated texts do bear strong similarities with the text which the tradition names *Laozi*. This suggests that the received text is the product of later scholarship putting together different texts under the same title. Quite likely, the process of editing, excluding, and including passages happened on several occasions until the text stabilised in its received form. Checking the passages of the received *Laozi* against the Guodian texts allows us to say with confidence which passages are not the product of later scholars. Even though each unit of thought is independent, there is conceptual coherence as can be seen from the fact that the tradition did start treating them as unitary wholes, parsing out a structure across the passages. Thus, even though the texts are collections of independent units of thought, I treat them as forming some kind of unity. Even though we do not have excavated counterparts of other early 'classical' texts, this formation process is almost certainly not only true of *Laozi* but of all texts that start emerging in the fourth and third centuries BCE. For a more detailed presentation on the issues of authorship of *Laozi*, see Lau 1963: 147-162. Henricks 2000 enriches this discussion by bringing forth new evidence from the Guodian texts. Below, I am quoting the text as provided in Henricks 2000. All translations are my own but I have consulted Allan 1997; and Henricks 2000.

[73] Henricks 2000: A: 10.32.

[74] Henricks 2000: A: 11.55.

[75] Henricks 2000: A: 19.40.

[76] Henricks 2000: B: 5.41.

> 大成若缺，其用不弊，大盈若沖，其用不窮。[77]
> The most complete appears lacking, yet when used is not worn out. The most full appears leaking, yet when used it is not exhausted.

These passages are in varying degrees reminiscent of the *Laozi* and cohere with sections of the received text:

> 大道汎兮，其可左右。[78]
> Ah, the flow of the great *dao*, it can go left or right.

> 道沖而用之或不盈。淵兮似萬物之宗。[79]
> *Dao* gushes [like water] and when used does not need to be refilled. It is just as the abyss, oh, resembling the ancestor of the myriad things.

> 上善若水。水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾乎道。[80]
> The highest good (*dao*) resembles water. Water's goodness is that it benefits the myriad things, does not contend, and dwells where the multitude detest. This is why it approximates *dao*.

> 天下之至柔，馳騁天下之至堅。無有入無間，吾是以知無為之有益。[81]
> The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest. That which has no [substantial] existence enters where there are no crevices. I therefore know the value of non-willful action.

> 道之出口，淡乎其無味，視之不足見，聽之不足聞，用之不足既。[82]
> The way *dao* flows out [is such that when you] taste it and it has no flavor; when you gaze at it, it cannot be seen; when you listen to it, it cannot be heard; [and] when you use it, it cannot be exhausted.

The language used to describe water, its flow, and its attributes is employed to conceptualise *dao*. *Dao's* relationship to the world is similar to that between

[77] Henricks 2000: B: 7.45.
[78] *Qinding Siku Quanshu* [hence SKQS]: *Daojia lei*: *Laozi Daodejing* 老子道德經 (*shangpian* 上篇; 34). Along with providing the item title in the *Complete Writings*, I also provide the number of the relevant chapter (*juan* 卷).
[79] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 4).
[80] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 8).
[81] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*xiapian* 下篇; 43).
[82] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 35).

streams and seas and it can "flow" "left or right". It is like a "deep spring" and just like water it is the "ancestor" of the myriad things, "benefiting" them all. Like water, even though it is soft and supple and "does not content" – flowing in a non-willful way (*wuwei* 無為) – it manages to overcome the strongest things in the world. Just like water flows downward, *dao* occupies the low places "which the multitudes detest". *Dao* is "tasteless" and "cannot be seen". Like water, it is infinitely replenishable and "cannot be exhausted".

The language of water is deeply implicated in the very apprehension of *dao*. The concept is not thought of apart from water, with imagery about it used at a second stage to merely illustrate aspects of *dao*.[83] Because *dao* is an abstract idea, it must be grounded on a concrete domain of experience.[84] *Dao* was not exclusively conceived in terms of water – other images existed as well.[85] Yet the language to describe water, its flow and attributes, was essential in the conceptualisation of *dao*.[86] The water-based language of *dao* reflects the insight that imagistic thinking is necessary in the apprehension of abstract ideas. Exactly because they have no concrete reality they require grounding in physical objects.[87]

That *dao* is conceptually structured on water points to the problematic nature of its most standard translation as 'the way', which introduces the language and imagery of roads to understand *dao*. This has at least two serious drawbacks. First, roads do not share the same structure as flowing water. If *dao* is understood

[83] Allan 1997: 4.
[84] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 3.
[85] Allan 1997: 115-117; and Slingerland 2003: 131-174.
[86] Ball 2017: 69.
[87] For a defense of the identity of cognitive mechanisms between modern readers and ancient Chinese text-producers, see Slingerland 2004b; Slingerland 2005; and Slingerland 2017. The nature of the cognitive mechanism which allows image based thinking to take place should be under discussion since the textual evidence from pre-modern Chinese points to a different cognitive process which cannot be properly labeled as 'metaphorical', see Gandolfo 2019. Nonetheless, this does not imply that some of the insights of conceptual metaphor theory should be abandoned. For more on the status of 'metaphor' in Chinese literary thought, see Kao 2000; and Kallay 2014.

as a road, it is a very odd one since it flows only in one direction and does not have any junctions.[88] Second, the road metaphor resonates with ideas of religious and spiritual journeys, connoting ideas of self-realisation which are irrelevant in the conceptualisation of *dao*. If *dao* is a path, then one must exert effort to travel on it and reach the destination, but water flows to the sea effortlessly. Both of these issues can be easily resolved if we use the natural flow of a stream as the prototype and translation for *dao*.[89]

The conceptualisation of *dao* is complicated by the partial incommensurability of 'water' in classical Chinese and English. *Shui* 水, most often translated as 'water', also denotes 'to flood'/'flood' and 'river'. The difference between the uses of *shui* and 'water' reflect not only a difference in linguistic practice but also a difference in categorisation.[90] Contemporary English and classical Chinese set different boundaries for the 'same' naturally occurring object. When *shui* is translated as 'river' or 'flood' the main thrust of the meaning of a text is captured. However, by using different words in translation for what is originally denoted by the same graph and sound, we inevitably impose external conceptual subcategories.[91] Even though we perceive the cognitive association between 'river', 'flood', and 'water', these words and concepts ultimately remain semantically distinct in English, obscuring the noetic overlap and literal associations of the original text. S*hui* and 'water' overlap but their range of meaning remains distinct. [92]

[88] Allan 1997: 66-70.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ball 2017: 70-71.
[91] Allan 1997: 32. For more on this subject, see He Liye 何麗野 2003; and Wu Yameng 吳雅萌 2011.
[92] Allan 1997: 67-68.

The Dao of Wisdom

One of the primary concerns in *Laozi* is to specify the content of knowledge by giving an account of the sages' demeanour and actions. The text explains the ways in which the sages – those who have come closest to grasping *dao* – act and behave. The following statements from the received text are indicative:

> 以其終不自為大，故能成其大。[93]
> [The sage's] ability to achieve greatness is because he does not act great, this is why he is able to achieve greatness.
>
> 為天下谿，常德不離 ... 知其白，守其黑，為天下式。[94]
> Act as a runnel to the world and the constant potency (*changde* 常德) will not depart … Know the pure, but keep to the polluted and act as the river valley of the world.
>
> 是以聖人處無為之事，行不言之教。[95]
> Therefore, the sage dwells in affairs of non-willful action (*wuwei* 無為) and practices wordless teaching.
>
> 清靜為天下正。[96]
> Be clear and still and you will be able to act as the rectifier (*zheng* 正) of the world.

The water-derived features essential to conceptualising *dao* are essential in the conception of knowing *dao*. Aiming to emulate and embody *dao*, the sage acts in accordance to *wuwei* (non-willful action), does 'not contend' with others, lives humbly at low places, calms and 'clears' himself, teaches without words and provides for the myriad things by not imposing upon them. The ideas that inform *dao* are extended to encompass the ways in which knowledge is constructed. Knowing and putting *dao* into practice, however, is not limited to general values

[93] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 34).
[94] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 28).
[95] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 2).
[96] SKQS: *Laozi Daodejing* (*shangpian*; 6).

and principles. As can be seen from the excavated manuscripts discussed below, specific political lessons are entailed:

> 江海所以能為百谷王者，以其善下之，故能為百谷王。是以聖人欲上民，必以言下之, 欲先民，必以身後之。是以聖人處上而民不重，處前而民不害。是以天下樂推而不厭。以其不爭，故天下莫能與之爭。[97]
> The reason that rivers and seas rule the hundred valley streams is that they are good at taking a lower position to theirs. This is why they are able to be king over the hundred valley-streams. Thus the sage who wishes to be in authority over the people always places himself below in his speech, and [the sage] who wishes to be before the people, places himself behind them. Thus even though he has his place above them, the people do not feel his weight, and even though he is before them, the people are not injured. Thus the world delights in exalting him, and is not weary of him. Since [the sage] does not contend, there is no one able to contend with him.

> 是以聖人之言曰：我無事而民自福，我無為而民自化，我好靜而民自正，我欲不欲而民自樸。[98]
> Thus the sages' words say: when I have no official duties, the people become rich by themselves, when I act non-willfully (*wuwei* 無為), the people transform themselves, when I am fond of stillness the people correct themselves, and when I desire not to desire the people become simple by themselves.

> 以道佐人主者，不欲以兵強於天下，善者果而已，不以取強。果而弗伐，果而弗驕，果而弗矜。是謂果而不強，其事好長。[99]
> One who uses *dao* to assist the ruler of men does not desire to use weapons to force himself on the world. The good person [sage] gets results and that is all and does not use the occasion to make himself stronger. He achieves results but does not brag, he achieves results but is not arrogant, he achieves results but does not boast. This is called 'achieving results but not being forceful' and such deeds are good and long-lasting.

> 聖人欲不欲不貴難得之貨，教不教復眾之所過。是以聖人能輔萬物之自然而弗能為。[100]
> The sage desires not to desire and does not consider valuable goods which are hard to obtain. He teaches without teaching and retreats from

[97] Henricks 2000: A: 2.66.
[98] Henricks 2000: A: 16.40.
[99] Henricks 2000: A: 4.40.
[100] Henricks 2000: A: 6.64.

> where the multitude go in excess. Thus, the sage assists in the inherent patterns (*ziran* 自然) of the myriad things and yet he does not do it.

From a position of power, the sage emulates the water features of *dao* in his governance. The sage-king places himself low, does not contend against the people and does not cause harm. By following *wuwei*, non-willful and non-coercive action, the sage manages to rule the people benevolently and efficaciously. The model of rulership that can be seen in these passages from the Guodian texts subverts standard modes of thinking: power entails softness and strength requires deference. The reason the sage is great is because he apprehends the fact that *dao* is like water and models his conduct and governance on its non-willful and free flow.

In *Zhuangzi* 莊子 – considered by the tradition as the second most important text of the 'Daoist school', with similar concerns to *Laozi* – the link between cosmological outlook and ethico-political concerns becomes even more explicit. The chapter *The Great and Most Honoured Master* (*Da zong shi* 大宗師), presents the following vision of *dao* and knowledge:

> 夫道，有情有信，無為無形；可傳而不可受，可得而不可見。[101]
> As for *dao*, it has essence and reality but is non-willful (*wuwei*) and shapeless, it can be transmitted, but cannot be received; it can be obtained, but cannot be seen.

> 泉涸，魚相與處於陸，相呴以溼，相濡以沫，不如相忘於江湖。與其譽堯而非桀，不如兩忘而化其道。[102]
> When the spring has dried up, the fish stay together on land, spitting on each other to provide moisture and foaming on each other to get wet. This is not as good as forgetting about one another in the rivers and lakes. Rather than praising Yao and condemning Jie, they [the sages] would be better to forget them both and transform themselves in the *dao*.

[101] SKQS: *Daojia lei*: *Zhuangzi zhu* 莊子注 (3).
[102] Ibid.

> 魚相造乎水，人相造乎道。相造乎水者，穿池而養給；相造乎道者，無事而生定。故曰：魚相忘乎江湖，人相忘乎道術。[103]
> Fish go to one another in water; men go to one another in *dao*. As for those who go to one another in water you nurture them by making a pond; as for those who go to one another in the *dao*, their life will be peaceful if they have no [official] duties. Therefore, it is said, fish forget about themselves in water; men forget about themselves in the *dao*.

Again, the fluidity of *dao* comes to encompass the way in which knowledge *qua* the actions and demeanour of the sages is constructed. Because *dao* is everywhere – we live and breathe in it – one must transform into *dao*, forgetting about oneself. The admonition that the sages should not take 'official duties' is a more radical vision of non-contending. As a cosmological principle, *dao* affects the very way one knows *dao* and puts it into practice.

Extending Unity

Moving by extension from the water conceptualisation of *dao* to knowing and putting it into practice is established by two paths. *Dao*, like water, is ubiquitous. It can be found in the sky in the form of clouds and rain and it can be found within us as blood and sweat. Because water was seen as the source of the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物), *dao* was conceptualised as permeating the fabric of the world, setting the patterns of inherent (*ziran* 自然) change of things. Given its construction as an all-pervading, omnipresent idea, *dao* affected the ways in which other abstract notions were apprehended.[104] Knowing *dao* and putting it into practice was structured on the idea of *dao* itself.[105]

[103] Ibid.
[104] Allan 1997: 67.
[105] See Ng 2003: 45 for how the link between knowing and *dao* was solidly part of the Qing conceptual framework.

On the other end, the way in which knowledge is conceived – to understand something about the world – helps explain its link to *dao*. Knowledge is situated between the world and ourselves: how we understand the world determines how we behave in it. Knowledge resembles the way in which the world is understood and our actions are patterned on what we know. The continuity of the water conceptual metaphor from *dao* to knowledge – apprehension (*zhi*), sagacity (*sheng*), and erudition (*wen*) – is the result of an 'extension' of meaning from *dao* to knowledge as well as an 'appropriation' of meaning from knowledge to *dao*.[106]

The shared imagistic construction of *dao* and knowledge reveals the links between cosmology, epistemology, and politics. From an outsider's perspective, these three domains appear significantly distinct and bringing them together seems odd. However, unearthing their collective imagistic structure illuminates the reasons that motivated ancient thinkers to link them together. Uncovering latent linguistic resonances reveals a way of thinking – extending beyond the *Laozi* to other classical texts and 'schools of thought'[107] – that would otherwise remain elusive.

One commonality between many philosophical texts of antiquity is that they perceived themselves, to varying degrees, as carriers of the kind of knowledge that leads to grasping *dao*. Despite their differences, a shared assumption across texts is that a correct apprehension of *dao* is necessary to the attainment of sagacity.

[106] The conceptual link between knowledge (*zhi*) and *dao* was arguably the foundation on which the modern neologism *zhidao* (知道), 'to know' – created to capture the semantic range of western notions of knowledge – rested. In other words, early twentieth century intellectuals perceived the connection between *zhi* and *dao* as the basis on which to construct the modern equivalent of knowledge.

[107] The demarcation of different 'schools' is artificial since no excavated text claims to be part of any one 'school'. The centuries prior to imperial consolidation saw a tremendous amount of intellectual production defined by fluidity and interspersing of ideas. The stability with which imperial scholarship viewed texts and 'schools of thought' is anachronistic, see Granet 1975 [1934]: 6-8; Nylan 1999; Loewe 2000: 375; and Queen 2001. Keeping in mind the artificiality of these intellectual walls, we can focus on the shared elements across texts from different 'schools'.

The reason behind this belief is that prior to the introduction of western categorical structures, the natural and human realms were not considered ontologically distinct.[108] That is to say, the principles that determine the natural order also regulate human affairs. This idea is expressed in Chinese as 'the unity of nature and humankind' (*tianren heyi* 天人合一) and was articulated in a systematic way by early imperial scholars such as Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 179–104 BCE).[109] Part of the reason this idea emerged is the water conceptualisation of *dao* and its inherent potential to be extended to other domains. The formation of a unitary perspective on *dao* and the extension of its structure to other abstract ideas is premised on the fact that ancient thinkers focused on the ubiquity of water and its necessity to all kinds of process. Apprehending *dao* – the way it flows in the world – *is* essential in structuring ethical conduct. Contemplating water *does* lead to insights on political rule. Cherishing water's features *can* reveal something about our lives. In their attempt to understand the world, ancient Chinese thinkers gave water – due to its significance in the conceptualisation of *dao* – a central position when articulating the fundamental aspects of morality and governance. The water-based way of thinking found in *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* was not exceptional but rather representative of a broader way of thinking.[110]

The Dao of Sagacity

The Analects (*Lunyu* 論語), *Mengzi* 孟子, and *Xunzi* 荀子 share a common concern for rituality – the idea of structuring and regulating human relations

[108] Allan 1997: 31.
[109] For a general introduction, see Zhang Dainian 張岱年 1985; and Tang Yijie 湯一介 2005. For more on the concept during the early imperial era, see Zeng Zhenyu 曾振宇 1997; for the late imperial era, see Meng Peiyuan 蒙培元 2002.
[110] Allan 1997: 39-55.

through specific patterns of behavior. These foundational texts also employ water imagery for *dao* and for knowledge. The *Analects* is a collection of 'sayings' traditionally attributed to Confucius (Kongzi 孔子) (c. 551–479 BCE). Because most of them are mainly short statements, often no longer than one or two sentences, later authors and commentators attempted to elucidate the meaning of these 'sayings'. The *Mengzi* and *Xunzi* build on them, at times explicitly structuring an entire discourse on certain phrases or passages of the text. The *Xunzi* is regarded as the youngest of the texts, allegedly composed during the third century BCE, while the *Mengzi* is a didactic collection of conversations primarily between rulers and Mencius (*Mengzi* 孟子) (c. 372–289 BCE), a follower of Confucius' ideas.

The link between water, *dao*, and knowledge had a special position in *Mengzi*. Referring to Confucius' teachings, the text reflects on two stories:

> 徐子曰：'仲尼亟稱於水，曰：'水哉，水哉！'何取於水也？'
> 孟子曰：'原泉混混，不舍晝夜。盈科而後進，放乎四海。有本者如是，是之取爾。苟為無本，七八月之閒雨集，溝澮皆盈；其涸也，可立而待也。故聲聞過情，君子恥之'。[111]
> Xuzi said: 'Confucius often praised water, saying 'O! Water! O! Water!' What [principle] did he derive from water?' Mengzi said: 'A spring gushes forth, not stopping day and night. It fills up hollows and then advances to be released into the four seas. Having a source is being like this. What [Confucius] took as a principle is merely this: if something is without a source, then it is like the collected rain of the seventh and eight months, filling all of the irrigation ditches, but one can stand and wait for it to dry up. This is why a reputation which exceeds one's natural endowment is something of which a gentleman is ashamed'.

And:

[111] SKQS: *Sishu lei*: *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 (8 *shang* 上; IV.B.18).

> 孟子曰：‘孔子登東山而小魯，登太山而小天下。故觀於海者難為水，遊於聖人之門者難為言。觀水有術，必觀其瀾。流水之為物也，不盈科不行；君子之志於道也，不成章不達。’[112]
> Mengzi said: ‘Confucius ascended Dongshan [the eastern mountain] and the state of Lu appeared small. He ascended Mount Tai and all of the world appeared small. Therefore, one who has contemplated the sea, finds it difficult to think of other waters, and one who has wandered within the gates of the sages, finds it difficult to think of the words of others. There is an art in the contemplation of water. It is necessary to look at it as foaming in the waves. The flow of water is for the benefit of things, and does not move until the hallows are filled; the commitment of the exeplary person[113] to *dao* is not fulfilled until he completes one lesson after the other’.

In both passages, Confucius is described as admiring water. He looks at water and draws (*qu* 取) a principle stating that there is “an art in the contemplation of water”. In the first passage, being ashamed of an exaggerated reputation is structured on the fact that water with a source does not dry up. The text draws a distinction between water flowing from a source (*yuanquan* 源泉) and water which has no ‘foundation’/‘root’ (*ben* 本). The rationale is that Confucius drew the principle that one’s reputation depends on natural endowment from the fact that a replenishing source flows perennially – without it, one’s reputation would simply evaporate.[114] In the second passage, the wisdom of the sages is paralleled to the vastness of the sea. Faced with the immensity of the sea, one comes to understand the limitations of one’s own knowledge. To attain sagacity – to fulfil one’s “commitment to *dao*” – one has to mimic water’s movement towards the sea. Contemplating that water flows only after having filled all hallows along its course,

[112] SKQS: *Mengzi zhushu* (13 *xia* 下; VII.A.24).
[113] The original text uses the term *junzi* 君子 which is often translated as ‘gentleman’ or ‘exemplary person’. I prefer the latter because it brings it closer to the idea of sagacity. For the purposes of this chapter, I use a ‘minimal’ understanding of the various terms employed by different texts to convey the idea of ethical excellence. Even though a distinction can be drawn between the terms *shengren* and *junzi*, I hold the position that they share a minimal understanding of what it means to be an ethically exemplar person, namely grasping and embodying the water-derived features of *dao*.
[114] Allan 1997: 36.

the *Mengzi* derives the principle that only by "completing one lesson after the other" can one approach *dao*.

The idea of committing oneself to *dao* and putting it into practice had mythological roots in the legend of Yu 禹, the sage-king of antiquity who controlled the floods and brought order to the world. This myth was among the most influential tales in early China and it brings together *dao*, knowledge, and water. One common version of the myth is retold in *Mengzi* as well as in the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書) – a collection of prose attributed to figures of antiquity and later canonised as one of the *Classics*.[115] The texts are dedicated to Yu's great feat of controlling rivers and putting an end to flooding. They argue that Yu's success lay in his ability to apprehend and follow the *dao* of water: "Yu's management of water, is the *dao* of water" (禹之治水水之道也) as *Mengzi* sums it up.[116] Yu first 'lay out' (*fu* 敷) the land and 'distinguished' (*fen* 分) it from water.[117] Then he made the rivers 'enter' (*ru* 入) and 'follow' (*cong* 從) their channels, and be 'channeled' (*zhu* 注), 'guided' (*dao* 道), and 'gathered' (*zhu* 瀦) into gullies and ravines.[118] Unlike Gun 鯀 – the failed foil figure – Yu did not try to 'dam' (*yi* 堙) the rivers and alter their course. He did not act against *dao*.[119]

Yu's success was attributed to his ability to follow *dao*, revealing the conceptual link between knowing it and putting it into practice. *Mengzi* argues that

[115] The story can be found in the *Hongfan* 洪範 and *Yugong* 禹貢 chapters of the *Shangshu*, see SKQS: *Shangshu lei*: *Shangshu zhushu* 尚書注疏 (11) for the *Hongfan* chapter; and SKQS: *Shangshu zhushu* (5) for the *Yugong* chapter. In the *Mengzi* the story can be found in SKQS: *Mengzi zhushu* (6 *xia*; III.B.9); and SKQS: *Mengzi zhushu* (12 *xia*; VI.B.11). For more on early Chinese flood myths, see Birrell 1993: 146-157; Lewis 2006; and Ball 2017: 52-63.
[116] SKQS: *Mengzi zhushu* (12 *xia*; VI.B.11).
[117] SKQS*: Mengzi zhushu* (6 *xia*; III.B.9). Also see Lewis 2006: 32.
[118] SKQS: *Shangshu zhushu* (5).
[119] SKQS: *Shangshu zhushu* 尚書注疏 (11). Also see Lewis 2006: 33.

"if those wise men would only act as Yu did when he conveyed the waters, there would be nothing to dislike in their wisdom. The manner in which Yu channeled the waters was by doing what gave him no trouble. If your wise men would also do that which gives them no trouble, their knowledge would also be great" (如智者若禹之行水也則無惡於智矣禹之行水也行其所無事也如智者亦行其所無事則智亦大矣).[120] The sages should mimic *dao* by "not contending" (*bu zheng* 不爭) with anything, a property modelled on water's softness. Only then is the knowledge of the sages great – indeed as vast as the sea.

Yu's success in channeling rivers was linked to his ability to 'lay out' the land distinguishing it from water. Yu would not have been able to control the flow of water if he had not first established its difference from land. The myth introduces a notion of order in the apprehension of *dao* whereby the establishment of distinctions is crucial in putting *dao* into practice. Yu's success was premised on the distinction between parts of the world that ought to be reserved for rivers to flow and all others that ought to remain dry.[121] Without this fundamental distinction, none of Yu's actions could have taken place. Knowing and embodying *dao*, in this case, necessitate the formation of appropriate distinctions.

The passages on knowledge and water in *Mengzi* were part of a larger discourse elucidating the brief assertion in the *Analects* that the wise take joy in water (智者樂水).[122] Many texts sought to explain its meaning and elucidate its implications. The *Youzuo* 右坐 chapter of *Xunzi* is one of the earliest attempts:

[120] SKQS: *Mengzi zhushu* (8 *xia*; IV.B.2).
[121] SKQS*: Mengzi zhushu* (6 *xia*; III.B.9).
[122] SKQS: *Sishu lei*: *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏 (6).

> 孔子觀於東流之水。子貢問於孔子曰：‘君子之所以見大水必觀焉者，是何？’孔子曰：‘夫水遍與諸生而無為也，似德。其流也埤下，裾拘必循其理，似義，其洸洸乎不屈盡，似道。若有決行之，其應佚若聲響，其赴百仞之谷不懼，似勇。主量必平，似法。盈不求概，似正。淖約微達似察。以出以入以就鮮絜，似善化。其萬折也必東，似志。是故見大水必觀焉’。[123]
>
> Confucius was gazing at a river flowing eastward. Zigong asked Confucius: "Why is it that whenever an exemplary person sees a large river, he is sure to gaze at it?" Confucius said: "A river flowing all over gives birth to all living things with no willful action resembling virtue. Its flow is downward and despite curves and bends it certainly follows its pattern, which resembles righteousness. Its gushing is not depleted or exhausted, which resembles *dao*. If someone opens a channel, [water] responds as swift as an echo and flows in valleys a hundred fathoms deep without fear, resembling courage. When poured into a basin, it must become level, which resembles proper models. When it fills up a hole, a leveling stick is not needed, which resembles uprightness. Soft and supple, it reaches into even minute spaces, which resembles discernment. By going into and out of it, one uses it to become fresh and clean, which resembled transformative goodness. Its flow through ten thousand turns certainly heads east, which resembles resolution. For these reasons, whenever [a sage] sees a large river, he surely gazes it".

The passage takes an expansive view on water as a model for human conduct. Its capacity to sustain life, its downward flow, its non-exhaustibility when flowing from a source, its suppleness, its power to purify, and so on, are all linked to ideals of human conduct. Abstract concepts – virtue, righteousness, courage, discernment and more – are conceptually grounded on water. Understanding these ethical ideals is exactly the purpose of 'gazing' at water. The conceptualisation of these abstract ideas is not independent of water but rather fundamental, revealing its significance to their formation. Given their association with knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity, to attain these ideals was to know *dao* and put it into practice.

[123] SKQS: *Rujia lei*: *Xunzi* 荀子 (20).

The Dao of Later Times

In the same way that ancient Greek philosophy influenced learning in Europe over the ages, pre-imperial texts determined the fundamental orientation of Chinese scholarship. Of course, the position of these texts changed over time: Buddhism, just like Christianity, challenged and gave new impetus to the ancient philosophical traditions.[124] During some periods, classical texts had lost their intellectual primacy as they competed with new kinds of knowledge. Around the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, they were brought in conversation with new ideas and eventually were rehabilitated to their previous high status.[125] Significant changes, however, had taken place in the intervening centuries. A discourse emerged that was driven by new concepts, such as *material force* (*qi* 氣) and *principle* (*li* 理),[126] giving rise to what later scholars would synthesise as the *Learning of dao* (*daoxue* 道學) and scholars of the Qianlong era would refer to comprehensively as *Song Learning* (*songxue* 宋學), in reference to the dynasty in which it flourished.[127] Despite the significant changes that had taken place, fundamental ideas, tropes, and ways of thinking survived, exactly because ancient texts never lost their influence over scholarship.[128]

Alluding to the water imagery of *dao* in *Zhuangzi*, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107 CE) one of the fundamental figures of *daoxue*,[129] compared humans to fish:

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[124] Yu Qingrong 余慶蓉 Wang Jinqing 王晉卿 1998: 49; and Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三 et al. 2007: 187-190.
[125] For more on the status of Confucian education during the Tang, see McMullen 1988; Lee 1989; and Birdwhistell 1989.
[126] This was closely associated with figures such as Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085 CE) and Cheng Yi 程頤; for more on their lives and philosophy, see Graham 1958.
[127] Since the twentieth century, scholars writing in English refer to *daoxue* as *Neo-Confucianism*.
[128] For more on *daoxue*, see Bol 2008; and Bol 2015; on its impact on education and learning, see Bol 1989; Kelleher 1989; and Walton 1999; for its sustained impact on thinking and learning during the Ming, see Chan 1970; and Meskil 1982.
[129] Graham 1958. For more on contemporaneous figures, see Birdwhistell 1989.

> 真元之氣，氣之所由生，不與外氣相雜，但以外氣涵養而已。若魚在水，魚之性命，非是水為之，但必以水涵養，魚乃得生爾。人居天地中，與魚在水中無異。至於飲食之類，皆是外氣涵養之道，出入之息者闔辟之機而已。[130]
> The truly original *qi* – the one which gives life to everything – does not mix with the external *qi*, but it does employ it to contain itself. For example, fish are in water and their nature is not water. Yet they need water to be contained and nourished. People live in between heaven and earth and that is no different from fish living in water. All kinds of food and drink are the *dao* of the external, containing *qi*, which is nothing more than in-breath and out-breath, a dynamic process of unfolding and clogging.

This passage reflects the new discourse that had emerged around the cosmological and metaphysical foundations of the world largely in response to Buddhism. The connection of *qi* to *dao* and the influence that ancient texts continued to exercise was instrumental in the extension of water imagery to the conception of *qi*. Its capacity to nourish life and its never-ending process of 'unfolding and clogging' allude to the water features traditionally ascribed to *dao*.

Similarly, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200 CE), the most celebrated and influential figure of late imperial scholarship,[131] argued that:

> 人物之生，天賦之以此理，未嘗不同，但人物之稟受自有異耳。如一江水，你將勺去取，只得一勺，將碗去取，只得一碗，至於一桶一缸，各自隨器量不同，故理亦隨以異。[132]
> Humans' lives are granted by heaven employing principle (*li* 理) and are all the same. However, what each person is endowed with is different. It is like a river: if you use a spoon to fetch water, you will only have a spoonful; if you use a bowl, you will only have a bowlful and so on for a bucket and a jar. Each follows their utensil whose quantities are not the same. Thus, the principle also follows differences.

[130] SKQS: *Rujia lei*: *Erchang yishu* 二程遺書 (15).
[131] See de Bary 1981; Chan 1987; Kelleher 1989; and Schirokauer 1993. For more on his teachings, see Liu 1990. For the dissemination of his teaching, see Kojima Tsuyoshi 小島毅 1993. For more on Zhu Xi's significance in Korea, see Youn 1986; in Japan, see Yamazaki 1986.
[132] SKQS: *Rujia lei*: *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (4).

In another passage, using Cheng Yi as a mouthpiece, he connected the underlying reality of the world – *dao* – with the nature of water:

> 程子曰：‘此道體也，天運而不已，日往則月來，寒往則暑來，水流而不息，物生而不窮，皆與道為體，運乎晝夜，未嘗已也’。[133]
>
> Master Cheng said: this *dao* is the substance, it is the perennial movement of heaven: the days leave and the months come, the winters go and the summers arrive. The flow of water never ceases and the life of things is never exhausted. They all take *dao* as their substance, which moves perpetually like day and night.

The connection between water and the most fundamental features of the world was never lost.

Commenting directly on the *Analects*, Zhu Xi elaborated on the connection between knowledge and water, making the ancient text to cohere with contemporary ideas. The reason the wise appreciated water, Zhu Xi held, was connected to their grasp of principle:

> 智者達於事理而周流無滯，有似於水，故樂水。[134]
> The wise have reached the principle of things and the surrounding rivers are not stagnant; they [the wise] are like water, which is why they take pleasure in it.

Zhu Xi was the great synthesiser of *daoxue*, the mind behind this new scholarly movement which from the middle of the thirteenth century up until the end of the Qing dynasty dominated the imperial examinations. What Zhu Xi and the scholars associated with *daoxue* taught was part and parcel of literati education during the late imperial period. By the Qianlong era, new concerns had emerged, giving form to scholarly movements which reacted to *daoxue*. With the introduction of new

[133] SKQS: *Sishu lei*: *Lunmeng jingyi* 論孟精義: *Lunyu jingyi* 論語精義 (5 *shang*).
[134] SKQS: *Sishu lei*: *Sishu zuanshu* 四書纂疏: *Lunyu zuanshu* 論語纂疏 (2).

questions and methods of investigation, the position of Zhu Xi and other scholars was re-conceptualised. However, just as pre-imperial thinkers retained their significance in scholarship of later times, so too were literati from earlier dynasties never entirely discarded. The way of thinking that figures such as Zhu Xi and Cheng Yi espoused was perhaps challenged but never forgotten.

Similarly, the connection between water and knowledge was never lost because it was present in the most influential texts of antiquity with many literati discussing the structure of the world in terms of water or commenting on the link between knowledge and water. For example, figures such as Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819 CE) – somewhat less illustrious than Zhu Xi but still memorialised as one of the *Eight Great Prose Masters of the Tang and Song* (唐宋八大家)[135] – held that:

> 山川者，特天地之物也. 陽和陰者，氣而游乎其間者也。自動自休，自峙自流，是惡乎與我謀？自斗自竭，自崩自缺，是惡乎為我設？[136]
> Mountains and rivers, these are nature's objects. The Yin and Yang forces are the *qi* which flows between them. It moves and stops on its own, it clogs and flows on its own – what do my plans have to do with it? It tussles and exhausts itself, it collapses and becomes scarce on its own – what do my intentions have to do with it?

And similarly Xing Bing 邢昺 (932–1010 CE), a renowned scholar and educator during the Song 宋 (960–1279 CE) dynasty, returned to the *Analects* to remark that:

[135] His memorialisation started with the publication of *Selected Writings of Eight Great Masters of the Tang and Song* (*Tangsong ba dajia wenchao* 唐宋八大家文鈔) by Mao Kun 茅坤 (1512–1601 CE). See SKQS: *Zongji lei*: *Tangsong ba dajia wenchao* 唐宋八大家文鈔 (*lunlie* 論列) for Mao Kun's rationale for choosing these eight figures.
[136] SKQS: *Bieji lei*: *Liu Hedong ji* 柳河東集 (44).

> 智者樂水者，樂謂愛好，言智者性好，運其才智以治世，如水流而不智已止也。[137]
> The wise take joy in water: joy means that they are good at doing something. The wise use good-natured words and employ their talent to order the world. They are like the flow of water which knows not how to stop.

The connection between water and knowledge permeated the totality of traditional scholarship and found its way in texts of different kinds and hues, some lying well beyond the most revered texts and their commentaries. For example, *The Art of War* (*Sunzi* 孫子), one of the primary military texts, conceived of war (partly) in terms of water, developing a military tactic – a kind of knowledge – based on water's movement. The text advises that "just like water avoids high places and tends to low ones, so too should one's attack avoid enemies' points of strength and aim for the their weaknesses" (夫兵形象水水之形避高而趨下兵之形避實而就虛).[138] In another direction, the early medieval text, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍), the first treatise of literary criticism, repeatedly employed the language of water to construct meaning. For example, the significance of the Classics is compared to Mount Tai, whose waters reach all the lands around it or to the Yellow River which moistens a thousand leagues (可謂泰山徧雨河潤千里).[139] The Classics are profound and rich (經籍深富) and their content is as vast as the rivers and the seas (皓如江海).[140] The text also explains that an unsuccessful literary scholar fails to observe the tide and trace it back to the source (並未能…觀瀾而索源), an image which establishes the

[137] SKQS: *Lunyu zhushu* (6). The phrase is transcribed in the commentary section.
[138] SKQS: *Bingjia lei*: *Sunzi* 孫子 (*Sunzi*). Here the bibliographic reference does not follow a sequential number but rather names of ascribed authors and texts.
[139] SKQS: *Shiwen ping lei*: *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (1). For more on the text, see Liu 1975: 22.
[140] SKQS: *Wenxin diaolong* (8).

movement towards the intellectual source of any given idea as a standard of good scholarship.[141]

Centuries later, when Zhu Xi argued for the necessity of tracing the flow of the sages' words back to their source (後人自流溯源智聖人之言),[142] he was not adopting a novel expression and devising a new way to think about scholarship. He was invoking a *topos* enmeshed in his intellectual *milieu* which could be traced back to its original sources in antiquity.

In their choice to compare knowledge to water, the editors of the *Complete Writings* were thus alluding and reaching back to this rich textual tradition. As the foremost learned men of the empire and as the compilers of the *Complete Writings*, they had intimate knowledge of this body of texts – this was the collective culutral substratum on which the similarities between knowledge and water were based. The articulation of knowledge in terms of water in the *Complete Writings* was the most concrete, mature, and sophisticated expression of a way of thinking which had been flowing for millennia.

The Streams of Knowledge

Having established that knowledge was understood as water, we can move our attention to how the order of knowledge was conceived by the makers of the *Complete Writings*. In the following pages, I argue that the names of the library halls that housed the four imperial copies reflect the editors' conceptualisation of the order of knowledge. Contrary to the dominant modern view, their connection

[141] SKQS: *Wenxin diaolong* (10).
[142] SKQS: *Zhuzi yulei* (44).

to water was not the fruit of superstitious beliefs or an exercise in literary embellishment. Far from being a curio triviality for the bookish sinologist, the names are indicative of a way of thinking about knowledge and its structure that has gone unnoticed. Understanding the implications of the water-based conceptualisation of knowledge organisation is vital in comprehending the structure of the *Complete Writings*.

The library records provide a clear presentation of their names.[143] All four names combine knowledge (*wen*) with a water-relevant feature – abyss, source, ford, and moving upstream. The records state that their meaning (*yi* 意) is established on (*li* 立) water (四閣之名皆冠以文而若淵若源若津若溯皆從水立意者).[144] This is important because the signification of the names is not located on *wen* – *prima facie* the more conceptually rich term – but rather on the seemingly innocuous 'water'.

The primary structural similarity between water and knowledge is the order between the four main divisions. The *Classics* are the *source* from which all other *streams* of knowledge – the *Records*, the *Masters*, and the *Collections* – flow out (流也支也派也皆自源而分集也子也史也皆自經而出).[145] The source is most important (*shouzhong* 首重)[146] for it guarantees the existence of a main *current* (*liu*

[143] Each of the four northern library halls had its own record (*ji* 記). These are: the *Record of the Literary Abyss Library* (*Wenyuan ge ji* 文淵閣記); the *Record of the Literary Source Library* (*Wenyuan ge ji* 文源閣記); the *Record of the Literary Upstream Library* (*Wensu ge ji* 文溯閣記); and the *Record of the Literary Ford Library* (*Wenjin ge ji* 文津閣記). They can be sequentially found in *Zuanxiu* 2.2720-25. The records were inscribed in stone stele and placed adjacent to the library halls. The records were written contemporaneously and in the early stages of the *Complete Writings*. They were written by scholar-officials in the Qianlong emperor's voice. Presumably the calligraphy was by the emperor or at least in his style, see Liu 1997: 11. All translations are my own.
[144] *Zuanxiu* 2.2724.
[145] *Zuanxiu* 2.2722.
[146] Ibid.

流) and smaller *streams* and *channels* (*zhipai* 支派) (有源必有流支派於是乎分焉).[147]

The four divisions are placed in a hierarchical relation: the *Classics* are the source, the *Records* are the main river flow, the *Masters* are the tributaries, and the *Collections* are the smaller brooks and channels (則經者文之源也史者文之流也子者文之支也集者文之派也).[148] The source itself is understood as the abyss (蓋淵即源也)[149] – a reference to the conceptualisation of *dao* – with the implication that the *Classics* are its direct manifestation. For this reason, the *Classics* are placed at the top of the division. The farther down the order of knowledge, the farther away one is from *dao*.

Having established this premise, the rationale linking water to the order of knowledge takes an interesting turn. The records reveal a deep concern – perhaps an anxiety – over tracing knowledge back to its source (溯其源).[150] It is not simple to find the way upstream: one first needs to know (*zhi* 知) where the ford crossings are before being able to trace the source (欲從支派尋流以溯其源必先在乎知其津).[151] Without such knowledge, one will inescapably be lost (弗知津則躡迷途而

[147] *Zuanxiu* 2.2723. In their structure and in the way they were conceived by the editors, trees and rivers are not fully unrelated. This is revealed by the fact that both languages use the word 'branch' or *zhi* 支 to describe different parts of a river system. The connections, however, end here. In a metaphorical structure, the associations that can be derived between any two objects is in principle infinite. Talking about the resemblance of X to Y can be meaningful only in a specific context as defined by the similarities drawn by a specific community. Conceptual metaphors are no different and so analysing them always entails not what features *could be* used from any one object to ground an abstract idea but what features in fact *have been* employed. For example, the bark of knowledge or its chlorophyll are not part of the conceptual metaphor for knowledge and certainly do not inform its organisation. Thus it is important to keep in mind that focus must be placed only on the elements of a river system the compilers emphasised and to recall, as Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995: 60-61 states, that 'tree structures' were not developed in China.
[148] *Zuanxiu* 2.2722.
[149] *Zuanxiu* 2.2723.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.

失正路).[152] This is because the fords trace the source's flow and they, along with moving upstream, ensure that the abyss behind the source is reached (津則窮源之徑而溯之是則溯也津也實亦迨源之淵也).[153]

The source of water and knowledge, however, is not only the spring from which a river emanates from. It is also its destination, the sea (若夫海源也).[154] All waters have their own source, but all of them also *return back* to the sea (眾水各有源而同歸於海).[155] While it might appear that the sea is a river's end and not its source (似海為其尾而非源), in reality they are the same because the origin reverts to the end-point (原始反終).[156] The key to this seemingly paradoxical statement lies in the connection between a river source and the sea. Weilü 尾閭, the mythical stone through which sea water drained out and was brought back to the source, was the link between beginning and end.[157] If one did not know how water drained from Weilü, then one could not understand how it perpetually moved back to the source (不知尾閭何洩則仍運而為源).[158] This understanding of the physical world – the pre-modern equivalent of the water cycle – was a direct reference to Weilü, which appears in many texts included in the *Complete Writings*, and most notably in the *Zhuangzi*.[159] For the compilers, the circularity of water in its extremities was a manifestation of the principle of Great Change (*dayi* 大易) contained in the most

[152] Ibid.
[153] *Zuanxiu* 2.2724.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] A type-search on Weilü gives 692 hits which translates to over 800 references to Weilü in the *Complete Writings* corpus. Weilü was an idea and literary *topos* which was part-and-parcel of general knowledge of late imperial scholars.
[158] *Zuanxiu* 2.2724.
[159] SKQS: *Zhuangzi zhu* (6).

important *Classics* text, the *Book of Changes* (*yijing* 易經) (大易所以示其端也).[160]

To drive the point home that knowledge is structurally similar to water, the rationale advanced by the compilers concludes with a rhetorical question: "with the essence-and-function of water being such, could the essence-and-function of knowledge (*wen*) alone not be like this" (水之體用如是文之體用顧獨不如是也)?[161] The compilers bring together the names of the four libraries to explain the structure of knowledge in the *Complete Writings*. The detailed account explaining how the names are constructed and how their meaning is – and ought to be – understood highlights the significance water played in the order of knowledge. The relations between water elements is indicative of a way of a conceptualisation of knowledge and its organisation which is different from – but as meaningful as – tree structures. Far from being apotropaic, aesthetic, or trivial, the names play a crucial role in the conceptualisation of the order of knowledge. The rationale they embody can be summarised in the following five features.

(1) The Necessity of a Source

[160] *Zuanxiu* 2.2724.

[161] *Zuanxiu* 2.2725. Also, notice that the presentation has constructively used all four of the terms found in the library names: the abyss (*yuan*) is implicitly linked to *dao* and explicitly linked to the source (*yuan*) and river crossings (*jin*) are essential in finding one's way in moving upstream (*su*) towards the source. Substance (*ti*) and function (*yong*) are foundational ideas in Chinese thought whose roots have arguably been traced back to the ancient classics, particularly the *Book of Changes*. Nonetheless, they acquired new significance with Buddhist metaphysical discourse. They remained important ideas organising the fundamental parameters of discourse up until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the slogans in favor and against modernisation and westernisation (for example, 'China as Substance and the West as Function' *zhongti xiyong* 中體西用). For the purposes of the present argument the terms denote what western philosophy would term as the 'nature' of an object and its 'application'. For more on *ti* and *yong*, see Cheng 2002; Cua 2003; Cheng 2003; and Patt-Shamir 2004.

Alluding to the distinction raised in *Mengzi* between rain- and spring-water, the compilers perceive knowledge as possessing a source. The text draws the distinction to highlight the fact that water from a source is replenishable and infinite while rainwater is exhaustible and short-lived. Echoing the idea that *dao* is the primordial source from which all patterns – and all knowledge – of the world are established, the compilers equate the *Classics* with the source of all knowledge.

On the one hand, this was a reflection of their belief that all ideas and ideals – at least the worthy ones – emanated from the *Classics*. All the streams of learning flowed out of the ancient texts. Without them, knowledge would just pour out and evaporate. Just as water with a source gushes endlessly, so too does the knowledge which emanates from the *Classics*. The sustained production of knowledge necessitates a source.

On the other hand, equating the *Classics* with the source of knowledge was a factual statement of the tremendous generative power – the sheer influence – that these texts had had historically. Much of the learning and scholarship through the ages had been dedicated to explaining their meaning, reconstructing their socio-historical contexts, and illuminating their eternal significance. Even the kinds of knowledge which were not necessarily related to the Classics often claimed that their inspiration and insights had been derived from the ancient texts. Placing the Classics as the source of knowledge was not only a way to enshrine their intellectual precedency. It was also a recognition of their primacy in the historical development of learning. It was an act that simultaneously reflected and consolidated their significance in the generation of new knowledge.

(2) Ordering the Streams

With the Classics as the source of all knowledge, the water structure confers a clear hierarchy to the four main divisions. The *Classics* are at the top – conceptually, as well as in the order of the *Complete Writings* – and the emanating streams flow out in a clearly ranked order: the *Records* are the main river flow, the *Masters* are the tributaries, and the *Collections* are the smaller brooks and channels. Each division is more important than the one that comes after: the *Records* outweigh the *Masters* and they in turn overshadow the *Collections*. This hierarchy reflects the compilers' perception of the different streams of knowledge and their ascribed significance.

It also resonates with the idea in *Mengzi* that learning has a natural progression modelled on the way water over-flows, spilling over only once it has filled a hollow space. In this way, one's studying should progress only after having completed the first (and most important) lessons. The idealised schematic study of the *Complete Writings* – *Classics* in the early morning, *Records* before noon, *Masters* in the afternoon, and *Collections* in the evening – reveals the pedagogic implications of hierarchical thinking.[162] The order is reflective of the relative value that different streams of knowledge had in one's progression from ignorance to knowledge.

While both the tree and water constructions confer a hierarchical order, they do so in different ways. The water metaphor does not establish a hierarchy on vertical lines but on horizontal ones among its four main divisions.[163] In the tree

[162] Liu 1997: 236.

[163] However, the water metaphor does not explain the relations between the three organisational tiers, the main divisions (*bu*), the sections (*lei*), and their respective groups (*shu*). One could see this as an indication of the limited application of the water image-based language to structure the conceptualisation of the knowledge order (or indeed even as a limitation of the water conceptualisation itself). However, we should not expect that all aspects of the notion of order to be completely determined by water imagery or indeed by imagistic constructions. See Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 10, 56 for the limits of any given metaphorical structure to explain the understanding of an abstract idea and the limits of conceptual metaphor theory itself in explaining

structure, this would mean ordering the largest branches with say, *Philosophy* first, followed by *History*, and then *Poetry*. The two hierarchies are qualitatively distinct since they are not only on different axes but also on different scales. While the tree hierarchy is concerned with the conceptual status between categories and sub-categories, the water hierarchy is concerned with the relative *value* of the different bodies of knowledge.

(3) Moving Upstream

Beyond hierarchies, movement up and down the streams of knowledge defines its conceptualisation. Tracing the flow of learning from its smallest runnels back to its original source was central to the compilers' understanding of knowledge. How one got from the far-ends of a river to its originating spring was crucial. It was not easy to trace its flow upwards and one needed to know the fords – the conceptual links which allowed one to see connections, cross from one side of the river bank to the other, and move further up.[164] Without such awareness, one would just be lost in a meandering flow.

The necessity of such knowledge was premised on the fact that rivers break out in smaller streams which both meet and diverge. Conversely, a river is

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all of the aspects of abstract thinking. Other factors, such as socio-historical imperatives, impacted the order of the *Complete Writings* by informing its purposes and principles, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, respectively.

[164] Liu 1997: 292 fn. 6 explains the idea of *jin* as a 'conveying medium' which allows to physically or spiritually cross from one point to another. In this sense, it is like a linking bridge which connects two sides or a river. Also the Qianlong emperor explored the significance of *jin* in a poem *Inscription for the Literary Ford Library* (*Ti wenjin ge* 題文津閣) where the relevant passage reads: "When a river has a source it must have a flow, and in tracing its flow to reach the source one must first know the fords. How could anyone seeking the sages actually reach the original source without the fords?" (按水有源必有流尋流探源必應先知津凡求聖道者非有津逮鮮究源本焉). This poem helps us appreciate the significance that was given to the notion of drawing connections which could allow one to move backwards to the source of all knowledge and wisdom. I am grateful to Henrietta Harrison for pointing out this poem to me. It can be found in *Qing Gaozong (Qianlong) yuzhi shiwen quanji* 清高宗(乾隆)御製詩文全集, *juan* 83.5b (654).

fed by tributaries which might intersect with other streams, creating complex patterns. While on some level rivers resemble trees in that they branch out – as both the English and Chinese terms (*zhi* 支) suggest – the compilers' conception of the streams of knowledge did not resemble the neat, unidirectional, and ever-smaller divisions of a tree. Twists and turns which connect streams, were the physical grounding which informed the compilers' perception that it is not always easy to trace the flow of knowledge. It is for this reason that they affirmed the necessity of knowing the features of the streams of knowledge well: if one did not know where the crossings are – where conceptual connections exist – then one would surely get lost. While the tree metaphor places increasing (in principle, infinite) differentiation at its core, the water structure emphasises the links across the streams of knowledge.

The call to trace the flow of knowledge to its source reflects an understanding of the *Complete Writings* as a project compiled from the perspective of an eighteenth century scholar who, faced a text, a thought, a poem, or an allusion, wishes to trace its historical development by following the conceptual currents constitutive in its formation.[165] Highlighting the relations between the streams of knowledge, how they flow in and out of each other, and how one can move all the way up to their source reflects the emphasis on continuity that the compilers placed upon their notion of order.

(4) Moving Downstream

[165] Ball 2017: 14 shows how the search for the source of China's mighty rivers was seen as a way of understanding the entire country's spirit (*qi* 氣).

While moving up the stream was conscious and deliberate, flowing downstream to the end-point of knowledge was effortless. The sea represented the collective wisdom of the sages as well as symbolised the purpose of the acquisition of knowledge. One did not learn merely to become more knowledgeable but rather to become wiser, to approach the ethical and political ideals set by the sages of antiquity.[166] Just as a river flows to its destination so too does knowledge move towards the attainment of specific goals.

The natural, non-contending flow of water toward the sea implied that while it always has a clear direction, it is also always free of intention. Water simply flows downward with no contention but with the certainty that its suppleness will overcome even the hardest obstacles. One who is in the stream of knowledge will non-willfully (*wuwei*) flow towards the sea of wisdom. What this conception of knowledge meant in practice was that as long as one kept oneself in the streams of knowledge – which, make no mistake, required endless effort – one would naturally come closer to the sages' ideal.[167] Sagacity was not something one willed into action but rather something which emerged on its own accord. Of course, in the highly moralistic vision of late imperial scholarship, very few – if any – could ever arrive at the sages' sea.[168]

(5) Circularity

[166] Idema and Lloyd 1997: 41-42; and Li 2012: 35-55. The idea that knowledge ought to have an ethical direction and promote the moral development of the self was not foreign to western philosophers. See Wellmon 2015: 36 for a presentation of the moral imperative for knowledge in Kantian philosophy. However, this ethical direction was not conceptualised in terms of water – as a spontaneous and natural process – but rather as a destination that ought to be strived for.
[167] Woodside 1990: 159.
[168] Even though the ethical component of knowledge acquisition existed no doubt from antiquity, Neo-Confucianism had imbued it with new meaning. For the ethical dimensions of Neo-Confucian education theory, see Bai 2013: 530

The movement toward the two extremes of the river underpinned the idea that they are conceptually identical. The sea of the sages and the source from which knowledge emanates are the manifestations of the primordial abyss that *dao* was conceived to be. The vastness of the sea and the unfathomable depths of the abyss behind the source, linked beginning and end. The *dao* of the sages had come full circle. The physical reality that water follows a cyclic pattern – correctly intuited by ancient texts – reinforced the circularity in the acquisition of knowledge according to which motivations and outcomes are identical: in order to approach the sagely ideal one ought to wish it first.[169]

Tracing Traditions

While it is clear that thinking about knowledge in terms of water had emerged from pre-imperial antiquity, it remains to be established whether the imagery applied to the *organisation* of knowledge before the *Complete Writings*. That is, was the extension of water terms to the order of knowledge an innovation of Qianlong-era scholars or was the rationale of the *Complete Writings* an extension of a pre-existing way of thinking? Is there a historical source to which the order of knowledge as rivers and streams can be traced back?

[169] The idea of circularity is not alien to western traditions of knowledge organisation. See Fowler 1996: 14-15 for the derivation of the word 'encyclopaedia' from the Greek ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (*enkyclios paideia*) originally designating, from at least the Hellenistic times (321–31 BCE) a cycle of studies that made a standard curriculum. The idea of circularity did not radically affect the conception of the order of knowledge since hierarchy wielded stronger influence. However, Hawley 2006: 219 explains the preservation of the spirit of the 'circle of learning' in encyclopaedias produced in England during the eighteenth century as compared to their continental counterparts. Also see Blair 2010: 168-169.

The connection between water and the organisation of knowledge was not an innovation of late imperial scholars and its earliest manifestation can be found in the oldest bibliographic projects of the Former Han. The *Records of the Grand Scribe* (*Shiji* 史記) was the first to divide pre-imperial scholarship in nine streams (*jiuliu* 九流).[170] These were the Confucianists (*rujia* 儒家), the Daoists (*daojia* 道家), the Yinyang School (*yinyangjia* 陰陽家), the Legalists (*fajia* 法家), the Logicians (*mingjia* 名家), the Mohists (*mojia* 墨家), the Diplomatists (*zonghengjia* 縱橫家), the Syncretists (*zajia* 雜家), and the Agriculturalists (*nongjia* 農家).[171] These were all anachronistic divisions since no pre-imperial text ever carried such labels or claimed to be part of any of these streams.[172]

However radical, the division persisted because it was regarded as helpful. The *Writings of the Former Han* (*Qianhan shu* 前漢書) state that it was adopted by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) to differentiate between texts, and it was exactly for this reason that he attained splendid achievements in creating an ordered bibliography (劉向司籍九流以別爰著目錄略序洪烈).[173] In a similar vein, the *Annals of the Former Han* (*Qianhan ji* 前漢紀), notes that Liu Xiang and his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 BCE–23 CE) canonised and collated classical texts giving them new and clearer meaning by dividing them into nine streams (流向父子典校經籍而新義分方九流區別典籍益彰矣).[174] Delineating scholarly streams was not only necessary in navigating the textual world but also beneficial for understanding the

[170] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Shiji* 史記 (*xu* 序).
[171] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Houhan shu* 後漢書 (89).
[172] For more on the problematic nature of these divisions, see Nylan 1999; Ng and Chow 1999: 3; Loewe 2000: 375; Queen 2001; and Nicoll-Johnson 2017: 65-66. However, from the perspective of high Qing scholarship these divisions were accepted and were not seen as anachronistic or faulty.
[173] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Qianhan shu* 前漢書 (100 *xia*).
[174] SKQS: *Bianian lei*: *Qianhan ji* 前漢紀 (25).

meaning of each text individually. The language of scholarship as streams never died out. The compilations of the Han dynasty were diachronically held in high regard, and their prefaces and basic structure were preserved and transmitted over the centuries. Both privately compiled and imperially sponsored, bibliographic collections from all periods continued employing the notion of streams to denote scholarly associations.[175]

In the *Writings of the Sui* (*Sui shu* 隨書), compiled in the early seventh century, the metaphor was extended to discuss the source and flow (*yuanliu* 源流) of a particular stream of learning. In the introductory note (*tiyao* 提要) the compilers refer to the source and flow – the origins and development – of the study of the Classics (經學源流).[176] This idea became important for the conceptualisation of knowledge and textual production. In his *magnum opus*, the *Record of Continuities* (*Tongzhi* 通志), the Song dynasty scholar extraordinaire and master bibliographer Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162 CE) argued that by examining the texts of a period one could know the source and flow of its scholarship (覩其書可以知其學之源流).[177] The *Comprehensive Catalogue of Exalted Literature* (*Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目), a Song dynasty imperial project

[175] Among texts included in the *Complete Writings*, the following are a selection which refer to the streams of scholarship: the *Writings of the Later Han* (*Houhan shu* 後漢書), the *Old Writings of the Tang* (*Jiu tangshu* 舊唐書), the *Writings of the Song* (*Songshu* 宋書), the twelfth-century *Commentaries to the Bibliography of the Upright Hall* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題), the thirteenth-century *List of Reading Books of the Prefecture Hall* (*Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志) and the seventeenth-century *Investigation of the Meaning of the Classics* (*Jingyi kao* 經義考). The first three are recorded in the *Official Records* (*zhengshi* 正史) section while the last three are included in the *Bibliographies* (*mulu* 目錄) section. By no means is this list comprehensive of all the occurrences of the expression. Rather, I have chosen these texts to shows how water imagery existed through time and how it was reproduced over the millennia across different scholarly projects. For more on the Han and Tang inheritance of this way of thinking, see Nicoll-Johnson 2017: 78-79.

[176] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Suishu* 隨書 (*tiyao* 提要).

[177] SKQS: *Bieshi lei*: *Tongzhi* 通志 (71).

which would receive great praise from the makers of the *Complete Writings*, drew an explicit connection between the notion of source, flow, and order (源流次敘).[178] The Ming 明 (1338–1644 CE) dynasty imperial collection, *Catalogue of the Literary Abyss Library* (*Wenyuange shumu* 文淵閣書目)[179] included three entries which specifically refer to the source and flow of different streams of learning: the source and flow of the rivers Zhu 洙 and Si 泗 (洙泗源流),[180] here metonymically standing for the Confucian school; the source and flow of the scholarship of successive dynasties (歷代源流);[181] and the source and flow of arithmetic (算學源流).[182] Bibliographic entries in the *Catalogue of the Hall of a Thousand Acres* (*Qianqing tang shumu* 千頃堂書目), privately compiled in the seventeenth century, reflect the use of water language to conceptualise different parts of knowledge from smaller streams such as the source and flow of scholarship on the *Book of Changes* (易學源流),[183] to larger ones such as the study of the Classics (經術源流).[184] It even extended to learning which was not part of the Confucian paradigm, such as the source and flow of Daoism (道教源流)[185] and Buddhism (釋氏源流).[186]

In the late imperial period, the conception of knowledge as water had found its way even in the titles of texts, a clear sign of how deeply the imagery had been absorbed into scholarly practice. Several of these texts were considered

[178] SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目 (4).
[179] The name and physical structure of the *Literary Abyss Hall* was inherited from the Ming dynasty and was preserved during the Qing. See *Zuanxiu* 2.2721.
[180] SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Wenyuange shumu* 文淵閣書目 (1). The two rivers were in the ancient state of Lu 魯 and demarcate the area where Confucius was traditionally believed to have taught; see McMullen 1988: 29.
[181] SKQS: *Wenyuange shumu* (2).
[182] SKQS: *Wenyuange shumu* (3).
[183] SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Qianqing tang shumu* 千頃堂書目 (1).
[184] SKQS: *Qianqing tang shumu* (3).
[185] SKQS: *Qianqing tang shumu* (11).
[186] SKQS: *Qianqing tang shumu* (16).

significant enough to be included in the *Complete Writings*.[187] For example, the Qing dynasty *Treatise on the Source and Flow of Medicinal Studies* (*Yixue yuanliu lun* 醫學源流論) was an overview of how different medical traditions and their textual *corpora* emerged and developed over time.[188] The title of this work alluded to an earlier Yuan dynasty text, *Collections Tracing the Source of the Classic of Medicine* (*Yijing suhui ji* 醫經溯洄集), an investigative exploration of the origins of one of the most celebrated medicinal works.[189]

The earliest texts with such titles included in the *Complete Writings*, however, date from the Song dynasty. These are the encyclopaedia (*leishu*) *Supreme Treatise of the Source and Origin of Things Past and Present* (*Gujin yuaniu zhi lun* 古今源流至論),[190] the lexicographic work *Source of Characters of the Han Script* (*Hanli zi yuan* 漢隸字源),[191] and the biographical anthology of major *daoxue* figures *Records on the Abyss and Source of Yiluo* (*Yiluo yuanyuan lu* 伊洛淵源錄), compiled by Zhu Xi himself.[192]

While the earliest examples date from the Song dynasty, it was during the Qing that texts of imperial patronage started adopting water based names. For example, the *Imperially Sponsored Source and Flow of Mongolia and its People* (*Qinding menggu yuanliu* 欽定蒙古源流) and the *Imperially Sponsored Study on*

[187] But we know for a fact that there were many more – and that the compilers knew about them – because past compilations included in the *Complete Writings* list texts with such titles, which however were not included. For example, the *Catalogue of the Hall of a Thousand Acres* lists the text *The Lasting Glory of the Source and Flow of the Confucian School* (*Shirong zhusi yuanliu* 時榮洙泗源流) and the *Catalogue of the Literary Abyss Library* lists the text *Source and Flow of Arithmetic* (*Suanxue yuanliu* 算學源流) but neither of these texts is included in the *Complete Writings*.
[188] SKQS: *Yijia lei*: *Yixue yuanliu lun* 醫學源流論.
[189] SKQS: *Yijia lei*: *Yijing suhui ji* 醫經溯洄集.
[190] SKQS: *Leishu lei*: *Gujin yuanliu zhi lun* 古今源流至論.
[191] SKQS: *Xiaoxue lei*: *Hanli zi yuan* 漢隸字源.
[192] SKQS: *Zhuanji lei*: *Yiluo yuanyuan lu* 伊洛淵源錄.

the Source and Flow of Manchuria and its People (*Qinding manzhou yuanliu kao* 欽定滿洲源流考)[193] show how the language of knowledge as water was extended to other abstract entities such as populations, languages, customs, and politics (or at least knowledge about them).[194] It also reveals, how the expression was applied to domains of scholarship which lay well beyond the strict purview of Confucian classicism, a continuation perhaps of the earlier extension to Daoism and Buddhism. Of course, works within the bounds of Confucian scholarship were passionately produced in great volume during the Qing and texts such as the *Study on the Abyss and Source of the Learning of Principle in Fujian* (*Minzhong lixue yuanyuan kao* 閩中理學淵源考)[195] and the astronomical text *Complete Records on the Source and Flow of the Solstice* (*Quanshi rishi yuanliu* 全史日至源流)[196] were included in the compilation. The imagery of knowledge as a river with a source and flow increasingly permeated knowledge-organisation structures for well over half a millennium before the compilation of the *Complete Writings*.

Water Reflections

With this context in mind, the water construction of the bibliographic order in the *Complete Writings* acquires new meaning. The phrase of "using water to understand knowledge" indicates that while the compilers did not invent the imagery, they did explicitly acknowledge it, bringing together its different elements and extending it in new directions. The result was the formation of a far-reaching framework for the order of knowledge which informed multiple aspects

[193] SKQS: *Dili lei*: *Duhui junxian shu*: *Qingding manzhou yuanliu kao* 欽定滿洲源流考.
[194] SKQS: *Zashi lei*: *Qinding menggu yuanliu* 欽定蒙古源流.
[195] SKQS: *Zhuanji lei*: *Minzhong lixue yuanyuan kao* 閩中理學淵源考.
[196] SKQS: *Tianwen suanfa lei*: *Quanshi rishi yuanliu* 全史日至源流.

of the collection's construction. Such a comprehensive and well-articulated vision of the knowledge order was the innovation of Qianlong-era scholarship. While in the past two millennia the metaphor had been repeatedly used, it was only with the *Complete Writings* that it was openly acknowledged. This is a reflection of the editors' deep understanding of their textual inheritance. It is also a testament to their acumen as scholars to reflect on their own tradition, to pull out aspects which had gone unnoticed, and to use them creatively for their own goals.

Their explicit reference to the metaphoric relation between water and knowledge effectively constitutes a *meta-language* which self-reflectively describes the totality of textual production as well as the entirety of their own project. They did not merely use the water metaphor to order knowledge but stated with clarity that they did so. In this sense, their work predates the contribution by Lakoff and Johnson by about two hundred years, since in their own terms they revealed the implicit conceptual imagery which had historically structured much of the discourse around knowledge organisation. Of course, the makers of the *Complete Writings* were not concerned with metaphors and cognition, nor did they employ such terms. Yet the open recognition that water is used as a metaphor to understand knowledge reflects the same kind of self-reflexivity and discernment that scholars of conceptual metaphor theory claim for themselves.[197] In pointing out the use of water as a way of conceiving the order of knowledge, the compilers acknowledged their inherited tradition as well as underscored the self-awareness that characterised this massive compilation project. This was a conscious, meticulous, and meaningful articulation of the structure of knowledge. Two millennia of thinking about scholarly learning, its products, and its organisation as

[197] Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 11; and Ortony 1993: 10-11

a river had found their climactic expression in the *Complete Writings* exactly because the compilers had revealed that which had been pervasive and therefore invisible for millennia.

This is perhaps the reason why they made sure that the connection between water and knowledge would not be lost on their audience. Of course, the library names were a good place to start. The fact that the library records were carved in stone stele and placed right outside the library halls also helped to underline the connection. But, perhaps, just to make sure that the imagery was fully appreciated, placards accentuating the point were placed right at the entrance of each of the libraries. In the Literary Abyss Library the placard read: *Converging Streams Demonstrate like a Mirror* (匯流證鑒), connecting the confluence of textual production – what we would perhaps today call, scholarly consensus – with the real state of affairs of the world as revealed by a mirror.[198] The placard in the Literary Upstream Library referred to the endless *Ebb and Flow of the Sages' Sea* (聖海沿洄), a clear allusion to Mencius' discussion of the sages' wisdom and the notion that learning is directed towards a specific ethical attainment.[199] The Literary Source Library placard invited both a literary allusion and a play on words. The first reading of the sign compels library users to read the *Books of Antiquity to Gaze at the Waves* (笈古觀瀾).[200] The choice of the character *ji* 笈 to denote textual records lends itself to the perfect homophone and structurally similar character *ji* 汲 which means 'to draw water'. The second implied reading of the placard is to *Draw from Antiquity to Gaze at the Waves* (汲古觀瀾).[201] Both readings re-affirm

[198] For more on mirror metaphors and knowledge, see Cline 2008; and Bao 2015.
[199] I have been able to find about the content of the placards only in Liu 1997: 273.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.

the necessity of understanding the source of the sagely past in grasping the waves and billows of the present. Both also allude to Confucius' statement that there is an art in gazing at water, thus linking up to the textual world of antiquity.

The fact that these placards were placed right at the entrance and would have been the first signs a viewer saw, reveals the significance that the makers of the *Complete Writings* placed on the notion of knowledge as water.[202] Arguably, it may also indicate that they were aware of their contribution of making a pre-existing, latent connection explicit. The prominence given to the water imagery and the effort to disseminate it as a concrete and overt structure for knowledge had analogous rhetorical functions to the *Encyclopédie*'s inclusion of the Tree of Knowledge.

There was, of course, no logical necessity that required the *Complete Writings* to be premised on water just as there was none for the *Encyclopédie* to be premised on trees. There is no *a priori* reason why Chinese thinkers were fascinated by water and why their European counterparts were captivated by trees. It is not culturally mandated that these two metaphors would become the dominant way to conceive the order of knowledge. Alternatives did exist and could have occupied the central position that trees and rivers did.[203] However, it is the case that the conception of the order of knowledge developed, matured, and consolidated in

[202] Liu 1997: 272.

[203] In China, alternative metaphorical structures such as mirrors, lamps, and plants were used in part to structure conceptions of knowledge. For more on these metaphors, see Lai 1979; Oshima 1983; Allan 1997: 93-122; Liu Yi 劉藝 2004; Chen Lisheng 陳立勝 2005; Chen Lisheng 陳立勝 2009; Bao 2015; and Han Yue 韓玥 2017. Tree metaphors existed in pre-modern Chinese but were not used to structure knowledge and did not have the salience and pervasiveness that the water metaphor did, see Storch 2014: 11. Similarly, in western European discourses, mirrors informed the construction of knowledge or ideas pertaining to it (such as apprehension, the mind, or cognition); see, Cline 2008. Water also played a role in the construction of knowledge. For a presentation of the language of 'tracing the source' during the Renaissance, see Quint 1983: 21-42. While these metaphors existed and did exert a certain amount of influence on the conceptions of knowledge in each tradition, they had a limited effect on how its order was conceived.

these forms. For the *Complete Writings*, its water conceptualisation stands at the temporal – and not teleological – end of this process, before tree structures were introduced in the early twentieth century. The use of the water metaphor in the *Complete Writings* was therefore not a random, gratuitous act of scholarly creativity nor an accidental, unsystematic analogy.[204] This was not merely an appropriation of a pre-existing way of thinking harking back to antiquity. It was the extension of one line of scholarship – one way of thinking about the order of knowledge – which found its most mature, sophisticated, and comprehensive expression in the *Complete Writings*.[205]

Trees, Streams, and Taxonomical Realism

In the *Guidelines for Readers*, the compilers provide a short overview of past compilations and they draw their attention to Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019–1083 CE), one of the most notable essayists and imperial librarians of the Song dynasty, later also memorialised as one of the *Eight Great Prose Masters of the Tang and Song*.[206] Zeng Gong had revised and published official editions of texts including a preface for each (曾鞏刊定官本亦各製序文), a practice which the compilers

[204] Compare to Liu 1997.
[205] Most of these expressions survive in modern Chinese. If anything, there has been an increase in water-based expressions to talk about the order of knowledge. For example, an academic school is referred to as a 'learning stream' (*xuepai* 學派), typological divisions (between genres) are referred to as 'different streams' (*liubie* 流別), and the circulation of texts is referred to as 'flow and spread' (*liuchuan* 流傳). The water based construction for knowledge also exists in modern Japanese. For example Mamoru Tonami 礪波護 et. al. 2006: 317 refer to bibliography as the compass to navigate the see of books (この書籍の 海の海図 やコンパスに当たるもの、それが目錄でする). In this sense, I do not wish to connect the metaphor to the fact that historically, and during the high Qing, massive hydraulic operations were undertaken to prevent flooding and improve irrigation and transport, see Dodgen 1991.
[206] See fn. 135 as well as SKQS: *Tangsong ba dajia wenchao* (*lunlie*).

saw favorably.[207] However, he was likely to employ subjects to present his own ideas often in a redundantly long way (然鞏好借題抒議往往冗張).[208] More importantly, his presentation of texts' beginning and end, source and flow, turned out to be rough and sketchy (而本書之始末源流轉從疏略).[209] The editors criticise Zeng Gong for not having properly executed one of the basic goals of knowledge organisation. Their critique reflects the power of the water conceptualisation of knowledge.

The compilers' issue with Zeng Gong boils down to the fact that his exposition of the source and flow is patchy (*shulüe* 疏略) and incomplete. In their view, Zeng Gong did not properly indicate the continuities in the flow of knowledge and did not identify which texts are the source and which are the streams. The compilers did not criticise him for identifying a wrong group of texts as the source or mistakenly tracing the flow of knowledge. This would have still been a serious mistake but one which could be redressed by pointing out which texts, in their view, were the source and which were the streams. Zeng Gong's failure was more substantial. His framework, his entire way of thinking about the order of knowledge, was misguided and incomplete, the compilers maintained, since it did not properly identify the source and its derivative streams. His patchy presentation did not achieve the fundamental goals of ordering knowledge, and therefore failed as a bibliographic project.

In the *Record of the Literary Abyss Library* (*Wenyuan ge ji* 文淵閣記), the editors explain their decision to adopt a water related name for the library. They

[207] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 首 3).
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.

first note that the name had originated in the Ming, the previous defeated dynasty, (文淵閣之名始於勝朝), and that the original library could not be found (今則無其處).[210] Yet their explanation for the decision was not premised on historical precedent but rather on the idea that the name cohered with the reality of making a book storage facility (茲以貯書所為名實適相副).[211] The water based names of the library halls reflected what collecting and ordering knowledge was about. Collecting and organising knowledge was nothing more than to structure it on the patterns of rivers: "with the essence-and-function of water being such, could the essence-and-function of knowledge alone not be like this?"[212] In this framework, organisations like Zeng Gong's, which only partially establish the source and its streams, are deficient. Organisations which don't do this at all are profoundly problematic to the point that, in the compilers' eyes, they would not even be recognised as classifications of knowledge.

At the outset of their book, Lakoff and Johnson point out the cultural specificity of metaphors. They note for example that in English and other European languages, the concept of 'argument' is metaphorically structured on the idea of war. Arguments can be *won* and *lost*. Positions are *attacked* and *defended*. *Strategies* to *defeat* interlocutors are laid out and revised. Reflecting on the metaphor's cultural specificity, Lakoff and Johnson invite the reader to imagine a conceptualisation of 'argument' which is not structured on war but rather on dance. How would behaviour change if arguments were modeled on an elegant performance? If participants were seen as dancers who, instead of fighting against each other, worked together to create an aesthetically pleasing whole? How would

[210] Zuanxiu 2.2721.
[211] Ibid.
[212] *Zuanxiu* 2.2725.

debates be different if argumentative moves were not based on attack and defense but rather on twirls and twists? Such kind of 'argument', Lakoff and Johnson point out, would differ from the notion of 'argument' as war so profoundly that it would hardly even qualify as one. A dance-based verbal exchange where competition, conflict, and conquest do not exist is not an 'argument' from an English speaker's perspective.[213]

Contemporary scholarship has consistently used the perspective of trees and the necessities they impose on the order of knowledge to approach the *Complete Writings* and Chinese bibliographic projects.[214] This is one fundamental reason why their ordering of knowledge is found deficient, problematic, or baffling, at times compelling scholars to wonder whether such a project can be properly considered as 'knowledge organisation'. In theory, the opposite charge could also be true. The criticism levied against Zeng Gong could be extended to the *Encyclopédie*, and its organisation deemed unsuccessful since it does not establish the source and streams of knowledge. The compilers could even doubt whether the *Encyclopédie* constitutes a meaningful order to knowledge at all since its structure does not cohere with their vision of knowledge as water.

In this sense, the *Complete Writings* and the *Encyclopédie* reflect the same attitude, which can be described as *taxonomical realism*. What I wish to convey with this term is that a certain kind of 'actuality' is afforded to the respective orders.

[213] Lakoff and Johsnon 1980: 5 suggest that a way out of cultural blinkers is to describe both conceptualisations in the most neutral terms possible. When it comes to conceptualising argument, they suggest the difference should be understood as one culture possessing "a discourse form structured in terms of battle" and the other as having one "structured in terms of dance." By employing general terms which carry as little cultural baggage as possible, a more objective description of both conceptualisations can be reached.

[214] See for example Yang 1946: 6; and Lee H. 2016: 159. Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995: 60-61 is the only piece of scholarship I came across to explicitly challenge the application of the tree paradigm onto Chinese knowledge structures.

The compilers of the *Complete Writings* viewed their decisions on identifying the *Classics* as the source and the other main divisions as the derivative streams as cohering with fact. The makers of the *Encyclopédie* saw their project as capturing the 'logical' tree-like relationships of entailment and dissimilarity that exist *a priori*.[215]

Both orders assumed their validity and made the case for it by putting it into practice. The *Complete Writings* and the *Encyclopédie* exhibit the same element of 'performativity' in that they act out exactly what they say.[216] The conviction that organising knowledge along tree or water terms is the correct – or indeed the only – way underpins both projects.[217] Despite their differences, both orders share the same attitude of certainty about what 'knowledge organisation' entails.[218] In the *Encyclopédie*, 'organising knowledge' *is* dividing it in ever smaller branches. In the *Complete Writings*, 'organising knowledge' *is* finding its source and tracing its streams.[219]

The difficulty of putting the two systems in conversation underlines the struggle of early twentieth century intellectuals in China to re-organise knowledge

[215] Adams 2006: 194-195 and esp. 198; and Mazzochi 2013: 367.
[216] For a presentation of an analysis of text performativity in the Chinese setting, see Meyer 2012.
[217] And this is a more generalised phenomenon found in other classification structures, see Dousa 2010: 67.
[218] The mechanism through which this certainty can be derived is quite different in the two settings. While in the West, philosophical discourses claims to reality or correspondence with truth have been the dominant way by which certainty is attained, in pre-modern discourse in China ideas of correct (*zheng* 正) apprehension of or agreement with (*he* 和) *dao* are the most prevalent mechanisms of attaining certainty and extending argumentative valence.
[219] Olson 1999: 107. Another way in which the *Complete Writings* and the *Encyclopédie* are similar is that they both aspire to a complete organisation. The quest for totality is reflected in the *Encyclopédie* by the fact that there is in principle an infinite number of branches and sub-branches that can be added to the tree structure. Likewise, the *Record of the Literary Abyss Library* states: "Throughout several thousand years of history, and within the myriad distances of the universe, although [the number of] books is very large, not one falls outside the purview of the four repositories" (蓋以古今數千年宇宙數萬里其間所有之書雖夥都不出四庫之目也). It is interesting but perhaps not surprising how both models are premised on two salient physical objects – rivers and trees – that nature functions as the source of inspiration on which human ideas and ideals are premised on. On the question cultural variation of metaphors, see Kovecses 2005: 67.

along tree structures. The challenge consisted in placing Chinese texts under conceptual categories – such as Philosophy, Theology, and Literature – which did not traditionally exist. Yet, the incommensurability of the two systems does not occur only from the non-correspondence across categories but also from the different poetic constructions of the order of knowledge.[220] Put metaphorically, intellectuals in Republican China had to perform the seemingly impossible task of turning water into a tree. Transforming an entire textual tradition from one vision of scholarship into another was to a large extent unfeasible. This explains perhaps why tree structures had to be incorporated wholesale, and received bibliographic divisions were submerged under the logic of tree structures.

The fact that the makers of the *Complete Writings* and the *Encyclopédie* embodied the spirit of taxonomical realism does not mean we have to accept their respective orders. We can challenge their assumptions even before appreciating their cultural specificity. In tree structures, for example, the farther out a branch lies the farther removed conceptually it is envisioned to be from other branches. But the conceptual distance between sub-branches is not a given: in the tree of the *Encyclopédie*, the *History of Animals*, the fifth-iteration sub-branch of *History*, is far-removed from *Zoology*, the fourth-iteration sub-branch of *Philosophy*, even though the subject matter of both is animals. This partition amounts to an implication that, for example, the history of animal domestication by humans is not relevant in understanding changes in their biological features or, *vice versa*, that animals' biological features are unrelated to their domestication. The reason the classification takes this form is that knowledge has been organised based on

[220] For more on the issue of conceptual re-calibration and institutional re-organisation in early twentieth century China, see Chew 2000; Kurtz 2011; and Makeham 2012a.

disciplines and not subjects. But any tree structure organised on any one principle, would suffer from exactly the same problem.[221] The emerging emphasis on inter- cross- and trans-disciplinary modes of study in contemporary academic settings stems from the recognition that tree structures impose artificial distinctions which can be more limiting than illuminating. Similarly, the water conception of order and its insistence on establishing clear connections between the source and the streams of knowledge can lead to downplaying or ignoring the originality of novel ideas by imposing continuities where they do not exist.

The fundamental structure of the order of knowledge is not independent of cultural context and poetic imagery. It is impossible to disentangle the notion of 'knowledge organisation' from its fundamental constituents which are socio-culturally given.[222] It is impossible to determine what the idea of 'knowledge organisation' entails without entering a meta-taxonomical discussion on the values, purposes, and principles of 'knowledge organisation' – a discussion, however, which itself is informed by the specific priorities and conceptual structures of different cultural groups.

While the imagistic vision of the order of knowledge permeates its conceptualisation it does not account for all of its aspects. It is an essential dimension of the knowledge order but not a total description capable of explaining each and every element. Other concerns emerge from considerations which are inflected but not defined by the poetic order of knowledge. For the *Complete Writings*, the imagined yet real relationship that its makers held with bibliographers

[221] Olson 1999: 108.
[222] Ibid.

and bibliographic projects of the past, is essential for understanding why they chose to order knowledge the way they did.

CHAPTER 2 - PURPOSES: THE *COMPLETE WRITINGS* IN HISTORY

A Radical Proposal

In early January of 1773, something unusual happened in the Qianlong court. Zhu Yun 朱筠 (1729–1781 CE), the Anhui education commissioner, submitted to the throne a proposal for a massive bibliographic project. Zhu Yun's proposal was unusual because, even though education commissioners were allowed to use the palace memorial system, they only did so to submit lists with the names of successful examination candidates and annual reports. It was also an oddity, during the late Qianlong era, for any official to communicate with the emperor directly through the memorial system.[1] Nonetheless, Zhu Yun's proposal was not only accepted but also carefully reviewed by the Qianlong emperor himself and the scholar-officials of the Grand Council (*junjichu* 軍機處). After all, Zhu Yun was one of the most prominent scholars of the day and his proposal was significant and exciting.[2]

[1] Guy 1987: 57. For a detailed presentation of the inner workings of the Qianlong court, see Bartlett 1991.
[2] For more information about Zhu Yun and his life, see Hummel 1991: 198-199.

But Zhu Yun's memorial was particularly unusual for another reason, overlooked by the literature on the *Complete Writings*. In his proposal for the compilation of a new bibliographic project, Zhu Yun explicitly addressed the issue of how it should be organised, stating that the new project could be arranged according to either the organisation of the *Seven Epitomes* or the four-fold order (或以七略或準四部).[3] This seemingly innocuous option of arrangements, however, which has gone unnoticed in modern scholarship, has major implications in understanding the *Complete Writings* and its purposes. The possibility of following different systems highlights the fact that, in its embryonic phase, the *Complete Writings* was not tied to the four-fold order. The inception of the bibliographic project and the choice of organising structure were two different decisions taken at different times.

The disjunction between the *Complete Writings* and the four-fold order can be traced back to the 1772 edict issued by the Qianlong emperor calling on scholars across the empire to participate in a new compilation project. Even by Chinese imperial standards, the Qianlong emperor was ambitious, if not grandiose. His intentions for this compilation project were no different. The edict commenced with self-congratulatory remarks on the benevolence and rectitude of the Qianlong reign and then affirmed the significance of bibliographic projects and the need to produce a new compilation. The project was envisioned so grand as to surpass the glories of the *siku* and the *Severn Epitomes* in order to fulfil the emperor's wishes (從此四庫七略益昭美備稱朕意焉).[4]

[3] *Zuanxiu* 1.20-21.
[4] *Zuanxiu* 1.1-2. Here the terms *siku* and *qilue* have to be understood as references to two different organising systems of bibliographic arrangement and not to specific bibliographic projects. Compare to Guy 1987: 37 who takes the term *qilue* to refer to the bibliographic arrangement of the Han and the *siku* to refer to the *Siku shumu* 四庫書目 bibliographic collection of the Sui dynasty (581–618

The edict reveals the emperor's desire not only to outshine the two systems but also to ultimately surpass all bibliographic collections of the past: this was to be the largest and most comprehensive compilation in Chinese history.[5] But the emperor's words imply something more subtle, and more interesting. While the closing lines of the edict state that the Qianlong emperor's intention is to outshine past systems, one finds no remarks on how to do so *vis-à-vis* the bibliographic arrangement: the question of what division the new bibliographic project should assume is left open. This points to the absence of an *a priori* commitment to any one particular system, even to the extent that a new system altogether could possibly be employed. One way – and arguably a very good way – to outshine past bibliographic catalogues would be by providing a novel order which would be more appropriate and becoming. In its nascent stages, the *Complete Writings* was not only clearly independent from the four-fold division but also agnostic as to which organisation should be employed. In this sense, Zhu Yun's proposal to follow one of two systems came to limit the range of possible organisations. However, his suggestion that the new project could follow the *Seven Epitomes* – rather than trying to outshine it – was in itself profoundly significant.

Zhu Yun was proposing nothing short of a radical re-arrangement. The *Seven Epitomes* organisation is the first comprehensive and systematic bibliographic arrangement in China.[6] Compiled under the auspices of the Han dynasty imperial court and led by the polymath Liu Xiang 劉向 (and eventually

CE). For a reading similar to mine, see Liu 1997: 87 fn. 9. This reading further supported by the editorial decision of the Staff of the China Number One Archives who not to include the terms *qilue* and *siku* in brackets (therefore implying that they refer to specific bibliographies). Finally, professor Lan Wenchin 藍文欽 of the Library and Information Science Department, National Taiwan University, also supports this reading as communicated to me in private conversation on April 13th, 2018.

[5] Elliot 2009: 118.

[6] However, organising texts occurred before as well, see Yuan Xueliang 袁學良 2002.

completed by his son Liu Xin 劉歆), the *Seven Epitomes* was most likely completed around the year 7 BCE – almost eighteen-hundred years before the compilation of the *Complete Writings*.[7] Naturally, the understanding and practice of bibliographic arrangements had changed in the interim. The divisions employed in the *Seven Epitomes* had endured for a few centuries, but had been abandoned for almost a millennium and a half by the time Zhu Yun's proposal reached the court. The proposal to revive it was an original and bold suggestion.

Bibliographic Fascinations

The *Seven Epitomes* was lost around the tenth century, but its organisation was known to Qing dynasty scholars because it partially survived as the 'Bibliographic Treatise' (*yiwenzhi* 藝文志) of the *Writtings of the Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書).[8] The *Seven Epitomes* organisation, as it was received in the Qing and as we know it to this day, features the following six general groups (*lüe* 略):

1. *Six Arts* (*liuyi lüe* 六藝略), under which the most important books of Confucian (*ru* 儒) learning were placed along with philological texts (*xiaoxue* 小學);
2. *Masters* (*zhuzi lüe* 諸子略), which included the foundational texts of pre-imperial thinkers divided into various 'families' (*jia*);[9]

[7] On the compilation of the *Seven Epitomes* and the roles played by various imperial scholars, see Nylan 2014: 158. For a presentation of the socio-historical purposes and functions of the *Seven Epitomes*, see Nylan 2001: 14-15; Henderson 1991: 38; Tsien 2004: 3 and 205; Xu Shiying 許世瑛 1982: 11-19; and Liu Zhaoyou 劉兆祐 2002. For a hermeneutic presentation of the motivations behind the *Seven Epitomes*, see Wang Guoqiang 王國強 2008: 15; and Lee H. 2016: 43-45. For biographical information about the life and work of Liu Xiang and Liu Xin, see Loewe 2000: 372-375 and 383-386. For a more general presentation in English on libraries and classification in antiquity, see Kuo 1926: 189-194; Handleman 1995; and Connery 1998.

[8] For a detailed account of the survival of the *Seven Epitomes*, see Lee H. 2016: 73-77.

[9] For the earliest problematisation of the term *jia* in scholarship written in a European language, see Granet 1975 [1934]: 6-7. Also see Ng and Chow 1999; and Nylan 1999.

3. *Lyrics and Rhapsodies* (*shifu lüe* 詩賦略), containing recited and sung poems;
4. *Military Writings* (*bingshu lüe* 兵書略), divided according to different aspects of warfare such as tactics, terrain, and skills;
5. *Numbers and Divination* (*shushu lüe* 術數略), with astronomical, astrological, prognosticating, and divinatory texts; followed by the final group,
6. *Formulae and Techniques* (*fangji lüe* 方技略), containing texts on medicine, pharmacology, sex, and longevity.[10]

From the perspective of a Qing dynasty scholar, what is strikingly absent from this organisation is an explicit group for 'historical' texts. In the *Seven Eptiomes*, texts which dealt with the presentation of facts from the past and the preservation of memory were appended after the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), the paradigmatic 'historical' text, compiled by Confucius himself according to tradition, and thus placed as one of the classic texts in the *Six Arts*. While this organisation of texts with little emphasis on historical writing – and conversely a significant stress on military texts – was arguably befitting the Han intellectual environment (or rather suitable to fulfil Han imperial scholars' goals), the suggestion that one could organise the vast and diverse body of writing that had accumulated in the past eighteen hundred years under the *Seven Epitomes* must have been striking. By the Qianlong era, there was so much history and so much

[10] Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 81-101 views the collection as an organisation of "written materials" not based on a systematic "typology" but rather based on the "nature of the position" of the imperial scholars undertaking the collection. As true as this understanding of the *Seven Epitomes* may be, the question then becomes why and how did these 'domains' of scholarly texts coalesce together in the form of imperial scholarship? That is, even if one accepts that the *Seven Epitomes* reflected rather than structured scholarship, some kind of account of the organisation of imperial scholarship is still needed. For a similar view, see Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 2004 [1963]: 139 who states that the division of the *Seven Epitomes* depended on the quantity of books in the different sections and on the institutional arrangement of court scholars. For a presentation of pre-imperial organisations of scholarship, see Yuan Xueliang 袁學良 2002b: 18-22. For a presentation of the understanding of 'knowledge' itself in the *Seven Epitomes*, see Lee H. 2012: 385.

writing about history that the suggestion that all of these texts could simply be attached after the *Spring and Autumn Annals* – and not have their own distinct group and sub-divisions – must have been mind-boggling for most, if not all, Qing scholars.[11] And if Zhu Yun's proposal is taken seriously, the creation of a distinct section for military texts – which had lost their intellectual significance early on – on an equal footing with the *Six Arts* or the *Masters* sections, must have appeared almost absurd.[12] How could historical writing, such an integral part of scholarship, be given such minor treatment, while texts of a long-lost school focusing on war be given such prominence?

In light of the intellectual hurdles that adopting the *Seven Epitomes* would have posed to Qing scholars, how should Zhu Yun's proposal be understood? Perhaps, he believed that the *Seven Epitomes* itself would have to be modified so as to reflect the needs and realities of the time. In this perspective, his proposal should not be taken at face value but rather considered in light of substantial emendations he might have had in mind. While this interpretation of Zhu Yun's suggestion is possible, it does not seem to hold up because it raises the issue of what adopting the *Seven Epitomes* would amount to for him, were it not to be followed rather strictly. If Zhu Yun did not intend at least to preserve the *Seven Epitomes*' primary divisions, then why would he have suggested following it at all?

More importantly, however, discounting the suggestion to revive the *Seven Epitomes* fails to take note of the intellectual climate during the Qianlong era. By this time, evidential scholarship (*kaozheng xue* 考證學) had emerged as a new

[11] The quantity of 'historical' writings had had an impact on scholarship and imperial institutions from at least the development of the four-fold order, see Lee 2000: 242. For more on how the quantity of certain kind of writing affected the formation of bibliographic groups, see Lai Xinxia 來新夏 1988: 13-14.

[12] Luo Mengzhen 羅孟幀 1986: 52.

mode of conducting scholarly work on classical texts to relate to a long-lost sagely past.[13] The focus of evidential scholarship was a new method – one which, in today's disciplinary terminology, we would call *philology*. Evidential scholars treated texts as historical artifacts which could be examined through philological analysis. The driving motivation behind this movement was to determine which texts (or sections of texts) constituted the actual words of the sages of antiquity and which were fabrications of later times.[14] Evidential scholars were bent on unearthing the factual state of antiquity and heavily relied on the idea of *proof*.[15] They greatly valued the exegesis and scholarship of the Han dynasty, which they viewed as being both temporally and linguistically closer to the sagely past. As a result, evidential scholarship increasingly became associated with Han learning (*Hanxue* 漢學).[16] As a scholarly movement, Han learning aimed to recover and reconstruct the past by drawing from Han dynasty scholarship, ideas, and institutions while expunging the additions, alterations, and interpretations of later scholars.[17] Han learning was opposited to the more speculative and subjective approach to classical texts – in modern terms, *philosophical* – which, due to its its association with scholars of the Song, had come to be known as Song learning (*Songxue* 宋學).[18] The difference between these two approaches to the sagely past

[13] Japanese scholarship has produced exceptional research examining the birth and development of evidential scholarship, see Yamanoi Yū 山井湧 1980; Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三 1980; Hamaguchi Fujio 濱口富士雄 1994; and Kinoshita Tetsuya 木下鉄矢 1996. For sources in English, see Elman 1984; and Sela 2018.
[14] Hamaguchi Fujio 濱口富士雄 1994: 27-28.
[15] The term used at the time was *shishi qiushi* (實事求是). For more on the role of proof in evidential scholarship, see Kondō Mitsuo 近藤光男 1987: 3; and Hamaguchi Fujio 濱口富士雄 1994: 27-28.
[16] Han learning was a regional stream of evidential scholarship. In time, however, Han learning came to be used metonymically for the entirety of the new philological movement. For more on regional differences, see Elman 1984; and Rowe 2001: 114 and 126-133.
[17] Shimada Kenji 島田虔次 2002: 524-528.
[18] For more on the differences between Han and Song learning, see Elman 1983.

was one of the fundamental features of the Qing intellectual landscape.[19] And it is in this context that Zhu Yun's proposal to revive the *Seven Epitomes* should be understood.

Zhu Yun was one of the most fervent proponents of Han learning. He championed Han commentators and their philological methods and shunned the abstract speculative approach of later scholars, which had been adulterated by Buddhist and Daoist ideas.[20] Zhu Yun and his circle of students had profound respect for Han scholarship and viewed a return to Han thinking as a means to comprehend – and ultimately revive (*fugu* 復古) – the sagely past. Unfortunately, there is little further textual evidence to better understand Zhu Yun's suggestion to follow the *Seven Epitomes* as none of his writings discusses the issue.

However, Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801 CE), one of his closest students and one of the most illustrious and influential scholars of the late imperial period, did put forth a zealous defense for adopting it.[21] In 1774, one year after Zhu Yun's proposal and the same year the *Complete Writings* was formally launched, Zhang Xuecheng published *The Hezhou Gazetteer* (*Hezhou zhi* 和州志), where, among other issues, he discussed the relative merits and faults of different bibliographic arrangements. Most striking among his views was the criticism, if not outright denunciation, of the four-fold division. In Zhang's view, the four-fold order made the learning of the world increasingly tangled and lacked a guiding principle of order (唐人四部之書乃為後代著錄不祧之成法而天下學術益紛而

[19] Yokokubo Yoshihiro 横久保義洋 2010.
[20] For more on Zhu Yun and his circle, see Guy 1987: 49-56.
[21] For more on Zhang Xuecheng and his life, see Yamaguchi Hisazaku 山口久和 1998: 6 and 150-151; and Inaba Ichiro 稲葉一郎 2006: 648-652.

無綱紀矣).[22] The organisation of the *Seven Epitomes* was superior to the four-fold alternative because it used divisions to properly order texts while the latter only created a chaotic order – the four-fold division could not reproduce what the *Seven Epitomes* had achieved (是七略能以部次治書籍而四部不能不以書籍亂部次也且四部之籍不能復七略者).[23]

Wary of the four-fold order, Zhang Xuecheng proposed to follow the *Seven Epitomes*. He suggested that all 'historical' writings be placed within the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and that the *Collections* of the four-fold order be broken up and placed under the *Masters* section of the *Seven Epitomes*. Zhang's proposal amounted to a radical re-evaluation of the bibliographic and intellectual universes.[24]

Since Zhang Xuecheng had not only studied under Zhu Yun but also lived with him for a considerable amount of time, we cannot exclude the possibility that Zhu Yun shared at least partially Zhang Xuecheng's ideas for a return to the Han bibliographic order.[25] Zhu Yun was perhaps not as committed to the revival as Zhang Xuecheng but his suggestion to the court to follow the *Seven Epitomes*

[22] Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, "Hezhou zhi 和州志", *Zhangshi yishi* 章氏遺書 [hence *Hezhou zhi*], 557a.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Zhang Xuecheng eventually dropped his support for the *Seven Epitomes* and in his later writing argued that the four-fold order was appropriate for organising texts and scholarship. It is not clear, however, whether this change represented a genuine turn of mind or whether it was politically motivated as he joined the official bureaucracy and as – by that point – the *Complete Writings* had rendered the four-fold order the established, imperially sanctioned system. Nivison 1966: 69-70 mentions the change in Zhang Xuecheng's position but remains silent as to why. Chang Bide 昌彼得 and Pan Meiyue 潘美月 1986: 75-76 and Huang Yanyu 黃晏妤 2000: 111 attribute the change to external political factors. However, Naito Konan 內藤湖南 1970: 432-437 argues that Zhang Xuecheng realised that his ideas were practically unrealisable. Zhang Xuecheng was not alone in calling for the adoption of the *Seven Epitomes* over the four-fold order as fellow Han learning scholar Qian Daxin 錢大昕 (1728–1804 CE) was also a proponent of the move; for Qian Daxin's position see Elman 1984: 73. Elman 1984: 165 also states that ultimately both Chang and Qian "admitted that Liu Xin's categories [i.e. the *Seven Epitomes*] were no longer appropriate for modern cataloguing."
[25] For the ties between the two, see Guy 1987: 52-53; and Nivison 1966: 70.

organisation reveals a strong alignment of master and student. Perhaps, Zhu Yun could foresee that an outright proposal to use the *Seven Epitomes* would most likely be rejected and therefore chose to introduce the idea merely as a possibility, in case it just happened to catch on.

In the end, of course, the *Seven Epitomes* was not employed and the four-fold order was followed. It was the Grand Council's memorial to the emperor commenting on Zhu Yun's proposal that first took a position on the arrangement of the new project, stating that it should follow the four-fold order (依經史子集四部名目).[26] Then, the Qianlong emperor approved the decision, which committed the new bibliographic project once and for all to the four-fold organisation.

Theoretical Purposes in Historical Context

Moving Past Orthodoxy

Working under the assumption that the decision to adopt the four-fold order was more or less given, most scholarship on the *Complete Writings* has overlooked the evidence presented above and remained silent on the issue.[27] A reason why this aspect of the formation of the project has gone unnoticed possibly has to do with the way in which the *Complete Writings* has been traditionally regarded as the paradigmatic example – if not, the culmination – of the four-fold order.[28] The few

[26] For the entire memorial, see *Zuanxiu* 1.51-54; for the section on the division of the compilation, see *Zuanxiu* 1.54.
[27] For example, Kang 1938; Guy 1987; Huang Aiping 黃愛平 1989; Liu 1997; Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2004; Zhang Zhuanfeng 張傳峰 2007; Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2008; and Guo Bogong 郭伯恭 2010 [1937]. To the best of my knowledge, there is not a single study which has meaningfully addressed this question.
[28] See, for example, Du Zexun 杜澤遜 2001: 160.

pieces of scholarship addressing the issue have not seen it as one of central importance giving it only minor treatment. Such scholarship – as almost all of the literature on the *Complete Writings* – has understood the decision to adopt the four-fold order in strictly socio-political terms: the Qianlong emperor, wanting to consolidate his claims to legitimacy and further secure his position in history, decided to follow a traditional and long-established system.[29] Similarly, the traditional narrative holds that scholar-officials were keen to follow the four-fold order due to a desire to uphold 'orthodoxy', however loosely defined.[30] The implication of this interpretation is that the common thread uniting emperor and scholars was the desire to glorify and consolidate the current dynastic rule – and conversely to weaken the claims to rule and belittle the achievements of the conquered Ming. True as these evaluations of the *Complete Writings* and its makers are, they have to be problematised in light of Zhu Yun's proposal.

First, if socio-political motivations were the be-all-end-all of the *Complete Writings*, then there seems to be a very strong argument to be made for the Qianlong emperor and his scholars to revive and exceed a Han dynasty 'orthodox' institution.[31] To assert that the decision to adopt the four-fold order was obvious on grounds of 'orthodoxy' simply begs the question of why the makers of the *Complete Writings* viewed it – inherited from the Tang 唐 (617–908 CE) – as more 'orthodox' than the *Seven Epitomes* of the Han. An appeal to 'orthodoxy' without

[29] Yao Mingda 姚名達 2011 [1936]: 77 was the first to characterise the four-fold order as the 'orthodox' system with clear socio-political ramifications. Later scholarship has followed him almost without exception. For example, see Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 2004 [1963]; Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮 and Xie Zhuohua 謝灼華 2001; and Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2005. For a Marxist-nationalist take on the *Complete Writings* see Wang Zhongmin 王重民 1984: 226 who argues that the project was a tool for Manchu domination aimed to exterminate Han national thinking (燒盡殺絕有民族思想).

[30] On the complexity and elusiveness of 'orthodoxy' in the late imperial context, see Woodside 1990: 158-184; and Liu 1990: 53-100.

[31] Man-Cheong 2004: 11-12.

an explanation of the antecedent factors that inform this conception of 'orthodoxy' is highly problematic, for at the time of the compilation of the *Complete Writings* it was far from obvious that 'orthodoxy' would lie with Tang instead of Han practices.[32]

As a term, 'orthodoxy' is only too commonly used to explain virtually any decision made by imperial scholars, a sort of *passe-partout*. Understanding the choice not to follow Zhu Yun's suggestion – and, as we will see below, not to follow the more detailed divisions of Song and Ming scholars – simply as an act of upholding 'orthodoxy' raises the question of what exactly did 'orthodoxy' mean to Qianlong-era scholars. At the same time, it also fails to take note of the considerations that were essential to that decision but cannot be summarily explained as part of an assumed 'orthodoxy.' The factors that pulled the makers of the *Complete Writings* towards some past compilation projects and conversely pushed them away from others do not fit in the simple polarity of 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' practices. To assume this framework is simply to accept the socio-political dimensions of the established scholarly discourse around the *Complete Writings*, and to ignore the rich theoretical aspects of the bibliographic project.

Even though the *Complete Writings* was initiated by the Qianlong emperor, the project – with its hundreds of editors – came to express the collective voice of an entire generation of scholars and continues to influence scholarly work up to this day. If every decision was only politically or socially motivated, then it would

[32] For example, Liu 1997: 87 fn. 11 tries to justify the decision on the grounds of the Qianlong emperor's "esteem for Tang precedents." However, this does not seem to be enough of an explanation since the decision to follow the four-fold organisation originated with the Grand Council and the Qianlong emperor also held in high regard the precedents of the Han dynasty. For the emperor's multi-faceted relation to past dynasties, see Kahn 1971: 125-127. Also, Wang Guoqiang 王國強 2008: 33 highlights the influence Han dynasty bibliographic practices had on scholarship at the time, further complicating what 'orthodox' might have meant during the Qing dynasty.

be hard to explain the general excitement around the project at the time; what's more, its usefulness would have been exhausted as soon as socio-historical conditions had changed. The broad and sustained interest by scholars in the *Complete Writings* shows that the project was not only an affirmation of dynastic legitimacy but also a genuinely intellectual enterprise, not merely the creature of a particular historical moment.[33]

The *Complete Writings* was certainly an imperial project with clear socio-political motivation,[34] but, as I have suggested, politics alone cannot help us understand the complexity of this inherently complex project. What I wish to suggest then is that on top of this socio-political understanding of the *Complete Writings*, a new layer must be added, to examine the theoretical and intellectual motivations behind it. The fundamental goal of this chapter, then, is to understand the decision to adopt the four-fold order by focusing on the conceptual dimensions of that choice. The best way to tackle this question is by examining what Qing scholars – explicitly and implicitly – thought the *purposes* of a bibliographic organisation were, or should be. What did they think the *Complete Writings* should achieve? What should its end-goals be? How did their understanding of past compilation projects affect their undertaking? What new goals did they introduce into the project? And why did they think that the four-fold order – and not its alternatives – was a better system to achieve these goals?

[33] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1991: 7 and 216-219.

[34] Most often the *Complete Writings* is presented as an exercise in imperial censorship and control, a common feature of most imperial bibliographic projects. For this dimension of the *Complete Writings*, which came about only after in the compilation process, see Goodrich 1966 who has influenced almost all later interpretations of the *Complete Writings* in scholarship in western languages.

Indispensable Purposes

All bibliographic arrangements fulfil a certain set of purposes whether theoretical or practical, explicit or implicit, new or inherited. These purposes delineate how the bibliographic tool is conceptualised and ultimately define its structure.[35] Without a clear understanding of the driving motivations behind a bibliographic project we cannot be in a position to understand it – let alone evaluate it.

It is only with modern library science that bibliographers have begun to make explicit their goals and operating principles. In 2016, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) published the latest iteration of its *Statement of International Cataloguing Principles* in which, among other things, the fundamental purposes behind a bibliographic tool are listed. The IFLA gives primary significance to the "convenience of the user", describing it as "the most important" purpose, so important that "all efforts should be made to keep all data comprehensible and suitable for users". As a corollary, the Federation recognises the significance of using vocabulary "in accordance with that of the majority of users", and from there proceeds to add other purposes such as accuracy, economy, consistency and standardisation, openness, accessibility, and rationality among others.[36]

The makers of the *Complete Writings* did not provide a specific account of their fundamental purposes, enumerating them neatly in a list. Just like all bibliographic schemes the world over, before the rise of modern librarianship,

[35] On the function and significance of purposes in bibliographic arrangements, see Bliss 1933: vi; Davinson 1981: 8, 19; Harris 1995: 7; Rowley and Hartley 2008: 174; Dousa 2010: 68; Friedman and Thellefsen 2011: 646; Keshet 2011: 149; Fran 2012: 727; and Joudrey et. al. 2015: 6. For a more expansive view of the factors determining bibliographic organisations, see Davinson 1981: 155.
[36] Galeffi et. al. 2016: 5-6.

purposes were not given the overt treatment they receive today. However, this does not mean that the makers of the *Complete Writings* did not have *any* purposes in mind nor that they did not leave behind discussions which reflect or even explicitly discuss the fundamental goals of their bibliographic project.

As noted above, many of the motivations behind the compilation – primarily in the socio-political realm – have already been identified in the literature. The launching point of this chapter is the recognition that the makers of the *Complete Writings* also had *theoretical* purposes, similar to the ones listed in the IFLA *Statement*. Of course, I do not wish to suggest that the *Complete Writings* adheres to any of the IFLA purposes nor *a priori* exclude the possibility it may share some of the IFLA conclusions. The contexts out of which the *Complete Writings* and contemporary library science have developed are quite dissimilar with different priorities and concerns, operating in distinct intellectual universes. What I wish to suggest, however, is that the makers of the *Complete Writings* did have a set of theoretical goals that motivated their bibliographic project, and that some of these goals are explicitly stated while others are implicitly revealed. What I further wish to suggest, is that while the key actors behind the compilation – the Qianlong emperor, the scholar officials of the Grand Council, Zhu Yun and the actual editors and compilers of the *Complete Writings* – all had different understandings of the purposes behind the project, the compilation originated from a shared intellectual substratum which defined its main theoretical goals.[37] Despite differences, a common understanding – explicit or implicit – of the theoretical

[37] As mentioned in the Introduction, hundreds of compilers and editors along with thousands of copyists were employed in the project. Among the most important editors were Jiyun, Lu Xixiong, Qian Daxin and Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1732–1815 CE) and there were significant differences between them. Here, however, I view the *Complete Writings* as a collective project since I am interested in the shared understanding of its most fundamental theoretical purposes.

purposes that the compilation ought to achieve brought all these key actors together. The main idea behind this chapter then is that the notion of *purpose* – in theoretical terms – is a meaningful and warranted tool in understanding the organisation of the *Complete Writings*.[38]

The appeal of analysing a project like the *Complete Writings* lies in the fact that, like all bibliographic projects, it is situated at the intersection of multiple different *kinds* of considerations. Socio-political motivations are intermixed with theoretical concerns but both are ultimately bounded by a deeply practical purpose: the placement of books on shelves. This seemingly mundane task of placing concrete objects in a determined space comes to inflect the ways in which bibliographic purposes are conceived, since physical books have to be placed in the order imposed by the structure of shelves and the space of a library. The restriction of placing a text in one and only one physical location extends to the placement of texts in conceptual space as well.[39] The *Complete Writings* is no exception and it too is inflected by the practical dimensions imposed by physical space.

[38] Most scholars taking a more conceptual approach to bibliographic practices in China have ignored the question of the compilation's theoretical purpose, except as part of arguments about 'orthodoxy' and historical continuity. There is an acknowledgement that organising systems in China – like anywhere in the world – reflect a certain worldview and belief about knowledge, for example, see Drège 1990: 90. The only study which uses the approach suggested here is Lee H. 2016: 109-111 and her previous work Lee and Lan 2009: 205-23; and Lee H. 2016. I am indebted to her work for the idea of referring to the IFLA *Statement*. Finally, I am not interested in exploring the purely scholarly purposes behind the project such as which texts where forgeries, politically subversive and so forth. For a presentation of this kind of purposes, see Wang Jinqing 王晉卿 1994.

[39] Rafferty 2001: 181. However, for a different take on the issue, see Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995: 8-9 who argues that because there were no public, lending libraries in China the locative and retrieval functions of library space were not so important and therefore bibliographic arrangements were primarily concerned with the organisation of intellectual space. On the formation of lending libraries in China and Japan, see Oguro Kōji 小黒浩司 2016.

If Only They Knew

Our understanding of the *Complete Writings* is only made more complex by its historical situation. Conceived in the late eighteenth century, the project stood at the very end of what appeared to Qing scholars as a continuous and unceasing quest to understand a long-lost antiquity.[40] Part of this quest consisted in providing an organisation to the massive production of scholarly work that had extended for well over two millennia. The project was responding to all major past bibliographic arrangements, while also addressing concerns that were explicitly rooted in the moment of compilation. The praise or critique of bibliographic arrangements from the Han dynasty onwards influenced the understanding of the purposes of knowledge organisation.

The compilation of a bibliographic project like the *Complete Writings* can be seen as a complex endeavour defined by multiple goals. It is the expression of social and political considerations coupled with theoretical and practical concerns. A near contemporary voice that echoes this concern with the overpowering intricacy of bibliographic arrangements, Thomas Hyde (1636–1703 CE), librarian of the Bodleian in the late seventeenth century, lamented in the preface of his new alphabetically arranged catalogue:

> 'What can be more easy, (those lacking understanding say) having looked at the title-pages than to write down titles?' But these inexperienced people, who think making an index of their own few private books a pleasant task of a week or two, have no conception of the difficulties that rise or realise how carefully each book must be examined when the library numbers myriads of volumes. In the colossal labour, which exhausts both body and soul, of making into an alphabetical catalogue a multitude of books gathered from every corner

[40] The popularity of compilation projects during this time is indicative of the need to understand the entirety of the tradition. See Naquin and Rawski 1987: 18, 20, and 66. For the significance of the historical weight of scholarship and learning, but expressed in a different metaphor – that of the mirror – see Crossley 2002: 20.

> of the earth there are many intricate and difficult problems that torture the mind.[41]

Hyde could easily have been describing the *Complete Writings,* for this is a project as "colossal" as can possibly be, with "many intricate and difficult problems" arising from the "multitude of books" it collects. We can attempt to comprehend an enterprise as complex as the *Complete Writings* by examining the purposes behind it. Close inspection of the historical documents around the compilation as well as within the *Complete Writings* itself – most notably in the preface and introductory notes of its bibliographic sub-section (*mulu lei xu* 目錄類序) and its *Guidelines for Readers* – cast a light upon the theoretical purposes – explicit and implicit, inherited and novel – underpinning the compilation, placing us in a position to better understand the decision to adopt the four-fold order.

A Rich Inheritance

Neither Mummy nor Zombie

The Qianlong emperor was grandiose in both actions and statements. Sometimes, this meant that truth and accuracy were sacrificed to pomp and grandeur.[42] Commenting on the decision to adopt the four-fold order, the Qianlong emperor stated that the division has been in fact the unchanging way since antiquity (實古今不易之法).[43] The statement is hardly true: it stands as a deliberate

[41] Quoted from Svenonius 2000: 9-10; I have revereted the spelling to British Enlgish.
[42] For example, in a poem extolling the ancestral Manchu lands, the Qianlong emperor praised the 'ancient' Manchu script in its superiority in form and elegance to the Chinese, suggesting that the Manchu script was far older than the Chinese, a "far-fetched claim, because Manchu did not have its own script circa 1600", Elliot 2009: 59.
[43] *Zuanxiu* 1.57.

fabrication designed to augment the emperor's claims to political legitimacy and historical greatness. Both the Qianlong emperor and the imperial scholar-officials knew all too well that the four-fold order was not an unchanging tradition. As we shall see below, their knowledge of the complexity and plurality of the history of bibliography is revealed not only in the edicts and documents about the compilation of the *Complete Writings* – with discussions on the merits and flaws of different organisation systems – but also in the *Bibliographies* section (*mulu lei* 目錄類) of the *Complete Writings,* where past compilations using different organisations were collected and extensively commented on.

Starting from the Song onwards, most private bibliographic collections did not use the four-fold organisation.[44] Instead, they used systems which had far more numerous main divisions and sections. In the mid-twelfth century, Zheng Qiao, the first scholar to provide a systematic and thorough discussion of bibliographic principles and practices, devised an organisational structure with twelve main division, one-hundred sections, and four hundred and twenty-two groups (總十二類百家四百二十二種).[45] The organsation he put forth in the 'Bibliographic Treatise' (*jiaochou lüe* 校讎略) of his celebrated work *Record of Continuities* (*Tongzhi* 通志) was thus exponentially far more detailed than the four-fold order had ever been by his time. Not only did he employ far more divisions but also pioneered a three-tiered structure (*lei* 類, *jia* 家, *zhong* 種), giving unparalleled precision to his division.[46]

[44] See Xu Shiying 許世瑛 1982: 206; Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 232; and Inami Ryochi 井波陸一 2003: 46-47, who shows the diversity in private bibliographies but argues that they do not really leave the purview of the four-fold organisation.
[45] SKQS: *Bieshi lei*: *Tongzh*i (71). For more on Zheng Qiao, see Lee 2004. For more on his division, see Yuan Xueliang 袁學良 2002a: 100-103; and Zheng Yi 鄭毅 2017.
[46] SKQS: *Bieshi lei*: *Tongzh*i (71).

Zheng Qiao's organisation not only afforded a higher degree of precision but also provided a different understanding of the intellectual landscape.[47] By elevating some sub-groupings of the four-fold order into independent sections with their own further sub- and sub-sub-divisions, Zheng Qiao effectively recognised both the richness and breadth of scholarly practice. For example, his division placed philological works (*xiaoxue*) outside of the classics section where they were usually found in the four-fold division – and where the editors of the *Complete Writings* would end up re-placing them.[48] More interestingly, however, Zheng Qiao subdivided the *xiaoxue* section into eight sub-sections, including phonology, paleography, study of characters, and calligraphy (*yinyun* 音韻, *guwen* 古文, *wenzi* 文字 , *fashu* 法書 respectively), which reveals the depth and specialisation of scholarship at his time.[49] Furthermore, he created an independent section for astronomical and calendrical studies (*tianwen* 天文), taking it outside of its position in the four-fold order as a sub-group in the *Masters*. He then divided it into three sub-sections – *Astronomy* (*tianwen*), *Calendrical Studies* (*lishu* 歷數), and *Counting Methods* (*suanshu* 算術) – which were each in turn sub-divided into further sub-sections. The same kind of conceptual independence and scholarly granularity was afforded to studies on the five phases (*wuxing* 五行), the arts (*yishu* 藝術), literature (*wen* 文), and medicine (*yifang* 醫方), each standing as a separate division with multiple sub-sections.[50] Thus, even if headings for some of the sections and sub-sections of Zheng Qiao's organisation do have an analog in contemporaneous four-fold orders – he was not operating in a vacuum, after all –

[47] On the significance of the relative positioning of sections, see Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 231.
[48] SKQS: *Bieshi lei*: *Tongzh*i (71).
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

the implication of adding new sections to the four main divisions along with providing a far more detailed and refined order is significant, revealing a different way of understanding the knowledge universe. Zheng Qiao was not alone in moving beyond the four-fold order, and many other contemporaneous and later scholars followed his lead in devising systems that would better fulfil their needs.[51]

The impact of these new bibliographic schemes was not limited to the realm of private book collections. The Ming extended them to imperial projects as well. In 1441, the *Catalogue of the Literary Abyss Library* (*Wenyuange shumu* 文淵閣書目) was compiled using an organisational structure significantly different to the four-fold order.[52] Instead it had twenty main groupings and fourty sub-groupings. The twenty main groups were given the first twenty characters of the *Thousand Character Primer* (*Qianziwen* 千字文) as a label.[53] Furthermore, breaking with all bibliographic tradition, the organisation did not place the classics at the top, but rather the collected writings of Ming emperors. The early seventeenth century *Catalogue of the Department of Imperial Audiences* (*Xingrensi shumu* 行人司書目) also placed first imperial writings.[54] And in 1605, the *Catalogue of the Imperial*

[51] Among them the renowned *Library of Heavenly Unity* (*Tianyi ge* 天一閣) – which would come to play an essential role in the compilation of the *Complete Writings*; see Luo Zhaoping 駱兆平 2012: 40. Another key figure who was heavily influenced by Zheng Qiao and will be examined in more detail was Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540–1620 CE). Last, Sun Xinyan's 孫兴衍 (1753–1818 CE) *Catalogue of the Ancestral Hall Library* (*Citang Shumu* 祠堂書目) also used a division very similar to Zheng Qiao's, showing that even up to the moment of compilation of the *Complete Writings*, private bibliographers were choosing more expansive systems outside the four-fold order. For more on private bibliographies during the Ming and Qing periods, see Zhang Sheng 張升 2015; and Yan Zuozhi 嚴佐之 2008.

[52] SKQS: *Mululei*: *Wenyuange shumu* 文淵閣書目. The *Wenyuan Ge* library of the *Complete Writings*, where one of the seven copies was stored, was inherited from the Ming and the name was preserved.

[53] This labeling system was adopted during the Qianlong era to catalogue painting of the imperial collection, see Cheng 2010: 147.

[54] Xu Tu 徐圖, *Xingrensi shumu* 行人司書目, *Mingdai shumu tiba congkan* 明代書目提拔叢刊 1993: 617-638

Collection (*Neige zangshu mulu* 內閣藏書目錄) was compiled and organised in 18 main groups along the lines of the 1441 *Catalogue of the Literary Abyss Library*.[55]

These developments in bibliographic practice show that that the four-fold order was far from being "the unchanging way" that the Qianlong emperor claimed, and it is with this context in mind that several scholars have argued that the decision to follow the four-fold order for the *Complete Writings* constituted a revival in itself.[56] This position is, no doubt, a considerable improvement over the tacit agreement that the four-fold division has been "unchanging" – a position espoused by a large part of modern scholarship in Chinese and beyond.[57]

However, taking a broader look at the intellectual landscape of both private and official bibliographies from the Song until the Qing reveals a more complex picture which makes either of these two positions – the 'unchanging' and 'revival' views – tenuous.[58] By the Qianlong era, the four-fold order was not the only way of organising texts, nor had it been abandoned and relegated to history like the *Seven Epitomes*. Many developments had indeed occurred in bibliographic practice during the six-hundred years before the compilation of the *Complete Writings,* but to argue that the use of the four-fold order was a revival – in the same way that use of the *Seven Epitomes* would have been – overlooks the complex and variegated bibliographic environment of the time. From the Song up until the early Qing, the

[55] Sun Nengzhuan 孫能傳, *Neige zangshu mulu* 內閣藏書目, *Mingdai shumu tiba congkan* 明代書目提拔叢刊 1993: 463-604. For more on the how official bibliographies were influenced by private projects, see Wang Guoqiang 王國強 2008: 198.

[56] For example, Xu Shiying 許世瑛 1982: 206; Guy 1987: 77; and Liu 1997: 124.

[57] Wang Guoqiang 王國強 2008: 5 is a notable exception within scholarship in Chinese. Wang Liguan 王立貫 1991: 154; He Fasu 何發甦 2009; and Dudbridge 2017: 153 are typical of the 'unchanging' view.

[58] Most scholarship in Chinese simply asserts that the four-fold order has indeed been the unchanging way for organising texts simply ignoring the diversity and richness of bibliographic practice. For example, Wang Liguan 王立貫 1999. The assertion is, not surprisingly, reproduced in western sources. For an example placing the four-fold order in a global perspective, see Lerner 2009: 41-42. For a more balanced position, see Elman 2007; and Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 232.

four-fold division was still extensively (though not exclusively) used in both official and private bibliographic projects. For example, the mid-eleventh century *Comprehensive Catalogue of Sublime Literature* (*Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目) and the bibliographic treatises (*yiwenzhi*) of the *Records of the Song* (*Songshi* 宋史) and the *Records of the Ming* (*Mingshi* 明史) of the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively were all organised using the four-fold order.[59] Furthermore, private collections such as the twelfth century *Records on Reading of the Prefectural Hall* (*Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志), the *Catalogue of the Hall of Retirement* (*Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目) and the *Annotated Bibliography of the Hall of Rectitude* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題) also employed the four-fold division.[60] In short, by the time of the compilation of the *Complete Writings*, the four-fold order was neither the only, unchanging, mummified way of organising libraries nor a lifeless, distant memory that had to be revived.[61]

Living Together

The introduction of a new bibliographic system did not displace previous organisations. New systems grew out from, and relied on, past ones and old systems incorporated the innovations of new organisations. Novel and inherited systems did not exist in oppositional terms or in isolation in parallel universes but rather influenced and shaped one another. The rise of a novel system obviously depended

[59] SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目; SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Songshi* 宋史(202); and SKQS: Zhengshi lei: *Mingshi* 明史(96). For more on the *Comprehensive Catalogue of Sublime Literature*, see Qiao Yanguan 喬衍琯 1994.
[60] SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志; SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題; and SKQS: *Mulu lei*: *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題.
[61] For a detailed overview of bibliographic practices in China through time, see Naito Konan 內藤湖南 1970: 369-460.

on methods, ideas, and practices of the past but crucially also came to breathe new life to old ones, giving rise to a rich and variegated bibliographic landscape.[62] We must appreciate the co-evolution of intellectual developments in order to understand key features of the changing nature of bibliographic practices and their underlying purposes.

Completed in the late sixteenth century, Jiao Hong's 焦竑 (1541–1620 CE) 'Bibliographic Treatise' (*jingjizhi* 經籍志) in *Records of the State* (*Guoshi* 國史) illustrates the tendency towards cross-pollination and experimentation.[63] While Jiao Hong employed the main divisions of the four-fold order – therefore preserving their intellectual priority – he adopted many of the sub-divisions of Zheng Qiao's organisation, therefore providing arguably the most comprehensive and detailed bibliographic organisation using the four-fold order. Jiao Hong's division, however, also incorporated the bibliographic trademark of his time. Just as *The Catalogue of the Literary Abyss Library* had done about a century and a half before, he placed the writings of Ming emperors at the beginning of the compilation.[64] Jiao Hong's order was the synthesis of three different systems representing not only the variation and richness of bibliographic practice but also a willingness to experiment and unite different bibliographic orders.

Despite his innovative spirit, Jiao Hong was not the first to embrace a spirit of amalgamation and experimentation. The Six Dynasties period (220–589 CE) – extending between the fall of the Han dynasty and the establishment of the Sui and Tang reigns – saw on the one hand the emergence and consolidation of the four-

[62] Yuan Xueliang 袁學良 2002a: 64.
[63] Jiao Hong 焦竑, "Jingjizhi" 經籍志, *Guoshi* 國史 [hence *Guoshi*], *Mingdai shumu tiba congkan* 明代書目提拔叢刊, 217-440, 1993 [original publication date unknown].
[64] Jiao Hong 焦竑, *Guoshi*, 217.

fold order and on the other hand the creation of new catalogues using the inherited *Seven Epitomes* structure.

The *Seven Epitomes* was the standard for both imperially sponsored and private bibliographic collections up until the emergence of the four-fold organisation in the mid-third century.[65] The first bibliographic collection recorded as using the four-fold division is the *Palace Library Catalogue* (*Zhongjing bu* 中經簿), compiled by Zheng Mo 鄭默 (c. 213–280 CE) in the second half of the third century. [66] This catalogue functioned as the foundation on which other contemporaneous or slightly later officially sponsored collections were organised: Xun Xu's 荀勗 (c. 210–289 CE) *Revised Palace Library Catalogue* (*Zhongjing xinbu* 中經新簿) and Li Chong's 李充 (c. 349–? CE) *Imperial Catalogue in Four Sections* (*Yuandi sibu shumu* 元帝四部書目) followed Zheng Mo's organisation quite closely.[67]

From a bibliographic perspective, the key innovation of these new arrangements is the reduction of the number of main sections to four. The *Military Writings*, *Numbers and Divination*, and *Techniques and Formulae* sections of the *Seven Epitomes* were placed under the *Masters* section, and an altogether new group was created for historical texts and records. The addition of a new section devoted to texts dealing with historical facts has been understood as a reflection of the changing intellectual environment, with the emergence and proliferation of

[65] Wu 1944: 55.
[66] SKQS: *Suishu* (33).
[67] SKQS: *Suishu* (33). Neither text has survived. The *Suishu* is the earliest source which documents this development, generally accepted in bibliographic studies, despite some controversies. See Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995: 24 and 33; and Jiao Shu'an 焦樹安 2011: 43-44. For the significance of the intellectual richness of this period, see Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄 1983: 156. For one of the earliest accounts in English of the transition to the four-fold order, see Wu 1944. Even though this is the consensus among scholars there is some controversy over the origins of the four-fold order, for an overview, see Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 94.

'historical' writing as a new and significant form of scholarship.[68] The creation of a new section reflects the rise of a new way of conceptualising and conducting scholarly work.[69] It also shows how the establishment of new bibliographic sections is sensitive to pragmatic dimensions, namely the increase in the quantity of texts dealing with the preservation of historical memory.[70] These early four-fold orders also included sections for Buddhist and Daoist texts, further reflecting the sensitivity of bibliographic practice to its broader intellectual environment.[71] The four-fold order continued to develop and was eventually enshrined as imperial practice with the compilation of the 'Bibliographic Treatise' (*jingjizhi*) of the *Writings of the Sui* (*Suishu* 隨書) by Tang court scholars in the seventh century.

But the five hundred years prior to the Tang also saw the continuation of bibliographic practices along the lines of the *Seven Epitomes*. Wang Jian's 王儉 (452–489 CE) late fifth-century *Seven Reviews* (*Qizhi* 七志) and Ruan Xiaoxu's 阮孝緒 (479–536 CE) early sixth-century *Seven Records* (*Qilu* 七錄) are testament to the lasting influence of the Han dynastic bibliographic arrangement.[72] But just like the emerging four-fold order built-on, emendated, added, or removed sections

[68] Inami Ryochi 井波陸一 2003: 37 argues that the formation of an independent historical section equals the formation of independent field of historical scholarship. This view is also expressed in Mamoru Tonami 礪波護 et. al. 2006: 5-6. For more on the rise of history as an academic practice, see Yu Qingrong 余慶蓉 and Wang Jinqing 王晉卿 1998: 49-50. For a more 'dynamic' approach to the interactions between bibliographic structures and scholarly practice, see Lee 2000: 242.

[69] Inami Ryochi 井波陸一 1989: 324.

[70] The implication then is that the old division inherited from the Han was no longer tenable. See Li Ruiliang 李瑞良 1994: 80.

[71] A heavily under-explored issue is the multi-directional interactions of Buddhist and Daoist bibliographies and Confucian schemes. To the best of my knowledge, there is no single study dedicated to this question. Unfortunately, the current study does not escape this limitation. For more on Buddhist bibliographic practice, see Storch 2014; and Zacchetti 2016. I will not explore the impact of European ideas about classification possibly introduced by the Jesuits may have had, because it appears that their effect was very limited and did not affect the four-fold organisation in any substantive ways. For a discussion on this issue, see Bray 1991; Ho 1991; and Elman 2005: 24.

[72] Neither of these survives but we know their structure from the *Suishu*, see SKQS: *Suishu* (32). Also, see Dudbridge 2017: 149.

from the inherited *Seven Epitomes*, so too did the *Seven Reviews* and *Seven Records* draw from the innovations of the four-fold organisation. Most prominently, both the *Seven Reviews* and the *Seven Records* incorporated a section explicitly devoted to 'historical' texts (*jizhuan lu* 紀傳錄) and one to 'literary' texts (*wenji lu* 文集錄) while submerging military texts under the *Masters* section. Continuing, however, with the spirit of the *Seven Epitomes*, the two bibliographies still retained a section for crafts and skills (*jishu lu* 技術錄).[73] The most important aspect of these late *Seven Epitomes*-inspired orders, however, were the sub-sections under the main groups which later were almost fully adopted – and re-arranged – in the 'Bibliographic Treatise' of the *Writings of the Sui*.[74] Thus, these developments in bibliographic practice reveal the extent to which different systems influenced each other, highlighting the intellectual openness and spirit of experimentation that defined their makers.[75] The intellectual variegation and cross-pollination of the Song and Ming was not unique but rather typical of the most innovative and creative phases of bibliographic practice.[76]

Developments in bibliography – in the six hundred years before the compilation of the *Complete Writings* and in the five centuries that saw the formation and consolidation of the four-fold order – did not happen in a vacuum. They were affected by changing socio-political, economic, technological and intellectual trends. To account for all of these profound transformations is of course a task commanding multiple volumes. Instead, I simply want to offer a brief sketch of the technological and intellectual changes that defined these two eras in order to

[73] SKQS: *Suishu* (32).
[74] Yao Mingda 姚名達 2011 [1936]: 80-81.
[75] Wang Jinmin 王錦民 2012: 110.
[76] See Wang Xincai 王新才 2008: 41; and Wang Jinmin 王錦民 2012: 110.

understand the broader context out of which the transformations in bibliographic practice occurred. First, it was during the Six Dynasties that paper started becoming – slowly yet steadily – the preferred medium for recording knowledge, thus moving away from bulkier and heavier options such as bamboo strips.[77] Conversely, from the Song dynasty onwards, printing – primarily woodblock but also movable type – kept expanding, leading to the eventual dominance in the mid-Ming of imprints and the formation of an independent marketplace for books and reading materials at large.[78] Second, on the intellectual domain, the Six Dynasties witnessed the overpowering introduction of Buddhism and the rise of 'religious' Daoism, challenging the received Confucian tradition as the primary source of wisdom.[79] The Song was defined by an opposing effort to re-affirm the priority of the Confucian classics, a quest which often led to appropriating – consciously or not – arguments and practices from the rival traditions. More importantly, however, both periods witnessed the rise of new forms of scholarly investigation and artistic expression.[80] It was during the Six Dynasties that an explicit historiographic consciousness arose – with the concomitant rise of recording individual biographies, genealogies, institutional practices, and geographic and topographic features.[81] Similarly, it is only from the Song onwards that bibliographies start

[77] For the impact of paper on scholarly production and intellectual thought in China, see Nakamura Miki 中村未来 2016: 77-78.

[78] The impact of print technology and market distribution has been overemphasised in the field of sinology probably because of the assumption that movable-type printing must have 'revolutionised' scholarship in China in similar ways to the 'revolution' it brought about in Europe. For a cautionary position, see Brokaw 2005: 56 and 78; and McDermott 2006: 115-116. For more on book markets during the Ming, see Chia 2005: 107-151. For an explanation why movable-type print was not widely adopted, see Inoue Susumu 井上進 2011: 101-106. For more on the history of the book in China, see Fu Xuanzong 傳璇琮 and Xie Zhuohua 謝灼華 2001.

[79] Yu Qingrong 余慶蓉 Wang Jinqing 王晉卿 1998: 49; Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三 et al. 2007: 187-190; and Minamizawa Yoshihiko 南澤良彦 2010. Of course, many other intellectual developments happened as well with the creation and popularisation of new kinds of writing, see Yu P. 1983: 31-35.

[80] Matsumi Hiromitsu 松見弘道 1989: 170.

[81] Yoshikawa 1955.

collecting and listing encyclopaedias (*leishu*) and past bibliographic compilations as they had emerged and consolidated into a distinct form of scholarly practice (*muluxue*).[82] With the expansion and proliferation of knowledge, both periods also witnessed a higher degree of scholarly specialisation and the sustained creation of new genres of literary writing.[83]

Given the considerable changes that had occurred during the centuries before the compilation of the *Complete Writings*, it is remarkable that the four-fold system survived up until the late-eighteenth century.[84] Technological and intellectual changes had brought a permanent change in the history of bibliography leading to the eventual abandonment of the *Seven Epitomes*. Quite possibly the centuries of innovation, experimentation, and cross-pollination before the compilation of the *Complete Writings* could have led to a similar fate for the four-fold division. The bibliographic landscape during the moment of compilation of the *Complete Writings* would have appeared to Qing scholars as replete with several possibilities. As evinced by Zhu Yun's proposal and the Qianlong emperor's edict, the weight of the four-fold order did not fall with tremendous force on their shoulders. It is in this context then that the decision ultimately to use the four-fold division over other, more detailed systems must be interrogated: Why did the makers of the *Complete Writings* believe that the four-fold order could better suit their purposes and in what ways was it considered more appealing than the alternatives at hand?

[82] For more on the origins and historical significance of the term *muluxue*, see Matsumi Hiromitsu 松見弘道 1953: 3-4.
[83] Liu 2015.
[84] Wang Guoqiang 王國強 2008: 5 is the only other study I am aware of that expresses the same kind of surprise and does not assume the immutability of the four-fold order.

Whom For? A Public Project

The challenge of understanding the purposes behind a project like the *Complete Writings* lies with its inherent complexity. This was a project that was conceived and executed by several different actors, each with distinct concerns and goals. The Qianlong emperor, the imperial court officials, and the scholarly community at large are three of the main participants behind the project raising the fundamental question: for whom was the *Complete Writings* made?[85] Nominally, it is easy to answer the question since the intended user was the Qianlong emperor himself and the emperors who would follow him. By extension the *Complete Writings* – like all imperial catalogues of the past – could also be used by the most senior court scholar-officials who, given their high-ranking positions, would have access to the imperial copies of the compilation.[86]

The answer is complicated, however, by several different factors. First, as we have already seen, the compilation – from its very conception – involved scholars, like Zhu Yun and his circle, who were outside the court. This trend towards inclusion of the broader scholarly community was heightened as the collection of texts began, employing renowned scholars from across the empire and summoning all book-owning families to contribute to the project by submitting their most valuable texts.[87] The movement towards a public *Complete Writings* found its fullest expression in the eventual decision to produce not only four imperial copies for the court but also three copies to be given to the southern

[85] Rowley and Hartley 1999: 171.
[86] Liu 1997: 65.
[87] See Zhang Weiping 張維屏 1998: 58. This was not the first time in dynastic history that an emperor called on book owning families to submit valuable texts, for examples in the Song dynasty, see Kurz 2007: 42.

provinces as a reward for their participation in the project.[88] Despite the Qianlong emperor's significant role in the formation of the *Complete Writings*, the compilation was never envisioned or structured around the needs of one man and one man only. Instead, the project was seen in its broader socio-historical and intellectual context.

Of course, the very basic purpose of the project, to collect, collate, compile, and copy all of the amassed texts into one master-anthology (*congshu*), paved the way for the idea to disseminate the *Complete Writings* and make it available to scholars across the empire. The basic purpose of reproducing texts in their entirety and publishing them in one massive volume sowed the seeds for the compilation's public orientation. By undertaking a task of such monumental proportions, the makers of the *Complete Writings* must have felt – indeed *known* – that their work would be used and commented on by later scholars just as they drew from, criticised, and praised past bibliographic collections. This was not some minor, peripheral and easily forgettable project. Quite the opposite: the *Complete Writings* was envisioned in titanic proportions, with a clear sense of its historical significance. The project was not only a work in conversation with the scholars of the time but also with the scholars of the past and the future. The sustained use of the *Complete Writings* as a reference tool to this day highlights its intellectual achievements as a piece of publicly accessible and useful scholarship. The inter-generational – indeed inter-epochal – aspect of the *Complete Writings* underscores its public orientation and the fact that the intended users of this artefact would be scholars across time and space.[89]

[88] Liu 1997: 65.
[89] See, for example, Mote 1987b: 48; Egan 2001: 105; Smith 2013: 134; and Rudenko 2017: 27.

The Case for a Confucian Canon

The movement towards a broadening of the *Complete Writings* was surely influenced by literati who – already from the Ming – were calling for the formation of a *Confucian Canon* (*ruzang* 儒藏) along Buddhist and Daoist lines.[90] The idea was first popularised by the renowned scholar Cao Xuequan 曹學佺 (1574–1647 CE) in the early seventeenth century.[91] Cao argued that the reason Buddhist and Daoist texts had managed to survive through time was not due to an alleged higher truth encoded in them, but rather to the continuous collection and reproduction effected through their respective canons.[92] He held that a similar structure was needed for Confucian texts that would form a triptych (*dingli* 鼎立) with the Buddhist and Daoist counterparts.[93] Cao's emphasis on the significance of the socio-institutional and material conditions for the preservation of a body of writing as expressed in the form of a reproducible and examinable canon reveals the increased currency – indeed sense of urgency – behind the idea of a public Confucian canon. During the Qianlong era, Zhou Yongnian 周永年 (1730–1791 CE) through the publication of *A Case for a Confucian Canon* (*Ruzang shuo* 儒藏說) explained that the fundamental purposes of such a project would not only be the preservation and transmission of texts but more importantly the enrichment of scholarly pursuits and the improvement of governance of the world.[94] While the term *ruzang* was not explicitly adopted to qualify the *Complete Writings*, the

[90] See Hu Zhusheng 胡楚生1995: 55; and Zhou Jiming 周積明1998: 64-65.
[91] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Mingshi* 明史 (288).
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Zhou Yongnian 周永年, *Ruzuang shuo* 儒藏說, *Songlin congshu* 松鄰叢書, 1917 [original date of publication unknown]. For more, see Wang Guoqiang 王國強 2008: 209. For a presentation on the significance of 'useful knowledge' in encyclopaedic projects in the West, see Fowler 1996: 10.

project nevertheless became the *de facto* Confucian canon.[95] On the one hand, the compilation managed to revive, preserve, reproduce, and transmit texts and on the other, through the establishment of the three southern copies, benefit scholarship at large.[96] Thus, the *Complete Writings* satisfied the need of codifying Confucian literature showing the extent to which the idea of a publicly accessible collection had re-emerged as a key concern during Qianlong-era scholarship.[97]

This prepares us to see the adoption of the four-fold order as an expression of the comprehensive, public, and ultimately ecumenical character of the *Complete Writings*. The four-fold order was no doubt the most enduring and therefore most familiar of all organisation schemes: its language, structure, and internal logic were all part and parcel of a classical education. While other organisations developed during the Song and Ming might have been more successful in fulfilling the needs of specific book collections, the groupings in which texts were divided and named, and the ways in which sections within the organisations were – explicitly or implicitly – intended to relate to one another, remained tied to particular book collections and specific individual scholars. Likewise, reviving the *Seven Epitomes* would have presented a similar set of issues. The problem with employing the long-lost organisation of the Han was not only the conceptual dissonance that such an organisation would cause in the late eighteenth century but also that such an organisation paled in comparison to the four-fold organisation in its relevance and

[95] McDermott 2006: 118-119.
[96] Scholars were allowed to access and even copy – not an obvious privilege at the time – from the *Complete Writings*, see McDermott 2006: 168.
[97] With the use of the word 'public', I do not mean to suggest in any way that there was any formation of a 'public' sphere analogous to the western European experience. I use the term, however, as the most apt translation for the recurring term *gong* 公. Yamaguchi Hisakazu 山口久和 1998: 208 more broadly sees scholarship of the Qing moving towards a less 'subjective' approach (清朝の学風はより一層没主観的態度を濃厚にするようになって行った). For a thorough and excellent problematisation of the idea of a 'public sphere' and 'civil society' in China, see Metzger 1998. Also see Elman 2010: 388-89.

public accessibility. Reviving the *Seven Epitomes* or using one of the more innovative systems of the Song and Ming periods, would have been counterproductive if the ultimate goal was to create a bibliographic project that could be used by the whole scholarly community. The four-fold order was not only the imperially preferred mode of organising book compilations for most of the dynasties of the past but also the broadest and most encompassing common denominator, the system that could more easily and directly be understood and used by the largest number of scholars.

Ecumenical Spirit

The decision to forego the *Seven Epitomes* can be seen as an effort to retain a syncretic, conciliatory, and ecumenical spirit within the context of Qianlong-era scholarship. Most modern scholars have argued that the *Complete Writings* was the brainchild of evidential Han learning scholars.[98] In many ways, this is the case as can easily be seen from the editorial decisions and critical summaries of several sections of the *Complete Writings,* which strongly reveal the Han learning attitudes of many of its compilers.[99] However, there is a new recognition that the polemic between Han and Song learning may have been overemphasised, overlooking aspects of the compilation which point towards a more conciliatory and comprehensive direction.[100] By the time the *Complete Writings* was commissioned,

[98] This understanding of the *Complete Writings* is traceable to the renowned late Qing scholar Liang Qichao 1959. Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2009: 44 also identifies him as the first to make this point. For an example of this position in contemporary scholarship, see Chow 1994a: 179 and 186; and Chan 1998: 31. Elman 1983: 213 and 219 also argues that by the late eighteenth century, scholars were trying to bring Han and Song learning under "a single Confucian vision."

[99] Indeed, the influence of Han learning scholars was so strong that one of the main editors and compilers, Yao Nai, a Song learning scholar, felt compelled to leave after several of his summaries had been rejected. See Chow 1994a: 195. While the incident is telling of the power of Han learning scholars over the project, it also reflects the fact that scholars from both 'schools' took part in it.

[100] Zhang Zhuanfeng 張傳峰 2007: 326 and 338-339. On the idea of an emergent *Complete Writings* 'faction' or 'school' (四庫全書派), see Liu Fengqiang 劉風強 2015: 7, 155-158, 161-170 and 201.

Han learning was already a fully-fledged and mature mode of scholarship with recognition of its strengths and weaknesses from scholars of both schools.[101] The concluding remarks of the general preface of the *Classics* (*zongxu jingbu* 總序經部) offers a strong case in point for the conciliatory attitude towards Han and Song learning.

The preface states that each school has its own strengths and weaknesses relative to the other (漢學宋學兩家互為勝負): Han learning has a foundational explanatory power (漢學具有根柢) while Song learning possess profundity and subtleness (宋學具有精微).[102] The preface continues to point out that some scholars belittle Han learning as trivial and superficial (講學者以淺陋輕之) while others demean Song learning as vacuous and inadequate (讀書者以空疏薄之).[103] The preface offers a resolution to the opposition holding that the way forward is to dissipate the differences between the two and merge them together by taking from each its strengths (消融門戶之見而各取所長).[104] It is only by doing so that the personal intentions of individual minds can be expunged and the *public* principle revealed; and it is only when the *public* principle is revealed that the meaning of the classics becomes clear (則私心祛而公理出公里出而經義明矣).[105]

The decision to forego the *Seven Epitomes*, then, can be understood as one more attempt to create a collection which would be as encompassing and ecumenical as possible. Reviving it would have marked the complete and

[101] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1998: 64-65; and Man-Cheong 2006: 82 also see the *Complete Writings* as taking a more balanced approach to the scholarly movements but neither discusses this in the context of the decision to organise the collection.
[102] SKQSZM: *Jingbu zongxu* 經部總敘 (1).
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid. The inclusive spirit is also clearly present in the general introduction of the Confucian (*rujia*) section. For a list of more examples, see Liu Fengqiang 劉風強 2015: 155-158.

unambiguous victory of Han learning over imperial scholarly practice and policy. More interestingly, however, it would have also marked, according to the logic of the preface, the expression of a private mind (*si xin* 私心). Even if the profound conceptual issues of re-organising scholarship along the lines of the *Seven Epitomes* could be overcome, such a division would not be the expression of a higher-order shared consensus. Thus, the choice to forego the revival of the *Seven Epitomes* not only reveals the limitations in influence of Han learning over the *Complete Writings* but also attests to the ambition to create a bibliographic project which would speak to as many scholars as possible. The public orientation of the *Complete Writings* was thus neither an incidental nor secondary feature of the compilation but rather an essential aspect of the project from its nascent stages – and the choice of bibliographic arrangement embodies and advances this goal.

Less is More

But while it may be clear that using the *Seven Epitomes* would have presented an insurmountable set of intellectual hurdles, the compilers had other reasons to argue that the four-fold order was better suited to their purposes compared to the more detailed organisations of the Song and Ming eras. In the introductory *Guidelines for Readers*, the compilers provide a telling – and rather negative – evaluation of Jiao Hong's 'Bibliographic Treatise.' The problem they identified with Jiao Hong's division is that it was simply overloaded with too many divisions (多分子目頗以餖飣為嫌).[106] The divisions employed in sections such

[106] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).

as philology, geography, biographies, genealogies, and the arts among others are too numerous and the general structure ultimately leads to confusion (流派至為繁夥端緒易至茫如).[107] Instead, they argue that the divisions used in the *Complete Writings – fewer* in number and *less* detailed – not only offer a proper and orderly arrangement (使條理秩然) but also facilitate searching through the catalogue (以便檢尋).[108] Compared to Jiao Hong's division, the *Complete Writings* has dispensed with excessive trivialities by deleting and merging different sections (其餘瑣節概為刪并).[109] The compilers were responding to what appeared to them as *taxonomical hypertrophy*, the debilitating explosion of categories which renders classification meaningless for using ten categories to organise ten objects is not to organise them at all.[110] In their eyes, orders such as Jiao Hong's had too many divisions and needed to be simplified.

Theoretical concerns about the appropriateness of different divisions ran deep in the Qianlong court during the genesis of the *Complete Writings*. In the Grand Council reports on Zhu Yun's memorial, scholar-officials had quite a lot to say about organisational divisions. Their primary focus was Zhu Yun's suggestion to revive texts from the *Yongle Great Compendium* (*Yongle Dadian* 永樂大典), the massive encyclopaedic (*leishu*) compilation of the Ming, totaling at over eleven thousand volumes and over three hundred and seventy million characters.[111] By the Qianlong era, the *Compendium*, which had been completed almost three centuries before, was rotting away in the imperial libraries. With it, many precious ancient

[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Owen 2007: 1392-93.
[111] *Zuanxiu* 1.53 and 1.57-58.

texts – recorded *only* in the *Compendium* – were also withering away. Scholars were well aware of the value of the *Compendium* and in his memorial, Zhu Yun called to examine the entire collection and resuscitate texts that were on the brink of extinction.[112] The Grand Council had initially rejected this goal arguing that such a gargantuan task would be exceedingly demanding.[113] While the emperor was not bound by his councilors' proposals, they were not to be taken lightly. Thus, when the Qianlong emperor reversed the Council's decision, ordering the *Compendium* to be searched for precious texts, one more unusual course of events came to define the history of the formation of the *Complete Writings*.[114]

Both the Qianlong emperor and scholar-officials held rather strong and unfavorable views towards the organisation of the *Yongle Great Compendium*. Citing specific examples, scholar-officials of the Grand Council found the *Compendium* to be in disarray, improper (凌雜不倫) and to have a mistaken sequence (前後錯互) which was fragmented and meaningless (支離無謂).[115] They also condemned the *Compendium* for severing what ought to be together and for being fragmentary (割裂瑣碎).[116] The reason their critique of the *Compendium's* organisation was so harsh is that it was not organised by topic as *leishu* collections usually were. Rather, the *Compendium* used a rhyming organisation by which topics and texts whose last characters rhymed were placed under the same heading. Such an arrangement – the functional equivalent of an alphabetic sequence –

[112] For the role of the *Yongle Great Compendium* in the compilation of the *Complete Writings*, see Taam 1977 [1935]: 29.
[113] Guy 1987: 75.
[114] The Qianlong emperor was a ruler for whom no detail was too small to consider. On his style of governance see Rawski 1998: 188-189. For more on the process of creating the *Complete Writings*, see Kinoshita Tetsuya 木下鉄矢 1996: 149-151.
[115] *Zuanxiu* 1.57-58.
[116] *Zuanxiu* 1.53.

violated a fundamental prerequisite of coherence, for it was based solely on the sound of words and not on their meaning. Because it lacked an internal rationale, it was seen as a haphazard division.[117]

The negative evaluations towards Jiao Hong's organisation and the *Yongle Great Compendium* reveal the sensitivity and significance that Qianlong-era scholarship placed on issues of bibliographic organisation. The mid-Qing was the pinnacle of bibliographic anxieties and pursuits in bibliographic, collation, and textual studies (*muluxue* 目錄學, *jiaochouxue* 校讎學, *banbenxue* 版本學 respectively) dramatically rose. These types of scholarship had not only emerged and consolidated into distinct entities but had also taken the centre stage of academic scholarship.[118] It was under the pressure to provide an ever better framework to structure knowledge that the *Complete Writings* was conceptualised and the decision to employ the four-fold division was made. The decision to adopt the four-fold division must be understood then not as the outcome of reactionary scholars who wished to uphold an entrenched 'orthodoxy.' Rather, it must be seen as a genuine intellectual response to the profound and diverse systems of past centuries, reflecting a divergent understanding of the fundamental purposes of bibliography.

The heightened emphasis on ever more exact sections of the Song and Ming bibliographies reveals a new understanding of the purposes of bibliographic arrangements. The drive towards increased exactness is no doubt traceable to Zheng Qiao who was not only the first, and most vociferous, scholar explicitly to

[117] The rhyming division of the *Yongle Great Compendium* can be seen as the functional equivalent of an alphabetic arrangement. And just like the response towards the *Yongle Great Compendium* in the Qing court was unfavorable so too was the reaction of many scholars in early-modern Europe towards the first alphabetically arranged catalogues, see Blair 2010: 125-126.
[118] Xu Linzhi 徐凌志 2004: 334; Brokaw 2005: 3; and McDermott 2006: 166.

make the case for detailed and meticulous bibliographic divisions.[119] Zheng Qiao's 'Bibliographic Treatise' tackled the issue head-on without shying away from intense criticism of past bibliographic arrangements. Zheng Qiao's starting premise was that specialisation in scholarship was necessary in order to be able to understand books: without specialisation, books could not be understood (學之不專者為書之不明也).[120] If books are not properly understood, clear bibliographic divisions cannot be made (書之不明者為類例之不分也).[121] For Zheng Qiao, detailed organisations were not only a matter of intellectual exactness but also an existential issue guaranteeing the survival of books. Proper conduct in scholarship meant proper handling of books, and correct organisation of bibliographies led to the perpetuation of scholarship and the preservation of books (人守其學學守其書書守其類人有存沒而學不息世有變故而書不亡).[122] He was extremely critical of the *Seven Epitomes* and four-fold order, which did not have the level of precision that defined his organisation. He described the two as incapable of illuminating texts and ultimately unintelligible and disorderly (七略不可以明書七略所分自為苟簡四庫所部無乃荒唐).[123]

Zheng Qiao's order aimed to differentiate texts and scholarship to a degree unprecedented in the history of bibliography, and influenced many of the bibliographic collections that came after it. The concern for ever finer differentiation was coupled with a quest for clarity and consistency that sought to place all books of the same kind (*lei* 類) under the same grouping (and conversely

[119] For Zheng Qiao, see Kuang 1991: 365; and Yuan Xueliang 袁學良 2002a: 153-156.
[120] SKQS: *Bieshi lei*: *Tongzhi* (71).
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

to ensure that books of different kinds were not placed in the same section). With these considerations in mind, Zheng Qiao argued that the purpose of bibliographic arrangement is to distinguish as much and as clearly as possible, in order for scholarship to become self-evidently clear (類例既分學術自明).[124]

The adoption of the four-fold order must be understood then not as the decision of reactionary scholars who wished to uphold an entrenched 'orthodoxy'. Rather, it must be seen as a genuine intellectual response to the profound and diverse systems of past centuries, reflecting a divergent understanding of the fundamental purposes of bibliography.

Critiquing and Defending Critical Bibliography

Zheng Qiao's commitment to precision motivated his criticism of the practice of providing critical introductory notes to sections and individual texts (*xiaoxu* 小序 and *jieti* 解題 respectively). This was a practice that originated with the *Seven Epitomes* and in time came to be seen as an essential, indispensable aspect of bibliographic practice. Even though many collections (both official and private) did not have such critical prefaces – this was a daunting task, after all – projects that had critical annotations were held in higher regard than those which did not. Zheng Qiao was the first to reverse the scales and criticise the practice altogether. He argued that bibliographic sections ought to be so clear that their meaning can be known simply by looking at the division itself – and with such clarity, of what use would annotations be (據標類自見何用更為之說)?[125] Thus, he criticised the *Comprehensive Catalogue of Sublime Literature* for including a

[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.

bibliographic note for every book entry (崇文總目出新意每書之下必著說), since divisions that were precise and clear did not need to explain themselves.[126] Zheng Qiao was thus pushing bibliographic practice in a new direction by re-conceptualising its fundamental purposes: because bibliography should aim to be as detailed and precise as possible there is no need for critical reviews and introductory notes.

The compilers of the *Complete Writings* did not look favorably at Zheng Qiao and his ideas. They vehemently – and also mistakenly – condemned him for removing the bibliographic notes of the *Comprehensive Catalogue of Sublime Literature* (建議廢崇文總目之解題) since, in their view, he deemed them to be useless literary embellishments (謂其文繁無用).[127] It is from Zheng Qiao onwards, the compilers proceed, that scholars of the Song put forth petty schemes and failed to exhibit a *public mind* (此宋人忌刻故智非出公心).[128] Instead, the compilers believed not only in the intellectual pre-eminence of the four-fold order but also in the need to include critical reviews, which to them could not be dismissed as mere literary embellishments (不可謂之繁文).[129]

The compilers' discussion about the deficiencies of Zheng Qiao's understanding of bibliography is not based on the idea of 'orthodoxy.' Rather, their criticism against him – and by extension against all bibliographies which follow him – is that they fail to exhibit a *public* orientation. This is crucial, as it reflects once again the public character of the *Complete Writings*. This comment casts new light on the compilers' conceptualisation of their own bibliographic arrangement.

[126] Ibid.
[127] SKQSZM: *Chongwen Zongmu jieti* 崇文總目解題 (1).
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

The ideas and motivations that underpin the *Complete Writings* – which led to the decision to eschew more detailed organisations and to adopt critical reviews – reflect an altogether different understanding of the fundamental purposes of a bibliographic project. The *Complete Writings* was never envisioned as a project that would provide the most detailed division in history. This was not the compilers' intention since ever increasing differentiation was not the fundamental purpose of an organisation in their understanding. Instead, they wished to achieve something else.

The makers of the *Complete Writings* placed great value on the introductory comments that were attached to each of the four main divisions, sections, and individual entries (*zongxu* 總序, *xiaoxu*, and *jieti* respectively). The idea behind critical explanatory notes came from Zhu Yun. In his proposal, he placed the practice in historical context, identifying it with the *Seven Epitomes* and the *Comprehensive Catalogue of Sublime Literature*: it was a practice handed down by tradition (*shifa* 師法) and worthy of emulation.[130] The purpose behind these reviews would be to provide not only background information on the text, its history, number of volumes and so forth but also summarise its contents and provide a critical evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses (每一書上必校其得失撮舉大旨敘於本書首卷).[131]

Sensitive to the practical dimensions of the compilation project, the Grand Council in its response to Zhu Yun's proposal argued against the inclusion of such reviews. They were not opposed on theoretical grounds. Quite the opposite, the Grand Council scholar-officials described critical reviews as being indeed good

[130] *Zuanxiu* 1.21.
[131] Ibid.

bibliographic practice (實為校讎良法) since they allowed readers to understand the content and value of books at a glance (撮其指意者所以倫次得失使讀者一覽了然).[132] However, books had become far too numerous (但現今書籍較之古昔日便繁多), so vast indeed as to resemble a deep ocean (羣書浩如淵海) – how could a critical review be provided for each book (難以一一概加解題)?[133] Instead, the Grand Council suggested the compilation of a simpler catalogue, listing only book titles and authors (體裁最為簡當應即倣其例).[134]

In the same edict where the Qianlong emperor called for the revival of texts from the *Yongle Great Compendium*, he also decreed that critical reviews be added, going once again against his councilors' advice. He recognised that following the practice of Liu Xiang, the maker of the *Seven Epitomes*, would be an overwhelmingly arduous task. However, he noted that bibliographic projects during the reign of the Kangxi 康熙 (1654–1722 CE) emperor – his grandfather – a short summary and description were added before each book greatly facilitating searching for texts (但向閱內府所貯康熙年間舊藏書籍多有摘敘簡明略節附來本書之內著於檢查洵為有益).[135] Once again, the emperor sided with Zhu Yun ordering that summaries be inserted for all compiled texts, marking the last unusual aspect in the formation of the *Complete Writings*. Eventually, the scope of these introductory notes was expanded to include extensive critical summaries for each entry and for the main divisions and sections of the compilation.

[132] *Zuanxiu* 1.51-54, esp. 1.54.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] *Zuanxiu* 1.55-56.

The inclusion of reviews came to determine the *Complete Writings*. This was not a project just aimed at compiling and reproducing texts but also at critically assessing them. The purpose of providing an evaluation of all included books meant that the structure that would be employed would have to be capable of capturing differences in value and thus the goal of providing a critical bibliography manifested itself in the compilation's order.

In the *Guidelines for Readers*, the makers of the *Complete Writings* explain the intention behind the inclusion of the general and lesser prefaces. The first were seen as guides to the overall structure of the project (以挈綱領) while the latter were to assist in the division of the sub-sections (以析條目).[136] General prefaces functioned as summaries describing the proper way to understand the transformations of the *source and flow* (*yuanliu* 源流) of the streams of scholarship (撮述其源流正變).[137] Lesser prefaces were seen as detailed descriptions of the ways in which the sections were divided and related to each other (詳述其分并改隸).[138]

Water shaped the organisation of knowledge by informing the conceptualisation of bibliographic purposes. The emphasis on the idea of source and flow and the quest for a correct understanding of its twists and turns is inflected by the explicit emphasis on value (the *Classics* as the source, the *Records* as the main flow, the *Masters* as the tributaries and the and *Collections* as the ravines). The purpose of a bibliographic project is to provide a structure that can reflect the

[136] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.

differences in value afforded to each stream of scholarship. The key question then is which texts are considered valuable and why?

Navigating the Textual Ocean

The key criterion used to evaluate books was their relevance to attaining an ethical ideal and improving the methods of statecraft. The concern with texts of a certain socio-ethical and political orientation was clearly present from the compilation's nascent stages. In his 1772 edict, the Qianlong emperor called to collect all books which clarified the essentials of governance or illuminated human nature and the morals and manners of the world (有闡明性學治法關繫世道人心).[139] Similarly, Zhu Yun's proposal to create a bibliographic project was motivated by a concern to outline the ancient sages' vision of the world with the hope of reviving the ethico-political structures of antiquity.[140] In the *Guidelines for Readers,* the compilers note that the primary purpose consists in illuminating the meaning of the sages' teachings *in order to arrive at a point where they can be employed* (聖賢之學主于明體以達用).[141] As seen in Chapter 1, the preoccupation with ethical edification cohered with the understanding of water as having a directional nature: just as water moves towards the sea so too does knowledge move towards the improvement of self.

While the ethical criterion surely was, at least nominally, the driving concern, emphasis on the applied dimensions of governance in the *Complete Writings* reflects the intellectual changes from the late Ming to the Qianlong era. A key transformation in scholarship had occurred during the two hundred years

[139] *Zuanxiu* 1.2.
[140] Guy 1987: 57.
[141] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).

prior to the *Complete Writings*, with changes not only in methodology – the comprehensive adoption of philological tools – but also in the very understanding of the purpose of knowledge.[142] Literati of the Qianlong era had inherited and developed scholarship that aimed to be usable in the effective administration of the state (*jingshi zhiyong xue* 經世致用学).[143] The practical orientation in academic pursuits had matured from the increasingly specialised focus of streams of learning such as calendrics, astronomy, mathematics and mensuration, irrigation, agriculture, and cartography among others.[144] This vision of scholarship came to complement – and to a large extent supersede – the strict ethical understanding inherited from the Song.[145] Of course, the traditional view of learning as a tool for ethical edification was current in the Qianlong era. However, the understanding of the purposes of scholarship – and therefore of the *Complete Writings* – was complicated by the new tendencies of the late Ming and mid-Qing. Echoing this concern for an examination of the external world, Zhu Yun advocated the collection of texts which examined the interactions of heaven and earth.[146] Ethical pursuits were to be complemented by investigations on the external physical world.[147]

The greatest change in scholarship, however, consisted in the emphasis on classical textual studies (*jingxue* 經學). The new philological reorientation affected both the methodology and purpose of scholarship. The emphasis on evidence as a

[142] Elman 2013: 276.
[143] Yamanoi Yu 山井湧 1980: 223-229.
[144] Miyazaki 1976: 78-79.
[145] In this sense there was a division between the pursuit of an ethical cultivation of the self and more practical considerations relating to control and management of the external world. It is in this light that statements about the lack of a distinction between the physical and moral realms have to be problematised. For example, see Liou 1961: 205. For more on the rise of studies about the external, physical world and the rise of a 'proto-scientific' method, see Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三 1980.
[146] Guy 1987: 57.
[147] Bai 2013: 530.

way to establish the original, unadulterated meaning of the Classics afforded a new understanding of the inherited texts not as finite products of sagely wisdom but rather as historical processes that underwent change over time. Evidential scholars did maintain that an original layer of the text derived from sagely antiquity – the task was to identify and reconstruct with use of proper tools the original language and meaning of the classics. For the purposes of the *Complete Writings*, this meant that texts which employed methods of evidential scholarship (or were seen as its precursors) were more likely to be included in the compilation and be given a favorable review.

The transformation of classical texts from, as it were, closed objects of reverence to open processes capable of being disputed, heightened the urge to historically reconstruct the development of academic thought – using Zhu Yun's language to trace the flow of knowledge to its origins.[148] The concern to differentiate between the original language and meaning of the Classics and of later additions and forgeries – many of which had been impacted by Buddhist and Daoist thinking, no less – manifested itself in a broader preoccupation with understanding the historical development of scholarship at large. The purpose of academic pursuits had thus become the establishment of the true words and meaning of the Classics through philological examination *and* historical reconstruction.[149] Studies which complemented the record or provided a presentation of the source and flow of scholarship were particularly welcomed in the *Complete Writings*.

The urge to provide a historical framework for scholarship and trace its flow all the way to its origins was intimately tied to the collective psychological

[148] Guy 1987: 57.
[149] Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎 1965: 6-7.

state of Qianlong-era literati.[150] In the deep ocean of books (羣書浩如淵海) scholars felt they were immersed, one of the fundamental questions of the era had crystalised: what comprehensive framework could be devised to understand the entirety of Chinese culture and scholarship?[151] How could this enormous and continuous outpour of learning be organised? And crucially, how could a scholar navigate through this vast body of knowledge?

The intensity with which Qing dynasty scholars faced these questions is reflected in the fact that while the *Complete Writings* was the most comprehensive and systematic effort to organise knowledge, it was not the only one. By the Qianlong era, a flurry of both imperial and commercial compilation projects for all kinds of books – from classics to novels and from sutras to plays – came to define the intellectual landscape.[152] Crucially, other compilation projects were understood at the time as attempts to answer these fundamental questions. The purpose of early Qing projects, like the *Collected Writings and Illustrations of Past and Present* (*Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成), was evaluated against a notion of bibliographic projects as tools which can either succeed or fail in facilitating readers to trace the flow of scholarship, to reach its source (使閱者沿流溯源) and to attest the origins of each and every one of its components (一一徵其來處).[153]

[150] On the significance and urge behind the quest for a comprehensive framework, see Chen Xiaohua 陳曉華 2009: 38-42; and Zhou Jiming 周積明 1998: 61.
[151] *Zuanxiu* 1.51–54, esp. 1.54. For more on this issue see Matsumi Hiromitsu 松見弘道 1989: 128.
[152] Feuerwerker 1976: 32; Hanson 2003; Elliot 2009: 118 and 164; and Burke and McDermott 2015. Also see Lovell 1973:49-50; and Cheng 2010 for painting catalogues; see Zhang 2002 for the breadth and depth of Qianlong-era collecting practices, including antiques, calligraphy, jades, ceramics, and valuable objects of daily use. See Chen 2008 for a slightly earlier collection on dreams.
[153] *Zuanxiu* 1.1. For more on the size and organisation of the *Collected Writings*, see Galt 1951: 44. For an index on the contents of this 'encyclopaedic collection', see Giles 1911; Galt 1951: 44; and Drège 2007: 32-33. Ahead of his times, Giles 1911: ix indicates that western terms and conceptual categories may not be well suited to capture or render Chinese terms. For the relationship between the *Collected Writings* and the *Complete Writings*, see Naito Konan 內藤湖南 1970: 65-67; Pei Qin 裴芹 1990; and Inaba Ichiro 稲葉一郎 2006: 702 and 750.

Thus, the choice to adopt the four-fold order over the more detailed and precise organisations of the Song and Ming periods – with those of Zheng Qiao and Jiao Hong as the best examples – was the result of a difference in the understanding of the fundamental purposes of bibliographic projects. Borrowing from the language of the water imagery for knowledge can help elucidate this difference.

Descriptive Maps and Advising Guides

The meticulous arrangements of the Song and Ming eras were attempts to provide *descriptive maps* of scholarship which aimed to be as precise and detailed as possible in their account of the various streams of learning. These were systems of division whose primary purpose was to give as much information as possible by tracing not only the main flow of knowledge but also all of its subsidiary streams. A hierarchical ordering of scholarship still influenced such systems but more focus was given to clarity and precision. The inclusion of multiple main divisions standing on a more equitable basis to each other was the precondition for introducing meticulous and ever-more precise sections within each one. Compounded with this drive for clarity over hierarchy, Zheng Qiao's rationale against the inclusion of critical reviews further deflated the evaluating, value-laden aspect of annotated, critical bibliographies.[154] Precision and comprehensiveness were the key theoretical purposes behind such bibliographic orders.[155]

The makers of the *Complete Writings*, however, found such a map rather useless. What was needed was not a detailed description but rather an *advising*

[154] Zheng Yi 鄭毅: 18 also argues that these two features are essentially complimentary.
[155] For an understanding along similar lines – but overly 'modernist' in its take – see Chen Yaosheng 陳耀盛 1997: 11-20.

guide for the vast outpour of scholarship. The purpose of the *Complete Writings* was not to provide an informational overview of knowledge that was as detailed and precise as possible but with little if any indication as to how one ought to navigate through this vast body of learning. The purpose was rather to give the most effective, instructive, and helpful guide in moving from one stream of learning to the source of knowledge.[156] The order of the *Complete Writings* had all of the necessary information to reach the source – everything else was superfluous or, even worse, dangerous. The most precise map is not the easiest to use and the most detailed division – let alone one without critical remarks – is not the best at guiding one's study.

The difference between the two approaches is captured in Zheng Qiao's evaluation of his division. Early Tang commentators had remarked that Zheng Mo's four-fold organisation in the *Palace Library Catalogue* – the first of its kind – was capable of distinguishing the crimson from the vermilion (朱紫別矣).[157] This statement was not meant to praise the division for its level of detail. Rather, it was an approval of its capacity to make distinctions of value.[158] The commentators had derived their evaluation from Confucius' *Analects* where the Master bemoaned:

惡紫之奪朱也，惡鄭聲之亂雅樂也，惡利口之覆邦家者.[159]
I despise the manner in which crimson robs the luster of vermilion. I despise that the songs of Zheng dishevel elegant music. I despise those who with sharp mouths overthrow kingdoms and families.

[156] Burke and McDermott 2015: 238 argue that the organisation of *leishu* was "shaped by the expectation imposed by the Chinese examination system and official life." Thus, while my position coheres with theirs, I want to focus more the theoretical quest – and not merely the practical dimension – of having a guide that can take a scholar all the way back to the theoretical source of all learning.
[157] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Jinshu* 晉書 (44).
[158] Zhang Guye 張固也 2014: 2.
[159] SKQS: *Sishu lei*: *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏 (9).

Distinguishing the crimson from the vermilion referred to the idea that differences in value existed among objects, events, or practices which were superficially similar. The *Analects* employs the division in an ethical context as applied to socio-political events. The Tang dynasty commentators were commending Zheng Mo's division for its capacity to separate the significant from the trivial. This was not an approval of the division's level of precision but rather of its capacity to provide a structured order that shed light on differences in value.

Commenting on his own order, Zheng Qiao held that with twelve main divisions, one-hundred sections, and four hundred and twenty-two groups, the crimson was separated from the vermilion (總十二類百家四百二十二種朱紫分矣).[160] The hundreds of disperesed sub- groups can exhaust, he claimed, the one hundred sections, and bringing these together can illuminate the twelve main divisions (散四百二十二種書可以窮百家之學斂百家之學可以明十二類).[161] Zheng Qiao deliberately used the same expression but in a different context to imbue it with new meaning. Zheng Qiao's point is that his division is so detailed that it can distinguish even between two seemingly near-identical objects. Adopting the sage's words, Zheng Qiao, quite arguably, aimed to render his position more authoritative and convincing. By intentionally giving it a different direction and focusing on the level of granularity of his division, he highlighted the stark difference between his division and existing instantiations of the four-fold order.

[160] SKQS: *Bieshi lei*: *Tongzhi* (71).
[161] Ibid.

The differences between the two systems did not mean that precision was not part of the theoretical purposes of the *Complete Writings*. The makers of the compilation did value detail. This is the reason why the *Complete Writings* was the first – and only – official bibliography using the four-fold system to employ a three-tiered level of division. In this regard, the makers of the *Complete Writings* followed – and implicitly paid tribute to – Zheng Qiao and his innovation of a three-tiered system, showing that they did not have an 'ideological', pre-determined stance towards past bibliographies but rather retained a subtle position, and were willing to adopt and adapt what they considered best. This aspect of the order of the *Complete Writings* highlights the inherent complexity of the project where multiple (competing) theoretical purposes required a creative compromise. The quest to create a structured guide to scholarship was complemented by a motivation to provide a more detailed four-fold order. The compilers' frustration with organisations like Zheng Qiao's was not a matter of principle but rather of degree: it was not whether precision should be a purpose of bibliography but rather to what extent it should be prioritised.

The Quest for Completeness

About a week after deliberating on the Grand Council's response to Zhu Yun's memorial, the Qianlong emperor issued an edict proclaiming the name of the project: the *Siku Quanshu* (四庫全書) – *The Complete Writings of the Four Repositories*.[162] The naming of a book collection project was atypical, as Yao

[162] *Zuanxiu* 1.60.

Mingda has pointed out.[163] Names were usually reserved for imperially sponsored encyclopaedias (*leishu*) like the *Yongle Great Compendium*. Book collection projects like the *Complete Writings* were rarely named. The decision to name the project is significant and a statement in itself. On the one hand, it suggests the importance that the Qianlong emperor attached to the project. On the other, it may also reflect, following Yao, that the Qianlong emperor wanted to merge the naming of an encyclopaedic project with the reality of a book collection.

No part of the name better captures the grandiosity and scale envisioned by the bibliographic project than the word *quan* (全). Translatable as 'complete', 'exhaustive', or 'full', the inclusion of *quan* in the name of the compilation project highlights the intention to not only amass titles currently held in the imperial libraries but also to expand the search throughout the empire. This was envisioned as the most comprehensive collection ever amassed in history – and indeed it was so.

This quest for totality shows that the *Complete Writings* was never conceptualised merely as a cataloguing project of existing books but rather was seen right from its inception as a creation of a new bibliographic universe. This means it was not a listing exercise of a pre-existing collection but rather an attempt to create a new complete collection.[164] The motivation towards comprehensiveness

[163] Yao Mingda 姚名達 2011 [1936]: 199. Guy 1987: 78 also refers to Yao's suggestion.

[164] There has been a considerable debate around this issue. Huang Yanyu 黃晏妤 2000: 105 argues that the four-fold order originated as a catalogue for a pre-existing book collection and should therefore be seen as an organisation of books and not scholarship. See Wang Xincai 王新才 2008: 48 for a similar view. This position may plausibly be historically correct but fails to provide an explanation of why the four-fold order survived through time. For an opposite view, directly targeted at Huang Yanyu 黃晏妤, see Zhang Quanxiao 張全曉 2006: 35-38. Also, Jiang 2007: 19 argues that the four-fold order was geared "not only for cataloguing books but also, more importantly, for advancing social and cultural values." Tan Huosheng 談火生. 2002: 84-91 argues that in the Qing context the four-fold order was seen as far more than a mere division for books. For a more conciliatory view, see Ke Ping 柯平 2008: 125 who explains in some detail what the difference between the two understandings amounts to.

and exhaustiveness was intimately tied with the fundamental concerns Qing scholars had about how to understand the totality of intellectual output from antiquity to the present. It was also linked to the calls to create a Confucian canon which by definition would be the exemplary collection of the Confucian tradition. The *Complete Writings* was an ambitious project and no term in its name better captures the grandiosity of its vision than the word 'complete'.

Beyond Books

Of course, behind the aspiration to and posturing for totality, the makers were immediately faced with the question of what specifically the *Complete Writings* aimed to collect. At first glance, the answer to this question, as has been suggested above, was a simple one: a collection of everything valuable as determined by both the traditional and the newly emergent understanding of scholarship.

But besides the question of what sort of material to include, the compilers also had to determine which *physical media* to collect. In his proposal to the throne, Zhu Yun had called for the compilation of handwritten texts (*chaoben* 抄本) from previous dynasties, of stone and bronze inscriptions (*jinshi* 金石) as well as maps, atlases, and other illustrative graphic materials (*tupu* 圖譜).[165] Zhu Yun reasoned that collecting these was both urgent (*ji* 急) – as many handwritten texts were on the verge of disappearance – and necessary (*bi* 必) since this broad collection of materials would come to expand and improve upon the limitations of bibliographic treatises from the past, and complete the Qing dynastic collections (用廣前史藝文

[165] *Zuanxiu* 1.20-21.

之闕以備我朝儲蓄之全).[166] Zhu Yun was essentially calling for the creation of one master catalogue that would go beyond writings and books (收書之外) and include knowledge in all of its physical carriers.[167] It was envisioned as nothing short of a universal collection of all knowledge in all of its forms.

Zhu Yun's proposal reveals a different understanding of the purposes behind the compilation project. Handwritten texts from the past, and especially the Song dynasty, were not to be collected because of the truths that were encoded in them but rather for their sheer historical value.[168] Zhu Yun's commitment to Han learning did not preclude him from recognising that insights had emerged even in the most abstruse and speculative texts of the Song. The primary motivation, however, to collect manuscripts from that period was not the search for elusive but profound truths, since texts which did have something meaningful to say would have already been preserved. Rather, lesser, obscure texts surviving only as manuscripts, many fragmentary, were important in the effort to understand the past and to reconstruct the flow of scholarship. Zhu Yun saw the project as having a more expansive purpose to preserve knowledge in all of its forms in a quest to historically reconstruct its development. Carriers of knowledge were valuable not only because of their efficacy in ethical self-development and sagely rule or the merits of their content *vis-à-vis* a certain topic. They were valuable in and of themselves exactly because they could be used to reveal elusive twists and turns in scholarly thought.

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[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Tarsala 2001: 103 argues that the *Complete Writings* "marks the point when Chinese scholars' interest in books shifted from their value as a source of useful information to their intrinsic value as historical sources." I agree with the general orientation of this appraisal for late eighteenth-century scholarship, but an evaluation of the bibliographic project needs to take into consideration the different priorities and concerns of different actors.

Zhu Yun was a distinguished scholar with a sharp mind and his comprehensive proposal was playing to the Qianlong emperor's ambitions. Zhu Yun was effectively trying to employ the state machinery in order to advance scholarly pursuits that were of particular interest to him as well as to the wider community of scholars that shared his concerns. These interests, however, were not as fervently held by either Grand Council scholar-officials or the Qianlong emperor.

The Grand Council rejected the proposal. Naturally, as already seen above, the Council aimed to make the scope of the compilation as well-defined and limited as possible – including a list of steles and bronzes which were often located in far-flung and remote corners of the empire would have been exceedingly difficult and would have led to trouble (轉滋紛擾).[169] Similarly, the Grand Council added, manuscripts from past dynasties did not need special treatment – especially since these barely surviving texts would be of little significance – and could be collected just like all other texts. Last, the Council provided an argument based on historical precedent to argue against the inclusion of steles, bronzes, and illustrations, pointing out that past compilations, such as Ruan Xiaoxu's *Seven Records,* did not have a specialised section devoted to such materials (阮孝緒作七錄始不專列圖譜一門).[170] Therefore no special effort should be made to compile these either.[171] The Council's appeal to bibliographic compilations from the past was intended to function as a reminder that a bibliographic project – especially one imperially sanctioned – should uphold an ethico-political orientation and not dabble in other divergent objectives.

[169] *Zuanxiu* 1.51-54, esp. 1.52.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

Taking into consideration the different visions of what the compilation ought to achieve, it becomes clear why Zhu Yun and the Grand Council held quite different views as to what, in modern parlance, qualifies as a relevant document.[172] Zhu Yun's more expansive understanding reflected the scholarly orientation of the time to treat texts and other carriers of knowledge as part of a broader historical process. The value of these carriers lay not in the fact that they expressed a truth, but rather in their ability to assist scholars in their effort to reconstruct intellectual streams of the past and trace the flow of knowledge. The scholar-officials of the Grand Council, on the other hand, retained a more narrow and practical orientation. In this case, the Qianlong emperor did not question his councilors' proposals and thus the bibliographic project was geared towards amassing only texts, explaining the use of the term *shu* (書) – 'book', text', or 'writing' – in the compilation's name.

A Finite Endeavour

All the actors behind the compilation, however, implicitly agreed on one thing: the project would focus on all scholarship and learning of the *past*. Bibliographic collections had always been seen as a grand summation of learning produced up until the moment of compilation.[173] In his initial edict, the Qianlong emperor had called for the collection of works from past and present authors, regardless of their number (然古今來著作之手無慮數千百家).[174] Some, he pointed out, might be living as recluses in distant mountains and not have attained stately recognition (或逸在名山未登柱史).[175] But the concern for geographic

[172] For an introduction to the western discourse around the question of what qualifies as a 'document', see Rowley 2008: 33-35; and Buckland 1997: 804-810.
[173] Chuan Rongxian 傳榮賢 1991: 85; and Zhou Yanwen 周彥文 1995: 2.
[174] *Zuanxiu* 1.1-2.
[175] Ibid.

coverage was not matched with a concern for extension through time, beyond the present: this was to be a complete collection of all the valuable texts up until the moment of compilation.

The agreement for this past-facing orientation was deeply embedded: no scholar ever raised the issue of creating a compilation which would accommodate for future expansion. Such a practice had never been employed in the long history of bibliographic compilations. More importantly, however, it did not cohere with the dominant understanding of knowledge at the time which saw its advancement as an ambiguous and complex possibility. On the one hand, Qing scholars, like almost all of their predecessors, considered antiquity to be the ultimate source of all knowledge and wisdom.[176] Since then, the state of the world and knowledge was only deteriorating and that is why it was essential to trace knowledge back to its origins. On the other hand, however, Qianlong-era scholars were not pessimistic about the possibility of understanding and perhaps even enacting that long-lost sagely past. They did believe that the new philological tools were giving them unprecedented access to understand the minds and intentions of the sages. If Qianlong scholars believed there ever was a time when antiquity could be revived, then there is no doubt that their era was it.[177]

Yet, the past-facing orientation of scholarship and bibliographic practice meant that compilation projects were always conceived as a finite work of scholarship. The *Complete Writings*, like all past bibliographic projects, was not intended to be a work-in-progress that would extend over time, conceivably *ad infinitum*, as modern library collections are now envisioned. The entries the project

[176] Sela 2018: 103-104.
[177] For more on the possibility of recovering ancient knowledge during the mid- and late-Qing, see Ng 2003: 45-47; and Sela 2012: 161.

would include and the way in which they would be organised would have a precise scope and definite end-date.[178] Therefore, even though the *Complete Writings* did use a three-tiered division, it did not allow for possible refinement or expansion. The inclusion of the words *si* (四) *ku* (庫), 'four' 'repositories' – historically used since the seventh century – captured the past-facing and finite nature of this massive project.[179]

Ticking the Boxes

The use of the four-fold division was neither accidental nor fated. Rather, it was intentional and significant in the formation of the compilation, to the extent that it brought to fruition, in the best possible way, the purposes of a bibliographic arrangement as conceived by Qianlong-era scholars. Qing intellectuals had at their disposal an array of organising structures, from a possible revival of the *Seven Epitomes* to the qualitatively more complex and detailed systems of the Song and Ming. The discourse around different systems of bibliographic organisation shows that the decision to opt for the four-fold division was not motivated only by a concern with 'orthodoxy': continuity with the past was only one nominal purpose behind the decision. Beneath the surface was a set of theoretical purposes which gave force to the decision.

Reviving the *Seven Epitomes* presented insurmountable conceptual difficulties, for the organisation was effectively obsolete. The kinds of writings, the

[178] See Tsien 1952: 318. This was further reflected in the fact that the design of the library halls housing the *Complete Writings* did not take into account any future possible expansion, see Kuang 1996: 31-32.
[179] Jiao Shu'an 焦樹安 2011: 57.

types of scholarship, and the specialisation of learning that had emerged and coalesced by the time of the Qing could simply not be captured by a system devised almost two millennia earlier. The intellectual incongruity of the *Seven Epitomes* was the primary reason for not adopting it. Its abandonment and the rise of new organising systems shows that throughout the history of Chinese bibliography, there was an intimate link between scholarly practice and bibliographic organisation – a link that should put to rest in scholarly discourse the widespread misconception about intellectual stagnation and over-preoccupation with 'orthodoxy' in the *Complete Writtings* and the practice of bibliography at large. Seen in a different light, these developments also reveal that an underlying thread of coherence underpinned the history of bibliographic arrangements. Qing scholars shared this concern for coherence between scholarly practices and bibliographic structures. The decision not to revive the *Seven Epitomes* and ultimately to produce a more refined version of the four-fold structure was based on an understanding of the need for congruence between scholarly practice and bibliographic arrangements.

Foregoing the *Seven Epitomes*, however, was also motivated by a concern to create a public, communal, synthetic, and comprehensive bibliographic project which would be of use not only to the emperor and a tiny group of top-ranking imperial scholars, but to the wider literati community. In the intellectual landscape of the time of compilation – with the establishment of Han learning as one of the leading currents in scholarship – a decision to adopt the *Seven Epitomes* would have signaled the unambiguous and complete dominance of one group of scholars over imperial practices. The decision not to revive the Han dynasty order was informed by a concern to fulfil a more fundamental purpose, that of creating a

shared and ecumenical project which could be used by as many scholars as possible. The calls for a Confucian Canon, and the eventual decision to produce three extra copies to be used by men of learning, reflect the tendency during the Qianlong era to produce a public bibliographic project. Using the *Seven Epitomes* would have gone against this purpose.

The concern to create a compilation which would function as a communal and shared project was further instantiated in the decision to forego orders of the Song and Ming. In the editors' eyes, these divisions were inextricably bound to their makers and the nature of their collections – these were the expression of private minds. As rich and diverse as bibliographic practices had become during the six centuries before the compilation of the *Complete Writings*, the four-fold division did retain a steady and significant position. No other organisation had a structure that was more broadly known. The four-fold order ensured that texts would be easily located and retrieved, rendering knowledge accessible. Using it for the *Complete Writings* was motivated not by a concern to uphold 'orthodoxy' but rather by an emerging aspiration to produce a collection that would be used and understood by as many scholars as possible.

The main theoretical problem, however, of Ming and Song divisions was their taxonomical hypertrophy. The minute differentiations and general disregard for critical overviews that systems like Zheng Qiao's and Jiao Hong's espouse were unconducive, and even harmful, to the advancement of learning since they wrought confusion. The *Complete Writings* was envisioned as a response to their conceptualisation of bibliographic purposes.

The choice to adopt a 'simpler' structure with less divisions was seen as more appropriate to achieve a more complex purpose, that of navigating, and

critically evaluating, the vast body of all accumulated knowledge.[180] The conceptualisation of this 'simple' structure stood at opposite ends to the more 'complex' organisations with numerous divisions, which aimed to provide a descriptive and comprehensive account of the flow of scholarship with less emphasis on hierarchy and evaluation. The former system was based on the understanding that a bibliographic project ought to be a guide to scholarship; the latter on the notion that it ought to be a detailed and descriptive map.

This concern for guidance was almost inherently built in the *Complete Writings,* for the primary and nominal purpose of the project was to guide the emperor – and all future emperors – in scholarship and governance. The progressive transformation of the project into a public enterprise led to an understanding of the *Complete Writings* as a tool to assist scholars – young as well as experienced ones – in their quest for knowledge. A division with no indication of what one ought to consult was merely pointless.

Underpinning the purpose of guidance was the paramount concern of Qianlong-era scholarship to provide a comprehensive framework through which the entirety of learning could be understood and – more crucially – the source of all knowledge could be reached. The past and its revival always played a pivotal role in the development of scholarly learning. However, the past had never weighed heavier than in the Qing, when new methods opened new pathways to sagely antiquity. The quest to comprehend, access, and ultimately revive antiquity was broad and deep. The *Complete Writings* aimed to meet this goal by employing a

[180] In this sense, my use of the term 'simple' is diametrically opposed to Burke 2000: 93 who qualifies the organisation of the *Complete Writings* as a "remarkably simple one, composed of no more than four groups."

structure which, to the eyes of its makers, made the continuities between the different streams of learning clear and strong.

The *Complete Writings* was motivated by a set of theoretical purposes that stood alongside socio-political considerations. These theoretical purposes were shared by the different actors behind the compilation and stood as a common understanding characteristic of Qianlong-era scholarship. Of course, significant differences in the conceptualisation of the project and the purposes behind it did exist. But a common substratum of theoretical goals united these different actors. For the makers of the *Complete Writings*, the project needed to exhibit coherence of scholarly practices and bibliographic divisions; to employ a widely-used language; to embody an ecumenical spirit; to provide a comprehensive framework balancing hierarchy and granularity; and to guide emperor and scholars alike from the myriad minor streams of knowledge all the way back to its origin. And in fulfilling this broad set of theoretical goals, the four-fold order was seen as most effective.

CHAPTER 3 - PRINCIPLES: THE FUNCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Exceptio probat regulam in casibus non exceptis.
The exception confirms the rule in cases not excepted.
Cicero

The Non-group Groups

In the preface to the section *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers (zajia* 雜家), the compilers inform their readers that the section consists of texts which cannot form a group of their own (不能成類者併入雜家).[1] The meaning of the term 'miscellaneous' (*za* 雜), they continue, is so broad that there is nothing which it does not encompass (雜之義廣無所不包).[2] They trace the origins of this problem to the fact that after the collapse of the Zhou 周 dynasty in antiquity hundreds of schools competed against each other, each establishing its own sayings and writings and forming its own scholarly lineage (衰周之李百氏爭鳴立說著書

[1] SKQSZM: *Zajia lei yi* 雜家類一 (117).
[2] Ibid.

各為流品).[3] The problem arose because many of these teachings were not transmitted and therefore not reproduced in later times (其學不傳後無所述), resulting in uneven breaks and continuities in their transmission and the impossibility to record texts in a simple and unequivocal way (故絕續不同不能一概著錄).[4]

Initially, as the compilers point out, the problem was confined to specific scholarly lineages like the Mohists or the Diplomatists, with each school having only one or two books to pass down (於是墨家僅墨子晏子二書…縱橫家僅鬼穀子一書).[5] Despite the textual dearth, they each established their distinct discourse (別立標題) and streams of learning (自為支派), which consolidated into steadfast divisions (拘泥門目).[6]

By the time *Complete Writings* was being compiled, the number of texts which could not form a specific group – because their scholarly lineages had not endured – had dramatically increased.[7] What made matters worse was the fact that miscellaneous jottings – usually termed notebook records (*biji* 筆記) or casual notes (*suibi* 隨筆) among other designations – had become a conventional form of writing in late imperial times.[8] In fact, most of the texts included in the *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers* sections are of this kind.[9] To use the word

[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] See Lai Xinxia 來新夏 2013: 231 who further makes a connection between the quantity of transmitted texts within a certain lineage and their codification as distinct bibliographic groups. He argues that they are inversely related: the fewer texts received the less likely they are to be codified with their own distinct group.
[8] For more on the term and history of miscellaneous writings, see Mote 1987a: 213; and Lee 2004: 168. On their popularity in late imperial times, see Tian 2006: 485.
[9] Out of the almost two hundred texts included in the *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers* only thirteen are listed as dating from the Han dynasty or before.

'miscellaneous' to describe this body of writing – and translate the term *za* in general – captures its all-encompassing nature. The term, however, could be misleading to English ears as it may imply that these texts are hodgepodges whose lack of coherence means a lack in value. In the Chinese context, however, while such texts may not have had a strong focal point, they contained valuable insights and were considered worthy of preservation. The inclusion of such texts in the *Complete Writings* is an indication of the value ascribed to them.[10] Miscellaneous texts may have lacked a strong sense of coherence but certainly not value.

Despite the profound heterogeneity of this group, the compilers devised a detailed six-fold division of the *Miscellaneous* section whereby texts were organised not on the basis of their subject matter or stylistic conventions but rather of their *function*. The six groups are based on whether the creators of these texts establish sayings (立說), authenticate claims (辨證), provide commentaries bringing together exegetical accounts (義理而兼敘述), investigate the 'principles' (*li* 理) of objects (旁究物理), topically organise texts of the past (類輯舊文), or collate together various writings (合刻諸書).[11] With this structure in place, the

[10] Furthermore, even though arguing from the absence of evidence is tricky and invites its own host of issues, there are no negative remarks on the value of the texts in the *Miscellaneous Schools and Authors* preface. The absence of any strong negative evaluative judgement, coupled with the fact that these texts were included, indicates that they were considered valuable. Comparing the *Complete Writings zajia* preface to those of the *Hanshu* and the *Suishu* offers a further indication of the non-negative stance held by Qing scholars towards this section. The *Hanshu* describes these texts as 'muddled' (*manxian* 漫羨) and the *Suishu* expands this designation to 'disorderly muddled' (*zacuo manxian* 雜錯漫羨), see SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Qian hanshu* (30); and SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Suishu* (349), respectively. These remarks differ substantially from the more general point in the *Complete Writings* that the section is all-encompassing, suggesting that there has been an evolution in the understanding and evaluation of the *zajia* group. For more on the *Suishu* understanding of the *zajia* group, see Nicoll-Johnson 2017: 110-112. The value ascribed to miscellaneous texts can also be seen in the use of the term in Buddhist bibliographic projects. For example, according to Hsu 2018: 341, the seventh-century *Fayuan Zhulin* 法苑珠林 anthology includes a section titled *Miscellaneous Essentials* (*zayao* 雜要) indicating, beyond the obvious paradoxical or even ironic use of the term, that notions of miscellany and significance were not seen as mutually exclusive opposites.

[11] SKQSZM: *Zajia lei yi* (117).

editors managed to take one of the least coherent groups of Chinese scholarship and divide into meaningful and manageable units.

The problem was not confined to only one section of the compilation. The *Miscellaneous Records* (*zashi* 雜史) was another case in point. Again, the compilers remark that the texts in this section are so numerous and disparate that it is difficult to divide and order them (載籍既繁難以條析).[12] As before, they note that the meaning of the term comes to include various *forms* (*ti* 體) of writings and to encompass diverse titles (義取乎兼包眾體宏括殊名).[13] The *Miscellaneous Records* do have in common the fact that they either include the development of a specific event but do not provide information about an entire era (或但具一事之始末非一代之全編), or merely narrate hearsay from one period and only from one writer's perspective and sources (或但述一時見聞只一家之私記).[14] What distinguished the *Miscellaneous Records* from the *Official Records* and *Separate Records* (*zhengshi* 正史 and *bieshi* 別史, respectively) is a lack of coherence not in terms of subject matter but rather in terms of *form* (*ti* 體): if the composition of writings possesses *ti*, how can texts not be divided, the compilers ask rhetorically (著書有體焉可無分).[15]

[12] SKQSZM: *Zashi lei yi* 雜史類一 (51).
[13] Ibid. On *ti*, see Tian 2006: 475; Owen 2007: 1392; and Li 2017: 164.
[14] SKQSZM: *Zashi lei yi* (51).
[15] Ibid. The translation of *ti* into English has vexed scholars of Chinese intellectual history because it does not match onto any modern notions of literary theory. *Ti* literally means 'body' but its extended use in literary critique denoted, as Owen 2007: 1392 puts it the "normative style…of a genre, an author, a period, and so on…[thus] while everything we would call a genre is a *ti*, not all *ti* were genres…*ti* identified a text as belonging to some norm." Owen's remark coheres with the compilers point that a *ti* allows for easy organisation of texts. What is interesting to note, here, is that the compilers' notion of *ti* as normative form was not focused on linguistic conventions present in the text but rather on methods of compilation and production around the text. See also Tian 2006: 474-475 who translates the term as "forms and conventions" but also translates *ti* as a "poet's style."

The problem of miscellaneousness was not limited to sections which were explicitly labelled as such. The editors identified similar issues in the *Treatises* (*pulu* 譜錄) section. This was, the compilers point out, a bibliographic innovation dating from the twelfth century collection *Catalogue of the Hall of Retirement* (遂初堂書目創立譜錄一門).[16] Before that, they argue, bibliographic arrangements suffered major deficiencies. From the introduction of the *Treatises* section onwards, however, diverse groups with dissimilar texts could be brought under control (於是別類殊名鹹歸統攝) and so the editors decided to follow this example (今用其例).[17] Yet, they remark that the amassed texts are so miscellaneous that they cannot be systematically organised (收諸雜書之無可系屬者) and that the sections are so numerous that searching for texts suffers from superfluous trivialities (門目既繁檢尋亦病於瑣碎).[18] Thus, they conclude that the organisation ought to be based on the groupings that objects described in the treatises *follow* (故諸物以類相從).[19] In other words, the order is topical and not chronological (不更以時代次焉) with three groups: *Tools and Objects* (*qiwu* 器物), *Food and Drink* (*yinzhuan* 飲饌), and *Flora and Fauna* (*caoben qinyu* 草本禽魚).[20]

The most acute manifestation of the problem of miscellaneousness was identified in the *Encyclopaedias* (*leishu* 類書, literally 'texts organised by group') section. In the Chinese context, encyclopaedias were closer to florilegia with sections from various texts cut and pasted together under the same topic heading.

[16] SKQSZM: *Pulu lei yi* 譜錄類一 (115).
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

Unlike the modern notion of encyclopaedia, Chinese *leishu* did not include original entries produced specifically for the volume.[21]

The compilers' note on *Encyclopaedias* commences with a remark on the breadth of texts that this section brings together – it is indeed so comprehensive that texts from all four main divisions of the four-fold order are collected (類事之書兼收四部).[22] This was problematic for it meant that *Encyclopaedias* did not properly belong in any one of the four sections: they were neither *Classics* nor *Records* nor *Masters* nor *Collections* (而非經非史非子非集).[23] Within the four-fold order, there is no group into which they can *converge*, the editors conclude (四部之內乃無類可歸).[24] Facing this daunting problem, they point out two solutions from the past: the *Bibliographic Treatise* of the *Records of the Sui* placed encyclopaedias in the *Masters* section, while the Ming dynasty compilation by Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551–1602 CE) placed them in the *Collections* (隋志載入子部…明胡應麟作筆叢始議改入集部).[25] In one of the few instances where historical precedent is provided as the sole justifying reason, the editors decided to follow the *Records of the Sui* placing *Encyclopaedias* in the *Masters* section because this was, in their words, the appropriate order which had been passed down over the ages (當有所受之歷代相承).[26]

[21] For more on the historical development of *leishu* encyclopaedias see Drège 2007; and Tian 2017b. For the development of *leishu* during the Song dynasty see Kurz 2007; for the development during the Ming dynasty see Elman 2007.
[22] SKQSZM: *Leishu lei yi* 類書類一 (135).
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid. However, Elman 2007: 140 further argues that the editors of the *Complete Writings* placed *leishu* encyclopaedias under the *Masters* section "because they contained more specialised information normally associated with the technical writings of the 'Masters.'"

A Helpful Conundrum and a Way Out

The presentation of the bibliographic conundrum of the *Encyclopaedias* section offers an explicit acknowledgement of the imperfection of the four-fold order. The recognition that there is a bibliographic group which is not part of any of the main four divisions reflects the compilers' self-awareness of the limitations of their system. More subtly and more poignantly perhaps, their remarks point to a deeper and broader recognition that any system which tries to impose order on the inherently unordered textual universe will create distortions, resulting in contradictions internal to the system. Broadness, comprehensiveness, and miscellaneousness are not just descriptors for certain kinds of texts. Rather they are indicators of how the *Complete Writings* editors conceptualised order and disorder. The conceptualisation of the problems behind the formation of miscellaneous groups – and the solutions given to these problems – is instrumental in understanding the structure of the entire *Complete Writings*. By examining the sections which, in the eyes of the compilers – and arguably of modern scholars as well – are most problematic, we can grasp some of the fundamental principles that dictate the organisation of the more well-defined sections within the compilation. Examining the violation of a rule can help us identify what the rule is in the first place. Thus, what does it mean that texts (or in fact objects at large) are not able to form a group (不能成類)?[27] What is 'miscellaneousness' for the *Complete Writings* and what does this reveal about the conceptualisation of the knowledge structure? Which texts can form proper groups and on what basis do they do so? What does it mean to be unable to record texts in a simple and unequivocal way

[27] SKQSZM: *Zajia lei yi* (117).

(不能一概著錄) and how is this related to the formation of bibliographic groups?[28] What role do form (*ti*) and subject matter play in the conceptualisation of order?

To answer these questions, I provide a *description* of the division – an account of how the compilers themselves explain the organisation – as well as a *typology* of the division – a theoretical classification of the division premised on notions of knowledge organisation.[29] The descriptive part brings to surface the evidence which is instrumental in working towards a typology. Conversely, the theoretical part sheds light onto the compilation's conceptual underpinnings which have gone unnoticed. In this way, I wish to work 'from the ground up', doing justice to the primary material while also extending the discussion to fit into broader scholarly issues that go beyond Qing intellectual history.

Both description and typology are handled within the same methodological framework premised on two notions: *principles* and *structure*. By principles, I am referring to the general specifications or directives for design which are manifested as repeating patterns. Principles are essentially the means through which the theoretical purposes of the compilation are achieved.[30] By

[28] Ibid.

[29] Devising typologies of objects in the natural and human worlds is nothing new and several traditions arguably extend this practice all the way back to Aristotle. In sociology and cultural anthropology, the practice can be more concretely traced to Durkheim and Mauss' seminal work *De quelques formes primitives de classification: Contribution à l' étude des représentations collectives* as Ellen: 1979: 3 argues; see also Durkheim and Mauss 2010 [1963]. In the realm of knowledge organisation schemes, typologies have been a more recent phenomenon. Two examples of comprehensive overviews of different types of knowledge organisation schemes are offered by Bailey 1994; Kwasnik 2000; and Lambe 2007. Despite their breadth, these studies do not take note of organisation projects emanating from non-western intellectual backgrounds. Cultural homogeneity is a widespread problem in the field of knowledge organisation which is only timidly being addressed. For an example of a typology in knowledge organisation, but from the field of psychology, see Bless et al. 2004.

[30] My understanding of the notion of *principle* in knowledge organisation is informed by Svenonius 2000: 21 who builds on Bliss' seminal work on library classification theory first published in 1933. For more on the notion of structure and how it relates to division and sequencing, see Smiraglia 2012: 12. Sneath and Sokal 1973: 63 also explicitly connect a taxonomic system to the purposes for which it is built. Also see Wilson 1978: 69 and 90 who essentially refers to principles as the "rules of assignment" but he limits the range of possible rules to subject matter. On the significance of principles, also see Shibukawa Masatoshi 澁川雅俊 1985: 29-30.

structure, I am referring to the *division* of objects into groups – how group are formed – and the *sequencing* of these groups – how groups are ordered.[31] Structure thus refers to how objects that are collected are brought together and held apart and how groups are related to one another. The ideas of *relation* and *boundary* – the relations between objects in the same group, the relations and boundaries between objects in different groups, and the boundaries across groups – lie at the centre of both the notion of principle and structure.[32] Combined, these notions shed light on the fundamental parameters that underpin the conceptualisation of group formation in the *Complete Writings*.

To that end, I use evidence from the *Complete Writings* on the one hand and theoretical concepts from Knowledge Organisation literature on the other. In the first part of this chapter, I focus on the prefaces to the main divisions and sections as well as the *Guidelines for Readers*, offering an interpretative description of stated organising principles. In the second and shorter part, I re-orient my focus to the linguistic aspects of key phrases which point to the embedded and abstract conceptualisation of groups. The first level accounts for the explicit ways in which the components of the organisation are discussed while the second level works towards understanding their implicit conceptualisation.

[31] Broughton 2015: 7-8.

[32] Joudrey et al. 2015: 673 states that "classification is about relationships. It provides a *logical arrangement of topics and subtopics from the general to the specific that can be translated into a linear arrangement* for materials in a library" (stress added). Here, I depart from this narrow understanding of relationships as limited to topics and sub-topics (i.e. content matter) and instead assume a broader understanding of how a knowledge organisation schemes constructs relationships across its constituent members at all levels. Broughton 2015: 7-8 refers to the "principle of division or characteristic of division…[which is] the technical term of the property or attribute that all the members of a group have in common." Again, I do not confine my understanding of boundaries and divisions exclusively on the basis of properties but again I apply the term to include a wider set on which distinctions can be drawn. On the difficulty to come up with a rigorous and comprehensive definition of classification, see Jones 2005 [1970]: 580. Working on statistical organisation models for biological organisms, Sneath and Sokal 1973: 7 and 27-28 assume a more expansive understanding of the notions of relation and boundary. For a comprehensive list of different kinds of relations extending beyond content, see Rowley and Hartley 2008: 37.

Bringing together the semantic and linguistic evidence under the same methodological roof of principles and structure highlights the continuities across the two.[33]

A corollary of this chapter is to highlight the ways in which the conceptualisation of structure – what it means to organise – in the *Complete Writings* differs from modes of organisation found in modern and early-modern Europe. I do not wish to suggest that there are no similarities but rather that communal points are complicated by the existence of evidence which points to a different conceptualisation of knowledge organisation. The broader questions this chapter aims to answer are: how does the evidence from the *Complete Writings* fit with existing theories of Knowledge Organisation? And in what ways does it enrich our understanding of what it means to organise? These questions and points of comparison will help illuminate deep-seated preconceptions in the apprehension of the *Complete Writings* specifically and strategies of knowledge organisation more broadly. Bringing socio-cultural and intellectual differences to the surface can enhance, I hope, our understanding of the tradition behind the *Complete Writings* 'from the ground up'.

[33] Kao 2000: 7.

Categories and Categorisations

Philosophical Foundations

To categorise is human and yet – or rather hence – what a category is, remains an object of dispute.[34] As the mental process by which objects and events are clustered together and held apart, categorisation has been identified by many cognitive scientists as the most basic phenomenon of cognition, posing fundamental questions for cognitive science, psychology, philosophy and beyond.[35] The literature on categorisation shows there is little agreement on what categories are and how they work. Instead, several definitions, theories, and models dot the field. Nonetheless, two views have emerged, dominating the spectrum of views: the classical 'Aristotelian' and the revisionist 'Wittgensteinian' theories.[36] The classical view takes a category as a group of objects which all possess a single property or set of properties.[37] These properties are individually necessary (each

[34] Cohen and Lefebvre 2005: 2 refer to the "plethora" of concepts deployed to understand categorisation. For example, see Neisser 1987: 1; Kwasnik 2000: 3; Bless et al. 2004: 52; Harnad 2005: 40; Pothos and Wills 2011: 4-5; and Mai 2011: 711. Taylor and Joudrey 2009: 376 state that "categorisation is considered to be broader and more abstract than classification, that is, categorisation is a cognitive function that is used to group concepts, rather than a structured process used to systematically arrange physical items. Categorisation can be seen as amorphous or less well-defined grouping; whereas classification can be viewed as a comprehensive hierarchical structuring for organizing information resources on linear shelves." This distinction is also given in Mai 201: 712. For the purposes of this study, I do not use the term 'classification' to denote something distinct from categorization. I avoid using both terms within the context of the *Complete Writings* and have opted for more descriptive terms. No doubt, there are good reasons to draw a distinction between categorisation and classification but part of my argument here is that ways in which the world and experience are unreflectively categorised will determine the ways in which knowledge and texts are classified.

[35] The significance of categorisation in these fields is perhaps one of the few points of general agreement, see Estes 1994: 4; and Cohen and Lefebvre 2005: 2.

[36] Sneath and Sokal 1973: 20-21 were the first, to the best of my knowledge, to articulate the two positions as forming a clear polarity. They did not term them 'Aristotelian' and 'Wittgensteinian' but rather 'monothetic' and 'polythetic' which I also use following Jones 2005 [1970]: 575 to describe knowledge organisation schemes only, so as to minimise the use of technical terminology and avoid confusion. On the other hand, the philosophical foundations of these positions is broadly undisputed; see Aristotle 1938; Wittgenstein 1967; and Medin et al. 2001: 123.

[37] For more on classically conceived categories, see Murphy and Koskella 2010: 28-9; and Cruse 2011: 67. On anthropologists' assumptions that all categories have to be crisp, see Laughlin 1993: 19 and 23.

one of them is needed) and jointly sufficient (collectively they guarantee membership).[38] Members within a category bear the same relation to each other and to the group – they are all members of the category in exactly the same way. Mammals, prime numbers, and bachelors are all examples of categories classically conceived. Membership of an object is established by progressively asking a series of yes/no questions (is the person male? Is he an adult? Has he never married?) which define the set of properties necessary to be considered a member. Thus, categories in the classical model are clearly defined (they are, in technical language, *crisp*) mutually exclusive (no one object can belong in more than one category) and totally exhaustive (no object is left outside of a category).[39]

This understanding of categories has been systematically challenged since the 1960s. Wittgenstein's seminal work *Philosophical Investigations* on the impossibility of determining the meaning of words lay the foundations for the revisionist view. Wittgenstein held that the meaning of a word is determined by its use, but given the breadth of uses that exists for any given word, it is impossible to fix its meaning.[40] His example was the word 'game' whereby he showed the difficulty – if not the impossibility – to come up with a set of criteria that can determine its meaning:

> Consider for example the proceedings that we call 'games'. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? – Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'" – but *look and see* whether there is anything common at all. – For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is

[38] Olson 1999: 109-111.
[39] Murphy and Koskella 2010: 28-9.
[40] Garrett Milkman 1984: 4, 32; and Hansson 2013: 385.

> common is retained, but much is lost. – Are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-rose-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear. And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.[41]

Wittgenstein showed that the classical conception of categories breaks down. There are no necessary and sufficient properties which establish membership in a group. Instead, the best way – in fact, the only way – that a group can be established is through a set of likely or typical features. He characterised these common similarities as a *family resemblance*: some features are shared by some members of a category but not necessarily by all, just as members of a family only share a handful of traits.[42] Wittgenstein's point was subsequently picked up by scholars across disciplines.[43]

According to the family resemblance model, categories are neither mutually exclusive nor totally exhaustive. Member A has some similar features to B and B to C but it is permissible that A and C have no common features at all. This does not imply that they are not members of the same category but rather that the conceptualisation of categories has an inherent *fuzziness*.[44] Members of one category can be members of any other category as well. What distinguishes

[41] Wittgenstein 1967: 31-32.
[42] Wittgenstein 1967: 32.
[43] For an application of the family resemblance model in statistical biology, see Sneath and Sokal 1973; for an application in sociology, see Ellen 1979: 10 and 14; and for an application in philosophy and linguistics, see Cruse 2011: 57-58. For one of the first and more formal expressions of the family resemblance model, see Beckner 1968: 22-23.
[44] For more on the notion of fuzziness, see Laughlin 1993.

membership between groups is how well any certain objects fits in a category. For example, a dog is a very strong member of the category 'pet animals' while a snake less so. A couch is a typical member of 'home furniture' while a radio set does not fit as well. In the family resemblance model then, membership in a category is graded.[45]

While the family resemblance view solves some issues of the classical position, it is not devoid of problems. Since no features are necessary or sufficient for category membership, there is no way to formally distinguish between any two categories. Graded membership implies that it is not wrong to say that a dog is a member of the category 'home furniture.' What can be said is that it is only an unlikely or atypical member but not that it is in principle excluded from the category all together. In turn, this introduces the problem that the way in which categories are conceived is highly sensitive to context.[46] For example, when radios were big wooden appliances they were more likely to be seen as furniture than they are today. Thus, the family resemblance view has responded to the neatly defined, crisp Aristotelian categories by arguably making them excessively fuzzy. Despite their respective weaknesses, the two views have deeply impacted philosophers, psychologists, and cognitive scientists in their understanding of categories and categorisation.

Ramifications to Knowledge Organisation

The two views have also found their way into theories of knowledge organisation and bibliographic structures. Orders which follow the classical pattern

[45] For more on the notion of gradation, see Cruse 2011: 57-58.
[46] Cruse 2011: 65.

are termed *monothetic* where one feature or one set of features establishes a bibliographic group. Most bibliographic arrangements like the Dewey Decimal Classification or the Library of Congress classification are monothetic.[47] Subject classification is the organising principle *par excellence* in modern classifications.[48] Conversely, structures which employ multiple features which are neither necessary nor sufficient for membership in any one group are termed *polythetic*. This means that members in a polythetic bibliographic group do not have the same properties.[49]

There are two other dimensions in the organisation of bibliographic structures. The first examines whether members of categories are listed only in one or multiple categories. If items are listed only under one category, then the organisation is *exclusive.* If items are listed under several categories, then the organisation is *overlapping*.[50] The second dimension asks how categories relate to each other. If categories are systematically related to one another, then the classification is *ordered*. If not, the classification is *unordered*.[51]

The monothetic/polythetic distinction focuses on the relationship between objects and their properties; the exclusive/overlapping distinction examines the relationship between objects and their categories; and the ordered/unordered

[47] I am following Jones 2005 [1970]: 575-76 in classifying classifications here because her seminal essay, later republished, has exerted strong influence in the field of knowledge organisation, see Hjørland 2007; and Hjørland 2008. The term 'monothetic' is essentially the application of the notion of monotypic (i.e. based solely on one property) on categories. For more on monotypic categories, see Beckner 1968: 23. For the historical continuities between the Dewey Decimal Classification, the Library of Congress, and earlier classifications, see Greetham 1999: 18.

[48] The idea that classifications should reflect the representation of subjects (or topics) found in documents is known as 'literary warrant', see Broughton 2015: 46; Joudrey et al. 2015: 673; Chan and Salaba 2016: 465 and 588. Dudbridge 2017: 148 applies the same logic to the earliest Chinese imperial classifications.

[49] Again, the term 'polythetic' is the application of the notion of polytypic (i.e. based on several properties) on categories. For more on polythetic arrangements, see Jones 2005 [1970]: 575-576; and Needham 1970: 349-350. For a formal expression of polytypic categories, see Beckner 1968: 22-23. For a comparison of monothetic and polytehtic classifications and their suitability in describing 'folk classification systems', see Ellen 1979: 10 and 13.

[50] Jones 2005 [1970]: 575.

[51] Ibid.

distinction surveys the relationship between categories. This classification of classifications – a strict follower of classical logic – is mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive.[52]

What is then the organisation of the *Complete Writings*? If it is neither Aristotelian nor Wittgensteinian, then what exactly defines its structure? Answering these questions is central to understanding the organisation of the *Complete Writings* on both the descriptive and typological levels. Unfortunately, the relevant literature on the *Complete Writings* and on the notion of 'category' in the Chinese intellectual context has scarcely raised them.[53] By and large, the assumption that some vaguely similar (and often somewhat deficient) notion of categories – at first Aristotelian and now increasingly Wittgensteinian – has dominated the field without interrogating the fundamental nexus between culture and language with categorisation.

Culture and Language

The effects of culture and language on cognitive processes constitutes a large, on-going debate in cognitive science, psychology, ethnography,

[52] Jones 2005 [1970]: 576.

[53] I have been able to find only tangential references to this problem. For example, Munro 1985a: 22 notes the "polarities" of modern western discourse between self and group, individualism and collectivism etc. as creating an "opposition between the poles" which does not properly apply to how similar concepts were constructed in pre-modern China. Moser 1996: 171-172 provides a short but interesting account of how *lei* 類, which is generally translated as 'class' or 'kind', is more akin to the "nominalist criteria for the type of similarity that allows for similar naming." Choi et al. 1997: 21 propose that there are "differences in reasoning style between westerners and East Asians of a very broad nature that include a different emphasis on the role of categories in thought." Eoyang 2002: 208 further suggests that the "categorical terms that specifically exclude the middle" which are commonly found in 'western' thinking are not present in 'East Asia.' More recently, Rosker 2015: 4 argues that "Chinese thinkers did not strictly or categorically distinguish between the spheres of matter and idea, nor between any other dualistic connotations resulting from this basic dichotomy" which seems to me to imply the impossibility of having classically conceived crisp categories. To the best of my knowledge, there is no scholarship which explores the conceptualisation of more concrete groups such as bibliographic sections. This chapter aims to fill this gap.

anthropology, and philosophy.[54] Attempting to demarcate the various positions taken in this broad debate is well outside the scope of the current project and so I wish to simply highlight some cases focusing on the cultural and linguistic effects on categorisation specifically. Broadly speaking, there are two positions: one argues that culture and language have substantive, qualitative effects on categorisation and the other holds that, as a cognitive mechanism, categorisation functions along the same cognitive mechanism across all linguistic and cultural groups.[55]

Focusing specifically on a Chinese/East-Asian and western comparison, scholars in favour of the first position present an array of findings from psychological and cognitive studies which reveal differences among cultural groups in undertaking specific tasks. Studies have chiefly focused on mental processes which require a robust categorisation mechanism such as object recognition, inductive reasoning, and causal attribution.[56] The main argument behind such studies is that due to cultural and linguistic factors, Chinese/East-Asians have less salient categories and therefore undertake such processes in qualitatively different ways than westerners. This conclusion is only rarely slotted into a normative framework whereby the lack of categorical thinking implies

[54] For a general presentation of the problem, see Quinn and Holland 1987: 4. For a more targeted framing of the issue for 'westerners' and 'Chinese'/'east asians', see Chiu and Hong 2006: 197; and Bond 2010: 2. For a historical account of the rise and formation of cognitive anthropology, see Blount 2011. Appadurai 1988: 41 argues, quite convincingly, that 'bad' cross-cultural comparisons tend to essentialise, exoticise, and totalise. I wish to avoid such an approach and instead follow Fiske and Taylor 2017: 28 who note that "at their best, cultural comparisons create interesting complexity, not stereotypes or caricatures." Goodenough 1957 offers an enduring definition of 'culture' as the set of 'rules' that any one individual must follow in order to be perceived as a member of a group, see Boster 2005: 94-95; and Bond 2010: 2.

[55] Lloyd 2007: 3. The following is not meant to be an exhaustive list of scholarship on this topic but merely a sample of some of the most cited research on this question. For scholarship arguing against the effects of culture, see Johnson-Laird and Lee 2006; and Rayner et al. 2009. For scholarship in favour, see Choi et al. 2003; Fran 2012; Wang et al. 2012; and Kuwabara and Smith 2016.

[56] For object recognition, see Kuwabara and Smith 2016; for inductive reasoning, see Choi et al. 1997; and for causal attribution, see Choi et al. 2003.

'inferior' analytic skills. For example, in some cases, such as inductive reasoning, less salient categories may hamper reaching conclusions fast.[57] In others, however, such as causal attribution, having a less categorically compartmentalised view of the world leads to taking into consideration more contextual information and avoiding causal misattribution biases (which are more typically found in westerners).[58] And in other cases, such as object recognition, there is no principled way to hold that one way of recognising and organising objects is 'better' or 'worse' than any other.[59] For example, when presented with an image of a cow, a chicken, and grass and asked to divide them into two groups, most Chinese participants place the image of the cow with grass while most westerners place the two animals together. Where one group sees a causal connection between the two objects – cows feed on grass – the other sees a categorical connection in that cows and chickens belong to the same group called 'animals.'[60] What these studies show is that the mechanics and salience of 'categories' differ across cultural and linguistic groups.

The opposite side argues that such differences are overstated. Disparities in categorical thinking are not as significant as argued and do not reveal major divisions in any of the fundamental cognitive processes. Divergence in lab findings is not qualitative but rather quantitative at best.[61] Cognition and categorisation is the same across all human beings and is fundamentally unaffected by linguistic and cultural factors.[62] Studies examining the reasoning abilities and scene recognition skills of western and Chinese subjects have found little evidence to suggest differences between them. The similarity of our shared genetic codes and the

[57] Choi et al. 1997.
[58] Choi et al. 2003.
[59] Kuwabara and Smith 2016.
[60] Nisbett 2003: 140-142.
[61] Rayner et al. 2009.
[62] Johnson-Laird and Lee 2006.

universality of the deep structure of language preclude the formation of any significant variations in categorisation attributable to culture and natural language.[63]

This long-standing, complex and fascinating debate has significant implications on our understanding of human nature. It will most likely continue to fuel new research for decades to come. I wish to take a balanced position whereby fundamental biological features of human brains along with cultural and linguistic aspects of particular societies are not seen as competing explanations but rather as complementary. Biology and culture jointly shape cognitive processes.[64] I do not wish to deny the existence of commonalities in cognition between groups and hold that ultimately 'everything is relative'. Rather, differences in culture and language, just like differences in position and velocity, imply a difference in perspective.[65] Just like mass remains constant across space but the gravitational experience of mass depends on one's location and velocity, so too some fundamental aspects of cognition are universal but the way in which they are incorporated in broader frameworks differs across cultural and linguistic groups. Some facets of human cognition are constant while others depend on one's cultural and linguistic position. Which aspects belong to the first group and which to the second remains to be explored. Taking into account differences in point of view is essential in understanding what is common throughout humanity. The current approach of

[63] Ibid.
[64] Stapel and Semin 2007: 23 argue that there has been "no crystalline resolution" to the question of whether and how language affects cognition. Lloyd 2007: 173 argues that the points raised by Nisbett reveal differences "in values and attitudes more than they do in modes of reasoning." Berry et al. 2011: 147-150 directly challenging Nisbett, call for the adoption of a "moderate universalist position" similar to the one described above. More recently, Fiske and Taylor 2017: 26-27 argue that "neural and cultural processes are inextricably linked." Leavitt 2011: 98 shows how a more moderate position was espoused by figures such Willhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835 CE) in rejecting Kant's universal categories.
[65] I draw and extend this analogy from Leavitt 2011: 10.

projecting a single and particular view found in one group at one time to all human beings across time and space is succumbing to significant pressure from new evidence. Thus, the intermediate position – which is slowly emerging in the field – invites the collaboration from both sides of the debate to move towards a new consensus.[66]

Assuming this balanced position for understanding the *Complete Writings* implies avoiding the often committed error of reading the latest western theory onto any given topic in Chinese texts while also eschewing over-stating differences. For example, a celebrated study on cognitive variations between East-Asians and westerners argues that: "Wittgenstein's sermon would never have been needed in the East. The pronouncement that complex categories cannot always be defined by necessary and sufficient conditions would scarcely have been met with surprise."[67] And: "if categories are less salient to East Asians, then we might expect that their perceptions of similarity would be based more on the *family resemblance* among objects ."[68] While it may be true that the Wittgenstein-derived family resemblance model fits better the conceptualisation of 'categories' in China, it still falls short of questioning the universality of constructs developed within the bounds of a specific cultural group since there is no attempt to look at the primary semantic and linguistic evidence of Chinese texts to challenge any of the models *derived in* and *developed for* western discourses.[69] Instead of cherry-picking the evidence we can harness from the Chinese space to fit the latest theory on categorisation (or any

[66] This emerging consensus is detected by Leavitt 2011: 208-211 who argues that from the 1990s onwards the earlier 'universalist' consensus erected by the figures of Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker has been systematically chipped away with new research from psychology and cognitive science. The middle-way positions taken in Gumperz and Levinson 1996: 3; Berry et al. 2011; and Fiske and Taylor 2017 further show how the median position is emerging as the new consensus.
[67] Nisbett 2003: 155
[68] Nisbett 2003: 141-42 (stress added).
[69] In a different but similar context, Mollgaard 2005: 333 points out how in post-modern sinology "Confucius tastes like Rorty and Laozi like Derrida."

theory in general), we have to look at the available information with an inquisitive spirit not in order to corroborate but rather problematise existing theories. It is only by assuming this critical stance that the claims of universality of any one of these models can be evaluated and a path towards a genuinely universal theory – one which takes into account information from as many cultural and linguistic groups as possible – can be opened. Working with the intention to neither draw similarities when they do not exist, nor to exacerbate differences when they are present and *vice versa*, is methodologically vital to understand the organisation of the *Complete Writings*.

Texts and Contexts

Historical Consciousness

The compilers displayed a deep historical consciousness in the construction of bibliographic groups. In the introductory prefaces of the main divisions and sections, they deployed a language reflecting a comprehensive awareness of the historical context and social-scholarly conditions which gave rise to organisational divisions. Time and again, reference to both the name and content of specific groups is made with regard to their historical precedents, with emphasis on their source of origin and flow of development (*yuanliu*). The compilers' knowledge – or rather, their claims to knowledge – of how bibliographic divisions were formed – by whom, when, and under what conditions – determined how they perceived the formation of groups in the *Complete Writings*.

All prefaces provide information on the socio-historical context of each section.[70] The *Official Records* preface, for example, opens by pointing out that the term is first seen in the *Records of the Sui* (正史之名見於隋志).[71] It then proceeds to account for the additions that have taken place over the centuries with the succession of each dynasty. Similarly, the *Separate Records* preface points out that the group originates with the Song dynasty scholar, Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (c. 1183–? CE) in his bibliographic work (陳振孫書錄解題創立別史一門).[72] The same is true for the *Four Books* (*sishu* 四書) entry which first provides a brief account of how the Four Books came in existence as an entity and then how they were codified as a distinct bibliographic section in the *Bibliographic Treatise* (*yiwenzhi* 藝文志) of the *Records of the Ming* (*Mingshi* 明史) (其編為四書自宋淳熙始…今從明史藝文志例別立四書一門).[73] The *Songs of Chu* (*chuci* 楚辭) preface identifies Liu Xiang as the figure who defined the group (定名楚辭自劉向始也) and the *Records of the Sui* as the bibliographic collection which set the precedent of placing the *Songs of Chu* in the *Collections* (隋志集部以楚辭別為一門歷代因之).[74] In a more speculative direction, the introduction for the *Record Collations* (*shichao* 史鈔) identifies Confucius' editorial practices as the ancestor of this kind of scholarly production (孔子刪取百編此史鈔之祖也) while identifying the *Bibliographic Treatise* of the *Records of the Song* (*songzhi* 宋志)

[70] The prefaces for the four main divisions as well as the introductions for the forty-four sections all include extensive information on the socio-historical context out of which bibliographic section and their contents grew.
[71] SKQSZM: *Zhengshi lei yi* 正史類一 (45). For more on the formation of the *Official Records*, see Huang Yongnian 黃永年 2014: 35.
[72] SKQSZM: *Bieshi lei yi* 別史類一 (50).
[73] SKQSZM: *Sishu lei yi* 四書類一 (35).
[74] SKQSZM: *Chuci lei yi* 楚辭類一 (148).

as the first instance where the *Collations* acquire their distinct bibliographic status (宋志始自立門).[75] Even though the compilers' knowledge placed some bibliographic groups beyond a firm historical understanding, the emergence of scholarly practices and their bibliographic codification permeates the compilation's introductory prefaces.[76]

Social Embeddedness

The editors' historical consciousness extended to an appreciation of the social embeddedness that defined the bibliographic terms they employed. The *xiaoxue* (小學) section is perhaps the best case in point. Like most words, *xiaoxue* does not have a fixed, unchanging designation but rather signifies different kinds of scholarly practice at different times – a point the compilers of the *Complete Writings* were well aware of.[77] The historical evolution of the term means that it can be translated both as *Primary Learning* and *Philology*. In the section preface the editors state that in antiquity the teachings of *xiaoxue* only referred to the study of characters (i.e. philology) (古小學所教不過六書之類).[78] With the compilation of the bibliographic treatises of the *Records of the Sui* and the *Records of the Tang*, however, books on calligraphy and bronze inscriptions were added to the section, thus losing its original meaning (隋志增以金石刻文唐志增以書法書品已非初旨).[79] From the Song dynasty onwards, the compilers note, Zhu Xi's formation of

[75] SKQSZM: *Shichao lei yi* 史鈔類一 (65).
[76] In fact, out of the four main divisions (*bu*) prefaces and the fourty-four section (*lei*) prefaces, there is not a single one which does not provide a historical account of the formation of a scholarly lineage or its codification in bibliographic projects of the past.
[77] SKQSZM: *Xiaoxue lei yi* 小學類一 (40).
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

xiaoxue as a complement to *daxue* (Great Learning 大學), meant that *xiaoxue* diverged even further from its original meaning (自朱子作小學以配大學…小學益多岐矣).[80] In examining and establishing (*kaoding* 考訂) the historical source and flow (*yuanliu*) of the term, the compilers argue that they could approach the original designation of *xiaoxue* as philological explication of the classics as found in Han dynasty antiquity (考訂源流惟漢志根據經義要為近古).[81] For this reason, they decided to break up the *xiaoxue* section as they had inherited it, placing texts used for primary education for children in various different sections and reserving the revived (or rather, reconceptualised) *xiaoxue* group for philological, lexicographic, and phonological works (今以論幼儀者別入儒家以論筆法者別入雜藝以蒙求之屬隸故事以便記誦著別入類書惟以爾雅以下編為訓詁說文一下編為字書廣韻一下編為韻書).[82] In this way, the editors conclude, the ancient meaning of *xiaoxue* is not lost (不失古義).[83]

The exposition of the evolving nature of *xiaoxue* reveals an appreciation of its social construction. Terms are embedded in their societal fabric and reviving them requires changes in scholarly practices *as well as* bibliographic arrangements. The meaning the compilers aim to revive had always been in their eyes – as far as we can tell from the prefaces – tied to specific academic, social, and historical contexts. They were not aiming to fix the meaning of words by appealing to a

[80] Ibid. For more on Zhu Xi's conception of *daxue* and *xiaoxue* as complements, see Kelleher 1989.
[81] SKQSZM: *Xiaoxue lei yi* (40).
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid. The fact that the compilers had a notion of 'original meaning' – and a concomitant belief that such meaning could be found – should not detract from the point that they had a strong socio-historical awareness of the evolving nature of *xiaoxue* in particular, and language and conceptual groupings at large. While the notion of restoration of original meaning might appear hermeneutically naïve, we must also recognise that such 'naïveté' can be invoked only in light of very recent developments in philosophy and literary theory.

transcendent being existing beyond time and space, as scholars within Abrahamic faiths often tried to do with their sacred texts. Instead, they aimed to reconstruct the signification of specific terms by consciously redirecting the social understanding around them – and getting the bibliographic divisions 'right' was central to this re-orientation.

Such socio-historical sensitivity was not limited to *xiaoxue*. Rather, it enveloped all bibliographic groups, even those which, within the scope of the *Complete Writings*, were perceived as less significant. The preface to the *Daoists* (*Daojia* 道家) section, expressively placed last in the *Masters*, embodies the logic of socio-historical embeddedness. The editors drew a distinction between the early and later stages of Daoist practice: initially, Daoism had an emphasis on developing specific internal states such as purity and self-composure as well as cultivating a steadfast energy (要其本始則主於清淨自持而濟以堅忍之力).[84] With the passing of time, however, supernatural beings came to be appended onto Daoism (後世神怪之跡多附於道家), which brought about the introduction of practices aimed at promoting longevity and sexual rejuvenation as well as the inclusion of curses, spells, and elixirs aimed at attaining immortality (其後長生之說與神仙家合為一而服餌導引入之房中一家近於神仙著亦入之鴻寶有書燒煉入之張魯立教符籙入之北魏寇謙之等又以齋醮章咒入之).[85] All of these additions that tradition had handed down were not Daoism's original meaning, the preface concludes (世所傳述大抵多後附之文非其本旨).[86] The compilers held, however, that it was impossible to separate these two lines of teaching and draw no

[84] SKQSZM: *Daojia lei yi* 道家類一 (146).
[85] Ibid. For more on the development of Daoism in the centuries preceding the *Complete Writings*, see de Bruyn 2000.
[86] SKQSZM: *Daojia lei yi* (146).

distinction within the organisation of the *Complete Writings* (彼教自不能別今亦無事於區分).[87] The only thing one could do in studying the source and flow as well as changes (*yuanliu qianbian* 源流遷變) of texts is to examine them assiduously one by one (然觀其遺書源流遷變之故尚一一可稽也).[88]

The decision not to draw distinct bibliographic groups within Daoism was no doubt, in part, motivated by a lack of concern on the compilers' behalf to 'restore' original Daoism, certainly not so within the bounds of the *Complete Writings*.[89] However, it also reflects a stance which problematises the incorporation of scholarly developments – such as the evolution of earlier 'philosophical' Daoism to its later 'religious' manifestation – into a knowledge organisation project. The decision to forgo the creation of two distinct groups within the *Daoists* on the grounds that the lived practice was ultimately unitary reflects the compilers' understanding that the bibliographic order is – and ought to be – tied to scholarly and social reality.[90] By the Qianlong era, *xiaoxue* philological investigation had emerged and consolidated into an established form of scholarly inquiry with divergent streams. Daoist learning and practice, however, had not developed a

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] As shown in Chapter 2, the *Complete Writings* was conceived as a counterpart to the Buddhist and Daoist canons. There was no perceived need to collect and preserve texts from these two 'traditions' within its scope, so their inclusion is reflective of the compilation's even broader ecumenical spirit. Placing Buddhist and Daoist texts last in the *Masters* section reflected the attitude the compilers had towards these texts within the bounds of classical scholarship.
[90] For more on how the ancient textual tradition had merged with the 'new' occult practices, see de Bruyn 2000: 604-605 which shows how Ming dynasty Daoist canons included both "fundamental texts" of antiquity along with sections labelled as, and devoted to, 'Divine Talismans', 'Secret Instructions', and 'Numinous Charts'. On the integration of ancient philosophical texts with occult practices during the Qing dynasty, see Esposito 2014: 21-24 and 114-116. Girardot 2002: 12 argues that James Legge, the first modern scholar to translate major texts from China, was in part influenced by this "Confucianised way of distinguishing" between the two Daoist strands. Finally, the distinction drawn by the *Complete Writings* editors has survived well into the twenty-first century with Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 36 who react to the "boundaries that can be drawn between 'philosophical' and 'religious' Daoism", thus echoing the editors' remark.

disjunction between its earlier 'rational' writings and its later 'occult' texts.[91] The transmission of the Daoist corpus as a unitary tradition was instrumental to the formation of a single bibliographic group with no divisions.[92] Even though, in principle, one could draw a line between earlier and later stages of Daoist thought and practice, the inherited and lived social experience had rendered, in the eyes of the compilers, the incorporation of this difference into the bibliographic order meaningless.

The significance of social context in the formation of bibliographic groups is also evident in the *Medicinal Schools* (*yijia* 醫家) and *Divinatory Arts* (*shushu* 術數) sections. The editors remark that unlike the Confucian school, which has an unchanging principle, the medicinal schools do not have a fixed standard (然儒有定理而醫無定法).[93] They attribute this to the nature of disease with its myriad complexities and variations (病情萬變).[94] Because it is hard to maintain a unitary approach within medicinal practice (難守一宗) the editors conclude that various different theories and schools are brought together in their collection of medicinal texts (故今所敘錄兼眾說焉).[95] The richness of the bibliographic section is premised on the complex nature of illness and its effects in the formation of diverse medical practices. The bibliographic section is understood as capturing the reality it represents since the social embeddedness of medical practice as a rich and varied tradition informs its broad representation in the bibliographic order.

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[91] Esposito 2014: 114-116.
[92] This could happen because Daoist texts were transmitted as part of the *Daoist Canon* (*Daozang* 道藏) which was over the centuries re-conceptualised and reproduced. For more on the compilation of the *Daoist Canon* during the Ming dynasty, see de Bruyn 2000: 597; during the Qing dynasty, see Esposito 2014: 21-29.
[93] SKQSZM: *Yijia lei yi* 醫家類一 (103).
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

Similarly, the division of the *Divinatory Arts* into five different groups – *Cosmogony* (*shuxue* 數學), *Prognostications* (*zhanhou* 占侯), *Residences and Tombs* (*xiangzhai xiangmu* 相宅相墓), *Divination* (*zhanbu* 占卜), *Fate and Physiognomy* (*mingshu xiangshu* 命書相書), and *Yinyang and Five Phases* (*yinyang wuxing* 陰陽五行) – is linked to the practitioners of these arts and their capacity to transmit their teachings (術士能得其傳).[96] In turn, this is connected to the feelings and aspirations of the general population who long for fortune and fear calamity – attitudes constant through time (世俗之感志徒以冀福畏禍今古同情).[97] The reference to the practitioners of these arts and the populace which embraced them points to the significance the lived social reality of texts had in the formation of bibliographic groups. How texts were used – by whom and for what ends – framed the way in which they were organised.[98]

Socio-historical context marked the understanding of texts at large. The preface to the *Book of Changes* (*yi* 易) offers a cursory overview of the five Han-dynasty canonised texts. The *Book of Odes* (*shi* 詩), the compilers state, *resides* (*yu* 寓) in the singing of folk songs; the *Book of Rites* (*li* 禮) *resides* in the regulation of conduct; the *Book of Documents* (*shu* 書) and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*chunqiu* 春秋) *reside* in record-keeping; and the *Book of Changes resides* in divination (詩寓於風謠禮寓於節文尚書春秋寓於史而易則寓於蓍筮).[99] What this short summation of the five classics shows is that the compilers thought of these texts and their origins within the bounds of lived social and scholarly

[96] SKQSZM: *Shushu lei yi* 術數類一 (106).
[97] Ibid.
[98] For more on these kinds of texts during the Qing, see Bai 1995.
[99] SKQSZM: *Yi lei yi* 易類一 (1).

practices. These texts – which were the most important texts within the purview of the *Complete Writings* – had clear roots in actions within different social domains. How they sprung out from but also contributed to the enactment of social *praxis* – what the open-ended term 'reside' plausibly implies – was central to the editors' understanding of the textual record.[100] Texts were not produced away from or beyond society but rather within it and for it.

For example, the editors remark that, as a text, the *Changes* carries out the heavenly *dao*, illuminating the affairs of men (易之為書推天道以明人事者也).[101] Similarly, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, by arraying the reality of affairs can explain societal interactions (春秋具列事實亦人人可解).[102] And the *Book of Documents*, by employing *dao* governs over socio-political matters (書以道政事).[103] The emphasis the compilers place on texts is not their properties – their subject matter or stylistic conventions – but rather their function ('illuminate,' 'explain,' 'govern') as tools to guide governance and scholarship.

The Miscellaneous Torchlight

We can come back to the original questions this chapter set out to answer: by virtue of what did the compilers perceive some groups to be miscellaneous? And how did they solve the problems posed by such groups?

The preface to the *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers* reflects the editors' conceptualisation of texts as socially embedded artefacts. The reason *Miscellaneous* texts cannot form a group of their own is that their line of

[100] For past and present uses of the word *yu*, see *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 2001: 3.2.1572
[101] SKQSZM: *Yi lei yi* (1).
[102] SKQSZM: *Chunqiu lei yi* 春秋類一 (26).
[103] SKQSZM: *Shu lei yi* 書類一 (11).

transmission was broken in antiquity.[104] It is because lineages were fragmented that many poorly developed textual traditions counting only a few texts emerged. The broadness of this bibliographic group is understood as an outcome of the uneven breaks and continuities in their transmission which rendered it impossible, in the compilers' eyes, to record them in a simple, straightforward manner. The comprehensiveness is not attributed to heterogeneity of subject matter – in fact, content is not even mentioned in the section preface. Rather, socio-historical factors affecting textual production, transmission, and reception generated this chequered and diverse group of texts.

The editors' response to the problem was to impose an order which incorporated the rationale of examining the socio-historical factors of textual production and consumption. Instead of dividing the *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers* on the basis of their subject matter or stylistic conventions, they organised it in terms of their ascribed *functions* – to what end and how a text was used (whether texts were employed to establish sayings, authenticate claims, provide commentaries, investigate principles, topically organise texts of the past, or collate various writings).[105] What the *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers* lacked of its own, the editors managed to impose externally by creating a structure where the ascribed function of texts guided the way in which they were grouped together and held apart. While this admittedly complex group required an ingenious solution, the rationale behind it was representative of a broader way of thinking which informed the relations and boundaries between all groups.[106]

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[104] SKQSZM: *Zajia lei yi* (117).
[105] Ibid.
[106] Compare this understanding of the 'disorder' and eventual 'ordering' to Chu 1987: 53 who employs the logic of subject matter to understand the miscellaneous group and argues that they can be classified into several divisions based on their content such as: "cosmological concepts and theories; quasi-scientific remarks on natural phenomena, animals, and plants; medicine, divination,

The preface to the *Miscellaneous Records* also places at centre stage the material factors of textual production in the conceptualisation of the bibliographic order. The editors' main concern with respect to such writings was the source base from which they drew.[107] The partial collection of sources, often deemed unreliable to boot, defined the *Miscellaneous Records* as a bibliographic section. Features that were above and beyond subject matter and stylistic conventions were at the heart of the *Miscellaneous Records*.

What I have suggested so far, and what will be shown in more detail in the pages below, is that the conception of miscellaneous groups and the solutions given to the problem they posed reflect the general rationale of the order of knowledge in the *Complete Writings*: socio-historical features determining the production, transmission, circulation, reception, codification, and ultimately *use* of texts determined the creation of bibliographic groups. What emerges then is that the order of knowledge took into serious consideration *extra-textual* features in its formation of bibliographic sections and the establishment of boundaries and relations between them.[108] How a text was believed to be composed, what kinds of

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and astrology; literary composition and calligraphy; evaluation of Confucianism against Buddhism" and so on. Chu concludes that the "content [of the miscellaneous group] truly fits the classification of 'miscellany,'" missing completely how the editors understood the roots of the problem and the solution they gave. Dudbridge 2017 also presents pre-modern classifications as being subject based.

[107] SKQSZM: *Zashi lei yi* (51).

[108] The practice of examining 'extra-textual' features in the formation of bibliographic groups seems to predate the *Complete Writings* and following Nicoll-Johnson 2017: 108 can even be found in the bibliographic arrangements of the Han dynasty. Nicoll-Johnson and I met at the 2019 Association for Asian Studies in Denver, CO where we both presented at the "Histories of Literary Information in China" panel series. In a brief but informative exchange on March 23, 2019 it became clear that we had reached similar conclusions for the bibliographic orders of the *Hanshu*, *Suishu*, and *Complete Writings* respectively. While our ideas were formed independently, I am adopting his use of the term 'extra-textual' to describe the set of features and phenomena which are not inherent in a given text. Lai Xinxia 來新夏 1988: 13 briefly explains that the organisation of the *Complete Writings* is based on the actual state of scholarly institutions and cites three examples illustrating the point but does not provide further details. Jiang 2007: 1 states that the order of the four divisions is based on texts' "function in the context of Chinese culture and society" but does not explain what this entails or how it is manifested in bibliographic orders. His use of the word 'function' is significantly different from the one used here because Jiang does not explain why or how extra-textual features enter the

sources it employed, how it was handed down from one generation to the next, and most importantly in what ways it could be put to function for the purposes of governance and scholarship were definitive in the understanding of group formation and sequence for the *Complete Writings* editors.

These features are unrelated to the 'inherent' *intra-textual* properties of texts, such as content and stylistic traits, which have traditionally been the determinants of bibliographic orders in modern and early-modern Europe. Because of this, the order of the *Complete Writings* has often been assumed to follow the same rationale.[109] In the *Complete Writings*, however, bibliographic groups were not conceived in terms of abstracted and generic qualities of texts. Instead, they were thought of in terms of their social and scholarly functions, seen as socio-historical embedded artefacts. This is the reason why the editors provide the context of texts' lives and their associated bibliographic divisions. The way in which a text was envisioned to be employed was informed by the ways in which it was produced, transmitted, and received. Knowledge of the source and flow of a text played an instrumental role in the conceptualisation of order.

The fundamental relation which emerges from this conception of the order of knowledge is that between users and texts. As seen in Chapter 2, the compilers' conception of who the 'user' of the *Complete Writings* would be was essentially an 'idealised' vision of a literatus who would employ the compilation with a set of purposes in mind. The order of the *Complete Writings* was envisioned to assist in the pursuit of ethico-political ideals and an expansion of knowledge of world and

conceptualisation of order, other than asserting that political considerations (an entrenched 'orthodoxy') permeates all pre-modern bibliographic orders.

[109] Referring to the four-fold order, Dudbridge 2000: 5 states that "the principle of subject classification was established right at the start." Wilkinson 2016: 1777 referring to the *Complete Writings* specifically holds that "the history branch [is organised] by genres; the masters branch by subject; and the literature branch partly by genre."

society. Its structure would guide its users to attain the social and scholarly purposes for which it was designed. The *principle of socio-scholarly function* – how compilled texts were thought to be employed by intended users to attain specific purposes – was the cornerstone on which the order of knowledge was based.[110]

Order and Disorder

The Order of Groups

The construction of bibliographic sections and their groups followed the principle of socio-scholarly function. For example, the editors note that the *Edicts and Memorials* (*zhaoling fengyi* 詔令奏議) section was in past compilations placed at the end of the *Collections* (居集末).[111] They explain, however, that in the *Complete Writings* the section has been returned to the *Records* (當歸史部) where they can *provide clear testimony* to the whole section (其證昭然).[112] Furthermore, they note that the way in which the *Edicts and Memorials* is divided into its two components is done with the intention of facilitating the *mutual examination* of this bibliographic section against chronicles and biographies (今亦並改隸裨易與紀傳互考焉).[113] The justification is indicative of the underlying conception that the

[110] Zhou Jiming 周積明 1991: 22 and 216-219 acknowledges the assistance to governance and scholarship as two different values of the *Complete Writings* but does not show how these are embedded in its structure.
[111] SKQSZM: *Zhaoling zouyi lei yi* 詔令奏議類一 (55).
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

function of texts as scholarly documents was instrumental to their conceptualisation as a group.[114]

The same rationale is seen in the *Book of Rites* section which is divided into six groups whereby each is ordered chronologically (六目之中各以時代為先後).[115] The reason the editors offer is that it will allow for the *comparison and examination of the source and flow* of each group as well as the establishment of similarities and differences across groups (庶源流同異可比而考焉).[116] Their explanation shows how the clustering of texts into groups was conceived with the specific intention of facilitating scholarly pursuits while providing a comprehensive intellectual narrative for knowledge.

Exactly the same justification is provided in the *Lesser Sayings* (*xiaoshuo* 小說) section found in the *Masters*. Texts within this section are divided into three streams (*pai* 派): those which (1) narrate accounts of various affairs, (2) record strange hearsay, and (3) collate trivial sayings (凡有三派其一敘述雜事其一記錄異聞其一綴輯瑣語也).[117] The reason these three streams are established is so that the diverging streams of *Lesser Sayings* can be *traced* (跡其流別).[118] The

[114] The *Astronomical and Counting Methods* (*tianwen suanfa* 天文算法) and the *Official Positions* (*zhiguan* 職官) sections are also divided into their constitutive parts. The first one is broken into *Astronomical Observations* (*tuibu* 推步) and *Mathematical Texts* (*suanshu* 算書) while the second is divided into *Administrative Systems* (*guanzhi* 管制) and *Administrative Apothegms* (*guanzhen* 官箴). Echoing the rationale of the *Edicts and Memorials* preface, the division of these sections into their respective parts is likely to have been carried out in order to facilitate the pursuit of scholarly goals.
[115] SKQSZM: *Li lei yi* 禮類一 (19).
[116] Ibid.
[117] SKQZM: *Xiaoshuojia lei yi* 小說家類一 (140).
[118] Ibid.

execution of specific scholarly tasks was instrumental to the way in which the editors constructed divisions between bibliographic groups.[119]

The Order of Sections

Records

The same logic applied to the relations that were established between different sections of the four main divisions. The *Records* division was split in fifteen sections out of which six have further groups. To a reader not familiar with Chinese texts, the partition of the *Records* may seem opaque and haphazard; to many modern scholars of Chinese literature, the *Records* embody an 'orthodox' way of arranging texts.[120] The introductory preface, however, reveals that the compilers conceptualised the section in a systematic way which had less to do with the preservation of a traditional bibliographic order and more with the pursuit of scholarly issues. The preface super-imposes an implicit meta-organisation of the fifteen sections: starting with the *Official Records* which are seen as a form of grand outline of the past (首曰正史大綱也), the remaining fourteen sections are divided into three larger groups based on their reference (*cankao* 參考) material.[121] The *Annals*, *Separate Records*, *Miscellaneous Records*, *Edicts and Memorials*, *Biographies*, *Record Extracts*, and *Records of Illegitimate Regimes* all use as

[119] For more on *xiaoshuo* and its relation to 'historical' writing, see Rolston 1997: esp. 132-133; Shi 2002: esp. 64; and Gu 2006: 24.
[120] See for example Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 2004 [1963]; and Sima Chaojun 司馬朝軍 2005.
[121] SKQSZM: *Shibu zongxu* 史部總敘 (45). The preface states that the section is divided into fifteen groups (今總括群書分十五類) but list only fourteen groups, omitting the *Records of the Origins and Effects of Events* (*jishi benmo* 紀事本末) section. It is not clear whether this is intentionally done or whether it is a genuine error. Either way, it should not detract from the fact that the compilers presented the order of the *Records* section in the following way. There is, however, more evidence to suggest that this was simply a mistake since similar counting errors crept into other parts of the *Complete Writings*, see fn. 33 of the Introduction.

reference material chronicles and biographical essays (次曰編年曰別史曰雜史曰詔令奏議曰傳記曰史鈔曰載記皆參考紀傳者).[122] Next, the sections on *Chronology*, *Topography*, *Officials*, *Administrative Writings*, and *Bibliographies* all use as reference material various kinds of descriptive treatises (曰時令曰地理曰職官曰政書曰目錄皆參考諸志者也).[123] Last, the section *Records Criticism* uses as reference material evaluative commentaries (曰史評參考論贊者也).[124]

This meta-organisation provides an internal logic to the structure, elucidating the relations between sections. It also accounts for the general sequence of the groups, further tightening the structure. The use of reference material as the organising principle reflects a scholarly orientation concerned with the 'rationalisation' of a diverse body of texts. By rationalisation, I do not imply that the compilers had a notion of a transcendent Reason which their vision of knowledge sought to reflect – as perhaps some of their European counterparts at the time would have aspired to. Rather, it shows that the organisation was premised on broadly accessible and internally consistent grounds.

Whether the texts included in these fifteen sections in effect follow without exception the type of reference material they are grouped with is secondary. Given the complexity and breadth of the texts included, it is impossible to exclude the possibility that more than one kind of source material is used in any given text within each of the three groupings. What matters, however, is that the editors *provide* this account. The fact that they present the organisation in terms of reference material sheds light on the scholarly inclination of the *Complete Writings*

[122] SKQSZM: *Shibu zongxu* (45).
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

and the understanding of texts based on their function within scholarship. The rationale renders the division more transparent arguably even to the non-familiar reader, and shows how the compilers' rationale was scarcely motivated by a desire to uphold 'orthodox' precedents. The function of texts – in this case, how they were to be used as reference material – was the principle on which the meta-organisation of the *Records* was premised.

Masters

A similar internal structure was provided for the *Masters*. The preface opens with a general remark on the included texts: beyond the Six Classics, all the texts which establish theories (*lishuo* 立說) are *Masters* texts (自六經以外立說者皆子書也).[125] This introductory sentence identifies the included texts' scholarly function. The editors proceed by providing a brief account of the complexity of the *Masters*, stating that initially it was rather disorderly and mangled (其初亦相淆...其初亦相軋).[126] With Liu Xiang's *Seven Eptiomes* texts were divided, listed, differentiated and clarified, defining what was valuable and separating the significant from the insignificant (自七略區而列之名品乃定...別而白之醇駁乃分).[127]

The term *Masters* (as those of the other sections) did not only refer to a bibliographic heading but also to a body of writing. This use of the term becomes apparent with their editors' comment that within the *Masters*, texts were either lost outright or, if initially transmitted, were subsequently lost because no one carried

[125] SKQSZM: *Zibu zongxu* 子部總敘 (91).
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid. For more on the historical development of the *Masters* section, see Tian 2006

on their transmission (其中或佚不傳或傳而後某為繼).[128] Switching to *Masters* as a bibliographic section, the compilers proceed to note that texts which in the past did not have a bibliographic group have now been added or conversely texts which had their own bibliographic entry in the past have now been merged with others (或古無其目而今增古各為類而今合).[129] These two facts – the unstable transmission of texts and the mutable recording of bibliographic groups – had rendered the *Masters* diversely complex (大都篇帙繁富).[130] For this reason the editors divide and order the *Masters* into fourteen sections (敘而次之凡十四類), creating an internal meta-structure just like they do for the *Records*.[131]

The introduction to the *Masters* states that the first six sections are related to the affairs of governing the world (以上六家皆治世者所有事也).[132] Among them, the *Confucians* (*rujia* 儒家) are placed first for reasons of reverence (儒家尚矣). Second, come the *Militarists* (*bingjia* 兵家), for matters of ethical and literary erudition exist along military affairs (有文事者有武備故次之以兵家).[133] They are followed by the *Legalists* (*fajia* 法家) because, as the editors tersely state, the military is grouped with legal penalties (兵刑類也).[134] Next are the *Agriculturalists* (*nongjia* 農家) because the people are the foundation of the state and grains are the sustenance of the people (民國之本也穀民之天也故次以農家).[135] The *Medicinal Schools* follow for their methods and formulae regulate

[128] SKQSZM: *Zibu zongxu* (91).
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

matters of life and death (本草經方技術之事也而生死系焉...故次以醫家).[136] The last section within the group are *Astronomical and Counting Methods* (*tianwen suanfa* 天文算法) because the affairs of the people need to accord to the seasons which requires observing and calculating the movements of heavenly bodies (重民事者先授時授時本測侯測侯本積數故次以天文演算法).[137] These six sections are tied to the effective governance of the world. They are followed by two sections from which the lesser *daos* – skills or methods – can be observed (以上二家皆小道之可觀者也).[138] The first is the *Divinatory Arts* which have arisen from the competing theories and techniques of hundreds of schools – some of which are meaningful and some which are not (百家方技或有益或無益而其說久行理難竟廢故次以術數).[139] They are followed by the *Creative Arts* (*yishu* 藝術) which are secondary matters, the editors state, with a recreational and scholarly element (遊藝亦學問之敘事...故次以藝術).[140] The next conceptual group, composed of four of the *Masters* sections, are all comprehensive resources for consultation (以上四家皆旁資參考者).[141] The *Treatises* are first because, among broad hearsay they assist in selecting what is useful (博聞有取利用攸資故次以譜錄).[142] Next, the editors note, is the *Miscellaneous Schools and Writers* section which despite the fact that it diverges without naming a single group, can be brought together by plucking out things of value (群言岐出不名一類總為薈稡皆可采摭菁英故次以

[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

雜家).[143] Traditionally placed in the *Masters*, the *Encyclopaedias* follows next with its broad collection of textual excerpts (隸事分類亦雜言也舊附於子部今從其例故次以類書).[144] Last are the *Lesser Sayings* which collect non-essential facts from far and wide (稗官所述其事末矣用廣見聞...故次以小說家).[145] The last group are the external teachings (*waixuei* 外學) placing the *Buddhists* (*shijia* 釋家) and *Daoists* sections last (二氏外學也次以釋家道家終焉).[146]

A meta-structure is given to the entire section explaining the relations between sections. Unlike the *Records*, however, the pattern within the *Masters* captures the worldly orientation of the *Complete Writings* as well as its intended purpose to serve as a guide to governance. Identifying a group of bibliographic sections as tied to ruling – and placing it first – reflects the compilers' understanding of texts relative to their social function in the pursuit of specific socio-political goals. Artistic refinement, broad erudition, and 'external' (non-Confucian) cultivation of the self are perceived as secondary to the state-orientated rationale of this section. While in the *Records* the function of texts is conceived in scholarly terms, the conceptualisation in the *Masters* is premised on notions of governance: texts and their concomitant bibliographic entries have a specific function in the attainment of socio-political *desiderata*.

With this broader conception of the organisation of knowledge, the editors remark that a scholar can uphold the rights and wrongs of the world by examining the principles in the *Classics* and can understand the successes and failures of past and present by studying the subtleties of the *Records* (夫學者研理於經可以正天

[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.

下之是非微事於史可以明古今之成敗).[147] The texts of the great Confucian scholars – and arguably by extension but to a lesser degree the texts in the *Masters* at large – illuminate *dao* and establish sayings which can function as comprehensive reference to the *Classics* and the *Records* (而數大儒明道立言…要可與經史旁參).[148] This summarising overview of the relations between the three main sections shows how the dual function of these sections was in essence thought of as one: a learned scholar was effective in his administrative duties and a successful official acted on the basis of his amassed knowledge.[149] Texts were placed together, held apart, and re-connected based on how they were to be used by scholar-officials to attain scholarly and socio-political objectives.

Bridges and Fences

Hierarchies

Classics

The significance function had as an organising principle is highlighted by the prominence of hierarchical thinking. Time and again, the compilers separated texts which they understood to be on some level similar on the grounds that they were sufficiently distinct in their value. This aspect is most acute in the *Classics* where it is almost by definition true that texts which in one way or another cohere with those of the other three sections are placed in the *Classics* solely on the basis of their significance. For example, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is the

[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Chow 1994: 174a.

paradigmatic *Records* text, the *Four Books* fall within the *Masters*, and the *Book of Odes*, could easily be placed with its descendant texts in the *Collections*.[150] Yet they are placed in the *Classics* because of their enduring normative and scholarly force.[151] The hierarchical dimension underscores the idea that function was the fundamental organising principle because the bibliographic position of texts was designed to mirror their position in terms of their utility in scholarly and worldly pursuits. The texts in the *Classics* were placed first in the bibliographic order because they were considered most important – a fact which not only reflected but also sustained their significance.

In fact, the entire *Classics* section was premised on a hierarchical construction which incorporated the notion of socio-scholarly function. The *Book of Changes* section was placed first because the *dao* found in it is so broad, the editors remark, that there is nothing it does not encompass (易道廣大無所不包).[152] It is so broad indeed that astronomy, topography, music, military tactics, phonology, and mathematics can all be traced back to the sayings of the *Changes* (天文地理樂律兵法韻學算術…皆可援易以為說).[153] The text is presented as having a tremendous productive capacity to spread out in limitless directions and influence the development of all different kinds of inquiry. This conception of the *Book of Changes* matches the notion of a generative source out of which the various streams of knowledge flow from. The primacy of the *Changes* is justified on the basis of its function as a creative force in learning and governing. The reason it is first is because, in the editors' eyes, it generates all different streams of inquiry and

[150] SKQSZM: *Yi lei yi* (1).
[151] SKQSZM: *Yue lei yi* 樂類一 (38).
[152] SKQSZM: *Yi lei yi* (1).
[153] Ibid.

not simply because it transmits truths. Whether this presentation of the *Changes* is accurate, or even whether contemporaneous scholars agreed with this view, is secondary to the question of how the makers of the *Complete Writings* presented and perceived their project. Whether the claim holds true is irrelevant to how the editors explained the organisation. Having established the primacy of the *Book of Changes*, an implicit sense of gradation, buttressed by the ascribed antiquity of texts, permeates the entire section as one moves down to the other classical texts from the *Documents* to the *Odes* and so forth.

The *Classics* section however, embodies the principle of scholarly function in its incorporation of the *Comprehensive Commentaries to the Five Classics* (*wujing zongyi* 五經總意) and *Philology* (*xiaoxue*) sections. These sections break the pattern of dividing the *Classics* on the basis of a text whereby each section is devoted to one of the ancient classics and its related commentaries.[154] No text in these two groups was thought of as being worthy of the status and reverence afforded to the *Classics*. In this sense, these sections do not belong to the *Classics* at all. Yet, the rationale for placing them here becomes apparent when we recognise that the principle of function is at play: the sections are placed in the *Classics* because they are to be *used* together to advance scholarly understanding of the texts. Since errors had accrued over centuries of transcription, the *Commentaries* include texts as well images and charts which noted corrections to the Classics, elucidating their meaning (其校正文字及傳經諸圖並約略附

[154] Of course, this was not the case for the *Book of Music* section whose text had been lost since antiquity but survived as a bibliographic place holder. Also, the notion of what a text is within the *Classics* is further complicated by the existence of the *Four Books* which were initially separate texts or chapters of other texts. By the Qing dynasty, however, they were essentially read as one larger 'anthologised' text in part because of the way in which they were codified in bibliographic structures.

焉).[155] Similarly, philological texts were placed in the *Classics* section, because the (revived) ancient teachings of philology did not extend beyond the classics (古小學之教不過六書之類).[156] The inclusion of these two rather voluminous sections in the *Classics* is not surprising. Quite the contrary, it is consistent with the general principle of design, since the bibliographic order mirrored the lived experience of how the Classics were read, which was almost always with the aid of a commentary.[157]

Nonetheless, hierarchical evaluations were the cornerstone on which distinctions between the *Classics* and the other main divisions were drawn. The opening line of the *Book of Music* preface states that the text was lost during the Qin 秦 (221–206 BCE), the first imperial dynasty (樂經亡於秦).[158] As such, it is the only section in the *Classics* which does not include an actual surviving text but rather functioned as a place-holder for a specific conception of music.[159] The editors first note that music can touch the spirit of men and deities and can connect heaven and earth (感神人而通天地).[160] Its function (*yong* 用) is immense and its significance exalted (厥用至大厥義至精).[161] For this reason, the editors conclude, out of respect for the lessons music entails, it was paired with the *Classics* (故尊其教得配於經).[162] In later times, they continue, books on bells and pitch-pipes were added in the *Classics* and these were *not* considered the same field of study

[155] SKQSZM: *Wujing zongyi lei yi* 五經總義類一 (33).
[156] SKQSZM: *Xiaoxue lei yi* (40).
[157] In fact, many of the commentaries had become so important that they had merited their own sub-commentaries and had effectively been elevated as 'classical' texts themselves.
[158] SKQSZM: *Yue lei yi* (38).
[159] For more on ancient notions of music, see DeWoskin 1982.
[160] SKQSZM: *Yue lei yi* (38).
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

(*ke* 科) as the *Creative Arts* (而後代鐘律之書亦遂得著錄於經部不與藝術同科).[163] With time, however, the refined and the vulgar were mixed (兼陳雅俗), going as far as to include lascivious songs and slanted tunes (艷歌側調).[164] If this were to continue, the compilers ask rhetorically, then should the fictional and anecdotal writings be appended under the *Book of Documents* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (循是以往將小說稗官未嘗不記言記事亦附之書與春秋乎)?[165] This would constitute a gross violation of principle, scarring the teachings of the Classics, they conclude (悖理傷教於斯為甚).[166] For this reason, they point out that they draw distinctions among the various books on music and only place texts which clarify tunes from antiquity and elucidate elevated compositions within the *Book of Music* section of the *Classics* (今區別諸書惟以辨律呂明雅樂者仍列於經).[167] All other kinds of texts on folk songs, lesser musical skills, and the sounds of various instruments have instead been placed in various arts sections and the *Songs and Drama* section of the *Collections* (謳歌末技絃管繁聲均退列雜藝詞曲兩類中).[168] Value plays a definitive role in the creation of these bibliographic groups, whereby things which are perceived to be on some level similar, are considered so different in terms of their perceived worth that they are placed in different sections quite far apart from each other. The significance that the compilers attributed to specific kinds of music and artistic expression – and the kinds from which they denied it – is a function of the understanding of texts in their lived – and constructed – social reality. The perceived value of a text in scholarly

[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.

and social pursuits determined its relative position among other texts. And this difference, according to the compilers' rationale, ought to be captured by the knowledge order establishing clear boundaries across bibliographic groups.

The organisation of the *Classics* section offers a clear example of how the principle of socio-scholarly function – with its expressed concern for usability and hierarchy – was enacted. The order of the *Classics* section illustrates how the notion of hierarchy was brought together with the logic of functionality: the progressive order in value was one tool in the determination of what was worthwhile in the pursuit of scholarly and social goals. The function of texts, determined in terms of their value and co-use, was the basis of the order within the *Classics*.

Beyond the *Classics*

A hierarchical order was not limited to the *Classics* but rather defined the whole *Complete Writings*. Just like in the case with music, hierarchical thinking defined the formation of the *Agriculturalists* section. In the preface, the compilers note that questions around the cultivation and production of tea are close to the issues of agriculture at large (茶事一類與農家稍近).[169] Yet, texts about tea are placed in the *Treatises* because tea is considered a refinement (*hua* 華) similar to silver spoons and jade bowls – in the end it is different from the affairs of farming and weaving that the *Agriculturalists* section is primarily concerned with (銀匙玉碗之華終非耕織者所事今亦別入譜錄類).[170] The final explanation the compilers provide is that their choice shows how the tea, the 'derivative' cannot be placed ahead of grains, the 'foundation' (明不以末先本也).[171] The choice to exclude tea

[169] SKQSZM: *Nongjia lei yi* 農家類一 (102).
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

from the *Agriculturalists* and instead place it in the *Treatises*, further down the *Masters* division, reveals a rather robust conception of what is significant. The justification that foundations cannot be placed after their derivative ends shows how notions of functionality and necessity in the social domain – the cultivation of staple grains for the population at large versus the production of a refined beverage – informed the notion of hierarchy and therefore the boundaries and sequence of bibliographic groups.[172]

The preface of the *Separate Records*, after identifying their formation as a distinct bibliographic entry, describes the section as being one step below the *Official Records* and one step above the *Miscellaneous Records* (以處上不至正史下不至雜史者).[173] While the compilers do not explain this difference in terms of value (plausibly, it was obvious this was related to the reliability of sources), the notion of a hierarchy defines groups since they are positioned in a ranked order. Where texts were placed was determined by their ascribed value.

Hierarchical thinking extended to the formation of groups within sections. The *Biographies* were divided based on the ascribed worth of their subjects. First, come the *Sages*, with texts such as Confucius' and Mencius' annals, which are followed by *Eminent Figures* (一曰聖賢如孔孟年譜之類二曰名人).[174] Next are the *General Biographies* with texts as *Biographies of Virtuous Women* (*Lienü zhuan* 列女傳) and fourth are the *Miscellaneous Biographies* for all other historical figures (三曰總錄如列女傳之類四曰雜錄).[175] The editors remark that the

[172] For more on writings on tea, see Zanini 2017.
[173] SKQSZM: *Bieshi lei yi* 別史類一 (50).
[174] SKQSZM: *Zhuanji lei yi* 傳記類一 (57).
[175] For more on traditional biographies, see Nivison 1962. For more on women's biographies, see Carlitz 1991; and Hinsch 2009.

biographies of deplorable individuals such as the rebellious general of the Tang dynasty, An Lushan (c. 703–757 CE), could not simply be excised (至安祿山黃巢劉豫諸書既不能遽削其名).[176] However, neither was it acceptable to place the noble and the corrupted together, so a special 'quarantined' bibliographic section titled *Separate Biographies* was created and placed at the very end of the section (亦未可薰蕕同器則從叛臣諸傳附載史末之列自為一類謂之曰別錄).[177]

The divisions within the *Topography* (*dili* 地理) section are premised on hierarchical thinking similar to the lines of the *Classics* order. *Imperial Palaces* are placed first because they are the emperor's abode (其編類首宮殿疏尊宸居也).[178] *General Gazetteers* come next for they provide a general overview (次總志大一統也) followed by *Cities, Prefectures, and Counties*, since they account for administrative distinctions (次都會郡縣辨方域也).[179] Next are *Waterways* and *Border Defences* because of their extreme practical value (次河防次邊防崇實用也).[180] *Natural Features*, *Ancient Ruins*, *Miscellaneous Chronicles*, and *Travel Chronicles* follow because they are to be used for general reference and consultation (次山川次古跡次雜記次遊記備考核也).[181] *External Chronicles* which broadly collect hearsay come last (次外紀廣見聞也).[182] The *Topography* section shows how the ordering of groups on the basis of hierarchy was measured

[176] SKQSZM: *Zhuanji lei yi* (57).
[177] SKQSZM: *Zhuanji lei yi* (57). It is not clear to what section the compilers are referring to as there is no *Separate Biographies* group within the *Biographies* section nor at the end of the *Records*. This matter, however, does not detract from the fact that the editors wanted to lay out a hierarchical construction of the *Biographies*. Tarsala 2001: 163 fn. 302 also notes this discrepancy.
[178] SKQSZM: *Dili lei yi* 地理類一 (68).
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.

against the criteria of both socio-political and scholarly functionality with some sections measured relative to their socio-political functions and others gauged relative to their usage in scholarship. This suggests that the distinction between scholarly and socio-political functionality should not be overstated. The lines between the academic and political roles of the imagined user of the *Complete Writings* were blurred rather than clearly distinct. Scholarship and governance were always inextricably intertwined. The order of the *Topography* section is a reminder of the multidimensionality of the *Complete Writings* and of the operation of the principle of socio-scholarly function as a unitary notion in the organisation of knowledge.

It is not surprising that the *Complete Writings* organisation had a hierarchical order. This is not because its makers were, as often claimed, profoundly concerned with upholding 'orthodoxy.' Instead, it is because all knowledge organisation structures – including modern ones – have an inbuilt concern for value, whether acknowledged or not. The influence of hierarchical thinking was not apparent in modern western projects because the concern with 'unearthing' shared properties between texts (in terms of subject matter or stylistic forms) gave a sense of objectivity, allegedly free of normative judgements. Operating under the logic of properties blinded the makers of knowledge orders to the fact that they were privileging certain forms of knowledge over others. For example, as Wilson-Lee has noted the ways in which texts from non-European, non-Christian, and non-white societies were placed in less-precise groups usually at the end of classification schemes reflected attitudes towards those societies and their intellectual output. The order of subjects which placed humans as separate

from animals and men over women strengthened these hierarchies as natural and preordained.[183]

There is no doubt that the editors of the *Complete Writings* carried their own biases. To a certain extent, however, the recognition that their order corresponded to (and constructed) a specific vision of scholarship mitigated the effect of their biases. They certainly believed in the correctness of their division not because they held it as an objective and factual description of the knowledge universe but rather because it provided an appropriate guide through it. Bibliographic groups were thus not a vehicle to capture properties that texts putatively possessed but rather structures which assisted in learning and carrying out the knowledge encoded in them.

The link between socio-historical reality and knowledge organisation was the foundation on which references to the fluidity of the bibliographic order were premised. The complexity of the *Daoists* is a case in point for how texts were perceived as possibly belonging to more than one bibliographic group. The editors remark that just like *Shenzi* 申子 and *Hanzi* 韓子 (i.e. *Hanfeizi* 韓非子), two prominent pre-imperial texts, could flow to (*liuwei* 流為) the teachings of the *Legalists*, so too could the *Yinfu Classic* (*Yinfu jing* 陰符經), placed *first* in the *Daoists*, be connected to the *Militarists* (故申子韓子流為刑名之學而陰符經可通於兵).[184] The recognition that the order imposed on the textual universe was not absolute but rather fluid and indeterminate is aligned with the compilers'

[183] Wilson-Lee 2018: 169.
[184] SKQSZM: *Daojia lei yi* (146). Also, the *Complete Writings* actually lists the *Yinfu jingjie* 陰符經解 first. This is a commentary on the classic which, however, includes the original text in full. In this sense some commentaries had come to 'absorb' their original texts and had become themselves objects of veneration and respect. Organisational decisions like these have vexed scholars from the early imperial era down to this day; see, for example, Queen 2001.

exasperation that the *Encyclopaedias* section does not fit with any of the four main divisions. The two remarks reflect the compilers' understanding of the four-fold order – and perhaps of all knowledge structures – as limited in their ability to impose an unambiguous structure to the inherently complex world of texts.

The textual universe was an overwhelmingly messy place. In the *Guidelines for Readers*, the compilers remark that, with the passing of time, new divisions were incessantly being created in the flow of writings (文章流別歷代增新).[185] Since antiquity every time a new school had formed a new bibliographic group was established (古來有是一家即應立是一類) and every time an author wrote in a new form (*ti*), a new framework (*ge* 格) had been deployed to account for it (作者有是一體即應備是一格).[186] Navigating the streams of knowledge was no easy task. Representing them in a bibliographic order was never free of ambiguities.

Chronology

In their quest to reign over the unruly world of texts, the compilers complemented hierarchical divisions with a chronological order. The *Collections* was the section which most strongly followed a chronological arrangement since it is premised on a conception of the development of literary writing. The order of the *Collections* follows the evolution of its parts: placed at the top of the division are the *Songs of Chu* which are the oldest (集部之目楚辭最古);[187] they are followed by the *Separate Collections* and the *General Collections* (別集次之總集

[185] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).
[186] Ibid.
[187] SKQSZM: *Jibu zongxu* 集部總敘 (148).

次之); which are followed by the *Literary Criticism* section since criticism emerged later (詩文評又晚出).[188] This appeal to chronology at times clashes with the compilation's evaluative dimension. For example, *Songs and Drama* are placed last because they were perceived as a lesser outgrowth of the *Collections* (詞曲則其閏餘).[189] This case highlights the project's complexity and how different approaches to the enactment of the scholarly-social principle had a cooperative or competing relation. The reality is that the ordering of the *Collections* shows how the notion of chronological arrangement was subsumed under the logic of an established hierarchical order, since things which were older were considered more valuable.[190] The *Collections* was structured on a hierarchical basis which unfolded on a chronological pattern.

Chronology, however, was not fully subordinated to hierarchy. The *Separate Collections* exhibit the highest degree of chronological arrangement, with no interference from other principles. The section has six groups with clear chronological demarcations, in some cases extending beyond the name of a dynasty

[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] For Qianlong-era scholars the long-lost sagely past was the pinnacle of an ethical era. From then onwards, the world had been in decay. In this past-facing mindset, texts which were ancient were almost always considered more valuable than those of later times. For more on Qing dynasty scholars' position towards the past, see Sela 2012: 161.

into the specific reign of emperors.[191] The total period covered stretches from the Han dynasty up to and including the Qianlong era.[192]

Within their own bibliographic groups, texts needed a precise order. The general principle that the compilers employed, described in the *Guidelines for Readers*, was chronological (所錄諸書各以時代為次).[193] What the editors stressed was significant about the *Complete Writings* was that texts – past and present – had been collected with the purpose to evaluate them and their respective periods, rather than to merely exalt the present age (四庫所錄包括古今義在衡鑒千秋非取尊崇昭代).[194] The date the compilers used was not the time period that a text covered but rather the time when the text was produced. Facts about a given text (when it was produced) trumped what a text was about (chronologically speaking). This decision reflects the conception of texts as socially-embedded

[191] SKQSZM: *Bieji lei yi* 別集類一 (149). For example, while the first group is titled *From the Han to the Five Dynasties* (漢至五代), the second and third groups offer more specific chronologies indicating the beginning and end of periods. The second is titled *From the beginning of the Northern Song Jianlong reign (960 CE) to the end of the Jingkang reign (1127 CE)* (北宋建隆至靖康) and third is *From the beginning of the Southern Song Jianyan reign (1127 CE) to the end of the Deyou reign (1276 CE)* (南宋建炎至德佑). Similarly while the last group is dedicated to the Qing dynasty (清代), the fourth section covers from the Jin and Yuan dynasties (金至元) and the fifth section covers from the Ming *Hongwu* (1368 CE) reign till the end of the *Chongzhen* reign (1644 CE) (明洪武至崇禎). These were the generally agreed dates for dynastic succession and are still used today.

[192] The order of the *Separate Collections* may appear to the modern eye as the most easily accessible and 'objective' arrangement, especially if compared to the hierarchical order of other sections. To label this chronological organisation as 'neutral' or even 'natural', however, reveals less about the structure of the *Complete Writings* and more about the person making these judgements. What makes the order of the *Separate Collections* appear 'objective' to a modern reader is only its similarity to modern bibliographic orders. Chronological arrangements, however, are not devoid of their own assumptions. For example, the basis of chronological orders is not given: should the order follow the 'internal' time of a text's content or the 'external' time of its composition? There is no 'objective' answer to this question. Rather, it depends on the overarching purposes behind the organisation. In the context of the *Complete Writings*, codifying in the structure the date of composition was seen as more important than representing affinities in subject matter in chronological terms. On top of these considerations, antecedent conceptions of time itself – what it is and how it behaves – unavoidably impact the conception of chronological order. Whether time is linear or circular, progressive or regressive, uni- or bi-directional determines how chronology can be conceived. What ultimately renders a chronological order possible and accessible depends on the community out of which and for which the order is produced. In this sense, chronological orders are no more 'neutral' or 'objective' than hierarchies.

[193] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).

[194] Ibid.

artefacts and carries forth the notion of the *Complete Documents* as an exercise in intellectual history. Placing texts by their date of production presumably facilitated Qing scholars in their effort to trace the source and flow (*yuanliu*) of words and ideas. This kind of extra-textual chronological arrangement cohered with the principle of function since it assisted in the execution of scholarly tasks.

The chronological arrangement, however, was complicated by two factors. The first was that texts authored by emperors were placed at the beginning of their respective dynasty within each section (其歷代帝王著作…冠各代之首).[195] This special provision shows, once again, how the socio-historical reality of hierarchical relations was imprinted within the bibliographic order. Nonetheless, the overall effect it had was rather minimal, especially if compared to Ming dynasty compilations which placed emperor's texts in a special section before the *Classics*.[196] Indeed, only the *Edicts* section reverse the chronological order, commencing with Qing emperors – starting nonetheless from the first emperor, Kangxi – and working backwards to the Song.

The second, more interesting and substantial complication to the chronological order, was the position of commentaries. In the interest of facilitating the reference and examination of texts (以便參考) the compilers made an exception to the production-date chronology for commentaries and annotations, in that they follow the text which they comment on and not the author's time period (至于箋釋舊文則仍從所注之書而不論作注之人).[197] For example, texts which comment on the *Records of the Grand Scribe* or the *Records of the Han* are appended after these texts even though the commentaries may have been written

[195] Ibid.
[196] See Chapter 2 as well as Elman 2007.
[197] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).

many centuries later (他如史記疑問附史記後斑馬異同附漢書後).[198] This exception to the chronological order is essentially an extension of the organisation of the *Classics* where the primary texts were followed by their commentaries. The exception is sensible if one thinks of commentaries and annotations in terms of their scholarly function, since they are almost by definition derivative works, in that they require an antecedent text to exist.[199] It is significant that the editors appeal to facilitating reference and not to, say, tightening the conceptual consistency of the order. This justification shows how considerations about the usage of texts structured the bibliographic order at all levels.

The fundamental relations between texts were thus their relative chronological position (based on date of production) and their co-extensive use as mutually dependent documents. Both relations followed the rationale of facilitating the use of the *Complete Writings* in scholarly pursuits.

Authorship

The issue of commentaries, however, raises the question of boundaries between texts. Modern notions of authorship – on which many bibliographic orders are premised – presume that a work has a single, agreed author whose link to the text as its main producer is undisputed through time. In the context of the *Complete Writings*, this notion of authorship is clearly present with the vast majority of texts treated as completed, bounded projects with one author.[200] Yet, many of the most important texts, primarily in the *Classics*, are listed not only with their authors (*zhuan* 撰) but also with their annotators (*zhu* 注), exegetes (*shu* 疏), compilers

[198] Ibid.
[199] Connery 1998: 55; and Zanini 2017: 55.
[200] For more on the notion of authorship in the *Complete Writings*, see Tarsala 2001.

(*bian* 編), and editors (*ji* 輯), at times even including the names of scholars who provided supplementary research (*kaobu* 考補) or even a phonological analysis (*yinyi* 音義).[201] Even texts whose author was undisputed and fixed, such as the *Records of the Grand Scribe* are listed with more than one scholar's name. Sima Qian is recorded along with Pei Yin 裴駰, Sima Zhen 司馬禎, and Zhang Shoujie 張守節, who undertook such different tasks as compiling commentaries (*jijie* 集解), explication (*suoyin* 索隱), and rectification of the text's meaning (*zhengyi* 正義).[202] The works by later scholars are not listed separately from the original text. Instead, they are recorded under the same entry, forming a single unit. On the one hand, this reveals the reading practices of Qing dynasty scholars. But on the other it also challenges modern conceptions of boundaries between texts.

A similar issue arose from state sponsored projects. The editors note that imperially commissioned works such as the *Rectified Meaning of the Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義) could not be identified with any one author because they were originally created by a team of scholars and subsequently revised by other teams of scholars (歷代敕撰官書如周易正義之類承詔纂修不

[201] For example, in the *Zengbu zhengshi zhouyi* 增補鄭氏周易 entry, the Song dynasty scholar Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (c. 1223–1296 CE) is listed as editor (*ji*) and the Qing dynasty scholar Hui Shu 惠棟 (1697–1758 CE) as having provided supplementary research (*kaobu*). Similarly, in the *Shangshu zhushu* 尚書注疏, Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648 CE) is listed as the exegete (*shu*) and Lu Deming 陸德明 (c. 550–630 CE) for phonological analysis (*yinyi*). Almost all of the most studied and respected texts where listed with their most important annotators and compilers, but the practice was extended to works of smaller stature such as the *Lixiang guolu shiji* 李相國論事集 in the *Eminent Figures* of the *Biographies* section, the *Huiji sanfu* 會稽三賦 in the *Miscellaneous Records* of the *Topography* section, and the *Mingyi lei'an* 名醫類案 in the *Medicinal Schools*. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of texts are only listed with their authors, if not only because most texts did not need, and in fact did not have, a canonised edited or annotated version. For more, see Du Zexun 杜澤遜 2001: 164.

[202] SKQS: *Zhengshi lei*: *Shiji* (1). The reason I have not included dates for the three scholars is that they are not known or well-established.

出一手).[203] Their conception of a work is at odds with modern notions of text stability and enclosure. Scholarly production on the same text was perceived as a diachronic process, since the scholars who worked on the *Rectified Meaning of the Book of Changes* did not produce a new text but rather added new layers to the original.[204] The *Complete Writings* lists the text with scholars from various eras, spanning a period of over three-hundred years.[205] Thus, while most boundaries between texts were fixed there were notable exceptions, pointing to a different conception of 'authorship' and 'work', complicating the division between texts and bibliographic groups.

Substitutes and Complements

Subject Matter

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the *Treatises* section was explicitly not organised on chronological terms in order to facilitate search and retrieval (*jianxun* 儉尋).[206] Instead, the compilers chose an arrangement whereby the objects discussed in the texts *follow* their respective groupings (故諸物以類相從).[207] The topical organisation of the *Treatises* saw it divided into three groups: *Tools and Objects*, *Food and Drink*, and *Flora and Fauna*. The stated recognition that a chronological arrangement would have been inconvenient (*bubian* 不便)

[203] SKQSZM: *Fanli* (*shou* 3).
[204] The text is actually included as part of the *Annotation and Exegesis of the Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi zhushu* 周易注疏) and it is here where they list from Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249 CE) to Kong Yingda 孔穎達 as makers with different roles. SKQS: *Yi lei*: *Zhouyi zhengyi* (*tiyao*).
[205] Ibid.
[206] SKQSZM: *Pulu lei yi* 譜錄類一 (115).
[207] Ibid.

reflects the degree of consideration the editors took in organisational decisions.[208] The *Creative Arts* was also divided into topical groups: *Calligraphy and Painting* (*shuhua* 書畫), *Musical Scores* (*qinpu* 琴譜), *Seal Carving and Engraving* (*zhuanke* 篆刻), and *Miscellaneous Crafts* (*zaji* 雜技).[209] A chronological arrangement with no topical divisions would have simply been too hard to navigate for these groups.

To a modern reader this division appears to be on the basis of content. A notion of 'aboutness' seems to inform it, with different topics placed under different headings. The boundaries between one bibliographic group and another were fixed, as in most modern library classifications, by subject matter. Closer examination of how the division was explained, however, reveals a different picture.

In the preface to the *Creative Arts*, the editors exhibit, once again, a strong interest in the lived social reality – the *praxis* – that informs bibliographic groups. They remark that in the plethora of books, calligraphy and painting had emerged as a new path of aesthetic appreciation (左圖右史畫亦古義丹青金碧漸別為賞鑒一途) which saw later generations exert themselves on this path and attain marked results (踵事增華勢有馴致).[210] Calligraphy and painting interpenetrated with scholarly erudition and for this reason were placed at the top of the *Creative Arts* (然均與文史相出入要為藝事之首也).[211] Echoing the preface of the *Book of Music*, the editors point out that music was originally an elegant and elevated sound befittingly placed in the homonymous section in the *Classics* (琴本雅音舊列樂

[208] Ibid.
[209] SKQZM: *Yishu lei yi* 藝術類一 (112).
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.

部).[212] In later times, however, popular folk songs had emerged, creating new sounds which did not reproduce the nurturing and purifying sounds of old (後世俗工撥捩率造新聲非復清廟生民之奏).[213] Music of this kind, they conclude, is merely a special skill (是特一技耳).[214] Furthermore, the editors remark that engraving was far apart from *xiaoxue* (here, philology) (鐫刻與小學遠矣), which prompted a division of texts on carving to be treated as an artistic skill.[215] Last, they note that the *Miscellaneous Crafts* brought together into one group (亦並為一類) numerous, complicated (*fenfan* 紛繁) and ultimately rather trivial (*suoxie* 瑣屑) skills.[216]

The editors' account does not employ any terms which could be considered similar or analogous to the notion of *subject matter* or *content*. Instead, the account is imbued with a concern for the social enactment of these different areas of artistic expression, and draws from distinct social practices and their evolution to justify the division of the *Creative Arts*. The avenue through which a notion of 'aboutness' emerged is not the abstract conceptualisation of subject matter, but rather the channelling of the complexities and specificities of the lived reality of artistic production. This difference is significant because it points once again to the extra-textual dimension – how texts were produced, transmitted, and employed – that defines the organisation, illustrating how 'internal' properties were subsumed under the logic of socio-scholarly function.

[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.

Genre

Records

Differences in *mode* of expression – what we would name today 'genre' or 'style' – also played a role in the construction of the organisation. The creation of the *Records of the Origins and Effects of Events* (*jishi benmo* 紀事本末) is a case in point of the effects of *form* (*ti*) on the bibliographic order. The editors begin by noting that in antiquity the only form of record keeping was annalistic and prior to the Zhou dynasty there was no divergence from this practice (古之史策徧年而已周以前無異軌也).[217] Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Scribe* followed the (composite) genre of chronicles and biographies and before the Tang there was no divergence from this practice either (司馬遷史記遂有紀傳一體唐以前亦無異軌也).[218] In the Song dynasty, the compilers proceed, Yuan Shu's 袁樞 *Comprehensive Mirror* (*Tongjian* 通鑒) was arranged by order of affairs, narrating in detail their beginning and end (至宋袁樞以通鑒舊文每事為篇各排比其次第而詳述其始終).[219] This kind of composition was named *Records of the Origins and Effects of Events* and record-keeping acquired a new form (命曰紀事本末史遂又有此一體).[220] The compilers remark that before the establishment of this form (未有是體以前) the two older kinds – annals, and chronicles and biographies – were placed separately (既紀傳亦創徧年亦創).[221] With the advent of the new form (既有是體以後), however, the three kinds of writing were influencing one

[217] SKQSZM: *Jishi benmo lei yi* 紀事本末類一 (49).
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.

another (編年相因紀傳相因既紀事本末亦相因).[222] Thus, the editors conclude, this normative form established its own mode of scholarship laying beyond the other two (遂於二體之外別立一家).[223] For this reason they draw distinctions based on their kind, and place each as a separate bibliographic section (今亦以類區分使自為門目).[224]

Placing the *Records of the Origins and Effects of Events* within the broader context of the *Records* raises the question of how *ti* was conceived within the bounds of record-keeping. The accumulation of source material such as palace annals, imperial ordinances, statistical figures, laws etc. in the *Records* problematises the conception of *ti* as genre. Instead it points to *ti* as 'document type'.[225] The editors' emphasis on the socio-historical context out of which the *ti* of the *Records of the Origins and Effects of Events* emerged reveals how it was conceptually related to extra-textual features. The emphasis on the material forms of production of the various record-keeping *ti* reveals the limited role that linguistic or stylistic conventions usually associated with genres played in the conception of *ti* within the *Records*. The distinction made across different groups of the *Records*

[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid. Here I am partially following Tarsala 2001: 137. However, she does not expand on the question in more detail. Compare to Wilkinson 2016: 1777. The rationale of 'document type' can also be seen in the division of the *Administrative Writings* (*zhengshu* 政書) and *Bibliographies* (*mulu* 目錄) sections. In the first, diverse kinds of texts such as the Tang legal code, national surveys and statistics, models for the construction of imperial edifices, and treatises on the administration of the state are divided into five groups: *General Administration* (*tongzhi* 通制), *Ritual Administration* (*yizhi* 儀制), *State Figures* (*bangji* 邦計), *Military Administration* (*junzheng* 軍政), *Legal Codes* (*faling* 法令), *Engineering Standards* (*kaogong* 考工). In the second section, bibliographies are divided on the basis of their physical medium: *Texts* (*jingji* 經籍) and *Bronze and Stone Inscriptions* (*jinshi* 金石). None of these divisions follow the modern notion of genre but instead were described as different *ti* in Qianlong-era scholarship. Tarsala 2001: 137 takes 'document type' to constitute the basis on which the entirety of the *Complete Writings* is premised however the nature of the *Classics* which has all different kind of 'document types' seriously challenges this idea, see Zuo Yuhe 左玉河 2004: 140.

is one of different *types* of documents insofar as they are produced and employed for different purposes. It is only within the bounds of their different extra-textual features that their *ti*, qua normative form, acquires salience.

Collections

A similar picture emerges in the *Collections*. For example, the introduction to *Songs of Chu* states that this section differs from others in terms of normative form (*tili* 體例), making it unreasonable not to capture this division in the bibliographic order (他集不與楚辭類楚辭類亦不與他集類體例既異理不得不分著也).[226] The *Separate Collections*, *Comprehensive Collections*, and *Literary Criticism* refer to the formation of bibliographic sections in terms of their normative forms as well. For example, the form (*tili*) of the *Separate Collections* began around the fifth and six centuries CE (其體例均始於齊梁)[227] while that of the *Comprehensive Collections* was formed (故體例所成) as the result of a confluence of factors.[228] The normative form (*ticai* 體裁) of *Literary Criticism*, on the other hand, emerged gradually through time (體裁漸備).[229] Similarly, the *Songs and Drama* preface begins by stating that the two forms (*ti*) are between prose and artistry (詞曲二體在文章技藝之間).[230] In turn, these two schools (*jia* 家) are placed separately and with a clear order in the compilation (詞曲二家又略分甲乙).[231]

[226] SKQSZM: *Chuci lei yi* 楚辭類一 (148).
[227] SKQSZM: *Bieji lei yi* 別集類一 (149).
[228] SKQSZM: *Zongji lei yi* 總集類一 (186).
[229] SKQSZM: *Shiwen ping lei yi* 詩文評類一 (195).
[230] SKQSZM: *Ciqu lei yi* 詞曲類一 (198).
[231] Ibid.

There is no doubt that a conception of stylistic membership is at play here.[232] What is important to note, however, is that the notion of 'style' or 'genre' is not thought of outside of its socio-historical context nor beyond a hierarchical order. Normative forms are not conceived as static entities which are given but rather as the outcomes of social forces operating within a broader historical framework. They are not thought of as having intellectual equivalence among them. Instead, the use of 'genres' as a tool to differentiate between different bodies of texts assisted in the formation of a normative order. These two factors bring back the notion of normative form (*ti*, *tili*, and *ticai*) to a conceptualisation premised on the extra-textual features of texts and their socio-scholarly function. To belong to different 'genres' did not only mean to differ in terms of linguistic conventions. It more importantly meant being produced – as well as used and organised – in different ways. In this sense, the *ti* of different sections does not refer only to stylistic conventions but also to form of publication or document type.[233] This is the reason why texts which according to modern notions of genre belong to the same generic group are placed in more than one section of the *Collections* (particularly in the *Separate* and *Comprehensive Collections*). [234] Stylistic conventions informed the order of the *Complete Writings* but did so primarily through the avenue of extra-textual parameters.

What *prima facie* appears as an organisation based on subject headings and stylistic divisions – similar to organisations found in modern knowledge

[232] Clifford 2017: xxxviii for genre distinctions and their codification in taxonomic structures in preceding centuries.
[233] Tarsala 2001: 137; and Wilkinson 2016: 1777.
[234] For example, different kinds of poems and prose writing – a distinction which is not made in the bibliographic order of the *Complete Writings* – can be found in both the *Separate* and *Comprehensive Collections*. Genre was not the determinant factor but rather co-existed with the notion of *ti* as publication *form*. It is exactly in this sense, that the semantic scope of *ti* is broader than and inclusive of genre.

structures – is ultimately determined by a qualitatively different conception of order. While the content and form of texts informed their organisation on some level, the role that subject matter and 'genre' played remained wedded to a socio-historical and hierarchical notion of order. Intra-textual properties were part of the logic of extra-textual features. They affected the understanding of function and the position of texts in the bibliographic project in a limited and indirect fashion. Subject matter and 'genre' did not stand apart or in competition to the overarching conception of the *Complete Writings*. Instead, they supplemented its structure by rendering some texts' internal features salient to how texts were envisioned to be used in scholarly and social contexts.

Towards a Typology

Lived academic practices are both reflected and moulded by their associated bibliographic arrangements. This was particularly so in the *Complete Writings*, a project of titanic proportions with wide-ranging effects. Bibliographic groups and their members were conceived in relation to their ascribed scholarly and social *function* – the position, role, and influence the compilers of the *Complete Writings* perceived they had and wished to confer upon them. What a text achieved to do – and how well it did that – relative to scholarly and social pursuits, was the essential principle on which the organisation of the entire collection was premised. The employability of a text was part of a larger bundle of extra-textual features pertaining to its production, transmission, reception, evaluation, codification, and description of texts. How texts were made, circulated, and consumed informed their perceived function, establishing the relations and boundaries within and across

bibliographic groups. Information traditionally overlooked in the history of knowledge organisation in early modern and modern European contexts was of greater importance in the case of the *Complete Writings* (and arguably of earlier knowledge organisation projects as well).[235] Texts were not thought of in terms of inherently existing properties but rather as objects with specific functions accruing from their usage for scholarly and social purposes. Knowledge was not conceived as an abstracted and idealised entity distinct from its enacted social context. Instead, it was seen as an embedded socio-historical process defined by transformation. How different texts and their bibliographic groups contributed to the understanding of the source and flow (*yuanliu*) of ideas and scholarly practices was at the heart of the project's order.

The notion that an organisation of knowledge reflects and moulds social practices may appear as a truism in a post-positivist society where claims to knowledge are seen as dependent on their social context. What is not obvious, however, is that late eighteenth century imperial scholars would conceptualise the organisation of knowledge in such a way. The fact that a community of thinkers, which did not share the experience and tools of post-positivist intellectuals, thought of (and deliberated like) this, is meaningful both for Chinese intellectual history and for knowledge organisation theory. And the value of the compilers' conceptualisation lies exactly in the fact that it was focused on extra-textual function instead of the intra-textual properties.

[235] For the significance of extra-textual features to the order of the *Hanshu* and *Suishu* bibliographic treatises, see Nicoll-Johnson 2017: 105-108.

Forgetting About Aristotle and Wittgenstein

Despite their differences, the Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian models conceptualise category formation in terms of properties, the features that individual members of a group putatively possess. The difference between the two models lies in the question of how the properties of any one member relate to those of others. The Aristotelian model requires *identity* across individuals – members have identical properties and bear the *same* relation to the group. The Wittgensteinian model requires *similarity* – members have *some* properties in common and bear a *graded* relation to the whole.[236] The two conceptions yield different ways of thinking about categories with effects on the organisation of the world and its objects. Both models, however, place exclusive focus on *what objects are* and therefore are more similar than they are different.[237] By only taking into consideration objects' properties the two models rest on exactly the same footing. Their only difference lies in the rules – identity or similarity – that establish the relations and boundaries across objects.

Organising in terms of function constitutes a different mode of organisation. Failing to recognise this fact is what makes it hard to understand – let alone appreciate – the knowledge structure of the *Complete Writings*.

Think of a toolbox. Inside there are nails, bolts, screws and tools of different kinds. The Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian would organise the toolbox by considering the properties of tools: Aristotle would place identical tools together in ever smaller categories, while Wittgenstein would put similar tools in nearby compartments. The *Complete Writings* way, however, would examine how

[236] Hahn and Ramscar 2001.
[237] And this has determined conceptions of what classification means today, see, for example, Ellen 1979:8; Estes 1994: 4-5; Hjørland 2008; and Sperberg-McQueen 2016: 378.

different tools are *used* – for what kinds of purposes – and place tools used together in the same section. If certain jobs require larger screws to be used with smaller bolts, then these would be placed together. If others require a flat-head screwdriver and a claw hammer to be used together then these would also be placed in the same compartment. The *Complete Writings* way would examine how frequently tools are used and how important they are for different kinds of jobs. If some tools are used more often than others they will be placed not only together but at a point where they can be more easily accessed, say at the top of the toolbox. Similarly, if certain tools are not used frequently because of a very specialised function then they might be placed deeper inside the box.

A function-oriented toolbox may appear messy to the untrained eye. To the person using the toolbox, however, there is a clear rationale behind the placement of tools. In the same way, the *Complete Writings* which might *prima facie* appear to be lacking a clear order is in fact sensible and functional for its makers and intended users. This is part of the reason why the four-fold order survived for so long. This does not mean that there are no quibbles over where any one text should go. Quite the opposite, diverging conceptions of tasks – as well as defining them in the first place – allow for disagreement. The reason why using the *Complete Writings* today may appear counter-intuitive has to do with the fact that the kinds of questions professionalised, modern-university scholars try to answer are different from those of eighteenth century China. It is like searching through a toolbox which has been organised for plumbing to fix problems with electrical fittings.

The modern perspective has to abandon its idea that knowledge organisation is premised on properties and instead recognise the significance of

function. Properties-based and function-oriented ways of organising toolboxes, libraries, and the world create arrangements which vary more between them than the Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian models ever could. The similarity between the two western models points to the necessity of adopting a sceptical stance regarding any reading of conceptual groups on Wittgenstein's logic in the Chinese corpus and the *Complete Writings* in particular. Doing so, would be yet one more iteration of reading into the Chinese tradition the latest theory of western thought, be it from Christian theology to Marxist historical criticism.[238] While plausibly the Wittgensteinian model may cohere better with evidence of organisation structures found within Chinese texts – including the *Complete Writings* – it remains an etic re-interpretation which does not derive from its object of study. By looking at the ways in which the compilers talked about the organisation of their project, we come to appreciate the difference between the two systems.

Directional Categories

Another way of understanding the difference between the Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian models is by examining the underlying metaphorical construction of categories. For the first model, categories are like containers where an object can only be placed inside or outside of a container-like catgeory.[239] When an object is in a container it cannot be inside any other container, unless, as the model develops, these are inside each other (i.e. are logically parsed groups). The clarity that determines whether an object is one group or not is the reason why Aristotelian

[238] See for example Girardot 2002 on what he calls the 'Victorian translation of China' as well as Mungello 1985 on the Jesuits' accommodation and Christian re-interpretation of Chinese classics. For the effects of Marxist historiography on the periodisation of Chinese history, see Guo Moruo 郭沫若 1985 whose work has had a long-lasting effect on Chinese scholarship.
[239] Jones 2009: 175.

divisions are defined as *crisp*. For the Wittgensteinian model, however, the implicit metaphorical understanding of categories is the ladder: objects placed higher up conform better to the best exemplar of the group. As one moves down the ladder, objects are less likely to have similar properties with the prototype and are considered less likely members of that group. Gradation within categories is what causes the boundaries across categories to be *fuzzy*.

The language employed to qualify group membership in the *Complete Writings* points to a different conceptualisation of their fundamental structure.[240] A recurring expression to describe how parts of a whole relate to their group is 'follow their group' (*cong qi lei* 從其類).[241] The key word here is *cong* 從 whose meaning is 'to follow' or 'to go with.'[242] Translating the phrase *cong qi lei* in modern English does not require a simple linguistic change but also a conceptual re-orientation. For an object to 'follow' its group, while plausibly comprehensible, could remain ambiguous to English ears. A more accessible translation would render the expression as 'an object belongs to its group.' While this translation surely makes it easier to understand, it glosses over a major difference in its conceptual make-up. The extension of the word 'follow' to talk about abstract entities implies a different conceptual metaphor than containers or ladders.

The language of categorical following was not a Qing dynasty innovation. In the *Book of Changes* one of the tri-grams is explained as "the root of heaven is above and the root of earth is below, thus each follows its category" (本乎天者親上本乎地者親下則各從其類).[243] Similarly the *Zhuangzi* holds that "[objects] of

[240] Link 2013: 213 also points out this difference.
[241] The expression *cong qi lei* or equivalent variations appear in more than ten of the section prefaces which means that over a fifth of the sections are explicitly described in this way.
[242] *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 2001: 3.2.1001
[243] SKQS: *Zixia yizhuan* 子夏易傳 (7).

same categories follow each other and same sounds conform to each other; this is the principle of heaven" (同類相從同聲相應固天之理也).[244] In fact, expressions which referred to groups in terms of following had become commonplace within bibliographic structures from at least the medieval period onwards.[245] To describe an organisation as following its groups was a prevalent expression which aided compilers and users to make sense of the bibliography and navigate it effectively.[246]

This different conceptual imagery alters significantly how objects are understood to relate to each other and how they relate to their groups. Texts *follow* their respective bibliographic headings. The relationship is not one of inclusion/exclusion or gradation but rather alignment, orientation, and direction. Objects are not inside or outside of their container-like categories or placed on a ladder of similarity. Rather, they are directional objects which move in certain ways.

The container categories and the tree structure of knowledge cohered with each other even though there are no explicit links between them. Similarly, the directional imagery for group membership and the water structure for knowledge complement each other. The water construction has a strong focus on the notion of directionality: just as water moves towards the sea so too does knowledge move towards an ethico-political ideal. This is not a static model but rather a dynamic conception of knowledge defined by change: moving from ignorance to knowledge to implementation. Similarly, the idea of groups which objects *follow* resonates

[244] SKQS: *Zhuangzi zhu* 莊子注 (1056).
[245] Hsu 2018: 74.
[246] Ibid. The fact that these expressions have a remarkably long history points to the fact that this way of thinking was deep-rooted and therefore unnoticed by its users in the same way that the conceptual metaphor of categories as containers had remained by and large unnoticed by western intellectual historians. Such cognitive primitives are so deeply ingrained in our mental operations that only under certain conditions (such as cross-cultural comparison) can they emerge.

with the idea of knowledge as a moving entity.[247] Objects tend towards their respective groups just as water moves towards the sea.

The notion of 'following group membership' is complemented by the notion of prototypical texts as the foundation for divisions within the *Complete Writings*. For example, the *Biographies* groups are constructed on the basis of different *kinds* of biographical texts by citing a certain text as its representative example. The *Sages* include texts of the *kind* of Confucius' and Mencius' annals (一曰聖賢如孔孟年譜之類); the *Eminent Figures* include texts of the *kind* of the *Records of Admonitions of Duke Zheng of Wei* (二曰名人如魏鄭公諫錄之類); the *General Biographies* include texts of the *kind* of *Biographies of Virtuous Women* (三曰總錄如列女傳之類); and the *Miscellaneous Biographies* include texts of the *kind* of the *Canluan Records* (四曰雜錄如驂鸞錄之類).[248] The recurring construction of citing texts not only as examples but as markers of a broader grouping shows the significance certain texts had in their capacity to stand as prototypical models of their groups. The way in which these texts were exemplary was by establishing the hierarchical value of their subjects. Similarly, the preface of the *Topography* section ends by tightening its conceptual boundaries by noting that the *kind* of texts like the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經)

[247] Of course, just as there are many linguistic expressions to describe group formation in English, so too was membership in a group described in different ways in the *Complete Writings*. Other words which imply a different conceptual metaphor were also used. For example, the expression 'conform to' a group (*suiwei yijia* 遂為一家) is used on a few occasions in the introductory prefaces. Another expression is the use of the word *ru* 入 'to enter', used to describe certain texts as being placed (*ru*) within certain groups. While this expression may seem as an indication of a rationale similar to the container conceptual metaphor, there is an important difference in that there is no expression that describes a certain object as inside (or outside) a certain category. The words *nei* 內 and *wai* 外 (inside and outside or internal and external) are never used in relation to a group and its constituent members. To what extent the use of *ru* reveals an Aristotelian container category is problematised by the fact that the dominant expression, within the *Complete Writings* at least, remains the directional *cong*. I leave it to future research to explore the relationship between these different linguistic expressions and their associated cognitive structures.

[248] SKQSZM: *Zhuanji lei yi* (57).

and the *Records of the Ten Lands* (*Shizhou ji* 十洲記) was not recorded in the *Topography* section because these text each *followed* their original grouping (若夫山海經十洲記之屬…則各從其本類茲不錄焉).[249] In a similar stroke, the *Encyclopaedias* preface notes that the *kind* of *leishu* like the *Patrilineal Name Lists* (*Tongxing ming lu* 同姓名錄), which were exclusively focused on one issue, were also included in the section as they had been in the past (專考一事如同姓名錄之類者…舊皆入之類書今亦仍其例).[250]

This way of thinking extended to divisions within sections even when they were not formally expressed in the bibliographic order. The preface of the *Records Extracts* states that in abiding with the concise and apposite words of the *Records of the Grand Scribe* objects should follow their groups (約史記要言以類相從) and the kinds of scholarly production *flowing* from the Song onwards can be divided in four types (沿及宋代又增四例).[251] The first *kind* is that of the *Collected Groups of the Comprehensive Mirror* (*Tongjian zonglei* 通鑒總類) which made few distinctions but instead compiled together various writings (通鑒總類之類則離析而編纂之).[252] The second *kind* is that of the *Detailed Extracts of the Seventeen Records* (*Shiqi shi xiangjie* 十七史詳節) which selectively discards and divides excerpts (十七史詳節之類則簡汰而刊削之).[253] The third *kind* is that of the *Valuable Sayings of the Han Records* (*Shihan jingyu* 史漢精語) which plucks out excerpts and phrases and collects them (史漢精語之類則采摭文句而存之).[254]

[249] SKQSZM: *Dili lei yi* (68).
[250] SKQSZM: *Leishu lei yi* (135).
[251] SKQSZM: *Shichao lei yi* (65).
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.

The last *kind* is that of *Broad Hearsay of the Former and Later Han* (*Lianghan bowen* 兩漢博聞) which cut flowery language and placed it in a specific order (兩漢博聞之類則割裂詞藻而次之).[255] Prototypical texts delineate groups and the texts which follow them conceptually in their ascribed function also follow them in the bibliographic division. Texts are conceived as objects which follow other texts and move together towards a certain kind.[256]

This construction of groups on directional grounds with a prototypical case points to a conceptualisation which appears to have some similarity to the Wittgensteinian model of categories. While the order of texts in the *Complete Writings* is not explicitly graded, it does seem that some texts fit better than other within their groups, if only in their capacity to act as bench-markers for the entire group. This is analogous to the ladder gradation model where some individuals are better fitted in their categories than others. Unlike the family resemblance model, however, this logic is not clearly and thoroughly extended to all the members of any group. What remains distinct in the *Complete Writings* is the emphasis on objects' directionality in following their groups and not their position in a graded ladder of conceptual affinity.[257]

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[255] Ibid.

[256] The language of following was used extensively to describe editorial decisions. In the *Four Books* preface, the editors point out that they are *following* the example of the *Bibliographic Treatise* of the *Ming Records* in establishing a separate section (今從明史藝文志例別立四書一門) (SKQSZM: *Sishu lei yi* (35)). Similarly, they remark that they *follow* Chen Zhengsun's bibliographic work in establishing a distinct section for the *Separate Records* (陳振孫書錄解題創立別史一門…今特從之) (SKQSZM: *Bieshi lei yi* (50)). In their decision to place the *Encyclopaedias* in the *Masters* section, the editors note they *follow* the example of old (舊附於子部今從其例故次以類書) (SKQSZM: *Leishu lei yi* (135)) while they *follow* the *Bibliographic Treatise* of the *Sui Records* in placing the *Classic of Healing Horses* (*Zhima jing* 治馬經) in the *Medicinal Schools* (隋志載治馬經等九家…今從其例附錄此門) (SKQSZM: *Yijia lei yi* (103)). Finally, for their editorial and collecting decisions in the *Official Records*, the editors point out that they are *following* official state-sponsored editions (今並從官本校錄) (SKQSZM: *Zhengshi lei yi* (45)). These examples show that *cong* – just like the English 'to follow' – had a wider semantic scope than physically following someone but rather could accommodate abstract notions.

[257] Munakata 1983: 107 hints to the dynamic, directional understanding of 'categories' as well.

Parts and Wholes

Finally, it is important to appreciate what Chad Hansen has described as one of the fundamental differences between Chinese and western ways of thinking. In western philosophy, Hansen notes, groups are conceived in a one-many relationship whereas in Chinese thought they are conceived in a part-whole relationship. In a one-many structure, "the units are treated as interchangeable, fixed in 'size' and only externally related" creating the "notion of a fixed unity – the atom, the quark, the person, the U.N. member" to which we can add the notion of the text, the bibliographic category, the discipline and so forth.[258] Hansen's description of one-many relationships alludes to the fact that they are conceived on the basis of properties. It is the possession of particular qualities that fixes them in 'size' and makes them externally related to one another, as well as equally positioned towards their group (i.e. they are members of the group because they comply with a rule). Part-whole systems on the other hand, Hansen states, are "sets which consist of, rather than contain, their members … One can refer to more or less inclusive parts of the same whole. A finger is part of a person. So is a hand, an arm, a trunk."[259]

The *Complete Writings* has the appearance of a one-many structure – with its clearly defined bibliographic units – but in reality follows a part-whole order – where the underlying conceptual structures and their relations are thought of as members of a whole. The creation and positioning of bibliographic units was not premised on providing a set of rules fixing the properties that each bibliographic unit's members ought to possess. Rather, the use of function as the determinant

[258] Hansen 1985: 36.
[259] Ibid.

bibliographic yardstick complements the idea of *mereological* part-whole relations, as each member of the whole plays a different function within the totality.[260] Parts are not brought together because of their identical or similar properties as members of a set. Instead, they are united because of their co-extensive functions as *constitutive* members of the whole. The part-whole structure helps us understand why the conceptualisation of the bibliographic order was premised on functions instead of properties and conversely why the use of functions illuminates the structural bonds of part-whole orders. While not referred to by Hansen, functions are the other side of the *mereological relations* coin since the way in which different members of a whole are brought together is through their coextensive functions.

Each of the bibliographic parts exists as the summation of its constituent members and not over and above them: the *bu* are the summation of *lei*, and the *lei* are the summation of *shu* (when they have them).[261] Returning to Hansen's analogy of the human body, we can understand the four main divisions of the *Complete Writings* as four limbs which are in turn composed of smaller parts – legs, feet, and toes; arms, hands, and fingers. Just as each limb does not contain but rather is composed of its members so too each *bu* does not contain its *lei* but is rather composed by them. Shifting from one order of the division to another is not a movement along enclosed containers from broader to narrower but rather a change in focus from one part of the structure to another. While one-many divisions are

[260] See Munro 1985a: 18 for a similar approach in a different context.
[261] Tarsala 2001: 138 makes a similar point but does not provide any further explanation as the structure of the four-fold order is like this or what it implies for knowledge organisation. However, Zhou Yanwen 周彦文 1995: 60-61 argues that the relationship between them is hierarchical but he underlines that this conception of hierarchy is not similar to 'tree structures.' In this sense, the two perspectives are not opposite but rather point to the idea that the four main divisions are larger than their sections and the sections are larger than their groups.

based on logically parsed hierarchies, part-whole structures are differentiated on the premise of inclusivity – how close or far out focus is placed.

As Hansen remarks, "philosophical doctrines written in classical Chinese can always be given elegant part-whole interpretations, and such interpretations are more compatible with the structure of the language."[262] Avoiding the imposition of the one-many structure on the *Complete Writings* and instead appreciating its part-whole composition works in tandem with grasping the fact that ascribed function – and not properties – underpinned the order of knowledge. This is working 'from the ground up' trying to understand things 'on their terms.'

Classifying the Complete Writings

How does the order of the *Complete Writings* square up with modern classifications of classifications? How does its structure fit in and challenge contemporary constructions of knowledge organisation?

The most significant insight we can derive from the organisation of the *Complete Writings* is that a knowledge order can be unrelated to the properties of its objects. By structuring knowledge on the basis of ascribed function the *Complete Writings* shuns the logic of properties-based organisations. It cannot be labeled as monothetic or polythetic since these terms do not properly apply.

The order of the *Complete Writings* is *exclusive* since all texts are placed under only one specific functional position informed by considerations of co-use, chronology, and hierarchy. The exclusive order the compilers impose on the textual universe, however, takes place with an open recognition that in some instances – such as some ancient texts or the *Encyclopaedias* section as a whole – the order is

[262] Hansen 1985: 53.

not unambiguous or unproblematic. The impetus to provide an ordered, consistent and predictable structure is met with the reality of a disordered, contradictory, and ambiguous textual universe.[263] While the order of texts is exclusive, the possibility an overlapping organisation is recognised.

The organisation is *ordered* because the relations between its constituent members – across all levels – are systematically predicated on their functions. While the specific rationale behind each of the four main divisions or sections within them might differ – co-extensive use, chronology, and hierarchy – the over-arching rationale is the ascribed socio-scholarly function as informed by the wider set of extra-textual considerations. There is nothing haphazard or random in the sequence of groups. Instead, clear relations, which are meticulously accounted for, permeate the entire order.

Several conclusions emerge from revisiting the original question of how miscellaneousness can illuminate the underlying principles of organisation. First, the inability of certain objects to form a group (不能成類) did not depend on their heterogeneity in terms of their inherent properties. Instead, it was a function of the difficulty (or even impossibility) of recording them in a simple and unequivocal way (不能一概著錄) given their overly messy development. Extra-textual features of production, transmission, evaluation, codification, and description were the foundation on which the ascribed social and scholarly function of texts and bibliographic groups was premised. Subject matter and genre only played an auxiliary role in the understanding of texts and the formation of groups. The ways in which miscellaneousness was understood and resolved is a mirror of how the entire order of the *Complete Writings* was conceived.

[263] Lambe 2007: xvi.

Second, the relation between users and texts – society and knowledge – was the cornerstone of the bibliographic order. Texts were not conceived as abstract entities with immutable properties. They were instead socially embedded artefacts whose position within the knowledge order ought to reflect the socio-historical understanding about them. Miscellaneous groups were particularly messy but that merely reflected the meandering and divergent path of these streams of knowledge. Our relationship to texts – how they are codified in a bibliographic structure – cannot but reflect this. The significance of the relation between users and texts was fundamental to how the compilers of the *Complete Writings* conceived its order.

Finally, what emerges from the description and typology of the *Complete Writings* is that it directly challenges the effects of modernity on classification theory. As Jens-Erik Mai has put it, modernity "has influenced information studies, and classification, by creating three almost universal principles that guide most thought and practice: dualism (by separating information content from the reader), de-traditionalisation (by assuming that documents can be represented independently of activities that produced and used them), and globalisation (by assuming that documents can be represented independently of time and space)."[264] But the function-based order is premised on the relation between organiser and organised, breaking the dualistic assumption. The emphasis in all introductory prefaces on the socio-historical contexts out of which that texts were produced, transmitted, and received challenges the de-traditionalisation assumption. Last, the focus on functions and the recognition of changing organisation practices through time contests the globalisation assumption.

[264] Mai 2011: 718.

The relationship between user and text is the most important determinant in the order of the *Complete Writings*. The extra-textual socio-historical features of texts were fundamental to the construction of function. How texts were represented in the knowledge organisation project depended on their position in time and space. The *Complete Writings* thus offers a comprehensive, systematic and wide-ranging conception of bibliographic order which challenges – and therefore can enrich – modern conceptions and practices of knowledge organisation.[265]

[265] Chuan Rongxian 傳榮賢 1995: 26 acknowledges this potential contribution but does not explain how traditional bibliographies can enrich contemporary practices.

CONCLUSION

Liu Guojun and his early Republican peers were faced with the task of turning rivers into trees. The poetic structure, priorities and principles of inherited bibliographic structures, exemplified in the *Complete Writings*, were not compatible with those of modern epistemological orders. With the imposition of tree structures, the epistemology of the modern West ruled supreme. The Dewey classification was adopted or adapted – but never fundamentally challenged – and thus 'the foot was cut to fit the shoe'.

Throughout this thesis, I have suggested that a certain commensurability can be attained between the academic scopes, methods, and questions of high Qing scholarship and our own. *Zhiology* – a new term I have proposed in this thesis – is an open-ended inquiry into the nature of 'knowledge' and its 'order' which invites a recalibration of these terms in light of the experience of others. Studying pre-modern Chinese texts and thinkers is neither possible only if conducted in strictly traditional frames nor is it valuable only if approached through modern categories. The cross-cultural, inter-linguistic, and non-disciplinary character of *zhiology* is designed to offer a way out from the Scylla and Charybdis of repeating traditional Chinese scholarship or misinterpreting it through alien ideas. By questioning the

universality of modern epistemological assumptions, we can investigate the conceptions of 'knowledge' and 'order' held by late imperial scholars and unearth their significance for how we order knowledge today.

Yet this commensurability in method might seem at odds with the apparent incommensurable predicament faced by early Republican scholars. Rivers and trees – with their related priorities and principles – do not easily square up. Does the incommensurability of different orders of knowledge preclude a common point of reference in the *study of* different orders of knowledge? Do differences in the poetics, purposes, and principles of different knowledge organisations bar the commensurability that a *zhiological* study wishes to achieve?

The answer, implied in this thesis, is no. And the reason is that a significant difference exists between *zhiology* and early Republican scholarship and its offspring, modernised Sinology. The difference, in Gadamer's terms, is that the latter espouses the subjugation of one horizon to another while the former aims to achieve the fusion of two horizons into a higher plane of vision. Subjugation entails the adoption of one order and the rejection of the other, thus implicitly asserting their incommensurability.[1] Fusion, on the other hand, invites the partial suspension of authority of both systems and therefore the elevation of forgotten, marginalised traditions. Commensurability is possible if we adopt a higher plane of vision where the benefits and limitations, assumptions and conclusions of each system are brought to surface on the basis of mutual respect.[2] Systems are incommensurable only if we remain fully committed to the particular points of reference of any one order of knowledge. They are commensurable if we use them

[1] Gadamer 2014 [1960]: 316.
[2] Gadamer 2014 [1960]: 317.

to reflect on one another and develop a point of view which goes beyond any particular horizon. Thus the fundamental difference between modernised Sinology and *zhiology* is one of approach and ethos, a difference in how we engage with the assumptions and conclusions of the modern West and Chinese dynastic scholarship; whether, in other words, we wish to subsume one under the other or instead create a new, higher plane of vision. This difference in attitude is reflected in the hybrid cultural, lexical and methodological character of *zhiology*, which this thesis has aimed to embody.

In these closing pages, I offer a short overview of the key ideas developed in this thesis. I provide a summary of the main arguments in each chapter and offer some reflections on the nature of bibliographic divisions, imperial scholarship, and the *Complete Writings*, which I put forth as preliminary conclusions awaiting further elaboration.

Taxonomical Rivers

In Chapter 1, I argued that the fundamental imagistic understanding of the order of knowledge in the *Complete Writings* is based on water and specifically rivers. ‘Knowledge’ and ‘order’ require a concrete imagistic conception exactly because they are abstract and cannot be conceived otherwise. The need to ground complex ideas on simple material objects is not unique to dynastic scholarship but is instead a shared feature of human cognition. In western discourses, the historically dominant paradigm for knowledge and its order has been the tree. Tree structures, like the one used in the Enlightenment *Encyclopédie*, impose a rationale of binary and hierarchical divisions which determine how knowledge organisation

is conceived. Extending the expectations of the tree paradigm to other contexts, such as the *Complete Writings*, is misguided and fails to take note of the understanding of knowledge organisation held by late imperial scholars.

The river-like conception of the order of knowledge was derived from a longer tradition of thinking about the Chinese terms analogous to 'knowledge', *zhi*, *wen*, and *sheng*, using water imagery. These terms were partially conceived as water because of their intimate relation to *dao*, which was also conceptualised as water. How the world was grasped through the water imagery of *dao* inflected how conceptions about knowledge were constructed, illustrating the point that any conception of knowledge is intimately connected to antecedent conceptions of the world. The relation between *dao* and the way it is grasped was the mechanism which carried forward the water conception of 'knowledge' in classical texts. The understanding of *dao* as water, I argued, is one of the main reasons why *zhi*, *wen*, and *sheng* share the same imagistic construction and were conceptually related. This is also the reason why we have to think of them as a bundle when trying to capture the nature of 'knowledge' in pre-modern Chinese thought.

I traced the conception of 'knowledge' as water to excavated manuscripts showing how the seeds of this idea can be found even before the organising endeavours of early imperial scholarship. Incorporating the logic of 'going upstream' to the earliest manifestations of any given idea showcases how the approach of Chapter 1 follows the logic of the *Complete Writings*. By marrying this imperative to the imagistic understanding of abstract thought, I trust I have shown how the editors' rationale can be brought together with some of the latest insights of contemporary scholarship. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first

time that the insights of conceptual metaphor theory have been applied to the Chinese excavated manuscripts.

The river-like conception of the order of knowledge afforded five features to the organisation of the *Complete Writings*. The first was the identification of a group of texts, the *Classics*, as the ever-flowing source of knowledge. A source, in the editors' eyes, was on the one hand a *sine qua non* to guarantee the perennial flow of learning. On the other, it was a recognition of the pre-eminent role the *Classics* had had in the long history of scholarly learning. The second feature was hierarchy. The four main divisions were hierarchically related to each other based on their ascribed value. A clear conception of order permeated the collection: the *Classics* were the life-giving source of the *Records*, the main stream of learning; the *Masters* constituted the tributaries and the *Collections* were the smaller brooks and runnels. The third feature was the upstream movement from any minor rivulet all the way up to the source of knowledge. What the upstream imagery denoted was that the order of the *Complete Writings* was deployed as an argument and tool to trace the historical development of knowledge. The intention behind the imagery was to assert the compilation's order as a means to assist scholars in tracing the source and flow of learning. The fourth feature was the natural downward flow of rivers towards the sea, understood as a symbol for the purpose of knowledge acquisition. Knowledge was perceived as directional, but naturally so. Flowing in the right streams of knowledge ensured one would inevitably reach its intended destination, namely ethical edification. While study required sustained and deliberate effort, the transforming effects of a classical education were seen as natural and spontaneous. The last feature, circularity, underlined the unity of knowledge from beginning to end, and was conceived as a manifestation of a

broader unity in nature. This last feature highlights how antecedent conceptions about the world and its structure came to be expressed in the *Complete Writings*.

The river-like conception of the order of knowledge was not an innovation of Qianlong-era scholars. Rather, it had a long history which stretched back to the first imperial bibliographies and developed over time. What is unique about the makers of the *Complete Writings*, however, is the explicit acknowledgement of their use of the water framework, bringing our attention to the deeply self-reflective, meta-commentary nature of the compilation. Their innovation was to bring to surface the historic link between water and knowledge and place it centre stage in the creation of the *Complete Writings*.

The historical background of the water imagery for knowledge does not mean there was any kind of cultural (or geographical) necessity pushing for the adoption of the river conception of order, just as there was none in the West *vis-à-vis* tree structures. Neither of these imageries held an exclusive monopoly in the conception of knowledge and its order – strong alternatives existed in both milieus. Yet, the imagery of trees and rivers cannot be easily discounted since they were historically dominant ideas, fundamentally affecting how the organisation of knowledge was imagined and carried out. In this sense, both the *Encyclopédie* and the *Complete Writings* are examples of taxonomical realism, a term I introduced to denote that a certain actuality is afforded to each kind of organisation. In the modern European context, organising knowledge meant dividing it in into branches and in the late imperial context, organising knowledge meant tracings its streams.

The interesting question that arises then is what exactly are the four main divisions of the *Complete Writings*. Early attempts to answer this question, reflected in early translations, came up with the answer that the four divisions are

disciplines, more or less similar to early modern European ones.[3] It was, however, always apparent that they did not conform to the idea of disciplinarity, primarily because of the nature of the *Classics*. Later answers held that the divisions are genres or, more recently, that they are 'document types'.[4] However, neither of these conceptions is particularly helpful as even a cursory overview of any one of the main divisions reveals several different kinds of genres or document types. Equally important is the fact that the makers of the *Complete Writings* do not give any indication that the four divisions were thought of – consciously or subconsciously – in such a manner.

The four divisions ought to be understood as the constituent parts of the river of knowledge just as branches are understood as divisions of the tree of knowledge. The sheer abstractness of the idea of knowledge organisation directs the conception of its components to concrete and material objects such as branches of a tree or the different parts of a river system.[5] A branch of knowledge can be a discipline (philosophy), a specific topic (early Greek aesthetics), or a domain of practical expertise (weave-making). This shows that a branch of knowledge is not tied to any other way of conceiving knowledge (in terms of disciplines, topics, or fields of expertise) but rather that it is simply one part within the whole. What the tree structure achieves is to determine how different parts are related to each other. Similarly, the four divisions of the *Complete Writings* cannot be identified with any other way of ordering knowledge (in disciplines, genres, or document types) because they are functional parts of a larger system. The articulation of the order of knowledge in terms of water means that the four divisions are conceived in a

[3] For example, see Guy 1987; and Hsiung 2015.
[4] Tarsala 2001: 137; and Wilkinson 2015: 1777.
[5] Or other equally concrete imagery such as that of the field, see Wellmon 2015: 84.

hierarchical way relative to the attainment of a specific goal. In this sense, bibliographic collections – and all knowledge organisation structures – require a concrete manifestation because of their abstract nature. Concrete manifestations, either in the form of branches or streams, are the articulation of the relationships between different components: just as the categories of the tree of knowledge of the *Encyclopédie* are its branches, so too are the four divisions of the *Complete Writings* the constituent parts of a river.

Overflow and Canonisation

In Chapter 2, I argued that the *Complete Writings* was envisioned as a public piece of scholarship designed for the use and benefit of contemporaneous and future scholars. By design, it was intended to be accessible and usable, and the organisation which was adopted was geared towards serving the compilation's public character. The four-fold order was chosen over the alternatives at hand not on grounds of upholding orthodoxy but rather for intellectual reasons.

The Han-dynasty *Seven Epitomes* organisation was unfit to capture the state of knowledge in late imperial times. Reviving it would have created an overwhelming set of difficulties related to where to place entire swathes of learning, as new kinds of scholarship had emerged over the centuries. Most acute among these issues would have been the placing of the 'historical' *Records*, since such texts did not exist in early imperial times and the *Seven Epitomes* did not have a dedicated section for them.

The revival of the *Seven Epitomes* would have further signalled the dominance of the Han learning scholarly movement, compromising the public and

ecumenical character the makers of the *Complete Writings* aspired to. Time and again, the editors stressed the intellectual strengths and weaknesses of Han and Song learning, trying to assume, in Gadamer's terms, a higher plane of vision, a synthesis between the scopes, methods, and questions of the different horizons of different scholarly traditions. Unlike the order of the *Seven Epitomes*, the four-fold order was not linked with any one scholarly tradition and enjoyed instead broad acceptance, appealing to the largest group of scholars.

This was part of the reason why the makers rejected the more detailed arrangements which had developed over the Song and Ming dynasties. On the one hand, such arrangements were perceived as being particularly tied to their makers and their collections, failing to reach the broader, higher level of appeal the editors aspired to. On the other hand, these detailed orders were seen as having simply too many divisions, suffering from taxonomical hypertrophy, the sheer explosion of classificatory divisions.

The rejection of detailed divisions sheds light on the underlying conception of the purposes of the collection. For Song and Ming bibliographers, detail and precision became paramount goals of knowledge organisation. The more detailed an order was, the clearer the nature of knowledge would be. For the editors, however, the fundamental purpose of a bibliographic project was to guide scholar-officials through the streams of knowledge, assist them in tracing each different flow, expand their knowledge of the world, achieve ethical edification, and ultimately contribute to proper governance of the empire. Too many divisions would have led to confusion obscuring the links between streams of knowledge. Just as the most detailed map is not the most useful in traversing unknown terrain,

so too is an overly-detailed order an impediment in navigating through the streams of knowledge.

Diversity defined the landscape of bibliographic structures of pre-modern China, casting doubt on any claims that knowledge organisation practices (or scholarship at large) were stagnant or monolithic. Quite the opposite, the plurality of conceptions of the fundamental goals of the *Complete Writings* was the manifestation of a far greater tradition of exploration and experimentation in the history of Chinese bibliographic compilations. Such richness can be identified as one of, if not *the* most, diachronically characteristic feature of bibliography in pre-modern China. What underpinned the production of different kinds of bibliographic orders was a spirit of adventurousness, an openness to experimenting with different orders both novel and old.[6] This was as true during the Qianlong era as it had been in earlier periods when bibliographic concerns lay at the top of academic pursuits.

The decision to adopt the four-fold order did not rest on conceptions of orthodoxy and the continuation of inherited practices. Concerns for the intellectual fitness of different classification structures ran deep in the Qianlong court, expressed not only by the higher echelons of court-scholars but also by the emperor himself. Contemporary scholarship has generally overlooked how the decision to adopt the four-fold order was made. This is primarily due to the fact that the *Complete Writings* has been regarded as the exemplar of the four-fold order and the decision has been considered as doctrinally mandated and therefore foregone. By focusing on the early stages of the compilation and how the makers related to

[6] Allen 2015: 6.

their inherited traditions, I hope to have shown how scholarly concerns, and not orthodoxy, underpinned the classificatory rationale behind the project.

As an analytic term, 'orthodoxy' is weak for it has come to denote that which imperial scholars choose, thus simply stating a tautology. Yet, given that at different times imperial scholars responded to the same problem with dramatically different, often diametrically opposed, responses, it is not clear what would constitute orthodoxy. In other words, appeals to orthodoxy have little explanatory power because they fail to account for the antecedent factors which inform the practices of imperial scholars. The concept is also misleading since it cloaks imperial scholars in a quasi-religious garb, introducing a set of connotations, such as belief and dogma, which have little to do with the reality of pre-modern scholarship.[7] The logic of imperial scholars as analogous to religious figures underlies the conception of the censorial dimensions of the *Complete Writings* as an act of 'Inquisition,' a term which evokes the often brutal practices of the Catholic Church.[8] Yet, viewing the censorial aspect of the compilation project as its main function – as has often been done in secondary literature – is misleading, for it overlooks the fact that a genuinely positive contribution was made in the creation of the bibliographic catalogue.

The undeniable fact of curtailment of information in the compilation of the *Complete Writings*, however, might be better understood through the language of the water imagery for knowledge. Time and again, China's mighty rivers have had to be controlled in order to be used productively and more importantly to avoid overflow and destruction. The historical precedent of managing China's rivers was

[7] For example, see Henderson 1998.
[8] For example, see Goodrich 1966; Guy 1987: 157-200; and Mosca 2011.

found even in the earliest legends of Chinese history in the sage-king Yu and his successful channelling of the rivers. What I am suggesting here is that acts of knowledge control by late imperial scholars might be better understood through the language of hydraulic engineering and that perhaps, in the minds of Qianlong-era scholar-officials, managing the flow of learning was just as essential and beneficial as managing the flow of rivers. This gives us another paradigm to think about the management, control, and censorship of knowledge which does not relate to the practices and conceptions about knowledge, belief, and dogma of the Catholic Church. This new paradigm might help us understand better the intentions, beliefs, and practices of knowledge control in late imperial China.

Last, management of the streams of knowledge implies the need to control their overflow: questions of censorship are intimately tied to those of inclusion, since the distinction between the beneficial and the harmful is intertwined with the division between the valuable and the insignificant. The canonising function of the *Complete Writings* – the decision about what to include and exclude – does not emerge from the mandate to defend a religious dogma, an orthodoxy, but from the mere fact that without selection, imperial scholars would have been met by an overpowering flood of texts. The act of closing the canon and determining what is significant is a response to the intellectual challenge posed by the reality that there were simply too many texts. In this context, selecting what ought to be preserved and handed down was not comparable to determining what is true in a religious setting. It was instead a way of handling the textual overflow of the centuries-old dynastic scholarship.[9]

[9] This was true of European scholars as well, see Wilson-Lee 2018: 172.

Thus, just as the decision to adopt the four-fold order was not motivated by a concern to uphold orthodoxy, the censorial and canonical functions of the *Complete Writings* were not driven by the religious sentiments that the language of orthodoxy and Inquisition imply. Instead, thinking of the editors and their practices in terms of the water imagery of knowledge, as Confucian 'hydraulic' engineers, can give us a better understanding of their intentions, ideas, and practices.

Power, Identity, Knowledge

In Chapter 3, I argued that the fundamental principle of design was socio-scholarly function – how a text was envisioned to be used in the context of Qianlong-era scholarship. Socio-scholarly function was the summation of a broader way of understanding texts which examined extra-textual features such as production, dissemination, reception, reproduction, and canonisation. How a text was believed to have been created, what kinds of sources it employed, how it was handed down from one generation to the next, and in what ways it could be put to function for the purposes of scholarship and governance were definitive in the formation of order. Different aspects of the life of a text determined how its use in Qianlong-era scholarship was conceived and therefore where it was placed in the *Complete Writings*. The conceptualisation of order did not depend on information found *within* texts but rather on information *about* them. This kind of *extra-textual* features is unrelated to the 'inherent' *intra-textual* properties of texts – such as content, style, genre, or disciplinary identity – which have been the determinants of modern bibliographic orders and mistakenly extended to the *Complete Writings*.

CONCLUSION

The principle of socio-scholarly function was enacted primarily through hierarchical and chronological orders. The compilers repeatedly created divisions between texts which they perceived to be similar in some way because they were sufficiently different in value. The *Classics* are the prime example of this, but texts on different kinds of music, poetry, or even agricultural products were placed in different sections based on their perceived value. Texts within bibliographic groups were ordered by date of production, creating chronological series aimed at assisting scholars in tracing the development of the streams of knowledge, one of the main objectives of the compilation. The chronological arrangement by date of production – and not by the time period discussed in the text – also contributed to the deployment of a broader argument about the source and flow of scholarly learning.

Bibliographic groups were not seen as vehicles to capture internal properties that texts putatively possessed but rather as structures to assist learning and enacting the knowledge recorded in them. The two-legged conception of order – social and scholarly function – was conceptualised as unity since a learned scholar became effective in his administrative duties through scholarship, and a successful official expanded his knowledge through enacting the teachings of the sages. The relation between users and texts – society and knowledge – thus functioned as the cornerstone of the bibliographic order.

This approach to text classification differs substantially from modern classifications which have primarily used subject matter or genre as the principle of design. For this reason, the conception of order in the *Complete Writings* offers an alternative to modern practice. More importantly, since the *Complete Writings* does not rely on intra-textual properties, it stands as an alternative conception of

classification itself, challenging that of Aristotle and Wittgenstein. Groups in the *Complete Writings* follow neither the classical requirements of inclusion nor the revised norms of family resemblance; therefore, the order of the classification itself is structured in an altogether different manner. Tied to this is the imagistic conception of 'categories' whereby objects follow (to varying degrees and in different ways) their group. This construction of the idea of 'category' is markedly different from the Aristotelian conception of a category as a container (setting clear markers of what is in and what it out) and the Wittgensteinian conception of a category as a graded ladder (establishing how well any object fits within a category). The directional model of the *Complete Writings* – and pre-modern Chinese thought – points to a saliently different conception of 'categories' which are not based on relationships of inclusion/exclusion or gradation but rather alignment and orientation.

Ultimately, by investigating the organisation of knowledge in the *Complete Writings*, this thesis has sought to understand the nature of the compilation. As noted in the Introduction, the *Complete Writings* was an inherently complex and multi-dimensional project and for this reason it can be understood in several different ways. It is simultaneously a collection of texts, an encyclopedia, a library, a syllabus, and a canon.

Seen as the ultimate expression of the Qianlong emperor's power to control the textual universe, the *Complete Writing* has traditionally been understood as inextricable from its imperial origins. According to this interpretation, the *Complete Writings* was designed to showcase the grandness of the Qing reign and affirm the unity between imperial authority and scholarly elites.

By undertaking a compilation project which continued but also surpassed past imperial projects, the Qianlong emperor aimed to buttress his claims to legitimacy and simultaneously carve a special position for himself in Chinese history.

Another related reading understands the *Complete Writings* as an expression of literati identity. By (re-)defining what constituted valuable knowledge, the compilation provided a strong new core around which scholarly production, and identity, would gravitate.[10] The inclusion and exclusion of texts has been regarded by secondary scholarship as the key mechanism through which the *Complete Writings* contributed to the articulation of an evolving literati identity. The inclusion of critical overviews gave a clear stamp to the nature of its contents. Yet, even though often overlooked, the order of texts was equally important, since it provided a grand narrative of the development of scholarly learning, suggesting how scholars ought to position themselves relative to the past.

There is no doubt that both of these readings can help us understand the political and social aspects of this inherently complex project and appreciate some of its outcomes, regardless of whether they were intended or not. Yet, as I have suggested throughout this thesis, what has been conspicuously ignored in the literature is the fact that this was also a genuinely intellectual project which first and foremost aimed to solve a scholarly problem, namely the collection and organisation of all valuable knowledge. Managing and ordering knowledge; making it accessible and usable; encoding it in a rational and publicly accessible structure; deploying an argument about its development; and providing a guideline to assist scholars in enacting the teachings of the sages in daily life and administrative duties; all of these were the primary and fundamental aspects of the

[10] Guy 1987: 10.

Complete Writings. The driving concern behind the project was the promotion and consolidation of learning, erudition, and knowledge. This of course is not to deny that the *Complete Writings* had political and social ramifications but that these have to be understood as co-existing with – or even secondary to – the main accomplishment of collecting and ordering knowledge.

Recognising the intellectual dimension of the *Complete Writings* as its primary characteristic allows us to treat it in an increasingly decontextualised way. So far, scholarship has vigorously – and quite successfully – aimed to understand the people, processes, and products associated with the *Complete Writings*. If we approach the project merely as an affirmation of power or the expression of an identity by a group of scholars who no longer exist, we deny the *Complete Writings* any cross-temporal and cross-cultural significance. Treating it as a primarily intellectual endeavour, however, has opened a new avenue of wholly different set of questions. When placed in comparison to western early modern and modern conceptions of knowledge organisation, as this thesis has indicated, the *Complete Writings* functions as a mirror which can expose the assumptions and pre-conceptions of our paradigms. As an untapped source of experience, the *Complete Writings* can enrich our own ideas and practices of knowledge organisation, a line of inquiry which I hope will be picked up in the future.

The *Complete Writings* was an intellectual achievement of global significance produced out of Qianlong-era scholars' conceptions about 'knowledge' and its 'order'. This thesis has been inspired by contemporary scholarship on knowledge organisation, classification, and the history of knowledge societies as much as by the specific poetics, purposes, and principles of the *Complete Writings*. Hopefully, it has achieved the *zhiological* ideal of understanding the object of study

in a hybrid way, merging priorities, methods, and ideas. By probing the intellectual foundations of this monumental project of late imperial China, this thesis also hopes to have opened new avenues for re-thinking ‘knowledge’ and its ‘order’ today.

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